

AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY OF THE ABUSE OF GIRLS IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS



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August 2003

Educational Papers

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Acknowledgements

The research team acknowledges the invaluable contribution to this research study of:

Dr Leslie Casely Hayford, Associates for Change, Accra, Ghana (consultant)

Dr Alison Croft, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex (consultant)

Caroline Nicolson, ActionAid/University of Sussex (research fellow)

Fritz Kadyoma, Malawi Institute of Education (researcher)

This study was only made possible with the cooperation of officials from the Ministries of Education in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe and the teachers, head teachers, pupils and parents in the participating schools, to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CRECCOM	<i>Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (Malawi)</i>	PEA	<i>Primary Education Adviser (Malawi)</i>
DEO	<i>District Education Officer</i>	PRA	<i>Participatory Rural Appraisal</i>
FAWE	<i>Forum for African Women Educationists</i>	PTA	<i>Parent Teacher Association</i>
G & C	<i>Guidance and Counselling</i>	SMC	<i>School Management Committee</i>
GES	<i>Ghana Education Service</i>	UNIFEM	<i>United Nations Development Fund for Women</i>
JSS	<i>Junior Secondary School (Ghana)</i>	WAJU	<i>Women and Juvenile Unit (Ghana Police)</i>
NGO	<i>Non-Governmental Organisation</i>		

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Context

This report presents the findings of an extension to an earlier research study carried out into the abuse of girls in junior secondary schools in Zimbabwe (Leach and Machakanja 2000). This earlier study found that girls were subjected on a routine basis to aggressive sexual advances from older male pupils and male teachers within the school and from ‘sugar daddies’ in the vicinity of the school, who prey on girls for sex in exchange for money or gifts. Other forms of abuse directed at both female and male pupils were verbal abuse (often with demeaning sexual connotations when directed at girls) and excessive corporal punishment, administered by female as well as male teachers.

Findings

This extension had the combined aim of taking the Zimbabwe research further as well as attempting to bridge the gap between research and action in addressing this abuse of children’s rights. This aim was achieved through three distinct components: firstly, information gathering and dissemination of studies on the abuse of girls and related topics through both print and electronic modes; secondly, further school-based research to assess the prevalence of abuse in two other African contexts (Ghana and Malawi) with a slightly younger age group (most girls were in the 11-14 age group); and thirdly, the trialling of a range of small scale strategic interventions to counter the types of abuse uncovered by the research.

The introductory chapter in this report (Chapter 1) presents the context, rationale and methodology of the study. Chapter 2 summarises the process of information gathering and dissemination of work relevant to the study of the abuse of girls. This dissemination was carried out in collaboration with id21, the DFID funded development research reporting service. It involved setting up a dedicated web page (www.id21.org/education/gender_violence/index.html) entitled ‘Gender violence in Schools’, which featured summaries of studies of school-based abuse of girls and other related studies (for example, gender violence in adolescent relationships; attitudes towards HIV/AIDS among adolescents) as well as accounts from different parts of the world of innovative and effective interventions to eliminate gender violence. This id21 initiative has served to raise awareness of the issue of gender violence generally, while at the same time broadening the scope of the study beyond sub-Saharan Africa, beyond an exclusive focus on girls and beyond the setting of formal education.

This component of the study highlighted the limited research into abuse and gender violence in a school setting, the lack of school-based initiatives to counter the problem, and the need for imaginative and participatory methodologies to tackle it. Eliminating the abuse of girls requires changing the sexual behaviour of both pupils and teachers, which cannot be done using the traditional didactic methods which most teachers rely on. Some of the items which featured on the id21 web page provide evidence that the use of various media is particularly effective in changing attitudes and behaviour among young people, e.g. drama, film, video,

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radio, art, poetry and storytelling. These items also suggest that eliminating gender violence needs the involvement of boys and men (including in an educational context male pupils and male teachers), who must be encouraged to engage in an analysis of power in gender relations in both the private and public arenas, to reflect on changing their own behaviour, and to offer themselves as positive role models and mentors for others. At the same time, it is clear that mobilising men to work towards gender equity will only be successful if men see benefits to themselves as well as to women.

The second component of the study (further research into the abuse of girls in Ghana and Malawi) is covered by the first part of Chapters 3 and 4, where the findings from the field work component in three schools in each country are presented. These are remarkably similar to the findings of the earlier study in Zimbabwe, while contributing some new insights, e.g. into boys' problems, into the impact of teacher abuse on the quality of the learning environment, the extent to which abusive behaviour feeds on poverty and ignorance (in terms of the procedures for seeking redress) and the ambivalent attitude of some parents, teachers and girls themselves towards teachers having sexual liaisons with schoolgirls.

As in Zimbabwe, schools in Ghana and Malawi are a breeding ground for potentially damaging gendered practices, the influence of which will stay with pupils into adult life. Sexual aggression goes largely unpunished, dominant male behaviour by both pupils and teachers is not questioned, and pupils are strongly encouraged to conform to the gender roles and norms of interaction which they observe around them. This sends messages to boys and girls about what can be tolerated and therefore 'normalises' abusive behaviour. The majority of pupils featured in this study are in the post-puberty age group (11-14), a stage of development when young people are most impressionable to peer influence. In these schools, there is strong peer pressure for boys to secure girlfriends, which not infrequently leads to coercion and physical assault. Girls too are subject to peer pressure in terms of making themselves attractive to boys, developing their femininity, and in some cases acquiring the 'grown up' status that comes with having a boyfriend or sugar daddy. It was difficult to gauge the extent to which girls in these schools were coerced into sexual relationships, or chose to enter them freely, i.e. passive victims of circumstances beyond their control or free agents making rational choices. It is likely that both scenarios apply; however, there is no doubt that poverty pushes many girls, in the absence of other means of supporting themselves, into relationships that they may not have considered otherwise, where they are dependent on men and hence vulnerable to exploitation. Indeed, there was a widespread belief among girls themselves that monetary gain is the main motivation for girls entering such relationships. Transactional sex, as a means for girls to pay school fees and living expenses, appears to be common.

The Ghana and Malawi studies revealed several cases of teachers having affairs with girls in their school and of the school and district education authorities taking very little, if any, action to deal with them. The negative impact of predatory male behaviour on the

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enrolment, attendance and achievement of girls was obvious. The case of one school in Ghana, where the head teacher's sexual misconduct over many years was an 'open secret' in the community provides an interesting insight into how difficult it is for communities and school staff to take action. Lack of information, fear of recrimination and the indifference and/or obfuscation of officials are all deterrents. In other instances, it is the apparent collusion of the parents in the affair (as in a case featured in the Malawi study), usually in the hope that the teacher will marry the girl, which prevents the authorities from taking action. In general, however, high levels of apathy combined with lack of information on procedures and a reluctance to take girls who make allegations seriously, mean that little is done unless the case is a high profile item in the national media.

In the Ghana and Malawi schools, as in Zimbabwe, it was clear that the abuse of girls, whether by male teachers, teachers or sugar daddies, is part of a wider problem of school-based violence (of which the illegal and excessive use of corporal punishment and high levels of bullying are a part) as well as of violence in society more generally, much of it perpetrated by males. Excessive use of corporal and other forms of punishment also militate against a supportive learning environment, for boys as well as for girls. Although levels of bullying and corporal punishment appeared somewhat less in the relatively small Ghanaian schools than in those in Zimbabwe and in Malawi (where the schools are extremely large), all three educational systems were characterised by a reluctance to take action against teachers who engaged in sexual relations with girls in the school, or against boys who used intimidating and threatening behaviour towards girls or other boys. For the majority of teachers, this was not seen as a serious problem but just a part of growing up – this is 'how things are'. It is not difficult to see that in a context where schools take no action to discipline aggressive behaviour or sexual misconduct, where the majority of cases go unreported and prosecutions are rare, it can easily thrive.

There are implications of the existence of sexual violence within schools for the teaching of HIV/AIDS – teaching about safe sex and sex based on mutual consent and negotiation in a context of sexual practice involving multiple partners, intimidation and coercion, and limited choices for girls within relationships (e.g. over the use of condoms) is unlikely to be successful. A school culture which encourages stereotypical masculine (dominant) and feminine (acquiescent) behaviour makes girls particularly vulnerable. The school as a location for high risk sexual practice militates against the school as an effective forum for teaching about and encouraging safe sex.

The third component of the study is covered in the second part of Chapters 3 and 4, and in Chapter 5, which provides an account of the dissemination and trialling of strategies in Zimbabwe. In all three countries, the researchers engaged in some small scale strategic interventions to address the problems of abusive behaviour uncovered by the research. In Ghana and Malawi, this was in the later stage of the study, after the interviews with pupils,

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teachers, parents and education officials had taken place, so that the strategies could be informed by the research findings.

In Zimbabwe, as documented in Chapter 5, dissemination involved a regional workshop at the start of the research period, which was featured on prime time TV and served to raise awareness widely of the issue of teacher misconduct. The workshop generated a set of actions which were committed to by a wide range of stakeholders: teachers and school heads, principals and lecturers of teachers' colleges, regional and district education officials, and NGOs. Participatory work was carried out with pupils, teachers, head teachers and regional and district personnel.

Recommendations

Tackling the issue of abuse and gender violence in schools requires a holistic approach, involving a range of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, pupils, officials from a number of ministries and at all levels, agencies of civil society etc. Without this, there is the risk of one off interventions, without support systems to protect children where cases of abuse are uncovered. Some of the main recommendations of the report are:

At the school level

- Initiatives to improve the school's response to abusive behaviour should be integrated into on-going efforts to strengthen Guidance and Counselling, life skills and HIV/AIDS education, especially through the teaching of negotiation and communication skills. A whole school approach is necessary involving all pupils and teachers, and where possible parents.
- Male and female pupils need to be encouraged to develop greater understanding and more constructive and consensual relationships, and to discuss gender roles and gender identity openly; boys need to be encouraged to take on less aggressive roles and to ensure that they are not always portrayed as the oppressor (which risks alienating them further)
- Schools need to become less authoritarian and more supportive of pupils, especially girls; creating a pupil friendly environment will facilitate effective learning, support pupils' personal development and protect their rights.
- Schools need to provide pupils with the necessary information and support so that they can report cases of abusive behaviour in reassuring circumstances and know that action will be taken by the appropriate authorities.

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- Schools need to transform the teaching of Guidance and Counselling by using teachers trained in pupil centred and participatory methods. Peer educators may also be effective in promoting discussions around issues of sexuality, HIV/AIDS and the importance of negotiated sex.
- Teachers and head teachers need to be trained to raise awareness in their schools of the importance of taking action when receiving a serious complaint by a pupil, to provide counselling skills and to follow the appropriate procedures when reporting an allegation.
- Teachers and head teachers need to be fully informed of what constitutes abuse and the penalties that it incurs; newly appointed teachers need to be provided with induction in this respect.

Teacher training

- Teachers are key to change in the school setting and to stamping out abusive behaviour. Teachers' colleges need to provide awareness raising among trainees, so that they understand fully their responsibilities in school and the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behaviour. There should be greater emphasis in the training curriculum on ethical conduct and it should deal explicitly with the issue of abuse, including within the context of HIV/AIDS education.
- Trainees should be exposed to gender training, so that they are made aware of the ways in which teachers perpetuate negative stereotypes about female and male behaviour, often unconsciously; they should be able to treat boys and girls equally, while understanding the importance of respecting diversity and individual needs.
- Specialist Guidance and Counselling teachers should be trained in participatory methods.

Ministry of Education level

- Ministries need to ensure the effective enforcement of regulations about teacher misconduct.
- There needs to be wide dissemination of Ministry policies on sexual harassment and abuse, the review and strengthening of procedures where appropriate, and prompt action taken to prosecute those accused of sexual relations with pupils.
- Ministries of Education should spearhead national campaigns on radio and TV and in the press, to make the public fully aware of the scale of the problem and of the correct procedures to follow in reporting a case.

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- Ministries should consider setting up a special unit to deal with cases of abuse.
- Clear guidelines should be provided to schools, school committees and PTAs, detailing the appropriate action to take in cases of abuse. Members of committees and PTAs should be provided with training in how to handle such cases.

District level

- Linkages between district education offices (DEOs), school committees and/or PTAs (and through them parents and communities) need to be strengthened, with improved coordination and communication.
- Prompt action needs to be taken by DEOs to suspend teachers and investigate cases thoroughly, referring them to the courts where necessary. DEOs need training in how to handle accusations of teacher misconduct.

Community level

- There needs to be awareness raising around issues of abuse, in particular teacher sexual misconduct.
- Communities, school committees and PTAs need information on the rules and regulations regarding teacher misconduct (not only on sexual abuse but also on corrupt management practices, absenteeism etc). Training should be provided so that they can monitor teacher performance and conduct and help the whole schooling process to be more transparent and accountable.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

This is an extension to a research study carried out in Zimbabwe during 1999-2000 (Leach and Machakanja 2000). The original study investigated the frequency and pattern of abuse of girls in four junior secondary schools in one region of Zimbabwe. As was pointed out in that study, there has been over the past decade or so considerable international effort to get more girls into school, given that it is estimated that girls constitute two-thirds of all out-of-school children. To achieve this, much attention has been paid to removing the external barriers to girls' schooling such as lack of school places, direct and indirect costs of schooling (fees, uniforms, books, domestic labour etc), distance to school, early marriage and parental resistance. However, very little attention has been devoted to examining barriers *within* the school that discourage girls who have entered school from staying on and achieving their full potential. This earlier study in Zimbabwe, conducted during 1998-9, helped expose a school culture which tolerates abusive behaviour and violence, in particular towards girls, and contributes to low achievement and drop out.

The earlier study adopted a broad definition of abuse as including non-sexual abuse (in this context mostly corporal punishment by teachers, both male and female) as well as sexual abuse which can be verbal, physical, emotional or psychological.¹ 'Abuse' is a legal term that is recognised in most countries of the world. The term 'child abuse' applies to children and adolescents who are taken advantage of by an adult (and sometimes by another child) by virtue of his/her superior power and for his/her own benefit or gratification. This study is investigating the abuse of girls by male pupils, teachers and adult men in and around the school.

Male pupils who engage in aggressive and intimidating behaviour, assault and even rape of girls are guilty of abuse. Teachers who form sexual relationships with pupils are committing abuse *and* a disciplinary offence according to the terms of their employment, which in most cases will contain clear statements on professional behaviour and misconduct of teachers.² Such teachers are taking advantage of their position of authority in the school and failing in their duty of care towards children. Adult men ('sugar daddies') who proposition girls for sex in exchange for gifts or money in the vicinity of the school are also guilty of abuse. They have been included in the study because the school is not divorced from the community and school-based abuse is part of a broader pattern of abuse in society, directed in particular at females. Whoever the abuser, if the pupil is under the age of consent (16 in most countries) this will constitute a criminal offence. Particularly important in the context of this study is the fact that the adult abuser, whether sugar daddy or teacher, may be misleading the abused (e.g. making promises of marriage) to tempt the pupil into a sexual relationship.

¹ The term 'abuse' has been used to describe much of the unacceptable behaviour described in the report as most of it is directed at children. The term 'sexual harassment' is used infrequently in this report as it is more usually associated with adult victims e.g. in the workplace or in adult education.

² In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Education uses the term 'improper association' for sexual relations between teachers and pupils.

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This second phase of the study has involved further research into the abuse of girls in schools in two more African countries (Ghana and Malawi), the dissemination of findings from this and other research studies and projects, and the trialling of a limited number of strategies to address the problem in schools. At the time of the earlier study, the authors knew of no published in-depth research into this phenomenon although the media in a number of Southern African countries were routinely reporting high profile cases of teachers and head teachers sexually abusing and in some cases raping schoolgirls. The absence of research was perhaps not surprising because, until the mid 1990s, there was little public knowledge that this existed in an institutionalised form. Those studies of sexual harassment and abuse that did exist were largely confined to higher education, e.g. Zindi (1998) and Gaidzanwa (1993) in Zimbabwe, Kathree in South Africa (1992), Anagol-McGinn (1994) in India, or to Western countries e.g. AAUW (2001) and Stein (1999, 1995) in the USA, Larkin (1994) in Canada, Duncan (1999) in the UK. The only readily accessible reports which covered sexual harassment at both school and higher education levels were by Hallam (1994) in the African context, Gouws (1997) in South Africa and Omale (1999) in Kenya. Some early work on girls' low educational participation and achievement and on gendered classroom interaction had, however, alerted an education audience to this phenomenon (e.g. Gordon 1993, Odaja and Heneveld 1995, Brenner 1998, Anderson-Levitt 1998). Further evidence of abuse was revealed by a number of small scale unpublished studies in related areas, e.g. Kaim's 1997 account of PRA work with adolescents in Zimbabwe exploring their views of sexual and reproductive health, Wood, Maforah and Jewkes' 1996 work in South Africa on adolescent violence and its significance in teaching about sexuality and sexual health, Mensch, Clark, Lloyd and Erulkar's 1999 study of premarital sex and dropout in Kenya. Recent research studies on the impact of HIV/AIDS on education also point to this, e.g. Bennell, Hyde and Swainson (2002) in Botswana, Malawi and Uganda, and Mirembe (1998) in Uganda (see also Mirembe and Davies 2001).

This was therefore on the whole uncharted territory in terms of in-depth ethnographic style research exploring with pupils, teachers and parents why and how the abuse of girls takes place in schools. Since the publication of the Zimbabwe report by DFID in 2000, a major study of violence against girls in South African schools entitled *Scared at School: sexual violence against girls in South African schools* has been produced (Human Rights Watch 2001). Another DFID funded study has also recently been published by Panos, examining evidence of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and universities globally and strategies to address it (Mirsky, 2003). There have also been several journal articles: one analysing reported incidents of child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwe (Shumba 2001) and another documenting the history of masculine sexuality as a political issue during the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Niehaus 2000), which shows that sexual liaisons between male teachers and schoolgirls were commonplace in the 1950s and continue today. A third, in the medical journal *The Lancet* by Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga and Bradshaw (2002), reported on a 1998 study of the frequency of rape among a nationally representative sample of 11,735

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South African women aged 15-49: this found that, of the 159 women who had been the victims of child rape (under the age of 15), 33% had been raped by teachers.

There have also been various news reports on the internet and in print e.g. the Guardian Weekly (2001) reported on research by UNICEF in the Central African Republic which claimed that the main cause of the spread of HIV in schools was the widespread practice of teachers having sex with schoolgirls. Two special issues of South African journals on HIV/AIDS and education (*Agenda*, 53, 2002 and *Perspectives in Education*, 20,2, 2002) and a UNICEF report (2002) on gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS in education in Eastern and Southern Africa also contain further evidence of systemic sexual harassment and abuse in schools.

It is noticeable that almost all these studies have been carried out in sub-Saharan Africa and that they have focused almost exclusively on girls. This should not be taken to mean that school-based abuse is most prevalent in this region; rather that the attention given to it may be the result of the concentration of internationally sponsored education programmes in this region, large-scale efforts at poverty alleviation and the very high rates of HIV/AIDS infection. Beyond sub-Saharan Africa, the evidence of abuse in schools is limited but is referred to in some writings on education. For example, Fox (1999) found that female students in Papua New Guinea fear sexual assault and violence in schools and feel threatened by male teachers' sexual advances and by unemployed youth on their way home from school. And in Ecuador, a World Bank country study (2000) reported that 22 percent of adolescent girls were victims of sexual abuse in an educational setting. The very high levels of sexual abuse reported in some Latin American countries (Ohsako 1997) suggests that this will also be found in schools. There is also evidence that boys are the victims of sexual abuse in schools: in Pakistan, a USAID evaluation (1999) reported boys being sexually abused by teachers, presumably male, and in a national survey in Israel boys reported much higher levels of sexual harassment than girls (Zeira et al 2002). Gay pupils are also reported to be the victims of gender violence in schools (Human Rights Watch 2003). Clearly, there is an urgent need for research to be carried out into school-based abuse in these different regions and contexts.

1.2 Key findings of the Zimbabwe study

In the original Zimbabwe study, four junior secondary schools had provided the setting for the research. Three of the schools were co-educational while one was an all-girls school. Two were located in rural areas, one in a high density peri-urban area and one in an urban area. In total, 112 girls mostly aged 13-15, 59 boys of the same age, 27 teachers and head teachers, 37 parents and a number of government officials were interviewed. Towards the end of the study, a number of workshops using PRA methods were held with pupils to confirm the findings and encourage them to think of ways of reducing exposure to abuse.

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For girls, the greatest threat of abusive behaviour on a daily basis came from older male pupils in the school, in the form of aggressive sexual advances which at times - usually when the girl rejected the boy's advances - turned to assault and threats of rape. The researchers found that there was tremendous peer pressure within the schools for older boys to secure girlfriends among the younger girls and this competition was played out through a series of rituals, including the writing of 'love letters', giving of money or small gifts and accosting girls in corridors and empty classrooms. These activities could at times lead to violent acts. A number of girls reported being victim of ambushes on the way to or from school by gangs of male pupils, being subjected to unsolicited physical contact such as touching or pinching on the breasts and buttocks, verbal abuse of a sexual and degrading nature, and being beaten or assaulted with stones, sticks or sharp implements. Abusive behaviour by teachers, in the form of requests or demands for sex (about one-fifth of the sample who were asked said that they had been propositioned by teachers), unsolicited and provocative or intimidating physical contact, and verbal abuse was also talked about. Although universally disapproved of, such behaviour appeared to be accepted as inevitable, even 'normal'. In schools where no action was taken to discipline teachers for misconduct, it could easily thrive.

The incidence of abusive behaviour of a sexual nature by teachers was lower in numerical terms than that of boys - despite the impression created by high profile reports in the media of teachers and head teachers impregnating, and in some cases, raping girls in their school. However, though few in number, these cases are more shocking because of the position of trust that the teacher has been placed in and the fact that the relationship, whatever the age of the girl, is an illegal one. In the Zimbabwean co-educational schools, girls consistently named between two and four teachers as having propositioned them or as being known to routinely proposition or engage in affairs with girls. Boys thought the number was even higher. However, interviews with school heads and Ministry of Education officials revealed that the majority of cases were not formally reported, prosecutions were rare and few teachers were dismissed for having sexual relationships with pupils.

The abuse of girls in schools, whether by male pupils or teachers, is part of a wider problem of school-based violence (of which the illegal and excessive use of corporal punishment by school heads and teachers, and high levels of bullying are other manifestations) and is also a reflection of society-wide violence by males against females. This occurs in both the private (domestic) and the public domain, and is itself a consequence of the low social and economic status afforded women in many societies. At the same time, interviews with male pupils revealed that domestic and school-based abuse of boys also exists, both physical and verbal, with beatings at home and in school being a frequent occurrence. In the peri-urban school in Zimbabwe in particular, there was much bullying of younger boys by older boys, some of whom carried whips and sent boys on errands for them (reminiscent of the 'fagging' system which used to be common in boys' public schools in the UK). It is known that some sexual abuse of boys also exists both in the home and the school; in the latter setting, both female

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and male teachers may be involved and it is also likely that boys who reveal their homosexuality, or are suspected of it, may be subjected to victimisation. However, no evidence of this emerged in the Zimbabwe study except for one instance of a boy who claimed that a female married teacher in his school had made sexual advances to a Sixth Form boy in another school. There is however some evidence emerging of sexual harassment and abuse of young female teachers by male pupils, in particular in rural schools in Ghana (Casely-Hayford 2001) and Botswana (Dunne, Leach et al 2003). As already pointed out, school-based sexual abuse of boys would appear to be a totally unresearched area in developing countries.³

1.3 Significance of the study for HIV/AIDS prevention

In addition to the abuse of girls in school being a human rights violation, there are important implications of the presence of widespread sexual abuse in schools for the teaching of HIV/AIDS prevention. The school has been widely seen as an appropriate location for initiatives and campaigns to reduce high risk sexual behaviour and infection rates among adolescents, especially given that young people in the 15-24 age range are at highest risk of HIV infection; girls are particularly at risk, being five to six times more likely to be HIV positive than boys in the worst affected countries of Africa (www.panos.org.uk). However, it is now being acknowledged that reliance on the school as a vehicle for changing sexual attitudes and behaviour has been somewhat misplaced. Schools in countries such as Uganda, Zimbabwe, Kenya and South Africa where there have been high profile government campaigns may have been relatively successful at passing on information about HIV/AIDS but these messages have largely failed to change sexual behaviour. According to Bennell et al's three country study of HIV and education (2002), only Uganda has shown some success in changing sexual behaviour through school-based interventions.

Various reasons have been advanced to explain this, including lack of materials, curriculum time and appropriate training for teachers, teachers' embarrassment and reluctance to teach the subject, cultural barriers and parental objections to sex education. However, the existence of sexual harassment and abuse in schools, most of it directed at girls, may provide an additional reason why schools are not particularly effective at educating young people about HIV/AIDS. Widespread sexual activity in conditions of intimidation, harassment and sometimes rape is likely to contribute to the spread of the disease, not its reduction. Furthermore, the prevailing school culture in sub-Saharan Africa is one that encourages the development of stereotypical masculine and feminine behaviours and promotes 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Mirembe and Davies 2001). This makes girls vulnerable to aggressive sexual advances, whether from male pupils or teachers, or from 'sugar daddies' within the vicinity of the school. There is therefore a contradiction between the school as a location for high risk sexual practice and the school as an effective forum for teaching about and encouraging safe sex.

³ In the context of HIV/AIDS, Coombs (2000: 26) refers to literature which questions the reluctance to address the issue of same-sex relationships in developing our understanding of the epidemic and interventions to stem its spread.

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These studies, and others (Mensch et al 1999, Bledsoe and Cohen 1993) suggest that in many poor countries the imposition of school fees under government structural adjustment programmes and other costs such as uniform and books have increased the incidence of transactional sex among schoolgirls; girls who are desperate to continue their education and whose parents cannot provide the necessary support are forced into sexual relationships with older partners, who will give them money for fees in exchange for sexual favours. It may be that in some cases parents accept the need for a daughter to be 'sponsored' in this way.⁴ Luke and Kurz (2002), in their study of cross-generational and transactional sexual relationships in sub-Saharan Africa, name financial reasons, including the need to pay school fees and other necessities, as the main reason why adolescent girls engage in such relationships. At the same time, an interesting argument is put forward (Bledsoe and Cohen 1993, Zabin and Kiragu 1998 cited in Mensch et al 1999) to suggest that the expansion in school enrolments in sub-Saharan Africa has led to increased sexual activity among adolescents as schooling removes young people from the supervision of traditional carers and exposes them to daily interaction with the opposite sex and to peer pressure. For some boys, opportunities for casual employment alongside schooling (e.g. farming, cleaning cars, portering etc) give them greater independence from their families and wider sexual access to young women. Since such income earning opportunities are largely absent for girls, they are placed in a dependent relationship with regard to men, which the latter can all too easily exploit.

1.4 Aims of the second phase

The broad aims of this second phase were to gather more data about the abuse of girls, this time in two new national contexts (Ghana and Malawi), and to engage in efforts to bridge the gap between research and action in addressing this most serious of human rights issues.

Specific objectives were to:

1. Raise awareness of the widespread abuse of children's rights in schools, in particular of girls
2. Disseminate information on studies of abuse and effective ways of tackling it to a global audience through both electronic and print media
3. Gather new information about the prevalence of abuse of girls in schools and its impact on their participation and achievement
4. Trial and monitor a range of strategies to counteract abuse in schools and identify those that were successful
5. Monitor mechanisms whereby policy and practice are changed as a result of such research.

⁴ This is not just an African phenomenon. The UK *Times Higher Education Supplement* of 3 May 2002 reported that a large number of students in Thailand prefer to take a 'sugar daddy' as a means of financing their studies than to take a student loan.

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Given these objectives, it was necessary to conceive of 'research' in broad terms, as encompassing empirical (field) work, information gathering, dissemination and the monitoring and evaluation of strategies to address the issues uncovered by the empirical work. To achieve this, the study had three overlapping components:

Information gathering and dissemination: the intention was to engage in an extensive search of both print and electronic resources to find other research studies in the area of school-based abuse and gender violence in developing countries, or studies in related areas (e.g. studies of understandings of HIV/AIDS among adolescents, and of adolescent sexuality) which would help uncover and explain the scale and nature of sexual or other abuse of children and young people. There was evidence during the Zimbabwe research that some agencies, mostly NGOs, were engaged in innovative work with schoolchildren and adolescents in this field and it would be advantageous to learn from these. Relevant findings on both research studies and project/programme interventions would then be disseminated to national and international audiences, including education policymakers, school personnel, teacher educators, health educators and international and national agencies working to promote gender equity in education. The DFID funded electronic resource id21, which is dedicated to communicating research-based knowledge on development to a global audience through both electronic and print media, was contracted to provide this service, with a view to building up a network where information, experiences and lessons learnt about successful interventions could be shared. In Zimbabwe, a regional workshop was to be held to disseminate the findings of the earlier study.

Extension of the original research: the original study was to be extended to two further countries (Malawi and Ghana) where there was evidence that the abuse of girls in schools was extensive but was only just being discussed openly. These country studies were to build on but not replicate the methodology of the first study. This second phase would therefore consist of shorter country studies, making use of the experience with participatory rural appraisal (PRA) work, which took place at the end of the first study. This was now to be used at the start rather than at the end of the data collection period, as being a more immediate and effective method of bringing the issues into the open than a series of one to one interviews. Individual interviews would then be held with selective pupils as a follow up to the workshops. They would also focus on a slightly younger age group (starting from age 10/11 instead of 13 as in the earlier study). Three co-educational schools were to be taken as case studies in each country. Particular interests were to continue exploring the incidence and effects of sexual abuse by male teachers of girls (the most difficult area to investigate) and the impact of abuse on girls' continuing participation in education and on their achievement. There was also an attempt to find evidence of the abuse of boys (through both the workshops and the interviews).

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Trialling of small scale strategic interventions: in Zimbabwe, as well as in Ghana and Malawi, a number of strategies which derived from the recommendations of the original study supplemented by insights from the new study were to be tried out. These were to be at the level of:

- the school (through pupils, heads, teachers, parents, parent-teacher associations and school development associations, in some instances using outside facilitators)
- teacher training institutions (through college principals, teacher trainers and trainees)
- policymaking, inspection, and advisory and counselling services (through the regional Ministry of Education, e.g. enforcement of policies on corporal punishment, prosecution and dismissal of teachers accused of ‘improper association’, training of guidance and counselling teachers)
- links with other Ministry initiatives which target children at risk, e.g. the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare.

It was hoped that these strategies could be tried out first in Zimbabwe and then findings from these fed into Ghana and Malawi where they would be trialled once the first phase of data collection had been completed and then monitored over a 4-6 month period using measurable indicators. The intention was then to disseminate the findings of these strategic interventions as widely as possible among interested parties, feeding into the above process of information gathering and dissemination, and to monitor the mechanisms whereby the messages transmitted through dissemination and trialling (of strategies) influence policy and practice in the national context.⁵

1.5 Anticipated outcomes

These were:

- Increased awareness of the issues surrounding abuse in schools among a wide range of actors
- Wide dissemination of the findings of this study (both the original and the extension phase) and studies in related areas
- Identification and dissemination of successful strategies to counteract abuse, targeted at different levels of policy makers and practitioners (schools, colleges, ministries) and at those working in different sectors (education, health, social welfare)
- Further evidence of the level and nature of school-based abuse in two new national contexts and within a lower age group
- Institutional research capacity-building in three countries (Zimbabwe, Malawi and Ghana). In both Malawi and Ghana, an experienced researcher would support someone less experienced and in Zimbabwe the principal researcher (Pamela Machakanja) would continue to work with the research co-ordinator (Fiona Leach) at Sussex University.

⁵ This did not in fact happen as there was insufficient time (see chapter 6).

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The research was conducted by two researchers in Malawi, Esme Kadzamira from the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) and Eve Lemani from the Malawi Institute of Education, which is working closely with schools and is supported by the DFID-funded Malawi School Support Systems Programme. The latter was supported by an experienced researcher from the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) of the University of Malawi. Alison Croft from the University of Sussex (whose doctoral research has been carried out with teachers in Malawi) and Pamela Machakanja (who carried out the original Zimbabwe study) contributed to the PRA workshops at the start of the research.

In Ghana, the researcher was an academic attached to the University of Cape Coast who was supported by an experienced social policy consultant who has done a range of consultancy work for the Ministry of Education in Ghana, DFID and other development organisations. In both cases, this arrangement served to enhance in-country research capacity.

1.6 Methodology

In both Ghana and Malawi, three schools were identified for the research, one urban, one peri-urban and one rural. In both cases, these were referred to as School A (urban), School B (peri-urban) and School C (rural). In Ghana, interviews were held with a total of 48 girls mostly aged 11-15, 27 boys, 23 teachers (including head teachers) and 15 parents, as well as four education officials, the district social welfare officer and the officer who was second in command of the Women and Juvenile Unit of the Ghana Police. The girls were taken from Form 6 of Primary School and Forms 1 and 2 of Junior Secondary School (JSS), the boys from JSS 1 and 2. The teachers came from both upper Primary and JSS.

In Malawi, a larger number of girls and boys were sampled (99 girls and 62 boys), in part to take into account the much larger size of Malawi schools. The largest of the three schools in Ghana had 350 pupils, the smallest in Malawi had 1003. The Malawi researchers also wanted to extend the age range to include pupils up to 18, as it was believed that sexual activity was likely to be greater among the older pupils. The pupils were taken from Standards 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the Basic Education sector (equivalent to Primary 5 and 6, and JSS 1 and 2 in Ghana). There is much over-age enrolment in both primary and secondary schools in Malawi (although also common in Ghana, it is less extensive) and the ages ranged from 10-18 compared to 11-15 in Ghana. In Ghana, the schools were chosen at random from two districts using three locational categories (urban, peri-urban and rural); in Malawi they were selected within one district according to the same three categories but this time on the basis of recent reports by primary education advisers of teachers sexually abusing girls.

The research was both qualitative and quantitative in approach. Given the sensitivity of the topic, and the denial and silence that mostly surrounds it, and the stigma often attached to

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the victims, qualitative methods were essential. In both countries, the researchers started with two day **workshops** using participatory activities based on PRA techniques. The aims were to:

1. Clarify understandings of abuse among female and male pupils, find out who perpetrates it, its frequency and its nature
2. Identify and prioritise the major problems girls experience at school, including abusive behaviour
3. Explore possible solutions to the problems expressed.

Similar activities were engaged in during both sets of workshops, drawing on the Zimbabwe experience. These included: exploring meanings of abuse through mapping their school and identifying where they felt safe and where unsafe; drawing 'abuse' spiders (to identify types of abuse) and 'cause and consequence' trees (to explore why girls have sex with boys and teachers and vice versa), constructing a 'problem wall' (to identify problems that girls face daily in connection with their schooling and prioritising these); and exploring possible solutions to these problems and at what level they should be addressed (individual, family, community or government). Boys were also taken through some of these same activities.

The workshops were followed by one-to-one **interviews** (supplemented in the case of Malawi by focus group discussions). The aims of these were to detail specific incidents of abuse experienced by girls in and around the school and how it had affected them especially in terms of their studies (to include sexual abuse by male pupils, male teachers and sugar daddies, and corporal punishment). In the case of boys, it was to try to understand how they perceived the abuse of girls as well as the extent to which they also felt subjected to abusive behaviour (bullying etc).

Interview questions with girls covered: a) their home background, including family members they lived with, distance to school, domestic chores and parental support, b) their views of boys and the problems they experienced with boys c) beatings or sexual advances by teachers, and d) sexual advances by 'sugar daddies' outside the school. Also, in the case of Malawi school chores and punishments were explored in more detail, as these emerged as important issues during the workshops.

Once the interviews were complete and preliminary findings known, the researchers discussed with the school heads and the relevant authorities the types of small-scale interventions that they could trial with a range of participants and audiences, with a view to identifying suitable **strategies** for addressing school-based abuse. These dovetailed with those carried out in Zimbabwe, where the extension phase of the study started with a national dissemination workshop, at which action plans were developed and implemented by

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different parties (schools, teacher training colleges, regional and district education and social welfare officers, and NGOs).

Strategies which were initiated included seminars/workshops with pupils, parents and teachers in all three countries, and with government officials and NGOs in Zimbabwe and Malawi. In Ghana, a large scale community event was also held.

Finally, it should be noted that the design of this study gave the researchers a dual role: the first being that of the conventional researcher collecting data in a school setting around the topic of abuse, and the second being that of developing, facilitating and monitoring a range of strategies to address the type of abuse that they found. In Ghana and Zimbabwe, the researchers chose to work on their strategic interventions with some assistance from an individual or organisation experienced in participatory work with children (in Zimbabwe with the Child Forum Network and the Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources, in Ghana with a children's NGO called Foundation Builders). In Malawi, the two researchers initiated the strategy formulation process (through workshops) themselves. Although there had been the intention to involve teacher training colleges in all three countries, as raising awareness and providing appropriate training to address abusive behaviour among those entering the teaching profession is crucial, this only happened in Zimbabwe; in the other two contexts, the timing did not allow it.

In all cases, the interventions appeared to have gone well, although monitoring was very limited. In Ghana, however, the researcher found herself in a difficult situation from the very start of the research, faced with incontrovertible evidence that the head teacher of one of the schools was demanding sex of girls in the school, from as early as Primary 3. The way in which she addressed this dilemma and handled the role ambiguity that the situation engendered is dealt with in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 **Information gathering and dissemination**

Objectives 1 and 2 of the extension phase of this study are related. These are: to raise awareness of the widespread abuse of children's rights in schools, in particular of girls, and to disseminate information on studies of abuse and effective ways of tackling it to a global audience. The first involved finding out if more work on the abuse of girls in school exists, especially where it might recommend ways of tackling the problem within the educational system; the second involved disseminating information in both electronic and print forms of any such studies and also of effective interventions to tackle abuse, thus helping to break the silence on the issue. This dissemination has been directed at national and international audiences working to promote gender equity in education and related areas such as HIV/AIDS prevention. In so doing, the study has sought to influence both policy and practice at the national and the international level. The search has not focused exclusively on Africa, although the little material that emerged during the earlier study originated from there.

As very little accessible material on this topic had come to light during the first phase of the study, the search was extended to related areas of investigation such as adolescent violence, youth culture, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health, as these might well document evidence of school-based abuse. Likewise, agencies working in related fields such as children's rights, gender/women and development, social welfare, community development, health and family planning could be uncovering evidence of children at risk of abuse and violence in an educational setting.

Unfortunately, the resources available for this project allowed us to only look for materials written in English. This was limiting, as we discovered in the more advanced stages of the project that there appears to be a large amount of interesting work done with adolescents in Latin America, although not necessarily in a formal educational context.

The intention was to disseminate suitable material in electronic and print versions in an easily accessible format (short clearly written summaries). To this end, a contract was entered into with id21, the DFID funded development research reporting service based at the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex, which produces regular print, web and email material summarising UK funded research on development. Print material is included in six-sided features called *Insights*. For this study, id21 agreed to create a separate 'Gender violence in African schools' page alongside its existing social development, health and education pages. This would feature a number of articles on this topic, the first 7-8 of which would also be contained in a special issue of *Insights*. Summaries of these articles called Highlights were also to be placed on the dedicated web page⁶ (www.id21.org/education/gender_violence/index.html). The web page would also carry a selection of relevant News items such as conferences and other events, to be updated regularly. The material featured on the web page was also to be disseminated in the

⁶ The title of the web page was chosen as 'Gender violence in African schools' rather than 'Abuse in African schools' as it was considered important to cover the broader range of activity associated with the former term. It was later adjusted to 'Gender violence in schools' to take into account items from outside Africa (see Appendix 2).

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form of email newsletters on gender violence. Two such newsletters were sent out to the 1000 or so who subscribed to the regular id21 education newsletters and to 123 additional requests for information. The first newsletter contained the original seven *Insights* items and the second nine new items, making a total of 16 items.

The intention was to focus first on information from Africa but then to widen the search to include information from other regions, including the industrialised countries and to focus on interesting and successful initiatives rather than only on research studies. In this way, it was hoped to build up a network where information, experiences and lessons learnt about successful interventions could be shared. The special issue would be sent to all current *Insights* subscribers (c. 9000), who would be invited to subscribe to the follow up gender violence email newsletters. A research assistant, Caroline Nicolson, was recruited under the project to find and prepare the material for id21.

The process whereby information on research studies and interventions in this field was located and turned into *Highlights* is documented below. This is followed by a summary of the content.

2.1 Information gathering

Accessing material was a major challenge. We already knew from the first phase that there was little published material on the topic which was internationally accessible and in English. The sensitivity of the topic and the likelihood that any small scale innovative work was likely to be done by NGOs who often do not have the resources to document and publish their experiences were additional problems. For this reason, we were looking for information on project initiatives as well as research studies and for those that dealt with areas related to abuse such as HIV/AIDS work with schoolchildren and adolescents, bullying, teenage pregnancy and drop out.

Information was sought through letters and emails to over 150 individuals and organisations working with children and adolescents in Africa and other developing regions, supplemented by extensive internet searches.⁷ The response was however disappointing and, of the seven items featured in the special issue of *Insights*, only three covered work not already known to us; two were identified through random searches of the internet and one through personal contact.

There was also the intention with the follow up items to move beyond summarising research reports on the abuse of girls to identifying innovative and effective interventions to address this abuse (reflecting the focus of the work being done on the ground in Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malawi, as detailed in chapters 3-5) and gender violence among adolescents more generally.

⁷ A list of the most useful web sites is to be found in Appendix 6.

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The *Insights* special issue, consisting of seven items and an editorial, was published in hard copy in mid August 2001 (**Appendix 1**) and was also placed on the id21 web site in the form of *Highlights* (summaries) within a dedicated 'Gender Violence in African Schools' page (see **Appendix 2** for a sample version of this page, later named 'Gender Violence in Schools' so as to include information from other regions). Each *Highlight* also contained links to other relevant web sites. These *Highlights* were subsequently sent out in an email newsletter (id21GenderViolenceNews Issue 1). The *Insights* special issue followed the conventional id21 format: an editorial, a number of short articles (seven in this case) and an end-piece entitled 'Site for Sore Eyes' which provides links to web sites on gender violence and other related topics. The web page, the *Insights* and the email newsletter all contained a request for news from people working on issues of gender violence within a school or community setting, with a view to disseminating appropriate items as further *Highlights* or News items. A further request for information appeared in the regular email newsletter EducationNews Issue 4 (November 2001). These requests produced a few additional leads.

A number of comments were received by us and by the id21 team as a result of the *Insights*. Samples are attached as **Appendix 3**. Most expressed appreciation that we had brought the issue into the public domain and concern about how widespread the problem appeared to be. A few, predominantly from those working in the area of men/masculinities and development, were critical of what they saw as the excessive simplification and stereotyping of African men and women. The importance of paying attention to the needs of men and boys (including addressing the abuse that they may also face) when seeking solutions to social, economic and political problems, and of working with boys and young adult males in counteracting violence against women and girls (and also in developing effective HIV/AIDS prevention programmes) is clear. It was therefore decided for the follow up items to try to identify some projects and programmes working with boys and young men, or with boys as well as girls, which were addressing gender violence both inside and outside the school context. We did in fact find a number which focused on changing male behaviour towards women and girls but not usually in a formal educational setting⁸. It was therefore necessary to look at work in areas such as HIV/AIDS prevention with urban youth, school dropouts and street children. In this search, we did not find work dealing with the abuse of boys in educational settings, which suggests that there is a clear need to research gender violence directed *at* boys as well as *by* boys.

As the study progressed, we looked for evidence of the impact of the id21 items. We found that a number of items were taken up by other sources of electronic communication. For example, the email newsletter Pambazuka News pambazuka-news@pambazuka.org, which claims to reach 'over 8000 individuals in NGOs, international organisations and networks,

⁸ A useful web site in searching for work being done with boys and adolescents and outside as well as inside the school setting is the Communication Initiative site, which was set up by Ruth Hayward of UNICEF in June 2001 (www.comminit.com). This provides a database of 60 organisations worldwide working with men and boys to end violence against women and girls.

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funding agencies and foundations, governments and the private sector⁹, has featured all the items from the *Insights* and at least two of the subsequent *Highlights*. Items have also been featured by the Gender AIDS Forum at www.healthdev.net, the South African Health Systems Trust at <http://new.hst.org.za>, Edufax at www.edufax.co.za, which advertises education and training events by email, and the www.learningchannel.org based in India. The ease with which one web site or email list can reproduce material from another is evidence of the power of the internet to reach global audiences. There was also evidence of policy makers making use of the *Insights* or email newsletter material. For example, a news story on the allafrica.com web site (www.allafrica.com) reported a speech given by the Deputy Minister for Basic Education in Namibia in March 2002, which talked of ‘the silence on sex abuse in schools as deafening’, and cited extensively from the *Insights* issue (**Appendix 4**).

The ‘Gender Violence in Schools’ web page was updated with News items at regular intervals, usually detailing conferences and resources on violence against women. The request for information on interesting material yielded a small number of leads.

A second email newsletter consisting of nine items which also appeared on the web page as *Highlights* was sent out in April 2002. This was sent to the 123 subscribers who specifically asked to receive the Gender and Violence email newsletters, as well as to the 1000 or so subscribers who receive the regular Education email newsletters.

The ten new *Highlights* emerged from a number of sources: in response to the special issue, further trawling of web sites, further development of earlier contacts and further searches of articles and print media, and in one case a London TV news item (on the work of the Zero Tolerance Trust). In total 16 individual items from five continents, featuring six research summaries and ten programme interventions relevant to the topic of the abuse of girls were identified. It should be noted, however, that six of these items originated in South Africa, this being perhaps indicative of the heightened level of awareness of the scale of violence perpetrated against and by young people there, often in the context of schooling, and the perceived urgency to develop programmes to counteract it. It should also be noted that although there were only ten examples of programmes which were trialling strategies to tackle gender violence, each of these had very useful lessons to pass on about appropriate approaches to take with young people when seeking to change perceptions of male and female identity and of appropriate sexual behaviour.⁹ The aim to share information and ideas on how to deal with abuse in schools has therefore been realised.

Since the end of the second phase of the research, a number of new items have been added to the web page.

⁹ The Panos report (Mirsky 2003) contains additional material.

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2.2 Content

The items in the special issue of *Insights* in August 2001 specifically addressed the abuse of girls in African schools, this being the focus of the DFID funded study, whereas those in the follow up *Highlights* encompassed a broader field, geographically (beyond Africa) as well as substantively, by documenting interesting interventions as well as research studies, and involving boys as well as girls. The full reports can be found on www.id21.org/education/gender_violence/index.html and are included as **Appendix 1**.

All but the last of the *Insights* items was based on a research study. Three originated in South Africa. All the items focused on girls, although a number of the original studies looked at relationships and adverse situations affecting both boys and girls – but with girls being affected to a much greater extent (e.g. Wood and Jewkes on adolescent relationships; Shumba on cases of abuse by teachers in Zimbabwe; Mirembe, and Kadzamira and Swainson on HIV/AIDS and education). The one item which was not an account of a research study provided information on a training manual to address gender violence in schools (Mitchell).

A brief overview of each item featured in the *Insights* follows:

The sugar daddy trap provides a brief account of the original Zimbabwe study (leach and Machakanja 2000). It suggests that the adolescent peer group culture within the school environment encourages male and female pupils to conform to certain stereotypical behaviours which make girls particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Male peer pressure requires older boys to aggressively demand the attention of younger girls; having a girlfriend and competing over girls appears to be essential features of the adolescent masculine identity. Girls were also propositioned by male teachers and by ‘sugar daddies’ in the vicinity of the school, who often used promises of marriage, gifts or money to tempt girls into relationships. Girls were widely perceived to enter sexual relationships for money and to acquiesce to male violence. There is therefore a need to encourage girls to be more assertive, to generate greater awareness of abusive behaviour among parents and teachers, for schools and education authorities to act decisively when cases are reported, and for ethical issues around teacher conduct to be dealt with explicitly in teacher training programmes.

Criminal justice is an account of the Human Rights Watch report (2001) on sexual violence against girls in South African schools and the discriminatory impact on their education and health. This suggests much higher levels of violence than were revealed by the Zimbabwe study. Although male students are the main perpetrators, abuse by teachers and other staff is also widespread. Some male teachers regard sexual relations with students as a ‘fringe’ benefit and bribe girls with promises of better grades and reports. Poverty, deprivation and fear of retaliation make it difficult for girls to resist or complain, while school officials, police and prosecutors shift responsibility to each other, leaving perpetrators unpunished. The

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government needs to develop a proactive, coordinated, system-wide response involving schools, police, the judiciary, medical and legal systems.

Dangerous love summarises Wood and Jewkes' study (1998) of the role of violence in sexual relationships among youth in one South African township. Boys use violence in sexual relationships to assert their masculinity, and physical assault, rape and coercive sex have become the norm. In these circumstances it is difficult for young women to protect themselves against unwanted sexual intercourse, pregnancy, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. However, boys' reliance on excessive control belies their own vulnerability, in particular the fear of girlfriends being unfaithful or leaving them. To them, masculinity is defined by numbers of sexual partners, choice of main partner and ability to control girlfriends. This study reveals close parallels with some of the violent behaviour talked about by girls in the Zimbabwean schools, and, interestingly, with the findings of research carried out by the ZeroTolerance trust among adolescents in Scotland (see below).

Mixed messages reveals through a study of pupils in a government boarding school in Uganda (Mirembe 1998) that the considerable knowledge which Ugandan school children now have concerning HIV prevention is neutralised by a school culture characterised by male domination and masculine norms. The new HIV curriculum teaches negotiation and partnership in sexual relationships as fundamental to HIV prevention, but discriminatory practices in the school, with preference shown for male staff and students in leadership positions, restricted access of girls to high status knowledge (e.g. science), unchallenged sexual harassment of girls and aggressive dominance by boys of classroom interaction, are all in direct contradiction to this. Endemic harassment and discrimination in school denies girls the right to negotiate relationships, to make choices or to voice independence.

Child abuse by teachers is an analysis by Shumba (2001) of 246 reported cases of abuse by teachers in secondary schools in Zimbabwe between 1990 and 1997 identified the majority as cases of sexual abuse of girls by male teachers. In 66% of cases, this involved sexual intercourse but in others teachers were accused of writing love letters, fondling, kissing etc. There were four cases of rape and one of pornographic material being shown to pupils.

Risky behaviour: can education help? provides an account of a study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on education in Malawi. This found that transactional sex between young girls and older men, including teachers, and sex with multiple partners is commonplace, despite pupils being generally well informed about how HIV is transmitted. Poverty, fatalism, the desire to experiment, to have money, and peer pressure are all contributory factors. There is uncertainty as to whether condoms are effective. AIDS education is ineffectively taught and has failed to bring about substantive changes in sexual behaviour. Recommendations include: peer education and drama techniques, access to non-formal education for out of school youth and dropouts, life skills classes throughout primary and secondary school, and a greater use

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of child-centred teaching methods and practical training for teachers on how to communicate with pupils about the importance of safe sex are all necessary.

Safe haven for girls? features a training manual entitled 'Opening our Eyes' which has been developed for use by teachers and other educationists in South Africa to address gender based violence in schools. It is based on the belief that teachers must first possess knowledge themselves in order to implement a curriculum of change and offers eight interactive workshops intended to show them what is happening in their schools and how they can respond to gender violence. These workshops aim to heighten awareness of the issue and why it happens, to provide tools and strategies to address the problem, to increase awareness of the links between gender violence and HIV/AIDS and to contribute to 'whole school' strategies for enhancing the culture of learning and teaching within a safe environment. Strong leadership with a clear vision, targets for implementation and financial support are all prerequisites for successful nationwide training.

Follow up *Highlights*

Following on from the special issue of *Insights*, the search was for items that documented innovative or successful strategies to counteract abuse in schools, including work in countries outside Africa and with boys and adolescent males as well as with girls. This resulted in nine new *Highlights* featuring items from the USA, UK, Nepal, India, Nicaragua and Brazil as well as three further items from South Africa. Several of these focused exclusively on boys' or young males' perspectives of violence. This search revealed that some of the most innovative work is in fact being done outside the school context, for example with street children, gangs and unemployed youth.

These items address a number of themes. These help to take forward our understanding of gender violence among adolescents and how to tackle it in a number of ways. Several items offer accounts of innovative work with young men using a range of media to address their views of male and female sexuality and to encourage them to change their behaviour towards girls, e.g. drama, comic strip and radio in South Africa, film making in South Asia, and popular education and awareness raising in Brazil and Nicaragua. Other items outline participatory research by schoolgirls in Nepal, curriculum work with schools in the UK, advocacy work in the USA on high school shootings, and teacher training in South Africa.

These items can be clustered into three categories of strategy targeted at raising awareness around gender violence and changing attitudes and behaviour: strategies that use the popular media, those that use research and those that use workshops and training courses. All adopt a participatory process-oriented approach. The work with young men shows how important their involvement is when trying to address issues of inequitable relationships and violence against women. Each of the items will be discussed briefly.

For the full reports, see www.id21.org/education/gender_violence/index.html.

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Media: film, drama and comic strip

Increasingly, educational programmes that target adolescents are looking to alternative media to get their message across. In so doing, they espouse the view that innovative methodologies which move away from formal didactic styles of teaching and learning and are experientially based are more effective in bringing about attitude and behaviour change.

In South Africa, *the Storyteller Group* has been using comic stories as a tool to explore the gendered dimensions of violence within adolescent dating relationships. In so doing, it has shown how it is possible to diffuse the conflict between the need to reflect the realities of young people's lives and the need to transform elements of their lives which encourage harmful behaviour. The work developed from an initial storytelling activity with a group of school students aged 16 to 20 who were asked to write a love story about a boy and girl in a rural village for a comic strip. Reflecting their own experiences, the students treated domestic violence, forced sex and having multiple partners within adolescent relationships as the norm. Using theatre techniques, however, they were encouraged to act out scenes from their own story and in doing this they started questioning and debating the legitimacy of the actions they had given the characters. The students explored previously undiscussed topics such as rights over one's body, male violence, sexual double standards, teenage sexuality, and traditional gender roles. Thus a new story, in comic form, emerged, which despite its educational agenda still retained its popular status by remaining true to the social conditions created by the students. The students in this way became active change agents in their own lives and those of young people around them by confronting the view that violence in adolescent relationships is the norm.

This work is reflected in the activities which have emerged from the South African Edudrama called 'Soul City', whereby a popular TV 'soap' is used as a starting point for developing educational materials seeking to change young people's views of sex, violence, HIV/AIDS etc. Soul City is now a multi-media project which aims to impact positively on people's quality of life through integrating health and development issues into prime time television and radio dramas backed up by print materials. Its offshoot projects include life skills materials and a children's edutainment vehicle called 'Soul Buddyz'. This deals with issues such as children's rights, AIDS, youth sexuality, accidents, disability, road safety, gender equality and bullying. Soul Buddyz consists of a television series, a radio series, a sex education video, a parenting booklet and life skills booklets distributed through schools to all Grade 7 pupils nationally. These materials have been adapted for use in other Southern African countries (Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia), using popular language and real life scripts which tackle local issues.¹⁰

¹⁰ A brief News Item appeared on the id21 Gender and Violence web page (see also www.soulcity.org.za)

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Work in South Africa also using drama techniques with adolescents has been carried out by *Dramaide*, a national NGO, and the University of Natal in Durban; groups of learners in two local schools developed plays designed to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and gender. A particularly interesting aspect of this work is the use of evaluative research in deepening the impact of the drama work. This evaluation process enables learners to evaluate themselves through a process of 'self-reconstruction'.

The project involved both boys and girls, using single sex as well as mixed gender interactions. Small single-sex focus groups discussed with a researcher/evaluator from the University team the impact of the drama work by focusing on the changes in their understanding about gender equality. This allowed the learners to reflect critically on their lives with new awareness. By building a strong rapport with the learners in this way, the team was able to challenge entrenched ideas about gender inequality.

The focus of the project was on male learners; however, the biggest impact of the drama work was among female learners. Girls were able to 'test' their new understanding, for example the realization that it was not obligatory to have sex with an assertive boy or to do the bidding of a fellow male learner. This allowed them to be much clearer about who they were, their rights, their position as women, the impact of gender inequalities on their lives, and they felt able to assert themselves more forcefully in social and educational contexts in the future. The girls became more expressive, outspoken and confident in challenging exploitative and uneven gender parameters within intimate relationships. They insisted on being consulted and respected by boys and by friends and teachers.

For the boys, the work led them to take more responsibility for their actions, to express their emotions better and to develop an understanding of the possibility of at least 'doing masculinity' differently. They became more reflective and open to ideas of gender equality in their own lives and relationships.

Film has been used in the pioneering *Let's Talk Men* programme in South Asia to challenge entrenched gender stereotypes (see Poudyal 2000 for an earlier account). Supported by Save the Children Fund and UNICEF, four films have been produced with the involvement and cooperation of children (one each in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan), aimed at raising awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescents and violence against girls in the region.

In a society where parents rarely talk to their children about gender inequalities and sexuality, the absence of dialogue means that most children develop notions of gender and power through the cinema and television, which portray conservative images of women and men and the relationships between them. These four films aim to initiate discussions between boys and girls, help them understand how knowledge and femininity/masculinity are constructed, and challenge traditional images of men and women and the power relations between them.

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In the Indian film, 'When Four Friends Meet', four boys who live in a working class district of Delhi share their secrets concerning sex, girls, their dreams, failures, frustrations and triumphs. After the screening, the facilitator leads a discussion focusing on certain issues such as: What roles do boys play during childhood? How does society view working women, and why? Should boys cry, can they feel anxious, is it OK to feel confused? The films present alternative male role models as well as a platform for discussion.

Behind the film project is the conviction that it is important for professionals to establish a culture of discourse with children and to discuss openly with them issues such as patriarchy, sexuality, masculinity, inequity, power, domination, abuse and violence. If interventions with children are to be successful, their views must be solicited and they should be encouraged to talk about their experiences. All too often professionals decide what is appropriate for children and then tell them what to do.

Research

Involving young people in participatory research can also be empowering. Save the Children Fund has been supporting a *Safe Spaces* project in Nepal that facilitates research by girls to explore ways to claim back unsafe spaces for themselves. Girls carried out the research themselves, exploring and analysing the types of space they occupied, determining the characteristics of a safe environment and developing an action plan to 'take back their space'. They used PRA tools to map unsafe spaces within their village, venn diagrams to illustrate their mobility, and team building tools; boys were involved in the process only when the girls felt it was necessary. They identified what was needed to reclaim their 'space', e.g. for parents to recognise the importance of girls' education, to avoid conservative traditions such as gender discrimination within castes and between sons and daughters, and early marriage. In particular, the girls demonstrated their ability to raise issues of girls' rights and equal opportunities within the community and to lobby people to speak out against injustices and the oppression of girls. By sharing the findings of their research and interacting with local government, school teachers, and parents, the children were able to begin to mobilise support and change. This is remarkable in a socio-cultural context where girls are usually confined to the private arena and rarely given a public voice.

As an advocacy tool, such a process can help girls and boys to influence those around them, whether at the school, the community or the government level. Children clearly have enormous potential to improve their environment and take control of their own lives. As a result of the project in Nepal, changes have been identified within communities, which are paying greater respect to girls than was hitherto the case. Boys who were initially teasers have become supportive of girls' efforts to manage change. Girls' groups have been consulted by community members on various cases of abuse or mistreatment of girls, and support groups for girls who have faced abuse have been established in some communities. Local government bodies often cite the groups as success stories, inviting them to events related to girls' rights and safety, and in one case providing financial support for future work.

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Research has also been used by the *Instituto Promundo* in Brazil to identify young men who show relatively gender sensitive attitudes and behaviour. In Latin America in general, male involvement in what are seen traditionally as women's issues, such as reproductive health and child care, is limited; men generally feel that they are entitled to sex from women and tolerance of violence against women is fairly widespread. Among the 25 men aged 15-21 included in the study, however, there were some who showed more 'gender equitable' characteristics than others, i.e. they were respectful in their relationships with young women and they sought relationships based on equality and intimacy rather than sexual conquest; they sought to be involved fathers and to assume some responsibility for reproductive health issues, and they did not use violence against women. These men manifested certain skills of self-reflection and to analyse their circumstances as men critically.

In response to the research, a programme was developed to promote the attitudes and behaviours described above. For example, group discussions about life histories were held to help the young men see the 'costs' of traditional masculinities. Courses in Afro-Brazilian dance, computing and health promotion aimed to encourage vocational and cultural competencies which would buffer traditional masculinities. Community awareness raising about domestic violence targeted men and women whilst group formation to tackle such issues was initiated and encouraged. The programme showed that it was important to promote public awareness of gender equity at the macro-policy level as well as at the community and individual level, to overcome the institutional barriers to working with young men on issues relating to sexuality, reproductive health and gender, to challenge preconceived notions of young men as always disruptive and aggressive.

Training

The above example from Brazil shows how research with young men can lead to the development of effective programmes to promote gender equity by raising awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour. In Nicaragua, training courses on masculinity and gender have also been developed which encourage men to examine, question and change traditional male values and behaviour. *The Association of Men Against Violence (AMAV)* has run workshops for young men from street gangs in poor neighbourhoods of Managua. Typically, the association first approaches the gang leader and tries to convince him to participate and to involve other gang members. Then discussions are held to ascertain what issues the boys would be interested in addressing. Violence, both in the home and between street gangs, sexuality and family communication are the most popular topics. Sexuality is a taboo subject in the home and at school. The association uses popular education methods and techniques, including personal history and experiences, games, debates and film. Course participants are encouraged to focus on their own experiences: to examine and 'unlearn' society's rules and expectations about being a man. The young men are encouraged to question male stereotypes by reconstructing the process of learning male behaviour and the role that different groups play – the church, media, school and family – in this. Although men face

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strong pressure not to change, their concern with gender issues and their willingness to reflect and change presents a new opportunity.

This work shows how important it is to promote men's participation in the analysis of male power in public, private and political organisations. The popular education model so strongly advocated in Latin America facilitates change, in this case by using men's own situation as a starting point. It provides spaces for reflection and analysis where men can think about issues that they rarely discuss, engage in collective articulation of proposals for change and consider how to support one another. In so doing, the process emphasises solidarity with women as well as men's own processes of 'unlearning' machismo. From this work it is clear that men must take the ultimate responsibility for promoting and consolidating change processes in themselves and in other men.

The training of teachers in appropriate skills to engage in the process of facilitating attitude and behaviour change among young people is also crucial, as the 'Opening Our Eyes' item in the *Insights* (detailed above) makes clear. Teachers who have been trained in largely didactic methods of classroom delivery within the formal educational system are ill equipped to do this. In South Africa, where gender violence in schools and in the community is reputed to be at historically high levels, the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape has developed a *Gender and Conflict* component for the primary school curriculum. This offers two training models to help teachers incorporate the issue of gender-based violence into the curriculum. These are the 'whole school' approach and the 'train the trainer' approach and both have been piloted in six primary schools. The models focus on identifying and challenging teachers' own knowledge and attitudes towards gender and violence, on encouraging teachers to reflect on the messages they send to students, and on identifying strategies to address such violence.

An evaluation of the training provided to teachers by the pilot project revealed that prior to the training 30 percent of teachers felt that schools could play a meaningful role in addressing gender violence but after the training 70 percent of teachers thought this to be the case. 85 percent of teachers felt that this was a significant problem in their schools, and 95 percent of teachers before training (100 percent post-training) felt that Grade 5 (age 9-10 years old) is an appropriate stage to begin addressing the issue of gender violence. Among the teachers, a separate and optional confidential questionnaire completed by 26 teachers (17 women and nine men) revealed that a number of the women teachers had experienced sexual harassment from a colleague or physical or sexual abuse from an intimate. Of the nine male teachers, several admitted to having been physically or sexually abusive.

It is important to recognise that teachers can be key instruments for change. They are role models for school children but also have their own experiences as gendered beings. To play an effective role in addressing gender-based violence in schools, teachers need to understand

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and confront their own attitudes and experiences regarding gender and violence. Given that the role of teachers as perpetrators of abuse was highlighted in the original Zimbabwe study and is further confirmed by the current work in Ghana and Malawi (chapters 3-4), it is important that strategies to address gender violence in schools acknowledge and address the attitudes and experiences of teachers themselves.

Violence in adolescent relationships and abusive behaviour in schools are not just the prerogative of the developing world. Work by the *Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust* in Scotland shows that similar programmes exist to address similar youth problems. In the UK, the government is committed to reducing teenage pregnancy, yet it seems to ignore the fact that abusive sexual relationships may be a contributory factor. According to the Trust, effective strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy need to tackle gender violence amongst youth and to help develop solid foundations of respect and self esteem in adolescent relationships. A study carried out by the Trust into young people's attitudes towards violence, sex and relationships in Scotland and England showed that, among many of the young men who participated, it was considered acceptable for a man to force a woman to have sex if they had been going out for a long time or if 'he is so turned on he cannot stop', also if he had spent a lot of money on the girl or if the girl had slept with lots of men. While hitting women was regarded as 'unmanly' or 'cowardly', 'provocation' such as nagging was sometimes seen as a justifiable excuse for violence. 36 percent of the young men thought they might use violence in future relationships in the belief that women often provoke it. At the same time, boys expressed feelings that they were victims of their own sexuality as a result of peer pressure.

Zero Tolerance has developed an innovative approach to challenging such attitudes among young people, based on the view that group norms and peer pressure encourage a continuum of abusive behaviour. It uses participatory techniques to explore the meaning of respect, power relations, and violence in relationships. The primary school pilot programme called 'Respect' uses games, jigsaws, role play and discussion to explore communication, cooperation, respect, difference, power, being a girl, and being a boy. Issues of gender violence are explored more deeply in secondary school.

Working in partnership with the Zero Tolerance Trust, the South Essex Rape and Crisis Centre has used interactive theatre techniques, in which plays performed by young people explore girls' and boys' vulnerability to peer pressure which pushes them into sexual relationships. Using incidents of abuse and violence as a starting point, pupils discuss possible alternative actions or types of behaviour that the characters might have enacted and, as the play is presented a second time, pupils can 'freeze' the action and themselves act out their alternative ideas. Alongside such curriculum interventions, a mass media campaign aims to challenge conventional viewpoints. Slogans such as 'Boys must always be tough, girls just need to be pretty, says who?' are placed on buses, in youth centres and in other prominent places throughout the community; posters promote consent in relationships rather than power and dominance.

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This programme shows that a whole school approach is necessary to ensure that the messages of respect are consistent and reinforced by teachers and pupils alike. Also, links with social services need to be developed to ensure support for teachers dealing with disclosures from pupils. Primary health care officials, social services and the education sector should build on such school curriculum initiatives as an effective way of addressing issues of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse. The core principles and approaches of 'Respect' should be taught within the teacher training curriculum.

In the USA, another manifestation of gender violence in schools is to be seen in the high incidence of high school shootings, which have attracted much media attention and much panic within communities. However, as the *Wellesley College Center for Research on Women* in the USA has pointed out, the national and educational media reporting on these acts has focused exclusively on the role of gangs, guns and drugs in these school shootings, and has failed to recognise and identify gendered relationships as a factor. In fact, most attacks were carried out by white boys upset about the break up of a relationship with a girl friend, rejection by a girl, or because they did not meet traditional community expectations of masculinity. Peer to peer sexual harassment is also rampant in American schools. According to findings from the latest survey by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation (AAUW) in 2000, 83 percent of girls and 79 percent of boys in 8-11th grades have experienced sexual harassment in school, while 54 percent of students admit that they have sexually harassed someone during their school life. Yet, when educators and policy makers consider interventions to curb youth violence, they overlook gender violence.

In response, Wellesley College is developing and promoting the notion of 'gender safety' in schools. This aims to shift the national media attention from a singular focus on gangs, guns, drugs and threats of violence to include acknowledgement of the gendered dimensions of threats to safety. These are not currently being measured or disaggregated in research or addressed in school or social policy. A landmark case involving a 5 year-long lawsuit filed by the parents of a 10 year old 5th grade female student who had endured months of sexual harassment by a male student (being grabbed in her crotch and breasts and spoken to in a vulgar way), resulted in the Supreme Court's ruling in May 1999 that officials in all publicly funded schools are liable for peer to peer sexual harassment. This decision charts a sea change in attitudes towards addressing sexual harassment in schools. This case revealed how school staff often witness incidents but fail to confirm the girl's experiences or to take action because they do not 'label' them as 'sexual harassment'.

Current school reforms addressing school safety focus on the creation of a 'zero tolerance' approach - 'one strike and you're out'. Yet, concerns have been raised that with the increased vigilance towards sexual harassment since the Supreme Court ruling, infractions will end up in outright expulsion and suspension of offenders (mainly boys), without addressing the root causes of the problems. The Wellesley College programme seeks to replace 'zero-tolerance'

Information gathering and dissemination

with ‘zero-indifference’, i.e. school staff should notice, comment on, and intervene in students’ behaviour, and take progressive disciplinary action. There is an urgent need for a large scale research study to be carried out exploring the relationship between harasser and victim in the school setting, this being an almost totally unresearched area.

2.3 Outcomes

This id21 initiative has been largely successful in achieving the first two objectives of this research, namely to raise awareness of the abuse of girls in schools in Africa and elsewhere and to gather and disseminate information on studies of school-based abuse and effective interventions to a global audience. In seeking out such studies, it has uncovered associated work outside the school context, especially with men and boys, which is of potential interest and relevance to those trying to reduce violence and abuse within schools. In particular, it has identified participatory approaches using a range of media such as theatre and film which appear to be effective in bringing about attitude and behaviour change among young people; there are lessons and suggestions here for those seeking to address the abuse of girls within educational institutions. The use of electronic media has allowed awareness of the severity of the issue of gender violence in schools to be raised among a wide audience of policymakers and practitioners in education and related fields. In identifying useful approaches and interventions and in disseminating research findings, it has also progressed the debate around men, women and development.

Particular outcomes are:

- Current research on the abuse of girls in schools and other related themes has been disseminated to a wide audience in both printed and electronic forms (16 items, plus further items identified by the id21 team since the end of the second phase of the research). This has shown that violence against girls in schools is a worldwide problem.
- Details of a range of interesting and imaginative strategies to counteract the abuse of girls, and evidence of their effectiveness in bringing about change, have been disseminated (nine of the 16 items document innovative work and suggest specific strategies)
- The silence on the topic of abuse of girls in schools continues to be eroded and awareness raised of the enormous scale and the institutionalised nature of the problem (one which was barely recognised even a few years ago)
- It has helped progress the debate beyond a concern with the abuse of girls to a realisation that it is necessary to explore and address violence in schools more generally and sexual violence in particular. This includes examining violence against boys and discussing issues around notions of masculinity and femininity with boys and girls. It also requires moving away from an analysis that simplistically views girls as victims and boys as perpetrators. Some of the articles stress the importance of involving boys (and men) in stamping out violence against girls in school as this requires them to actively seek to change their own behaviour and that of other males.

Information gathering and dissemination

- It has helped move the debate on men and masculinities beyond the theoretical level of Gender and Development (GAD), where it has been largely contained to date, and beyond its concern with vulnerable men, men as victims and the empowerment of marginalised men. It suggests that it is necessary to strengthen both women's and men's rights through the transformation of gender relations and that men need to see the benefits to themselves as well as to women of pursuing gender equity. Some people working within the GAD framework fear that the involvement of men in gender and development issues will not improve women's rights but will instead lead to the further empowerment of individual men. However, working with men in isolation will repeat the same mistakes as have been made with women.
- It has provided some practical examples of how men and/or boys are being involved in projects with girls (e.g. in the UK, South Africa, Nepal). These are however very few; most work either with boys or with girls. At the same time it has exposed the absence of information into the impact that such projects have on gender relations and pointed to the need for process-oriented research and evaluation in this area.

It is to be hoped that this id21 initiative will persuade international agencies of the importance of placing the elimination of gender violence in schools high on their agenda in terms of working towards the International Development Targets on gender equity and universal primary education. For smaller agencies, a focus on gender violence may well assist them in lobbying for funds to focus on improving the quality of schooling and ensuring the safety of girls at school.

2.4 Limitations

This approach to information gathering and dissemination would appear to be particularly effective where the issues (whether about development, education, health etc) are of interest to a wide inter-disciplinary audience. However, it is labour-intensive: searching for items on web sites, in journals and through personal and professional contacts was time-consuming and frequently failed to produce the desired results.

The objectives relating to this component of the study did not quite fit with the id21 format, given that the latter's mission is to disseminate UK based development research findings and their implications for policy. In contrast, we were looking to disseminate not only research findings but also ways in which these findings have been translated into strategic actions for change, i.e. summaries of innovative interventions and methodologies. However, given that DFID in common with other development agencies is anxious to close the gap between research and action, a broadening of the id21 reporting remit might be welcome. If the insights generated by research are to inform policy *and* practice, id21 has a useful role in reporting on effective interventions informed by research.

Information gathering and dissemination

The study was restricted by the lack of opportunity to access non-English material. Despite intensive trawling of the internet, it only became apparent in the later stages of the research that there was considerable activity to address gender violence among adolescents in Latin America, although mostly related to work on masculinities outside the school context supported by NGOs. NGOs are less likely to have the resources available to translate their work into English and place it on the internet; it may also be the case that international development agencies which are more likely to produce reports in English and to place them on their web sites are less active in Latin America than in the poorer regions of South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa; hence there is less material to draw on.

Chapter 3

Ghana

3.1 The research context

The formal educational system in Ghana consists of four levels: primary (Forms 1-6), junior secondary (JSS), senior secondary (SSS) and tertiary education, with automatic transition between primary and junior secondary, and a competitive national examination determining entry to SSS. In the mid 1990s the Government of Ghana launched a reform programme for Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) intended to increase access and participation, especially of girls, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning through community involvement in the ownership and management of schools, revised curriculum materials and improved teacher training.

The Government of Ghana has made among the most concerted and comprehensive efforts in Africa at educational decentralisation with the aim of bringing the decision-making process closer to the people. The district Directorate of Education, which reports through a regional Directorate to the central Ghana Education Service (GES), has overall responsibility for the management of education in the district. A Girls' Education Unit has also been created in the GES and Girls' Education Officers have been appointed at the regional and district levels to oversee improvements in girls' participation. Despite these efforts, education in Ghana remains in a parlous state: in some rural areas there is declining demand for schooling, low achievement and continuing low enrolment and high dropout among girls.

Ghana has not as yet experienced an HIV/AIDS epidemic but there are concerns that it is reaching the point at which the disease will take off. There is relatively low awareness of the risks of HIV/AIDS among young people because at the time of writing there has not been any systematic government campaign.

The case study schools

The research was carried out in three government schools in one region of Ghana (referred to as Schools A, B and C). All three were co-educational and were located in two districts within the selected region. School A was situated in an urban community, School B in a peri-urban community and School C in a rural community. In all cases, schools were chosen which combined a Primary and Junior Secondary School (the basic education cycle) under a single head teacher. The schools were selected from a list provided by the District Education Office within the chosen study area, stratified into urban, peri-urban and rural schools according to population size, social amenities/infrastructure, and the general socio-economic development of the community. One school was then selected randomly from each of the three strata. All three schools had male head teachers.¹¹ In all cases, girls were selected from classes in the upper Primary School and the JSS, as being those classes which were likely to hold the relevant age group of girls (10-15). Boys were selected from JSS 1 and 2 only.

¹¹ Originally, an urban school had been selected which had a female head, but when it was discovered that this school was being used for another research study, it was replaced by a comparable school in the same community, this time with a male head.

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The study began with participatory (PRA) workshops in the selected schools in May and June 2001, followed by interview based fieldwork from July to August 2001. The interviews, consisting of mostly open-ended items, were conducted with 48 girls attending Primary 6 and JSS 2 classes and 27 boys in JSS1 and 2 (16 girls and 9 boys from each school). In addition, interviews were held with 18 teachers (8 females and 10 males) from the three schools (both primary and JSS), together with the school head and the Guidance and Counselling (G&C) teacher in each of the schools (a total of 23, as one head also served as the Guidance and Counselling teacher). Interviews were also held with: 15 parents (five from each school), two senior officials from the Ministry of Education (the Director of Girls' Education and the Director of Teacher Education), the regional Guidance and Counselling officer, the education welfare officer from one of the district education offices, a district social welfare officer and the second in command of the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) of the Ghana Police.

The ages of the girls interviewed ranged from 11 to 17 years, with the average age of the total sample being 13.9 years (only two girls were 16 and one 17). Respondents for interviews were selected according to a purposive sampling method, with pupils identified according to early indications that they had information that they might be willing to share or because they were named by a friend already interviewed. Interviews were more extensive and targeted in School B because informal interaction during the PRA workshop at the start of the study suggested that girls in this school in particular had important stories to tell, in particular relating to unwilling sexual encounters with the head teacher. Primary school girls from all three schools were included in the sample because both the workshops and the early interviews revealed that they were also exposed to abusive behaviour, mostly sexual in nature, from either male students or teachers in the school.

Interviews were strictly one-to-one and were held away from the main classroom block where they would not be heard. This made them relatively relaxed in expressing themselves. All were promised confidentiality.

This period of primary data collection was followed by the trialling of small scale strategic interventions. These involved:

- formation of clubs in all three schools with the aim of developing in girls the confidence to talk about abuse, with support from a local NGO advocating children's rights.
- a workshop for parents and teachers organised in Schools B and C in collaboration with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC).
- organisation of a *durbar*¹² in the community where School B is located, aimed at raising awareness about abuse within the community. This involved the girls in performing a play based on the main issue raised during interviews (abusive behaviour by the head teacher).

¹² A 'durbar' is a high level community meeting of traditional rulers and council, ministry and district officials, policy makers, people in the community, NGOs etc who meet to discuss issues that affect the development and general well-being of a community. Such meetings are used to identify mechanisms and procedures to seek redress on matters of concern. They are also used to educate and sensitise communities on developmental and socio-economic issues. In this case, the district assembly showed its support by providing 1000 chairs for the event.

These activities took place between September and November 2001, and were monitored up until the schools closed in December 2001. A further brief monitoring exercise took place in March/April 2002.

The analysis of girls' and boys' perspectives of abuse in section 3.3 below is based primarily on findings from the interviews, supplemented in some instances by information gleaned from the PRA workshops. The pupils' perspectives are then followed by those of the teachers, parents and government officials interviewed.

Background to each School

School A is located in the centre of a tourist community situated on the coastline of the Atlantic ocean. The current population of the town according to the 2000 census is 119,340 (58,916 males and 60,424 females). The traditional economy has evolved around fishing and commerce. The town now boasts a number of fine hotels and beach resorts, which play host to innumerable tourists. The problem of tourism-related child labour is most prevalent in this town. Most of the children involved in child labour can be found serving as tourist guides, in the production and sale of arts and crafts, and in the 'entertainment' industry, in particular prostitution, which poses particular risks for young girls. While some parents (especially mothers) due to poor socio-economic conditions, encourage or 'push' their daughters into sexual relationships with male foreign (usually Western) tourists, some male tourists openly offer cash and gifts to tempt girls. It is common to see young girls soliciting in broad daylight on the beaches.

The school is strategically located on a hill. It is housed in a two-storey building which appears to be in a bad state of repair and the effect of erosion on the compound poses a serious threat to the foundation of the building. The ground floor houses the early years (Nursery to Primary 4) while the older pupils (Primary 5 to JSS 3) occupy the first floor. The building in fact houses two schools, called the A & B stream, each with its own head teacher and staff. They operate a morning and afternoon shift system which rotates every two weeks. This study focused on the 'A' stream. This stream had 163 boys and 193 girls registered at the start of the year, totalling 356 pupils (see Table 1) and 11 teachers, including the head teacher who was male and was responsible for both Primary and JSS. There were six teachers, all female, in the Primary school and five in the JSS, of whom two were female and three male. All the teachers were trained and they commuted daily from their homes. In addition to the 5,000 *cedis* (50 pence) that pupils paid as the annual school fees, they also contributed 200 *cedis* (2 pence) a day as study fees. The school had electricity, pit latrines and a urinal.

There are considerably more girls enrolled in this school than boys but with a slightly higher dropout of girls (9 girls and 6 boys) at this stage in the year (May). The main reason for this gender imbalance is that many of the boys leave school to engage in fishing as an economic activity. Most of the girls in the school according to the teachers come from Moslem

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households. Such girls were considered more academically able than the boys in the school but were often forced into early marriage, which accounts for the relatively higher dropout. The G&C teacher during an interview talked about a very intelligent Moslem girl in JSS2 whose mother wanted her to leave school and get married. The mother stopped paying her daughter's school fees but the G&C teacher together with some other teachers intervened to pay her fees until she completed JSS3.

Table 3.1: Pupils School A, 'A' stream

Primary	Start of year		Current (May 2001)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	15	14	15	13
2	16	28	16	28
3	15	23	15	23
4	26	21	20	17
5	16	19	16	19
6	17	23	17	23
JSS1	23	21	23	17
JSS2	18	22	18	22
JSS3	17	22	17	22
Total	163	193	157	184

16 girls were interviewed in this school, drawn from Primary 5 and 6, and JSS1. Their average age was 13.9 years. Six lived with relatives other than their biological parents, five lived with their mothers only and five with both parents. Only three girls travelled more than 2 kilometres to school each day. Apart from one girl who said she travelled by taxi to school, the rest walked to and from school each day. Half the girls in the sample claimed that in addition to the usual domestic chores (fetching water, sweeping, cooking etc), they also sold goods in the market or the community before and after school each day. The girls spent an average of four hours a day on household chores, before and after school.

School B is located on the outskirts of a peri-urban community with 2,234 inhabitants (1040 males and 1194 females). It is located three kilometres off a major highway linking the country to the Cote d'Ivoire, along a dirt road. It is about two kilometres from the nearest large town. There is no electricity in the community and water is drawn from hand-dug wells, boreholes and from streams. The local economy is primarily subsistence agriculture. In recent times, some older boys and male adults engage in the brewing of *akpeteshie*, a local gin. This exposes young children in the community to substance abuse from alcohol intake.

Single parenthood is prevalent in this community. This results in child abandonment by fathers and child trafficking by the adult population. There is a high incidence of 'floating' parents,

especially mothers, who migrate to the Cote d'Ivoire in search of jobs. This situation often culminates in the 'transfer' of girls to the Cote d'Ivoire to serve in the tourism industry as prostitutes and to engage in other forms of child labour. Lawlessness was also a problem: during the PRA workshops, the girls said that there have been one or more murders in the community recently and a nine year old girl in Primary 3 had been raped by a man the previous year.

The school comprised 212 pupils at the Primary level (117 boys and 95 girls) and 78 at the JSS (48 boys and 30 girls). There were five teachers at the JSS level, all male and all trained, and five teachers (three females and two males, both national service personnel) at the Primary level, all of whom were untrained. The male head teacher managed both the Primary and JSS levels. He had been in the school for 14 years and had served three years in this position. The head and the only long serving female teacher were the only married teachers in the school. There was a high incidence of pregnancy in this school, with five cases in 2001: two in JSS3, one in JSS2, one in JSS1, and one in Primary 6.

The Primary and the JSS schools are located side by side. They are situated on a slight incline off the dirt road, with a large open area containing a football pitch in front of the buildings. The buildings have recently been renovated by the district assembly and they look in good albeit basic condition. The classrooms are adequately furnished with new desks, chairs and blackboards (provided by DfID). There is no decent place of convenience apart from pit latrines and a urinal, and many pupils use the bushes. The school receives local support from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), with parents paying monthly dues to the school and providing communal labour for construction work, and also from the School Management Committee (SMC), which assists in managing the school and mobilising the community to support school activities to improve effectiveness and quality.¹³ According to the pupils, an

Table 3.2: Pupils School B

Primary	Start of year		Current (May 2001)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	29	18	29	17
2	35	15	35	15
3	32	17	31	15
4	27	16	25	18
5	28	13	28	14
6	19	16	17	14
JSS1	21	8	20	9
JSS2	14	13	14	11
JSS3	13	9	completed	completed
Total	218	125	199	113

¹³ A USAID pilot scheme under the QUIPS programme is in the process of scaling up the activities of SMCs in all communities but especially in deprived areas.

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annual fee of 5000 *cedis* (50 pence) is levied, plus a monthly contribution of 1000 *cedis* (10 pence). This latter is supposedly to pay for additional teachers but the pupils said that there was no sign of any. Pupils who were unable to produce this monthly payment on time were beaten. As we were running the workshops at the end of the month, we witnessed some instances of beating.

This school is noticeable for its very low enrolment of girls as compared to boys (125 and 218 respectively, a difference of 93). The drop out rate is difficult to assess because the JSS 3 group had already had their leaving examinations when the field work started and no figures were available; also, more girls seem to have entered the school during the year in Forms 4 and 5 and JSS1. This can probably be explained as girls returning from a period of absence with their mothers in the Cote d'Ivoire or having been employed as house-helps for a period to support the family.

The average age of the 16 girls interviewed was 13.9 years. Seven of these girls lived with relatives other than their biological mothers, another five with their mothers, and only four with both parents. All walked to school, with only one girl walking more than 0.5 km. Ten (63%) out of a sample of 16 said that they did not get enough food to eat each day either before or after school and four said they were not satisfied with the provision of basic needs (uniform, fees, books, transport etc). All the girls in the sample said they engaged in household chores, with two of them also selling goods in the market or hawking in the community after school. The time spent on household chores and/or selling before and after school was high, averaging five hours per day.

School C is located on a small hill on the outskirts of a rural community with a population of 1,373 (649 males and 724 females). It is situated along a dirt road about seven kilometres off the main highway linking two regional capitals. There is no electricity and water is obtained from hand dug wells, boreholes and streams. The economy is predominately subsistence farming, and is surrounded by some cash crop farming by inhabitants from the nearest semi-urban community. The JSS is one of very few in the area and serves three other communities.

The Primary school and the JSS are situated on the same site, on very uneven terrain. The buildings are old, have uneven dirt floors and are generally in a worse condition than those of Schools A and B. They do however have some new wooden furniture and blackboards, provided by DfID. The head teacher, who was male, had spent 12 years in the school and served four years in this position. There were five teachers at the Primary level (4 males and 1 female), all trained. The only female teacher, who was recently trained and unmarried, was from outside the community. She lived in the only teacher's house in the school grounds. She told the researcher that she was looking to be transferred away from this rural area as soon as she had served two years because the community did not value education – a not uncommon view among teachers posted to rural areas. The JSS had four teachers, all male.

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Two were married, and one was untrained. The incidence of pregnancy was relatively high in the school but declining. In 1997 the school recorded six cases, three cases in 1998, and two each in 1999 and 2000 respectively. In this school, the enrolment of girls is also much lower than that of boys (144 and 210 respectively, a difference of 66) and girls' drop out is higher (12 girls and 7 boys).

Table 3.3: Pupils School C

Primary	Start of year		Current (May 2001)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	26	20	24	18
2	29	24	28	22
3	25	20	24	17
4	23	13	23	13
5	28	19	27	19
6	29	10	27	9
JSS1	22	17	22	16
JSS2	11	9	11	7
JSS3	17	12	17	11
Total	210	144	203	132

The average age in the sample of 16 girls is 13.9 years. Five girls walk a distance of 3.5 or more kms to school each day. Apart from the usual household chores, nine girls said that they also go to the farm after school and do some selling both in the mornings before school and in the evenings at home. The girls spend a significant time each day on domestic chores, averaging 6 hours a day. Three girls said that they were not satisfied with the provision of the basic items provided by their families and half said they do not get enough food to eat and sometimes go hungry. The school has no toilet facility except a urinal. Pupils pay a fee of 4500 cedis (45 pence) annually as a contribution to the school.

3.2 The PRA workshops

Two-day workshops were held in each school during May 2001. Working in English presented problems except in the urban school (School A), so in Schools B and C a mixture of local language(s) and English was used. The first workshop was run by the Ghanaian researcher, Vivian Fiscian, and the consultant, Leslie Casely-Hayford, the second and third by Vivian Fiscian and Fiona Leach. In each case between 14 and 17 girls and 12 and 13 boys participated.

All the workshops were conducted in a part of a building away from the main classrooms and away from prying eyes. Refreshments were provided. The workshops always started with ice-breakers (songs and games) and with the researchers explaining that they were looking at

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girls' problems in schools. The activities chosen built on those used in the Zimbabwe workshops, as outlined in 1.5 above. Pupils worked with large sheets of paper, coloured marker pens, coloured stickers and sticky dots, coloured 'post-its' etc. Their drawings were posted on the walls for plenary discussions. Pupils were guaranteed confidentiality. The pupils always started nervously but slowly relaxed and all seemed to find them enjoyable.

A summary of two of the workshops is provided in **Appendix 6**.

3.3 Perspectives of Abuse

The PRA workshops and the interviews combined to provide a picture of the girls' and the boys' perspectives of abuse. Both sources are drawn on in the following account.

3.3.1 Girls' perspectives

Girls' problems in school

As in the Zimbabwe study, these one-to-one interviews failed to reveal any girl who was ready to admit to a sexual relationship with a teacher in the school, although some mentioned others whom they said were having affairs. It was interesting that, as in the Zimbabwe study, they were usually ready to talk about others as having had sexual experiences or having been victims of abuse rather than about themselves.¹⁴ Nevertheless, there was enough evidence in all the schools to show that some level of harassment and abuse, both sexual and non-sexual in nature, existed and that it was mostly girls who were at risk, whether from male pupils and teachers within the school, or from older boys and men outside. This was particularly the case with girls in School B.

The interviews covered the girls' background and their views of abuse. The extent to which abuse was experienced as a problem by girls in and around the school had already been explored during the PRA workshops at the start of the research, where the participants identified, prioritised and discussed their problems through drawings. Before moving to an analysis of the girls' interviews, therefore, the problems which emerged during the workshops are summarised below for each school.

In **School A** (the original urban school selected), problems that emerged for girls were: absenteeism by teachers, teachers' laziness and poor teaching, being required to walk to school, punishments at school, beatings, insults by teachers, expulsion from school due to lack of money for fees, inability to study privately at home, insults by parents, poor parental care and money related issues. When asked to prioritise, they listed in decreasing order: poor

¹⁴ Mensch et al (1999: 7) in their study of premarital sex and school dropout in Kenya point out that young people are embarrassed to be questioned by adults about their sex lives and that girls in particular find it difficult to admit to sex outside marriage within an interview situation. Boys on the other hand may over-report sexual activity as it is considered a badge of honour and a rite of passage to male adulthood.

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teaching, walking to school, punishments, beatings, insults and expulsion from school for not paying fees. Girls also said that boys in the senior secondary boarding school next to their school sometimes exposed their sexual organs in front of them and that boys would come into their own compound to smoke marijuana and cigarettes.

The girls complained of poor performance by teachers; as one girl said ‘Sometimes the teachers are tired and when we go and call them, they tell us to read our books until they come but they do not show up. Teachers at times give us notes but do not explain them to us’. They also saw corporal punishment by teachers as a problem. Walking to school was also seen as a big problem (although only three lived more than two kilometres away) as tiredness affected their learning and they were scorched by the sun and got ‘body pains’; it also led to lateness, which resulted in being punished.

In **School B**, which was located in a peri-urban area, the most common problem cited was lack of money for school fees but problems relating to their studies were also important, and a few also mentioned teachers propositioning them. The problems were prioritised as (in decreasing order): school studies, stealing/rape/killing and school fees (equal importance), boys and men proposing, shouting, beatings at home and household chores. The girls explained that if they were unable to pay their fees, they were not allowed to attend and so their studies suffered. This is significant because this school charges a 1000 *cedis* monthly levy in addition to the annual fee of 5000 *cedis*. The girls also said they needed exercise books, which they could not pay for and they had to work before and after school either selling goods or carrying out domestic chores (on average five hours a day). For those in JSS, this meant that they did not have time to read and revise for each subject and so they fell behind. Also a problem, but less so than in School A, was the shortage of teachers and teacher absenteeism. They felt that the teachers did not help them; if they didn’t understand or couldn’t answer, the teacher would just cane them. Sometimes they didn’t come to school because the teacher frightened them.

Boys were also seen as a problem, especially those from JSS2 and 3: if a boy proposed (by telling a girl he likes her, he will buy her anything she wants etc.) and the girl did not accept, he might victimise her by beating or insulting her. A boy might wait along the road to school for a girl and then beat her or pinch her breasts. A girl could also be mocked or verbally abused because she didn’t have a boyfriend.

In **School C**, most problems related to parents lacking money for basic items such as fees, sandals, uniform and school bag. This was not surprising given that this was a rural school in a community with the lowest socio-economic conditions of the three (although there was no additional monthly levy in this school). The girls here also said that they had problems with their studies, English especially, and verbal abuse. Boys, teachers and parents also beat them and boys touched and harassed them. They prioritised their problems as being (in

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decreasing order): boys touching and harassing them, school fees, school studies, beatings at home, insults and one teacher who touches them (all equal), boys and teachers beating them. When asked to identify the most frequent problem, however, they listed (in decreasing order): the teacher touching them, followed by school studies, beatings at home, insults, school fees, boys touching them, boys and teachers beating them.

It is clear, therefore, from the PRA workshop that abusive behaviour, consisting of excessive beatings, insulting language, physical attacks, propositioning by teachers, and ‘touching’ by male pupils and teachers, were problems that girls experienced at school. In the case of boys, beatings and verbal abuse were also common. However, poverty and its consequences for their schooling, and the low quality of teaching were seen in most cases as more serious and pervasive problems for them in trying to secure a good education.

Sexual activity in the schools

It was obvious that some girls did respond to sexual advances by boys and by male teachers. However, as noted, the girls were not willing to talk freely about their own sexual experiences but instead preferred to talk about the activities of others. Interestingly, 12 out of the 48 girls (25%) interviewed said that they knew of some teachers who were having sex with girls in their schools; ten out of these 12 girls were in School B. In the same school, five girls said they knew of a girl in their class having sex with a teacher. This was not the case in the other

Table 3.4: Girls’ views of sexual relations and pregnancies

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (48)	% Percentage
Know at least one teacher having sex with a girl in the school	1	10	1	12	25.0
Know a girl in their class having sex with a teacher	-	5	-	5	10.4
Know a girl in their class having sex with a boy in the school	7	8	3	18	37.5
Know a girl in the school who got pregnant by a boy in the school	7	15	8	30	62.5
Believe girls agree to have sex with teachers, older men and boys	-	1	4	5	10.4
Believe girls are trapped or raped	15	12	8	35	72.9
Don’t know whether girls agree or are trapped/raped	1	3	4	8	16.7
Know of a girl in the class with a sugar daddy or older boy as boyfriend	4	5	4	13	27.1
Know a girl who got pregnant by a man/boy outside school	7	2	9	18	37.5

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two schools, although one girl in each school said she knew of a girl elsewhere in the school who was having sex with a teacher. However, when asked if they knew of a girl who was impregnated in their school by a teacher, six replied in the affirmative; of these, three were in School A and three in School B. It was impossible to verify whether the above statements were based on fact or on rumour.

During interviews, girls pointed to their friends as the target of sexual advances by teachers. In cases where a girl who had been named by a friend was then interviewed, she was not ready to talk about her own sexual activities, but would instead point to another friend. Although only six girls had said that they knew of a girl who had become pregnant by a teacher at their school, 30 girls (62.5%) said they knew of a girl who became pregnant by a boy in the school and 18 (37.5%) knew of a girl who got pregnant with a boy or man outside the school (although only 13 in total had said that they knew of a girl in their class with a sugar daddy or older boyfriend outside the school). Even from this small sample, it is possible to infer that teenage pregnancy and subsequent dropout were problems within this community.

Only five of the 48 girls indicated that they thought the girls agreed willingly to have sex, whether with teachers, students and older boys/men. 35 (72.9%) were of the view that the girls had either been raped or forced (trapped). The view was that they were primarily trapped by money: 27 (56.25%) thought the desire for money was the main reason why girls had sex with boys and older men, although they acknowledged that peer pressure also played a part.

Although the majority of the girls (90%) claimed to know how people contracted HIV and AIDS, when asked what a man/boy should do to protect himself and his partner, only 16 girls could give accounts of what they might do. This included abstaining from sex, having a single partner, using condoms and not sharing razor blades. 31 girls offered suggestions for how girls could prevent getting AIDS: they should refrain from sex before marriage, not wear revealing dresses or go out in the evening, not 'give in to men' and not share razor blades. However, of the remainder who claimed not to know, this professed ignorance could well be the result of embarrassment or reluctance to show that they knew about such matters.

During the PRA workshops at the start of the research, the perceptions of boys and girls as to why young people have sex at a young age were explored in the school setting. In their separate groups, they were asked to draw a 'cause and consequence tree', illustrating firstly why they thought girls had sex with boys and with teachers, and also why boys and teachers had sex with girls (the roots of the tree). They were subsequently asked to reflect on the consequences of such sexual relationships (the branches). The findings relating to the causes are summarised below. In all three schools, but especially in the rural school, it was clear that poverty was a major factor in influencing girls into relationships, whether with boys or teachers. On both sides, it was widely believed that girls expected money and gifts from a sexual partner. Love and a desire for marriage appeared less significant. Peer pressure was also

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important, especially so in the case of boys, where much status was attached to having one or more girlfriends. This helps explain why boys may be aggressive in their sexual advances towards girls, and also why girls might enter into relationships with teachers.

Box 3.1: Why girls have sex with boys

<i>Girls' views</i>	<i>Boys' views</i>
For gifts and money	The way girls walk - some boys want to rape them
To have a child	The girl may want to have sex
Lack of parental care	Girls wear short dresses
For money or gifts or dresses	It's natural/girls like sex
To get clothes like her friends	To get money
To get money for school fees	Girls are weak
For peer influence	If the boy has done something nice for the girl
Her parents have no money so she wants to marry him	Because she is from a poor home
Because her friend already has a boyfriend	She may be in a relationship with a boy
For love (this only after prompting)	

Box 3.2: Why boys have sex with girls

<i>Girls' views</i>	<i>Boys' views</i>
Peer influence	For pleasure
Pleasure	To show love to the girl
To show love	Get something (gift, money) from the girl
To give them money and sweets	Because of the way girls dress
Because of a girl's beauty	Because of girls' beauty
They get attracted to boys	Peer influence
Boys are lustful	Because boys are lustful
The girl may force herself on him	Because girls sometimes entice boys
To practise the things they see on video	Because of the way girls approach boys
Girls wear sexy clothes/short dresses	To boast to their male friends
He wants her to wash and cook for him	To prove to the girl that he will marry her
To boast to his friends	To practise things they see in films
To prove to her that he wants to marry her	

Box 3.3: Why girls have sex with teachers

<i>Girls' views</i>	<i>Boys' views</i>
So that teachers won't punish them For money, gifts or clothes To get help during exams/for special teaching She hopes he will marry her Lack of parental support The teacher may entice her with money and gifts Because of promises teachers give to girls When the teacher is not from the town some girls will like to befriend him	Threats by teachers (if the girls refuse) Teachers help them to pay their fees Teachers give them the exam questions in advance Teachers help them to pass the exams To avoid getting punished in class

Box 3.4: Why teachers have sex with girls

<i>Girls' views</i>	<i>Boys' views</i>
Girls go to them and ask for money and gifts Because she has no money If a girl is a high performing pupil Because they admire girls A teacher invites a girl for private lessons at home	Girls stick out their buttocks to attract the teachers The way they dress/they wear short dresses Girls go to teachers' houses for extra lessons They taunt and flirt with the teachers They provoke and attract the teachers When teachers misunderstand girls' actions Teachers ask girls to go to their house to work/they call girls for errands Girls shake their bodies at teachers

Abusive Encounters

It was clear that abuse of girls in and around the school was a hidden problem and that the victims were reluctant to talk about it openly. As elsewhere, it appeared that it was male pupils who were the main perpetrators and who often intimidated girls. However, girls did not necessarily act the role of passive victim of aggressive male attention. As shown in Table 5, some actively seek boyfriends, whether for financial support, love or status. This parallels the findings in Zimbabwe, as does the finding that many of the boys saw girls as 'asking for it', as 'weak', or as only interested in money.

Abusive behaviour by boys

Just over a quarter of the girls (14) in the sample of 48 said that they had been propositioned by boys in the school but a much larger number (38 girls or 79.2%) said that they were

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'troubled' by male pupils. Boys who were said to be aggressive engaged in touching a girl's intimate body parts (breast and buttocks) and teasing. Even though only 15 of the 38 girls (39.5%) claimed such things affected their behaviour in class and their school studies, all indicated their displeasure at boys' behaviour. Only four girls said they had received at least one love letter from a boy but 20 girls (41.6%) said that they had received money or gifts from a boy. 23 thought boys were serious when they said they were in love (perhaps contrary to the workshop findings).

Table 3.5: Girls' views of abusive behaviour of boys

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (48)	% Percentage
Girls propositioned by boys	5	4	5	14	29.2
Girls troubled by boys' behaviour	12	12	14	38	79.2
Of whom:					
Girls whose studies are affected by this	6	4	5	15	39.5

Harassment hot spots

Against this backdrop, it was clear that there were places within and around the school which constituted 'harassment hot spots'. During the PRA workshops, both boys and girls were asked to identify and mark places on the school map that they had drawn where they felt safe and unsafe. Girls felt much less safe than boys. Particularly unsafe places were: the toilets, where boys would come to smoke weed (marijuana) and would try to kiss or touch them, where someone could frighten or harm them, or where a girl could fall into the pit, the school playing field where boys played football and would chase them away, the teachers' quarters, especially the male teachers', as they may ask them to come to their house, and the road where a pupil might get hit by a vehicle. The Primary girls also said the JSS block was unsafe for them as the seniors may bully them.

Abusive behaviour by teachers

Although no girl interviewed admitted having had a sexual relationship with a teacher, some gave accounts of pressure for sexual favours and demands, as reproduced below. Almost as many girls said that they were propositioned by teachers (13) as said they had been propositioned by boys (14). However, ten of these 13 girls came from School B and eight of them named the school head as the chief offender. One striking feature in School B was that during the PRA workshop and subsequent interviews with the girls, nine out of ten girls in Primary 6 made it known that the head teacher had propositioned them (only one girl denied it). The girls were clearly frightened of these approaches, and it was noticeable how nervous they were at the start of the workshop.

Table 3.6: Girls' views of abusive behaviour by teachers

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (48)	% Percentage
Propositioned by a teacher	2	10	1	13	27.1
Of whom:					
Told her mother about this	-	2	-	2	15.4
Told a friend about this	-	2	-	2	15.4
Know of at least one friend propositioned by a teacher	4	10	1	15	31.3

Only four of the 13 girls (all in School B) who had been propositioned by a teacher said they had told someone about the incident: two had told their mother while the other two had told their best friend. In both cases where they had told their mother, she had said not to 'mind him' but that if he were to repeat this they should report the incident to them or to their class teacher. All said that it was unacceptable for a teacher to propose love to a schoolgirl; such teachers were irresponsible and did not respect themselves. In their opinion, the teacher has the responsibility to counsel them to refrain from sexual relationships, rather than to lure them into them.

In the interviews, some of the girls from School B described the circumstances under which they were approached by the head teacher:

He sent for me to come to his office, he said 'I have nurtured you since your lower Primary days now you look special and I want to "walk" with you'. He promised to give me money if I accept his proposal.

He asked me to drop his books home after school, when I entered his house compound he dragged me into his room and pushed me to his bed and whispered into my ears 'me hyew wo' (I will burn you). He fondled me but I screamed so he allowed me to go.

He invited me to one of the empty classrooms and said 'I want you for a friend' and he said that he would buy me a schoolbag, books and panties. He did this twice and assured me that if I agree to his proposal, he would not let the other teachers know about it.

It was morning break time at about 9.30 am and he asked me (a girl in Primary 3) to accompany him to his house but I dodged him. It was the first time.

He pretended he had something to tell me but he did not want to say it to the hearing of other people around. He took me to a quiet place in the school and then told me 'I want you for a special relationship'.

I was thirsty and going to my sister in another class for water, I met him on the way and he asked me to follow him to his office for water. After drinking the water he offered me, he asked me to take

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some papers from the cupboard for him. He then held me from behind and touched my breast and said 'Today the two of us will be together after school' – he used his fingers to signal 'love making'.

Another two pupils (one from School A and one from School C) said:

I was in Primary 4 and he asked me to bring a clock to his house after school, I met him at his home and he proposed love to me.

He sent for me during school break time and asked if I could be his 'special friend'.

It should be noted from the above that a girl in Primary 3 in School B was approached by the head (this group would normally be aged 9-10). It is not known whether the teachers referred to in the last two statements were still in their schools (A and C).

In addition to the above, 32 out of the 48 girls claimed teachers used abusive language towards them. They used words such as *twerp*, *esisiefō* (useless people), *nkurasefō* (villagers/bush people), *ebiafōmba* (children of the poor) and many others. This was also common in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Teachers' talk was also full of innuendo: for example, when responding to questions in class, girls reported that teachers would tell them not to talk to them as if they were their boyfriends, or sometimes when sweeping or dusting the teachers' table and chair, the teacher who was not satisfied might say 'Is that how you clean your boyfriend's room?' In School B, girls said that sometimes when the head is beating them (on the buttocks) he will feel them 'there' and remark or whisper to the girl concerned 'So you are wearing beads/not wearing beads around your waist' (in the Ghanaian cultural context, beads connote romance or sexuality). The girls strongly indicated that verbal abuse also affects their behaviour in class and their full participation in school life.

45 of the 48 girls said that they had been beaten by a teacher on at least one occasion. However, when asked whether they approved or disapproved of corporal punishment, the majority (37 or 77%) said they approved. They gave reasons such as: beatings helped them to be serious about their studies and to deter truancy, lateness and general misconduct in school. All of them however objected to teachers caning them just because they did not understand what he/she was teaching them. It is interesting to note that in all three PRA workshops, beating by teachers was identified by the girls as either a problem or a form of abuse. However, in most cases it was ranked as less serious than other forms of abuse, which suggests that on the whole they accepted it provided it was given in moderation and for a valid reason.

Table 3.7: Girls beaten by teachers

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (48)	% Percentage
Beatings by teachers				45	93.8
Of whom:					
Male	-	6	13	19	42.2
Female	4	-	-	4	8.9
Both	11	10	1	22	48.9

Note: School A had more female teachers (eight) than Schools B (three) and C (one only, who had recently qualified). The female teachers in School A were mostly in their forties and were long-serving trained teachers, whereas in School B they were all untrained. This might suggest that long serving teachers are more prone to using corporal punishment and/or newly trained teachers are less ready to use it (but may succumb over time).

Abusive behaviour by men

20 (41.7%) of the 48 girls interviewed had had men outside the school propose sex to them. This was more than those girls who had been propositioned by either teachers or male pupils. However, half of these girls came from the urban school, which suggests that this problem is worse in urban settings. Four out of these 20 were propositioned in their house or compound (by a male relative or family friend), whereas for the majority this happened when they were in a public place e.g. selling or buying in the market or running errands for their parents/guardians. Being accosted by strange men in public places, who were often drunk, seemed to be a relatively common occurrence, as it was shown to be in the Zimbabwe study.

Table 3.8: Abusive behaviour by men

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (48)	% Percentage
Propositioned by men	10	5	5	20	41.7
Of whom:					
In the house or compound	4	-	-	4	20.0
In a public place (e.g. market, bus terminal)	6	5	5	16	80.0

Statements from girls included the following:

School A - urban

I sell after school and during school holidays at the main bus terminal and these men usually propose love to me before they buy from me.

It was in the evening at home. I was playing outside with friends and this man sent for me and proposed to me.

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He has a store close to ours. He will wait until I am alone in the store selling to sneak in and 'misbehave' – he mostly will touch my buttocks and even attempt touching my breast and say all sort of silly things to me.

I went to their store to buy something and he proposed to me there. He went on to tell me to go and drop the items at home and meet him in his house.

School B – peri-urban

I was walking on the same road as a man on my way home after an errand. On the way he walked close to me and whispered to me 'I want you to become my special friend'.

I was going to the market and this man called and proposed to me. He promised me many things if I accept to become his girlfriend.

School C – rural

I was sent to a corn mill in the next town and this man called me and said 'I will marry you'. He then gave me money.

I was returning from the farm in the evening and this man was walking along the same direction with me. He engaged me in a conversation and told me I should agree to become his 'special friend'.

Evidence also emerged, as in the Zimbabwe study, of sexual abuse in the home by male relatives or neighbours and in public places such as markets and other commercial places. There were several cases of girls interviewed who had experienced possible attempts of rape (or who might in fact have been raped). One girl gave an account of how her uncle had on several occasions sneaked into their house at a time when she was alone to demand sexual favours from her. The girl said that on one occasion she had pulled a knife on him. Another girl told of an incident with a labourer working for her aunt's husband: she was asleep one night and woke up to feel someone 'fondling' her on her sleeping mat. Some of the girls talked of a girl in Primary 3 who had been raped by a neighbour.

In conclusion, it can be noted that abusive behaviour by male pupils and teachers was a problem in these schools, but no more so than poverty, poor quality of teaching and absenteeism among teachers. This does not detract however from its severity, in particular with regard to teachers. There was also some evidence that the girls' fear of being accosted or propositioned in intimidating circumstances by male pupils and teachers was greater than the reality, except in School B where many had experienced it at first hand from the head teacher. Being accosted by strange men was also relatively common, especially in the urban setting. The consequences of the head teacher's abusive behaviour towards girls in School B were clearly devastating, with low enrolment (Table 2) and attendance (there were fewer girls in school on the days visited than appeared on the register), and a poor quality of learning

environment. Despite better physical conditions in School B, the brief encounter during the PRA workshops suggested that the level of achievement based on knowledge of English and skills at carrying out set tasks was lower than in the less well equipped rural school.

3.3.2 Boys' perspectives

Twenty-four (88.9%) in the sample of 27 boys interviewed acknowledged that they face problems with beatings, basic school items such as exercise books and pencils, school studies, lack of food and/or pocket money, and teachers' dislike and 'poor attitudes' towards them. 25 boys also acknowledged that girls face problems such as school and examination fees, basic school items, harassment and bullying, beatings, boyfriends, lateness and irregular school attendance. Only two boys said that in their opinion girls do not face any problems in school. Interestingly, 23 (85%) confessed that boyfriends are a major problem for schoolgirls, whereas only three (11%) said girlfriends are a major problem for boys.

Table 3.9: Boys' views of girlfriends

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (48)	% Percentage
Boyfriends are a problem for girls	5	9	9	23	85.2
Girlfriends are a problem for boys	2	1	-	3	11.1
Has a girlfriend	2	-	-	2	7.4
Knows a boy in his class with a girlfriend	9	7	7	23	85.2
A lot of girls in school have boyfriends	8	9	7	24	88.9
Girls prefer older boys and men	7	8	9	24	88.9
Know a boy in his class having sex with a girl	6	7	6	19	70.3
Know a girl in his class having sex with a boy	8	8	7	23	85.2
Know of a teacher in the school having sex with a girl	1	7	-	8	29.6

As with the girls, the boys were more eager to talk about their friends' sexual relationships than their own. Only two of the 27 boys admitted that they had girlfriends but 23 (85.2%) of them claimed they knew of at least one boy in their form who had a girlfriend. Again, when asked if they thought that a lot of girls in their school had boyfriends, 23 (85.2%) said yes. Twenty-four (89%) out of the total sample, however, said girls preferred older boys and men outside the school.

Interestingly, a higher number of boys (23) said they knew of at least one girl in their form who is having sexual relations with her boyfriend than those (19) who knew of at least one

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boy in their form having sexual relations with his girlfriend. When asked where they thought the girls' boyfriends were, 21 (78%) said they were outside the school and only five (19%) said they were in the school. Likewise, 19 of 23 boys who claimed to know of a boy in their form with a girlfriend said that she was outside the school. Whether this was the reality or whether they wished to downplay the level of sexual activity between male and female pupils was not clear. It was clear however that the boys thought that girls were sexually promiscuous: 26 (96.3%) thought that girls starting having boyfriends between 12 and 16 years of age but 23 (85.2%) thought boys started having girlfriends at a later age, between 14 and 18 years.

A small majority of interviewees (14) felt girls were more serious about their relationships than boys, ten said that it was boys who showed more seriousness, with only two saying that both sexes were equally serious. However, when asked which sex they thought was more serious about their studies, 25 (92.6%) said boys, with only one boy saying that girls were and one boy saying both sexes.

Table 3.10: Boys' views of who is more serious about their relationships

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (27)	% Percentage
Boys	4	2	4	10	37.0
Girls	2	7	5	14	51.9
Both	2	-	-	2	7.4
Cannot tell who is more serious	1	-	-	1	3.7

Table 3.11: Boys' views of who is more serious about their studies

	A Urban	B Peri-urban	C Rural	Total (27)	% Percentage
Boys	7	9	9	25	92.6
Girls	1	-	-	1	3.7
Both	1	-	-	1	3.7

Concerning their views on girls having affairs with teachers, 13 (48.1%) out of the 27 boys were of the opinion that it is the teachers who take advantage of the girls, whereas nine (33.3%) claimed the girls are 'bad/spoil'. The view of the remaining five (19%) was that the girls lack parental support and care. However, when prompted as to whether they knew of teachers in their school having affairs with schoolgirls, only eight (29.6%) said yes. Seven of the eight boys were in School B.

Regarding boys harassing girls, 15 (55.6%) in the sample confessed that they sometimes used threatening behaviour towards them; the remainder denied this. However, all of them

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were able to provide examples of ways in which boys attempted to capture girls' attention. These included:

You take a girl you would want for a girlfriend as a playmate and if possible engage this girl in evening studies at home.

Say 'sweet words' to the girl and sometimes save money to use in convincing her you have money.

You degrade/undermine your competitor: say he has no money and can't provide for your needs.

Boys sometimes fight over girls, stop talking to each other.

You buy items such as snacks, earrings, panties, underwear etc for the girls

.

You give girls special gifts on Valentine's Day and on their birthdays.

Some boys also claimed that the girls may make a sexual advance:

If the boy is clever or good in sports, some girls will buy presents and sweets for him. Such girls will go all out to attract the boy to their side for a relationship.

When asked about whom the boys thought received the most beatings in school, 17 (63%) said it was boys, eight (29.6%) thought it was girls while only two thought there was no difference.

In conclusion, the boys' interviews confirmed the Zimbabwe findings that boys see obtaining girlfriends as a competitive game and that many think that girls behave provocatively and on occasion lure the boy into the relationship. They almost universally believe that boys are more serious (and more intelligent) in their studies. At the same time, the data reveal that boys accept that both boys and girls experience many problems at school, girls more so than boys.

3.3.3 Teachers' and head teachers' perspectives

Interviews were held with 18 teachers, six from each school (10 males and 8 females altogether) and with the three head teachers, all of whom were male. Of the ten teachers in JSS, eight were male and two were female (both in School A) and at the Primary level of the eight teachers, two were male and six were female (reflecting the national pattern of most female teachers being at the primary level). Schools B and C had no female JSS teachers. The majority of those interviewed thought the problems of girls in school are mainly lack of parental care and support, largely resulting from the high incidence of 'broken homes'. This leads to girls facing financial difficulties in meeting basic school requirements such as fees, uniforms, books, pens and pencils. Teachers in School A further added child labour as one

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of the worrying problems that girls have to contend with. Many girls serve as 'house-helps' and are made to do some selling before and after school. All the teachers interviewed thought that problems are widespread among schoolgirls, with those most affected being from relatively poor homes.

Teachers largely confirmed that girls do experience abuse of both a sexual and a non- sexual nature in and around the school. They thought the most frequent forms were physical (beatings, bullying) and verbal. Boys also experienced abuse in school, bullying being the most common form. All the teachers believed that abuse of whatever type affects the academic performance of pupils, although most thought that it affects girls' performance more than boys. When asked why, eight gave reasons such as girls are 'weak', 'soft' and do not have the strength to withstand these problems while the remaining nine thought that they are more sensitive and emotional than boys, and as a result they do not overcome these experiences so easily.

The teachers also acknowledged that corporal punishment was practised in their schools but the majority did not consider it as a form of abuse if administered reasonably. One female teacher quoted the biblical saying 'spare the rod and spoil the child' in support of her argument. Many of the teachers thought the administration of corporal punishment on pupils was not gender discriminatory and that both boys and girls were punished equally. Most did however believe that male teachers used it most. The researcher observed that all three schools practised corporal punishment, but it appeared to be exercised with greater moderation and less frequency in School C.

Although they wished to downplay the scale of sexual abuse compared to physical and verbal abuse, most of the teachers confirmed that sexual harassment and abuse did exist in their schools. However, they thought that the biggest problem was abusive behaviour towards girls by male pupils, with Primary 5 to JSS3 levels being where the problem is the most serious. Most exhibited some sense of unease when it came to discussing abusive behaviour by teachers. As with both the girls and the boys, they wanted to de-personalise it, to distance themselves from its manifestation in their own immediate professional context. All were more comfortable talking about incidents that happened in other schools. Ten teachers (55.6%) admitted to having heard of at least one case from another school of a teacher who had sexually abused a schoolgirl. Two were in School A, five in School B and three in School C. They also accepted in some cases that there had been teachers misbehaving with female pupils in their school in the past. However, in School B, only one female teacher admitted this and said that the teacher had been transferred, and another acknowledged that sexual harassment and abuse was particularly bad with Primary 3 pupils and that male teachers were responsible. On the whole, however, all those interviewed preferred to give examples of male pupils in the school or in other schools who had made girls in their school pregnant. Only four teachers (one in School A and three in School C) admitted either on the basis of rumour

or fact that there were cases in their schools where a male teacher had made a schoolgirl pregnant. It is interesting to note that neither male nor female teachers in School B were ready to speak openly about this in their schools (despite the evidence of serious misconduct by the head teacher and possibly by other male teachers). They were either covering up for each other or fearful of the head teacher. They were however very open in discussing girls' sexual relationships with boys in the school and at home.

Teachers confirmed that schools do not have specific policies towards male teachers who sexually abuse girls. However, many pointed out that the Ghana Education Service has a professional code of ethics, which spells out the punitive measures in dealing with such cases of misconduct¹⁵ but which unfortunately does not provide a clear set of guidelines or procedures that the abused can follow to make an allegation and seek redress. Most of them thought that young male teachers, especially the unmarried, are the most likely abusers. Recommended actions to address the problem included:

- Establish a unit at Ministry and/or District level which will be solely responsible for dealing with cases of abuse in school
- Empower parents financially to enable them to provide the basic needs of their children
- Develop a specific school syllabus to address all forms of abuse and children's rights
- Conduct a nation-wide campaign against sexual abuse of schoolgirls by male teachers
- Hold regular workshops on abuse for all stakeholders involved in education.

56% of the teachers interviewed said they did not teach any lessons which explicitly addressed the issue of abuse within and outside the school. Of the remainder, they taught lessons within Religious and Moral Education, Science, Ghanaian Language, and Social Studies which have topics such as children's/human rights, human reproduction and causes of divorce. This allowed them to teach related issues of abuse and sexuality. The weekly morning school worship was also used to educate children about moral behaviour. Very few of them however thought that the school curriculum, even through Moral and Religious Education, explicitly addressed harassment, abuse or bullying in school.

3.3.4 Guidance & Counselling teachers' perspectives

The three guidance and counselling (G&C) teachers interviewed (one female in School A and two males in Schools B and C, with the head teacher carrying out this role in School C) indicated that they saw their roles as an opportunity to meet with pupils and counsel them. They believed that broken homes were the main cause of children's problems in school.

Interestingly, while the two male G&C teachers said that they do get some pupils coming to them with problems, the female G&C teacher said none had come to her with their

¹⁵ Part V, category 'B': Penalty for misconduct

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problems. In fact she was very dismissive of what might constitute a ‘problem’ for girls – boys touching them or troubling them did not appear to be considered as serious. Predominant among the problems that pupils took to the male G&C teachers were lack of pocket money for school and (perhaps surprisingly) pregnancy. Both teachers in Schools B and C talked about the problem of pregnancies among schoolgirls. They also said they got complaints about boys and men outside the school who bother girls at home. Although they both acknowledged that abuse of schoolgirls by teachers exists in their schools, the pupils did not bring this to their notice. They only heard about such cases through parents and people in the communities. The G&C teacher in School C (who is also the head teacher) cited a case that was reported to him by a member of the community. According to him, ‘there was a teacher in the school who was doing that... he once “slept” with one of the girls and this became an issue, so we (the teachers) had to go to the parents of the girl with a bottle of schnapps to plead on behalf of the teacher involved’. (It seems that the teacher is no longer in the school.) This example illustrates the way in which such cases tend to be dealt with, with the school trying to hush it up by negotiating a settlement with the family (with as little as a bottle of alcohol as compensation) rather than reporting it to the education authorities and seeking a prosecution. It is not surprising, therefore, given such a weak response that sexual abuse by teachers is able to flourish.

According to the G&C teacher in School A, it seems that the most common form of abuse that girls and some younger boys experience is bullying by older boys. This is perhaps not surprising as this is an urban school in a low socio-economic area (higher levels of bullying were also found in a similarly located school in the Zimbabwe study). In Schools B and C, they thought sexual harassment by older boys outside the school was the greatest problem for girls. When asked whether the school authorities took any action against abusers, both teachers in Schools A and C said yes. However, the teacher in School B said no, justifying this by saying that most abuse cases of a sexual nature involving schoolgirls do not constitute rape, hence he did not see how the school can take any action against the offender. According to him, even in cases where a schoolgirl is impregnated, there is little that the school can do. This is an extraordinary statement, especially from a G&C teacher, which shows a complete lack of awareness of the ethical conduct required of teachers.

In their view, if a teacher was involved in a sexual relationship with a schoolgirl, the school would try to handle the matter with the girl’s family. Only the female G&C teacher conceded that if it transpired that he had forced or raped the girl, then the school authority should hand him over to the police. All three expressed the view that such behaviour affected school performance, made the victim withdrawn and could lead to sexually transmitted infection, pregnancy and in some cases abortion, which in turn could lead to drop-out. Despite this, they seemed to accept the situation as one which did not need urgent action.

When asked about the training or preparation they received for their role as G&C teachers, they said that the district education office organised annual one-day workshops for them but these were not sufficient. They were all of the opinion that to tackle cases of abuse adequately, the Ghana Education Service (GES) must ensure the following:

- The role of a Guidance and Counselling teacher should be made a full time position
- Separate times or days must be set aside for pupils as counselling sessions in school
- The Ministry of Education should make funds available to very needy pupils who come to school without food or pocket money and examination fees

In their recommendations to the government, the G&C teachers suggested the following:

- Parents must be educated about their roles and responsibilities toward their children's education
- There must be intensive public education on the nature of abusive actions against girls and who the potential abusers are
- The government must provide more incentives to strengthen G&C programmes in school
- The government must take stringent measures against offenders.

3.3.5 Parents' perspectives

Interviews were held with fifteen parents and guardians of girls in the selected schools, of whom two were uncles and 13 were mothers. Like the other interviewees, they acknowledged that girls have more problems to grapple with in and around the school than boys. Most of them believed that their daughters/wards had been exposed to incidents of bullying, harassment, threats or beatings by older boys both in school and around the home. When asked for details, the general response was that daughters do not report such cases to them but they hear about them through a third party. It was noted during interviews that they were reluctant to talk about male teachers propositioning their daughters/wards. However, when asked whether they knew of cases where male teachers had propositioned schoolgirls, eight out of the fifteen answered yes. Of these, three had children in School A, four in School B and one in School C. Once again, parents and guardians were more willing to talk about other cases of abuse than those directed at their own children.

When asked whom they would blame if a schoolgirl became pregnant, they saw parents themselves as largely responsible; so many teenage girls became pregnant because parents failed to take proper care and responsibility for their teenage daughters. However, lack of parental control was compounded by the inadequate provision of basic needs by some parents due to financial constraints. There is indeed no doubt that family poverty makes girls vulnerable to all forms of exploitation.

When asked if a girl who got pregnant should be punished, most thought she should not be. However a few expressed the view that 'the girl must be left to suffer' because they did not have the money to take care of 'two people'. Most agreed that she should be allowed to return

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to school after she had had the baby. It must be noted, however, that although the GES has a policy which allows girls to go back to school after delivery, most head teachers do not follow the procedure.

Most thought that schools were not doing enough to protect girls. In their view, teachers should be responsible for monitoring girls who 'go out' in the evening and punish them later in school. Schools should do more to teach pupils about morality. However in the case of School B, they felt that the teachers were the schoolgirls' 'main problem'. One parent in an angry tone said 'How can the school protect girls if teachers are those who trouble our daughters?' It seemed that parents in this school were aware of the behaviour of some male teachers both past and present, including the present head, but that they had failed or been too afraid to do anything about it. It emerged during the investigations by the District Education Office overseeing School B (see below) that whenever a question was raised about the head teacher and a schoolgirl, he would threaten them that if they complained and he was dismissed or transferred, they would not get a replacement.

The interviewees thought that unlike girls boys did not face any particular problems, although in Schools B and C they said that boys had to do 'by-day' on farms (i.e. offering one's labour for a daily wage) to earn an income to pay for their fees and buy basic school items. When asked 'Why do girls not also do 'by-day' to get money for their basic needs?', they said that 'girls are not as strong as boys and cannot offer their labour on farms – it's hard work'. It is clear that the lack of opportunity for girls to earn any sort of income puts them at particular risk of sexual abuse.

3.3.6 Government officials' perspectives

Two officials from the central Ministry of Education (the Director of Girls' Education and the Director of Teacher Education) were interviewed, as were the regional G&C officer, the district social welfare officer, the district education welfare officer, and the second in command of the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) of the Ghana Police. Despite several efforts, the GES Director responsible for Basic Education could not be interviewed.

Both the Directors of Girls' Education and Teacher Education viewed abuse within the school context as the exploitation of pupils by school authorities and teachers for their own needs – both sexual and non-sexual. The Director of Teacher Education stated that despite the absence of statistics, they knew that cases of defilement (sex with a child under 16 years of age) and rape by teachers went on in schools. She cited instances of her personal involvement in dealing with such cases and acknowledged that it was difficult to get to the bottom of cases because most educational officials condoned and connived with the perpetrators and as such would not want to expose their colleagues.

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The story told by the WAJU police officer was no different. She dealt with cases of rape, defilement, abduction, unnatural carnal knowledge (non-penetrative sex), indecent assault (touching of private parts), child abandonment (desertion/withdrawal of maintenance) and others. Most victims were girls and most cases involved rape or defilement. She provided national data on cases reported to the Department of Social Welfare. Figures for the period January – May 2002 revealed 216 cases of defilement, 584 of assault, 65 of rape, and 583 cases of child desertion/non maintenance. These are very high figures – an average of 15 child rapes a month nationally.

She invited the prosecuting officer to join in the interview. The latter explained the frustrations of dealing with such cases: WAJU would do everything to process cases and bring them to trial, but parents of the victims would at the last moment, sometimes a day before the prosecution, send in a withdrawal letter for the case to be dropped. Several accounts were given by police officers of instances where the complainant would aid the accused to run away or the relatives of the victims would collect large sums of money from the accused and then come to withdraw the case. The two welfare officers interviewed also said that they dealt with cases of parental neglect, child trafficking, excessive beatings by parents, rape and defilement. Some cases were reported to the district assembly by parents and victims, others the social welfare and education welfare officers got to know about from pupils during visits to schools.

All the officials were sure that there was more abuse than actually got reported. In their opinion, both parents and school authorities covered up cases in order to save the ‘image’ of the offenders and the victims’ family reputation. Girls also did not report cases because they were intimidated, not believed and frightened of stigmatisation. They believed that the effect of abuse on the abused, especially girls, made them embarrassed, withdrawn and depressed and they developed low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in themselves.

The Director of Girls’ Education acknowledged that despite the MOE policy on teacher misconduct, this was not enforced adequately. According to her, it varied from school to school depending on the kind of professional cooperation that existed between the head and the staff. Apart from the punitive measures stated in the professional code of conduct for teachers, the Girls’ Education Unit (GEU) also collaborated with NGOs and other organisations to implement sanctions aimed at deterring all kinds of men from taking undue advantage of innocent schoolgirls.

The G&C officer also echoed the above and stated that his office designed programmes and offered leadership in providing guidance services. G&C teachers in schools were supposed to receive in-service training once a term (the frequency of training however depended on availability of funding) and to update their knowledge through seminars and workshops. Not many cases of abuse reached his department but he did hear about them through

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informal discussions. He also confirmed that most schools preferred to deal with cases internally to keep the good name of the school. He was of the opinion that ‘home-room’ sessions (group sessions to discuss gender issues) and ‘assertiveness drills’ for girls at school were invaluable in helping address abuse in school. Unfortunately, the school timetable did not provide space for such important activities. If girls sought help when abused, existing laws and policies were enforced, and counselling teachers were given professional training in dealing with abuse cases, all this would help eliminate all forms of school based abuse.

All the officials interviewed recognised that abusive behaviour by teachers was a problem, that all too often prosecutions were dropped and schools colluded with the offenders to make sure that any misdemeanours did not become public knowledge. The result is apathy and officials who can all too easily apportion blame to others.

3.4 Strategic interventions

The second phase of the study involved the researcher working with others to trial a series of small scale initiatives to address abusive behaviour towards girls in schools. It began with some networking: the researcher met with the Director of the Girls’ Education Unit in the MOE, the regional Director of Education, regional and district officials in charge of girls’ education, the district assembly members, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC) of Schools B & C, and also with a local NGO advocating the practice of children’s rights called Foundation Builders. In consultation with the regional and district officers responsible for girls’ education, it was then decided to run a PTA/SMC sensitisation seminar in the schools and a community awareness *durbar* in School B. The NGO would help run girls’ clubs in the schools. It was also proposed to run workshops in one teacher training college in the region; however, this latter activity was not possible because of the timing (the college vacation).

It was clear from the earliest stages of the research (the PRA workshops) that girls in School B were at risk from the head teacher, who preyed routinely on them for sexual favours. This placed the researcher in a predicament, as to whether to reveal the situation to the education authorities or not. However, during discussions with district education authorities over what might be suitable ways of trialling strategies to counteract abuse, it became clear that the head teacher’s behaviour was well known to some education officers, to the executive bodies of the PTA and the SMC, and indeed to the majority of the community. The latter had known about it long before the research started but they had not made any official complaint. The education authorities had learnt about it from informal conversations with community members and rumours. Some parents subsequently admitted to the researcher that the presence of the research team in their community was a relief to them and their daughters, as they hoped that something would now be done. Members of the SMC discussed openly with the researcher some incidents which confirmed what the girls had told her earlier.

In discussion with the authorities, it was agreed that an appropriate strategy was to be to stage a community event which would raise the issue of abuse of schoolgirls generally, without naming any individual perpetrators. This would hopefully empower both the girls and the School B community to take action. It was therefore agreed that an awareness raising *durbar* should take place. In this way, the researcher found herself moving rapidly from the role of researcher gathering data in the school to one where she was involved in staging an event to expose a case of serious sexual misconduct. This role shift raises issues - not considered when the study was being planned but not unfamiliar to researchers - of how to act when confronted with new knowledge which incriminates somebody as a wrong-doer and exposes individuals, in particular children, to risk, while still trying to ensure confidentiality. To have walked away would not have been acceptable. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

The interventions in the three schools therefore consisted of:

1. Formation of Clubs. The aim of this was to empower the younger girls, to build up their self-confidence and self-esteem and to develop the ability to talk about or report abusive actions against them to adults. These clubs were set up in consultation with the school heads. The NGO 'Foundation Builders' was contracted to form the clubs and teach, alongside the researcher, eight hourly lessons provided once a week immediately after morning assembly. Five schoolgirls were selected to attend from each class, but other girls came peeping through the windows, indicating that they wanted to join their colleagues, and so all the girls in the school were included in the end. Six team leaders were nominated. The researcher provided an education kit (two booklets originally sponsored by DANIDA).

2. The PTA/SMC workshop for parents and teachers. This was held in October and November 2001 in Schools B and C, with 63 parents of pupils in School B and 35 parents of pupils in School C attending.¹⁶ Both heads attended throughout, and teachers attended for part of the time as their teaching duties allowed. The aim was to expose to the participants the way in which their own actions may be abusive towards schoolgirls and the way in which abuse affects girls' participation in school. It was also intended to encourage parents and teachers to listen to younger girls. Pupils' drawings of 'abuse spiders' and 'cause and consequence trees' prepared at the PRA workshops were used (anonymously) as resource material.

Box 3.5: The Foundation Builders' Club

Lesson One: the girls were taken through some basic principles relating to children's rights and safety, e.g. definition of a child, welfare principles relating to the care and protection of children, their right to the basic needs of life and to education.

¹⁶ It was unfortunately not possible to obtain the cooperation of School A for these workshops.

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Lesson Two: they were educated about the ‘private areas’ of the body. The girls were taught not to permit anybody to touch them unless it was a very young child whom for example an adult in the family was bathing. They were given information on child sexual abuse, based on two sets of educational materials provided by the researcher – ‘Child Sexual Abuse: what everyone should know’ and ‘Students acting against sexual harassment’.

Lesson Three: they were taken through a detailed discussion of ‘Who a stranger is’ and were taught not to accept or demand ‘unnecessary’ gifts from male adults in and around the school. They were also led to understand why they must not enter the rooms of male adults or follow older boys to obscure places in and around the school and home.

Lesson Four: they talked about who the victims and offenders were in cases of abuse. Explanations of why children do not complain when abused were raised and discussed. Some of the explanations suggested by the pupils were: they would be beaten by their parents and even by the culprits, they might be threatened with death, they would not be believed, they would be afraid of being victimised, ridiculed and stigmatised in society.

Lesson Five: it was explained to them that any form of sexual abuse is a very big crime, which they should report without fear to teachers, parents, adults in the community, the police and social welfare. They were made to understand why they should not allow their parents or adult relations to take money from the culprits and settle the matter at family level – adults should see to the prosecution of offenders.

Lesson Six: they were then taken through ‘what everyone should know’ as listed in one of the booklets provided by the researcher and each item was explained to them. Girls in Schools B and C were later given 40 copies of the booklets to keep in their library. They also talked about some of the excuses that offenders and abusers give: e.g. she urged me on, she demanded gifts/money from me, she enticed me with her short/revealing dress, she came to lie on my bed.

Lesson Seven: This was devoted to awareness on HIV/AIDS and other STDs. The pupils were taken through them and it was explained that the main means of getting these diseases is through sexual relationships. The girls added that they knew that all forms of sexual relationships – whether rape, under-age sex or sex based on mutual agreement - can lead to early pregnancy.

Lesson eight: schoolgirls in both Schools B and C on separate sessions discussed what they had learnt on the Regional FM radio during the Saturday morning children’s programme. The children featured in the programme shared their experiences of abuse at both school and home. They passed on information about places where girls are commonly abused by boys and older men, and what is said to them. They told their fellow listeners to: learn to scream/shout for help in cases of sexual abuse, avoid walking alone in obscure places, not to enter rooms full of boys or men and to report cases of abuse to an adult relative. Girls were also advised not to stay out late in the evenings. They made an appeal to parents to listen to them when they tell ‘their story’. The programme was also fused with biblical teachings.

3. **The *durbar*:** This was held in early November 2001 in the community where School B is located. The aim was to talk about the abuse of girls openly within the community and to create awareness of the abusive experiences that girls encounter in and around the school. It was also intended to expose the problems faced by schoolgirls more generally through publicity in the media and to press for explicit guidelines and procedures for handling reported cases other than at the family level. The girls in the school performed a play written for them by the researcher after which invited guests answered questions from the audience. The guests included the regional Deputy Director of Education, the regional social welfare officer, the district Girls' Education Officer, teachers, the Regent of the community, the district planning officer and coordinating director, a children's rights advocate and the researcher. The audience was also given information about the bodies responsible for handling cases of sexual abuse and was urged not to let abusers go unpunished or to accept money from them. The series of events surrounding and following the *durbar* are illustrative of the difficulties faced by communities in seeking redress against an offender 'from within', and of the lack of clear procedures for education authorities, communities and parents on how to deal with abusing teachers. This is therefore covered in some detail in the following section.

Circumstances surrounding the *durbar*

Preparation for the event was not trouble-free. The centre piece was the play on the theme of a head teacher asking girls for sexual favours. A copy was given to the Director of Girls' Education and the coordinating director at the district assembly for comments before the rehearsals. A local teacher recommended to the researcher by the district planning officer and the district Girls' Education Officer agreed to rehearse the play with the pupils of School B prior to the *durbar*. She was an experienced teacher from the nearest urban community, who along with her husband (also a teacher) knew something about this school head and agreed that a sensitisation *durbar* would encourage the community to wake up and act. As for the pupils, both boys and girls responded positively to the suggestion. Indeed, it was difficult selecting the main characters because so many wanted to take on roles which would allow them to dramatise what they had been experiencing in school.

A few days before the *durbar*, however, the head teacher of School B asked the teacher who was rehearsing with the girls what the play was about. Once he learnt its content he protested and wanted to stop the performance. The researcher sought advice from the chairpersons of the PTA and SMC and from several district education officers, who decided to visit the school. After discussing the matter with the Regent, the officers told the head that there was nothing obscene about the play and thought that the pupils should go ahead with it. The attitude of the head 'raised eyebrows', although as indicated above some officials and the PTA and SMC chairpersons already knew why the head was objecting to the play.

The event was very well attended by people from School B and the neighbouring communities. The PTA/SMC, the district and regional Girls' Education Officers, the district

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assembly member and the Regent of the community had all helped to mobilise support and ensure that every community member was present at the *darbar* grounds. Nobody was allowed to go to the farm that day, this being a Wednesday (the traditional community taboo or meeting day). Several thousands attended and the event was covered in the newspapers and discussed on FM radio, this latter being a ‘phone-in’ organised by the researcher with school children as guest speakers who answered questions from the public. The activities were also captured on video, which had the potential for being used as educational material during workshops and seminars for children, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

After the event, when two newspaper articles appeared (**Appendix 7**) and the radio discussion had been held, the head and three of the male teachers in School B protested that, as the *darbar* had been held in the community where they were teaching, it was clear who was being referred to in the media. They threatened to leave their posts and ask for a transfer. The district education office subsequently sent an investigation team to the community, which confirmed, as the data already gathered by the researcher had shown, that the school head (a member of the community) was the principal sexual abuser. The team learnt a great deal from the elders of the community about what the girls encountered at school. As already indicated, this was an ‘open secret’ but community members had not known how to handle the matter. Several of the other male teachers were also mentioned as sexually harassing and abusing schoolgirls. In response to this, the district office ordered that no teacher should leave his/her post until the office had completed its investigations.

In response to the teachers’ protest, the District Director of Education (who was not present at the *darbar*) expressed her annoyance that it had gone so far in exposing the teachers’ misdemeanours as such public exposure tarnished the image of the teaching profession and led to teachers losing society’s respect. Other members of the district education office did not support this line and thought that the Director should be more concerned about the plight of schoolgirls in the face of HIV/AIDS than the image of the teaching profession. It was hoped that the Director would take up her retirement after Christmas, which was due. This in fact happened and her deputy took over as Acting Director.

Impact of the *darbar*

In addition to the ‘unmasking’ of the head teacher, there were other direct consequences of the *darbar*. One small incident occurred immediately after the event, with a woman approaching the researcher to tell her that ‘there is a female teacher who has been “preparing” schoolgirls for the male teachers as girl friends’. From her description, the researcher realised that it was a long serving untrained teacher from the community. This woman requested that the researcher ensure that the school authorities transfer the teacher, even though she is a member of the community. As yet, no action has been taken on this but it does suggest that complicity exists within schools even with female teachers to allow abusive behaviour to continue unchecked.

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According to the education welfare officer, a few weeks after the *durbar*, a case was reported to her office by a parent regarding a teacher in another school just two kilometres from School B who had impregnated her daughter at that school. The teacher had sought and received a transfer to another school after realizing the girl was pregnant. This parent had learnt from the *durbar* about the procedures that the authorities should follow in dealing with such cases and about what parents should do to report such a case. It was therefore only after the *durbar* that she lodged her complaint, by which time her daughter was eight months pregnant. In response, the district office sent a message to the teacher's new school, informing the head of the teacher's behaviour and instructing him as to what action to take against this teacher.

On following up the situation at the end of March 2002, the researcher learnt from a member of the investigating team that the school head and four teachers also suspected of abuse had been summoned to meet individually with the disciplinary committee of the district education office. Only the head had admitted his offence after pressure was brought to bear on him, including an intervention from the Regent. The other teachers all denied any sexual liaison with girls in the school. The committee was due to return later in April to meet with the traditional Council made up of the Regent and elders of the community and the SMC. It was expected that the head would be transferred to an all male school.¹⁷ The district education office had since the *durbar* also learnt that three girls in the JSS were pregnant and it was currently investigating who was responsible. It should be noted that there had been no reports of victimisation of the girls in School B following the events and the teachers had been warned that any complaint from the pupils or their parents would be dealt with severely. The girls were in fact safer than before the *durbar* because the situation was now openly discussed.

This member of the investigation team expressed concern that the incident had brought into the open the lack of explicit mechanisms which education officials could use in handling such cases. In his opinion, a special unit within the GES should be set up to deal specifically with cases of abuse in schools.

3.4.1 Impact of the strategic interventions

It was clear that the *durbar* had had a major impact on the School B community in raising awareness of the seriousness and prevalence of sexual abuse in the school, and had also raised the issue nationally through the media reports. The teachers and the head were under Ministry scrutiny. It was clear to the research team that holding a *durbar* was an excellent means of raising awareness and mobilising communities to act, without placing the girls at risk of retaliation.

¹⁷ This only happened in early 2003. No further penalty was imposed on the head.

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Evidence from School C also revealed a positive impact of the intervention strategies implemented (school club and sensitisation workshop). Two follow up visits to the school took place, in December and April, both providing evidence that negative attitudes and treatment by both teachers and parents towards the girls had been reduced. Below are some of the small successes recounted to the researcher.

The Head commented favourably on a number of changes. Firstly, there were usually two or more pregnancies every year but since the research started in May 2001 there had not been a single pregnancy. Secondly, during his 12 years in the school (four years as head) he had never had a schoolgirl come to him to complain of sexual abuse; yet a girl in JSS had told him about a newly posted male teacher in another school, located near her own community, who was sexually harassing her (propositioning her); she had asked the head for a copy of the booklet on 'Child Abuse' distributed by the researcher so that she could give it to this teacher to read. He had been surprised by her behaviour but realised that such initiative was to be encouraged.

During the April visit, the head also told the researcher that parents who were previously not paying their children's school fees regularly were now making prompt payment. Moreover, previous attempts at organising extra tuition for the pupils had failed because parents were not prepared to pay the 'study fee' and preferred having their children on their farms after school. The sensitisation workshop, however, had positively changed the perception that parents had of their children's education. Most were now paying the weekly fee for extra classes.

From the girls, there was evidence that the researcher's workshop with parents had also been productive. One reported that she used to go to the family farm after school to work every evening and return home very late, usually around 6:30-7pm. But now she was sent earlier and spent less time there, returning at around 4 pm when the road was safer. Another girl commented that her mother used to send her on errands after 6pm but now she sent her earlier and also made sure that she went to bed early and was not allowed to go out at night.

Other stories showed how for some girls excessive beating, insults and other abusive actions by either their stepparents or guardians had reduced considerably since the interventions. For example, one girl who was deformed in one hand told the researcher that her stepmother had been maltreating her by beating and insulting her regularly, and sometimes refusing to give her food. However, there had been a positive change of attitude towards her since the *durbar*. She appealed to the researcher to have regular meetings with parents. During both visits, it was clear to the researcher that the girls appeared to be more confident and assertive than before.

The above provides some evidence of the small scale impact of the interventions on pupils, parents, teachers and officials. The latter had become very aware of the shortcomings in the system for reporting and handling cases of teachers' sexual misconduct and the need to

strengthen procedures. Parents had acquired information about the appropriate channels for complaints and had realised that it was possible to assert their right as parents to a safe school environment for their children.

3.5 Conclusions and recommendations

The Ghana study shows that, as elsewhere, abuse is a sensitive area to research because it involves sexual abuse, a taboo topic and one which many of us would prefer to ignore. Abuse of schoolgirls remains largely hidden because the victims are reluctant to talk about their experiences to teachers and parents and those in authority are quick to find excuses for inaction. From this research, it was clear that everyone preferred to talk about abuse as experienced by others. Nevertheless, it revealed that abusive behaviour by male pupils and teachers, relatives and sugar daddies did exist in the Ghanaian school context. This took the form of aggressive sexual advances, harassment, intimidation and threats, bullying, physical assault and verbal abuse. While older male pupils posed more of a daily problem for girls, the impact of those few teachers who engaged in professional misconduct was much greater, on both girls and boys (the latter through providing a negative role model).

As in the Zimbabwe study, it was worrying that girls appeared to accept such behaviour by older boys and teachers as an inevitable part of their daily school life, thus allowing abusive actions to go largely unchecked. Evidence was provided to suggest that where victims or parents did make official complaints about abuse, the schools often failed to discipline offenders. As in the case of the district Director of Education's reaction to the *durbar*, some school authorities show defensiveness in discussing cases of abuse if the offender is a teacher and, in an effort to protect the image of teachers, are reluctant to expose and discipline such individuals. In so doing, they are shielding perpetrators and helping to perpetuate serious sexual misconduct. In cases where education authorities do mete out punishments, they are not a sufficient deterrent to prevent abusive actions occurring again, with the transfer of the teacher to another school being the most common action. It appears that even the head of School B will not face prosecution, despite his offences over many years. Similarly boys are rarely disciplined within the school when they assault girls. Such attitudes have encouraged the abuse of girls in school to flourish unchecked and to become a 'normalised' part in society. This poses a threat to girls' education at all levels.

Unfortunately, when girls come forward with allegations, they are often not listened to or believed. Girls who try to report to the school authorities are often victimised, ridiculed and stigmatised by pupils and teachers. Such attitudes continue to foster an authoritarian culture where the behaviour of boys and male teachers cannot be questioned by schoolgirls. Consequently, most girls suffer the effects of abuse in silence which in turn damages their confidence and self-esteem and retards their educational progress and achievement. The negative consequences of one head teacher's misconduct are informative, as despite efforts to

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delegate powers of educational decision-making to regional and local bodies and to give political voice to the people through district assemblies and bodies such as SMCs, it appears that there is no easy way of gaining redress - not at least until clear procedures, adequate information and institutional support are available.

In terms of **recommendations**, there is an urgent need for a more coordinated, proactive and system-wide response to combat the problem of school-based abuse. It requires a holistic approach. The following are suggested for consideration by stakeholders at every level of the education system.

Ministry of Education (MOE):

The study revealed weaknesses in terms of linkages between the district education office and the national level response to abuse in the school environment.

The MOE should:

- Develop and adopt a plan of action on school-based abuse of girls. This should be done in wide consultation with all stakeholders including parents, pupils, teachers, social workers and NGOs, offering advocacy and support services to abusers and government officials.
- Establish a special unit for children's rights and protection (a suggestion already made by teachers and education officials) within the Ministry and GES. GES should report and document all cases of child abuse to WAJU and the Ghana Police Service, and GES should work with the police to identify proper procedures for handling cases.
- Develop a stronger and more transparent national policy for handling cases of abuse and authorising district disciplinary procedures. The teachers' code of conduct should be revised to take into account new legal and disciplinary procedures. Teachers should be suspended during criminal investigations and not transferred until cleared of all charges.
- Set out guidelines for schools providing details of appropriate action in cases of abuse and create easily accessible procedures by which girls can make confidential complaints. Legal provision must be introduced to protect schoolgirls who may be abused.
- Create an independent Task Team at both regional and district levels to monitor cases of abuse in schools and oversee adequate response to reported cases. Such a body must be empowered to take steps to sanction head teachers or education officers who may fail to act in accordance with the provisions/guidelines.

The Ghana Education Service (GES) should:

- Organise regular participatory community *durbars* to sensitise communities on children's rights and legal procedures to follow in cases of abuse in school, especially if it is sexual in nature.
- Hold Parent-Teacher workshops in schools to raise awareness of issues of abuse and parental responsibility toward children's education, and to develop community-based action plans to handle allegations of abuse.
- Revise the PTA and SMC training manual to incorporate procedures for reporting cases of child abuse.
- Strengthen the role of the District Education Office Disciplinary Committee in investigating and taking action when complaints are made against teachers
- Strengthen the District Education Oversight Committees and Disciplinary Committees so that they also act as a support mechanism for parents and communities when reporting issues of child abuse. This will ensure that issues are taken up by a wider body and not limited to action by the District Education Director.
- Develop specialised curricula on abuse in school and provide gender-based training courses and workshops for all teachers and for trainees in training colleges.¹⁸
- Train district officers and head teachers to deal with incidents of abuse in and around the school in accordance with explicit guidelines. Such training programmes must be geared towards reducing gender and power bias in dealing with abuse of schoolgirls.
- Appoint and train child protection officers who will work from the District Education Office (or train existing welfare officers to handle cases relating to child abuse, children's rights and protection). Some officers could be appointed directly by the District Assembly.

Girls should:

- Move in and around the school in the company of other girls to prevent any attempt at harassment or abuse.
- Form clubs to discuss and learn about their basic rights and how to respond to abusive behaviour or harassment.
- Refuse to go to male teachers' quarters or rooms on request except with other girls.

¹⁸ World University Service of Canada is in the process of publishing eight story books on child rights and abuse for teachers and children at basic level of education.

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- Be empowered to report abuses they experience to their parents, teachers and adult relations.
- Receive information on child abuse, children's rights and protection at the basic education level, through the life skills curriculum and other materials on children's rights.

Boys should:

- Be provided with gender awareness training to eliminate negative perceptions about girls and treat them with respect.
- Report cases of abusive actions that they themselves encounter.

Parents must:

- Be encouraged to listen to what their daughters tell them and refrain from blaming girls when they make allegations.
- Be encouraged to provide their children, especially girls, with basic school items.
- Be sensitised to refrain from using abusive language towards their children.
- Be encouraged to show interest in their children's progress in school, monitor their attendance at school and discuss their education with teachers.

Chapter 4

Malawi

4.1 The research context

The formal educational system in Malawi consists of three levels: primary (Standards 1-8) which enrolls children from the age of six, secondary which is of four years' duration, and tertiary. Access to secondary remains highly competitive, with in 1997 the transition rate being only 8% (MoEST 1999). There are a number of Distance Education Centres and Community Day Secondary Schools which supplement formal provision. Primary education has expanded very rapidly in Malawi from 1.9 million in 1992/3 to nearly 3 million in 1994/5; at the same time fees have been abolished, although schools make unofficial levies to cover the cost of various activities and items (e.g. sports, exams, water). District Education Offices (DEOs) provide material and professional support to all public and assisted schools, including inspection and advisory services.

Malawi has one of the highest levels of HIV/AIDS infection in Africa: in 1999 it was estimated that 16.4% of the 15-49 age group were infected with HIV and the national total was 8.8% (National AIDS Control Programme 1999). 46% of all new infections in 1998 were estimated to be in the 15-24 age bracket and of these 60% were female.

The case study schools

This study was located in three public primary schools in one district of Southern Malawi. The selection was made from the District Education Office's list of schools. One school was chosen in each of three categories - rural, urban and peri-urban - based on information provided by Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) about recent incidents of sexual abuse involving teachers.

The three schools had diverse characteristics: the first was located in an urban setting, serving mostly low income groups as is typical of most urban public primary schools in Malawi. The second was located in an expanding trading centre with peri-urban characteristics, although most of the children attending the school came from peasant families. The third was located in a typical rural area, where families depend on subsistence agriculture. The schools differed in the gender composition of their teaching force: the majority of teachers in the urban school (90 percent) and in the peri-urban school (two-thirds) were female, whereas all but two in the rural school were male. All three schools were co-educational.

As was also the case in Ghana, the research began with PRA workshops, which took place in February 2001. They were followed by individual interviews and focus group discussions. Individual interviews were conducted with 106 female pupils and 65 male pupils aged 10-18 from Standards 5, 6, 7 and 8, 13 teachers (six female and seven male), and the three male head teachers. Given the focus of the study, more girls were interviewed than boys. As already pointed out, these numbers are higher than in the Ghana study because of the wish to cover a wider age band (most girls in the Ghana sample were aged 11-15) and also because the

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Malawi schools were much larger than their Ghana counterparts (the smallest was the rural school with 1003 pupils and the largest the peri-urban school with 1756, compared to a figure of around 350 for each of the Ghana schools).

For both the PRA workshops and the interviews, classroom registers were used to select pupils randomly within the age group 10 to 14. A number of older pupils were then included, because it was thought that they had more experiences to recount than the younger ones; also a balance was sought between pupils who lived near the school and those who were obliged to travel some distance. Around 30-40 girls and 20-25 boys were interviewed in each school. Focus group discussions were also conducted with separate groups of boys and girls in each school and also with some members of the School Committee¹⁹ and Disciplinary Committee.²⁰ In addition to the teachers, the police officer in charge of the domestic violence unit in the region was also interviewed.

The third phase of the research was devoted to strategy workshops, which were held in July 2001. The purpose of these was to identify viable strategies based on the research findings that could be recommended as a way forward to help address the issue of abuse in schools. These workshops were held separately for different groups, these being female pupils, male pupils, teachers, members of the PTA and School Committee, and district level personnel (including some NGOs). Follow up visits were made to two of the schools in December and April 2002.

The analysis of girls' and boys' perspectives of abuse in section 4.3 below is based primarily on findings from the interviews, supplemented by views expressed during the focus group discussions. In some instances, findings from the PRA workshops are included. The pupils' perspectives are then followed by those of the teachers. A brief account of the focus group discussions with School Committee and Disciplinary Committee members is also included.

Background to each School

School A (urban): This is a mission school, located in the centre of an urban area and on a major highway. The one-story school is part of the church compound and is generally in good condition, with electricity, running water and a phone. The government pays the running expenses including the salaries. In the afternoon, it serves as a Community Day Secondary School. The school caters for pupils from five villages, the furthest being 5 kms from the school. At the time of the research in early 2001 it had 1469 pupils, with significantly more boys (762) than girls (707). The school had 25 teachers, 20 female and

¹⁹ The School Committee is the governing body in every school, consisting of a chairperson and usually eight other members, including one DEO representative, the school proprietor (e.g. the local church)'s representative, a local education representative, four parents and two community members. These committees have not functioned well; currently a national NGO called CRECCOM (Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation) supported from the USA is running a campaign intended to mobilise the community to participate in improving educational quality; this includes training for School Committee members.

²⁰ The Disciplinary Committee in each school is made up of 2-4 teachers. Its role is to handle complaints, settle disputes and discipline both teachers and pupils (but usually the latter).

five male, all of whom were qualified. Only one male teacher was unmarried. The current head teacher is male and has been there for 8 years, two of which as head. A few teachers live in teacher housing in the compound. The average age of the girls who participated in the research was 13.2 years, and of the boys 15.7 years. In the urban school 16 out of 39 girls lived with both parents, five with their mothers, five with their fathers and 13 with other relatives. The majority (87.2%) said that they were satisfied with the support they received from home, but 48.7% had problems with making school contributions. All but one boy out of 56 and all 29 girls passed the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) in 2000, although only 14 boys and six girls were selected to go on to secondary school.

There had been no cases in 2000 or 2001 of teachers getting girls pregnant, although some pupils and teachers referred to a case in the past. It is noticeable, however, that the Standard 8 class was much smaller than that of Standard 7, which would suggest a high dropout rate, especially of girls.

Table 4.1: Pupils School A

Standard	Total girls	Over-age girls	Total boys	Over-age boys	Age range	Total
Total 1-8 of which:	707		762		5-17	1469
Standard 5	93	3	96	0	9-14	189
Standard 6	89	4	94	4	10-15	183
Standard 7	78	9	87	5	11-16	165
Standard 8	37	5	48	3	12-17	85

School B: This is located on a tar road, approximately 16 kms from a major town, and in a community which is a growing trading centre. It takes pupils from 11 surrounding villages, several of them being at 2 kms distance. This is a very large school, with a total of 1756 pupils at the time of the research. In order to accommodate this very large number, it operates an overlapping shift system, with some pupils arriving in the early morning and others late morning. The school is very dilapidated, with its buildings in poor repair. It has no electricity or running water. It does however house a Teacher Development Centre, which provides INSET activities and resources for teachers in the area, and is funded separately. Some teachers live in houses in the school grounds. There are significantly more girls (934) than boys (822) in this school. This is largely because boys drop out to engage in income generating activities usually linked to the trading centre, where a large market is held twice weekly. The boys are active in petty trading and portering. Smoking marijuana is also widespread among boys. The school had 27 teachers at the time of the research, of whom 16 were female. There were five unmarried female teachers and one unmarried male. Six female and two male teachers were unqualified. The head teacher is male and has been there for 19 years, seven of which as head. The majority of the teachers live in housing on the school premises; however, as there is insufficient for all the teachers, some rent houses in the community. This school has very low

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passes in the PSLCE: with only 12 boys out of 70 and four girls out of 26 passing in 2000, and only five boys and three girls selected to continue to secondary school.

There were no officially reported cases of teachers impregnating schoolgirls in 2000 or 2001. However, during the research 13 girls said they knew of a teacher who had impregnated a schoolgirl at the school. The average age of the girls who participated in the research was 14.1 years, and of the boys 15.2. 15 out of 35 girls said that they lived with both parents, six with their mothers, six with their fathers and eight with other relatives. A smaller number than in the urban school (only 61.8%) said that they were satisfied with the support they received from home and 62.9% said that they faced problems with making their school contributions.

Table 4.2: Pupils School B

Standard	Total girls	Over-age girls	Total boys	Over-age boys	Age range	Total
Total 1-8 of which:	934		822		5-16	1756
Standard 5	103	0	75	0	9-12	178
Standard 6	81	0	77	2	10-14	158
Standard 7	79	3	70	0	11-14	149
Standard 8	65	15	68	14	12-16	133

School C: This school is the smallest of the three, with 1003 pupils. As with School A, there were significantly more boys (536) than girls (467) at the time of the research. It had 15 teachers, of whom only two were female (both married). One male teacher was unmarried. The head teacher was male and had been there for 12 years, eight of which as head teacher. The school is located near the tar road, a trading centre and a market. There are three buildings, but only one is in a reasonably good state and another is extremely dilapidated. There is no running water or electricity. None of the classrooms have furniture except Standards 7 and 8. Even the staff room has only two benches and the head teacher's office is unfinished. Most teachers live in housing in the school compound. The school serves 12 villages, two of which are at 5 kms distance and only five are one km or less distance from the school. The villages rely mainly on a subsistence economy. There is a high number of over-age children, especially in Standards 7 and 8. The average age of the girls who participated in the research was 13.6, of the boys 15.7. It has a relatively low PSLCE pass rate, with 23 out of 46 boys and 16 out of 30 girls passing in 2000 (of whom 8 and 5 respectively were selected for secondary school).

Table 4.3: Pupils School C

Standard	Total girls	Over-age girls	Total boys	Over-age boys	Age range	Total
Total 1-8 of which:	467		536		6-20	1003
Standard 5	38	2	52	10	9-18	90
Standard 6	37	12	48	12	11-20	85
Standard 7	49	30	48	31	11-20	97
Standard 8	29	27	67	65	10-20	96

Nine of the 25 girls sampled said that they lived with both parents, nine with their mothers only and seven with other relatives. 76% were satisfied with the support they received from home, but 72% reported problems with making school contributions. One case was reported in 2000 of a teacher impregnating two schoolgirls; he has been suspended since that time on half pay.

4.2 The PRA Workshops

The research began with two-day workshops in each school, with 20 girls and 10 boys from Standards 5-8 being selected in each school through stratified sampling. The selected girls were aged 10-15 years and boys 10-17 years. A wide range was preferred so as to enable the research team to look at perceptions of abuse at around the age of puberty as well as with older girls who are more likely to have experienced or encountered some form of abuse. Most of the boys selected were older than 14 years, because their sexual initiation usually begins later than with girls. Considerations were also given to distance from home to school, and in particular girls who lived far from the school were included so as to capture some of the challenges they face in walking to and from home.

The workshops were participatory in nature allowing the pupils to express themselves freely. Activities were carried out separately for girls and boys. Most pupils were at ease working in groups; however, the youngest boys and girls, being those around the age of 10-12, were sometimes at a loss when it came to discussing some of the issues. It was also observed that younger pupils were more at ease if grouped together than when grouped with older pupils. Repeating instructions was necessary with the younger ones. It was apparent that the pupils were not very open with information at the beginning; however, after explanations and reassurances they relaxed, although in all the schools (as in Ghana and Zimbabwe), they were more at ease talking in general than talking about personal experiences.

The activities carried out during the workshops were similar to those covered in the Ghana workshops and included: mapping their school and identifying safe and unsafe areas, drawing 'abuse' spiders, drawing 'cause and consequence' trees, compiling a 'problem wall', performing role plays and identifying solutions. As in Ghana, some of the time was devoted

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to working with boys on a sample of the tasks. Some of the findings, which were broadly similar between schools, are integrated into the analysis of girls' and boys' perspectives below.

4.3 Perspectives of Abuse

4.3.1 Girls' perspectives

Problems girls face in school

The issue of abuse, especially for girls in Malawi, is a sensitive one. It was seen as necessary for the researchers to first establish a rapport by exploring the general problems that girls face in school in the participatory workshops. This also allowed them to ascertain the extent to which abuse came up spontaneously as a real issue, rather than one imposed by the researchers' agenda. This was then followed up through the interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews were able to probe these problems further in terms of individual experiences of abuse.

In School A (the urban school), the most serious problem mentioned in the workshops was excessive corporal punishment, followed by (in decreasing order of importance) 'too much noise in the classroom', 'love proposals' by teachers and male pupils, discouraging remarks by teachers and fellow pupils, and sexual harassment (consisting of unsolicited physical contact such as pinching or fondling of breasts, beating, abusive language etc) by teachers and pupils. Other problems in this school included: some subjects (e.g. science) being difficult, girls gossiping among themselves, and teachers' inappropriate behaviour (laziness, drunkenness, cruelty).

In School B (the peri-urban school), girls indicated excessive punishments and being beaten by teachers and boys as the most critical problems, followed by teachers and fellow pupils proposing love, discouraging comments from teachers and fellow pupils, and sexual harassment by teachers and pupils. Other problems were: teachers' inappropriate behaviour (laziness etc), difficult subjects, lack of learning materials, theft and fighting among pupils, girls gossiping amongst themselves, pupils making a noise in class, and being sent back home for coming to school late.

In School C (the rural school), the girls indicated being beaten by teachers and boys, teachers and fellow pupils proposing, excessive punishments, teachers' inappropriate behaviour, lack of learning materials and difficult subjects as the most critical problems. Other problems mentioned were: poverty, too much noise in class, gossiping among girls, and discouraging remarks.

Some of the statements made by girls in the three schools were:

Boys threaten to beat me when I refuse their proposition of love

Corporal punishment given to all when only some pupils are making a noise in class

A lot of noise in class by pupils

Afraid of approaching the teacher when faced with a problem because others have accused me of proposing love to the teacher

When I ask a question the teacher answers rudely and negatively

Teachers not marking our work

When I fail to answer a question, I am made to stand on the desk and boys peep through my dress

Boys touching my breasts

Bigger girls snatching food from me

Gossiping among girls

Interestingly, excessive punishment from teachers rather than sexual harassment or physical violence was cited as the most common problem by the girls (also by the boys). The types of punishments given to girls varied but included: digging pit latrines, tending flowerbeds, cleaning classrooms or toilets, fetching water, whipping by teachers, and collecting bricks, poles and reeds for construction purposes. Various reasons were given for these punishments. Making a noise in class and coming to school late were the most common, followed by writing notes or personal letters while the teacher is teaching, fighting, making rude remarks, gossiping about the teacher and failing a test.

It is common in all schools in Malawi for girls to do chores around the school, usually before and sometimes after classes. These three schools were found to be no exception. Almost all girls interviewed indicated that they sweep the grounds and classrooms before classes, clean the blackboard and collect teachers' books from the staffroom. Class teachers and sometimes the head teacher also ask girls to do additional chores in the morning before classes, some of which relate to school or class work but others not.

During the workshops in the urban school, the girls expressed the opinion that doing personal chores for teachers during school hours was a form of abuse, and that sometimes male teachers used this as an opportunity to propose love to girls (e.g. by asking them to carry their books or to buy household items for them in the market, which they will then bring to their houses). In the rural school, girls said that they were sometimes sent to buy items for teachers from the market 5 kms away on market days, while others were sent to buy drinks at the roadside. Over half the girls in all three schools said that they ran *school* related errands for teachers and a lower percentage (10% in School A, 37% in School B and 20% in School C) said that they also ran *personal* errands for teachers.

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What was very noticeable was that boys were rarely asked to do such chores. Only 5% of boys in the urban school, 4% in the peri-urban school and none in the rural school said that they sometimes ran errands. In addition to their school obligations, girls in Malawi have heavy domestic duties to perform daily before and after school, while boys are usually only asked to do the more physical tasks such as collecting firewood, chopping wood and gardening perhaps several times a week. Girls are therefore disadvantaged in so far as they have little opportunity for uninterrupted learning and are more likely to suffer from fatigue and lower levels of concentration than boys.

Participation during classes

The study endeavoured to find out from girls if they sometimes felt shy to ask or answer questions during instruction in the classroom. Some girls revealed that this was the case: 58% in the urban school, 63% in the peri-urban and 68% in the rural school reported that they felt shy in class. Interestingly, boys also said that they felt shy: 45%, 48% and 50% respectively. This is contradictory to common perception that boys are bold and attention-seeking in class. Sample statements from girls included:

Fear of being laughed at if I give the wrong answer

Teachers say I ask questions I already have answers to

Teachers are harsh; they make me stand in class when I fail to give the right answer and sometimes beat me

Sexual activity among girls

The interviews explored the pupils' perceptions of sexual behaviour. Their answers appeared to confirm findings from other studies in Malawi that reveal a high level of sexual activity among school children (McAulliffe 1994, Bandawe & Forster 1996, and Phiri 1997). It appears that nearly half of primary school pupils are sexually active, most at an early age. These studies, however, have not explored whether abuse or violence characterises these relationships.

Slightly over half the girls interviewed in all the three schools claimed to know at least one girl in their Standard who was having a sexual relationship with a boy in the school and in two of the schools (urban and peri-urban) nearly 80% of these girls said that they could identify more than one such girl. This matches the finding of the Kadzamira et al (2001) study that 70% of secondary school pupils and 60% of primary school pupils agreed with the statement that love relationships between boys and girls are common in their school. In the present study, while the majority of girls in the urban school (76.8%) disapproved of such behaviour, nearly half of the girls in the peri-urban and rural schools were not sure whether to approve or condemn it. Those who disapproved were aware of the consequences of premature sexual activity, in particular its consequences on girls' life chances. Few girls, however, mentioned HIV/AIDS as a consequence of indulging in sexual activities.

In the interviews, some girls reported that girls who have sexual relationships with boys tend to boast about their relationship, suggesting that there is considerable peer pressure among girls to engage in sexual activity. At the same time, three quarters of the girls interviewed believed that girls were more serious than boys about their relationships but this was more pronounced in the rural and peri-urban schools than in the urban school, where just over half believed that girls are more serious.

Table 4.4: Girls' perceptions of sexual behaviour in their school

	Urban (Total Number 39)	Peri-urban (Total Number 35)	Rural (Total Number 32)
Know of other girls who are having sex with boys in the school	21 53.8%	18 51.4%	17 53.1%
Approve of such behaviour	1 2.6%	0 0%	0 0%
Disapprove	30 76.9%	19 54.3%	17 53.1%
Don't know/no reply	8 20.5%	16 45.7%	15 46.9%
Know of cases where a girl was impregnated by a boy in the school	20 51.3%	16 45.7%	11 34.4%

Some of these sexual relationships have resulted in pregnancies as indicated by the responses in Table 4, with somewhat higher figures in the urban school. When asked what had happened to the girl and boy, the most common response was that she had aborted the pregnancy, was expelled or had dropped out of the school to have the baby. Apparently, very few of these cases end up in marriage, with only one urban and one rural schoolgirl mentioning marriage.

During the PRA workshops, as in Ghana, the perceptions of boys and girls as to why they have sex at a young age were explored, and it is valuable to compare girls' views with those of boys here. Girls were of the view that peer pressure and lack of support from parents are the main reasons why girls have sex with boys. In addition, girls in the urban school stated that girls wrongly interpret the new democratic freedoms to mean freedom to do as one likes. While boys thought that lack of parental support and peer pressure account for the high levels of sexual activity among young people, they also perceive girls as wanting to have sex.

The pupils' responses to the question why boys want to have sex with girls suggest that both boys and girls see boys to a large extent as victims of provocation from girls. Both, for example, blame the way girls dress as responsible for arousing sexual desire in boys. Dresses with slits, see-through dresses and mini-skirts were all cited as provocative dressing. This view is also shared by teachers who during the strategy workshops strongly felt that it is the way girls dress that is responsible for teachers propositioning them. Pornographic material was also said to encourage sexual activity among boys. Boys from the peri-urban school also mentioned copying teachers (whom they observe propositioning girls) as a reason.

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Box 4.1: Why girls have sex with boys

<i>Location</i>	<i>Girls' views</i>	<i>Boys' views</i>
Urban	Because of the way girls dress Because of the freedom of expression brought by democracy They want money They copy from friends thinking it is good Lack of assistance from parents	Girls want to get pocket money from boys Girls find boys handsome Peer pressure Lack of support from home Lack of interest in school Lack of guidance from their parents and teachers
Peri-urban		Lack of support Because of the way girls dress today Because of 'gender', girls want to have sex with boys They believe that they have the freedom to do what they want because of democracy
Rural	Lack of support from parents Peer pressure	They just want to have sex with boys They want money from boys They want to confide their secrets to boys

Abusive encounters

Against this backdrop of perceived high levels of sexual interest and sexual activity, the interviews explored the extent to which girls experienced abusive behaviour, whether by boys, teachers or other men.

Abusive behaviour by boys

When asked about their personal experiences of abuse, the girls perceived the main perpetrators to be fellow male pupils, as in Ghana and Zimbabwe. Within the school compound they were commonly subjected to aggressive sexual advances by older boys ('proposing love'). Nearly half of the girls interviewed in the urban and rural schools stated that boys from their school had propositioned them, while in the peri-urban school only a quarter said so. The majority had been propositioned by several boys, not just one. Where boys used coercive behaviour, the girls said that they felt angry or embarrassed. Peer pressure among boys in particular to have relationships with girls is considerable and so at times they resort to abusive behaviour to coerce girls into submitting to their advances. As in Zimbabwe, but unlike in Ghana, the most common means of approaching girls was for boys to send messages through friends or to write love letters. Forty-five percent of the girls

Box 4.2: Why boys have sex with girls

<i>Location</i>	<i>Girls' views</i>	<i>Boys' views</i>
Urban	Lack of self control over sexual desires Girls attract boys by wearing mini skirts and dresses with slits Loose morals	
Peri-urban	Because of the way girls dress Because they go to drinking places where they find girls Lack of parental guidance Copying friends Pornographic videos and magazines	Because of watching pornographic videos and magazines Lack of parental guidance Copying teachers Provoked by girls dressing Boys who drink in bars end up going with bar girls
Rural	Boys would like to spoil girls' future Girls want money Girls' dress is deliberately provocative in order to attract boys Girls want to fulfil their sexual desires Copying their friends Girls go out with boys out of fear Boys entice girls with money Boys want girls not to continue with their education Girls go out with boys because they are ill- treated by their parents Boys have sexual desires	Boys lure girls with money Boys threaten girls with physical violence Peer pressure Girls lack money Girls lack soap Girls lack support

interviewed had received love letters from boys. Girls who turned down these proposals risked being subjected to various forms of aggressive behaviour including threats of being beaten up, abusive language and being accosted on the way to and from school, as the following statements show:

Four boys wrote letters and passed them through a friend. Two of them were aggressive because they threatened to beat me up.

I kept the letter and when he threatened me with beating, I gave the letter to the teacher who punished him.

The following example of a 'love letter' received by a girl in School C reveals a tone that is both aggressive and arrogant.

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Box 4.3: Sample 'love letter'

I know you are not OK due to High Blood Pressure. I do not have much to say but I just want to tell you that I have never had a girlfriend..... OK let it be that you are not the only girl around. There is another girl in Standard 6. Do not think that because I proposed love to you then you are the most popular girl around - no but there is something I like in you.

Why don't you just tell me that you do not want. OK I agree, thanks, maybe its my luck. I do not have much to say. I just want to warn you that you are clever this time round but you are a Motherfucker woman! You'll never get a man like me, your friends are suffering because of myself.

N.B. If you have not heard me properly, go and ask your more learned friends to read this letter for you.

Not surprisingly, therefore, when girls were asked to indicate whether they had experienced any problems with boys in their school, a large number said they had (64%). When asked to mention the worst thing that ever happened to them with a boy, girls from all three schools mentioned various forms of abusive behaviour such as sexual harassment, physical threats and abusive language. Examples were being beaten because a girl refused a boy's proposal, being threatened with rape and unsolicited touching on the breast and body. This echoed what was said by the girls during the workshops about boys intimidating and humiliating them by behaving aggressively.

Only a small number of girls said that they confided in someone when they had problems with boys. In all three schools, peers or best friends were the most popular choice for sharing problems with, followed by parents and teachers. In the rural school none of the girls said they had reported such an incident to a female teacher but several had reported it to a male teacher. This rather surprising finding can however be explained by the fact that there were only two female teachers in the school, both of whom were teaching in lower Standards. So, girls may have little choice but to report to their male class teachers.²¹ It is clear however that girls are afraid of reporting incidents of assault and aggressive behaviour, even rape, for fear of retaliation, so many cases go unreported. They also believed that teachers did not listen to them and that if the incident occurs outside the school compound, the teachers will not be interested. As reported elsewhere (Leach and Machakanja 2000), by ignoring and not acting on complaints when they do receive them, whether from girls or from other boys, teachers are in fact condoning abusive behaviour.

Harassment hotspots within the school

The school mapping exercise during the workshops at the beginning of the study revealed many places both within and outside school where pupils do not feel free to walk, play or relax. Girls'

²¹ In Ghana, the researcher observed that the male teachers in all three schools interacted more with the girls than with the boys, and that the female teachers appeared not to show any warmth towards the girls. It may be that girls do prefer to talk to sympathetic male teachers.

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maps had more areas marked as unsafe, as in Ghana and in the earlier Zimbabwe study, indicating that girls feel more threatened and less secure in the school environment than boys.

A comparison between boys' and girls' views is revealing here. While their perceptions of unsafe areas around the school tended to be similar, there were significant differences in the reasons given as to why they regarded them as unsafe, and hence different safety concerns. Girls identified unsafe areas as the pupils' toilets (both girls' and boys'), boys' playground, busy roads, teachers' houses, offices and classrooms. For them, the main reasons were fear of being attacked by boys and men, and verbal and sexual harassment by boys, teachers and men from the community. Boys on the other hand mentioned areas such as busy roads, girls' toilets, the girls' playground and the head teacher's office and staff room as unsafe, not for fear of personal safety but because they knew that these areas were out of bounds.

A particular harassment hotspot within the school compound was the pupils' toilets. This was mentioned both during the workshops and the interviews in all three schools as an area where girls were frequently harassed without much intervention from the school authorities. In the rural and urban schools, girls' toilets were regarded as dangerous because they were close to the boys' toilets. In the rural school, boys' and girls' toilets were located in the same building and boys continuously harassed or assaulted girls who tried to use the toilets. Boys would wait for them and try to fondle their breasts or peek at them as they were using the toilets. Similarly in the urban school, where boys' and girls' toilets were located in the same direction, girls reported being intercepted by boys on their way to the toilets, which forced them to use the bushes, but even then boys would follow and peek at them. Significantly, in the peri-urban school, where boys' and girls' toilets were in opposite directions, girls labelled their toilets as an area where they felt safe.

Another hotspot was the playground. This was considered a 'no go' areas for girls in all three schools and girls reported that boys verbally and physically harass them if they dare go near what they consider to be their playground. Girls were sometimes also assaulted in and near their classrooms. In the rural school, boys were reported to stand by the classroom door after break and to try to fondle girls' breasts as they entered the classrooms. Girls who tried to avoid this by entering after their teacher faced the possibility of punishment for being late to class. Girls felt bitter that the insensitivity to their complaints by teachers and the failure to see such behaviour as abusive meant that they were left with no support and no means of addressing the situation.

In all three schools, both girls and boys also mentioned the staff room and the head teacher's office as areas where they felt unsafe because the school rules did not allow them to go there unless instructed by a teacher to do so. Classrooms were also mentioned in two of the schools as areas where pupils felt uncomfortable because teachers sometimes beat them.

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Abusive behaviour by teachers

Girls were of the opinion that abuse by teachers took three forms: sexual abuse, verbal abuse and corporal punishment.

Sexual abuse

Girls were asked if teachers make sexual advances to them. This was a very sensitive question for them, especially for the youngest girls. Many in the sample appeared to be too embarrassed to answer. However, Table 8 shows that a few did admit to having been subjected to such advances.

Table 4.5: **Girls' perceptions of male teachers**

	Urban (Total Number 39)	Peri-urban (Total Number 35)	Rural (Total Number 32)
Received a 'love proposal' from a teacher in the school	4 10.3%	5 14.3%	3 9.4%
Know of at least one girl who had been proposed to by a teacher	18 46.2%	15 42.9%	20 62.5%
Know of a girl who accepted the teacher's proposal	10 25.6%	8 22.9%	9 28.1%
Know of a teacher having sex with a girl in the school	11 28.2%	11 31.4%	19 59.4%
Know of a girl who became pregnant by a teacher	3 7.7%	13 37.1%	20 62.5%
Think some girls encourage the teacher to make advances	15 38.5%	7 20%	16 50%

Four girls from the urban school, five from the peri-urban school and three from the rural school admitted to having received 'love proposals' from teachers. Sample statements were:

He asked me to visit him at his house in the evening

He called me outside as if he wanted to send me for something and he proposed verbally

He wrote a letter and put it in my notebook when he took it for marking

He used to call me, to ask a lot of questions. He once invited me to his house so that we could have a chat.

He sent another girl to propose to me and promised every good thing like passing exams.

Although a relatively small number admitted to having been propositioned by teachers, it is significant that over 50% of all the girls interviewed said that they knew of other girls who had received and accepted love proposals from teachers - although 30% of these said they did not know whether their girlfriend had accepted or not. Over 80% of girls who said they knew that some girls were having sexual relationships with teachers were actually able to name both the girls and the teachers involved (seven in School A, 11 in School B and 12 in

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School C). However, the study could not establish whether at times this was just rumour. Most girls did however admit that such proposals flattered them. It was also established that most respondents did not in fact report teachers' advances to parents, friends, and the head teacher (as was also the case in Ghana and Zimbabwe). Where they did decide to confide in someone, it was to a friend. Among those who said they had told a friend, surprisingly all of them said that he/she encouraged her to accept the proposal. A number of girls also thought that some girls actually encourage the teachers to propose love to them.

As in the Ghana and the Zimbabwe studies, here too girls were more willing to talk about other girls who had been proposed to by teachers, and in some cases were having affairs, rather than admit to it themselves.

All the girls interviewed said that it is not right for teachers to propose love to pupils. They gave reasons such as:

The teacher can impregnate the pupil and abandon her
Teachers are supposed to be exemplary in behaviour towards their pupils
Girls get disturbed in their schooling and their future gets doomed

When asked about their personal opinions of girls who have such relationships with teachers, answers given included:

The girls are after financial gain
The girls have loose morals
Girls want to get favours from teachers during school based examination time
Girls are doing this because of poverty
Girls are afraid of being punished by the teachers if they refuse

Girls impregnated by teachers

Cases of girls being impregnated by teachers while in school are common in Malawi. Most of such cases are handled at the school level and not by formal procedures involving the education authorities. This may be attributed to a lack of clear guidelines on how to handle teacher misconduct or weak enforcement of regulations regarding teacher conduct while in service.

In two of the three schools there had been recent cases reported of a teacher or teachers impregnating schoolgirls. This had been one of the criteria used for selection of the case study schools. During the interviews, girls were asked whether they knew of any girl who had become pregnant from a teacher in their school. Table 8 above shows that three girls in the urban school, 13 in the peri-urban school and 20 in the rural school said that they knew of at least one girl. When asked what happened to the girl, they said that in most cases she had dropped out or been expelled. In only three cases (one urban and two rural) had she got married to the teacher.

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In both the peri-urban and the rural schools, the teachers were still on the staff. In the peri-urban school, two of the 13 girls thought that the teacher was on sick leave and had denied being responsible for the pregnancy. In the rural school, most knew that the teacher was still in the school and had not been punished, although two thought that he had been transferred (this is discussed in detail later).

Corporal punishment

As already indicated, the pupils interviewed revealed that corporal punishment is one of the most common problems they face in school. It should be noted that it is not permitted in schools in Malawi, yet this study has revealed that it is widely practised. This may be because the policy runs counter to cultural views of appropriate ways of disciplining children or because there are no clear guidelines on appropriate teacher conduct to support the policy.

Over 80% of girls in all three schools said they had been beaten by at least one teacher, and at least a quarter of them by more than one teacher. Most said they had only been beaten once in the current school year but 40% in the rural school said they had been beaten at least three times. It would appear that corporal punishment was more severe in the rural school (in contrast to Ghana where it appeared to be used less). As for who used it more frequently, in all three schools more girls thought that male teachers did. However, in the urban school there were only five male teachers, and in the rural school only two female teachers, so the findings need to be viewed with this in mind.

Table 4.6: Girls' beaten teachers

	Urban (Total Number 37)	Peri-urban (Total Number 35)	Rural (Total Number 25)
Beaten by a teacher	32 86.5%	28 80%	22 88%
Male teachers beat most	29 78.4%	20 57.1%	22 88%
Female teachers beat most	6 16.2%	11 31.4%	2 8%
Both male and female teachers equally	2 5.4%	2 5.7%	1 4%

When asked if they approved of corporal punishment, over 70% in all three schools indicated they did not approve. It was established during the focus group discussions that pupils think there are other ways of punishing them. It was clear that they considered beating a serious form of abuse which leads to both physical and emotional trauma and contributes to school dropout, lowered self-esteem, and increased absenteeism due to fear and sometimes unruly behaviour towards teachers. Pupils also said that corporal punishment is a violation of their rights.

Verbal abuse

This study explored the extent to which teachers used abusive language towards pupils during lessons. The findings revealed that over 50% of girls in all three schools indicated that some teachers did. Examples provided by girls during interviews included:

You are as dark as a pot
You are as red as a tomato
Your hair looks like hemp
You are stupid
Your head is like a brick
You dirt people, you stink
You are too old for school; go and get married
Girls should not be proud because we sleep on top of you
Some of you girls look like prostitutes

Also, when girls bring pieces of *chitenje* (cloth) to school to sit on on the floor, teachers would comment that they use them after school when they are having sex.

In more general ways, teachers' language and behaviour humiliates and embarrasses girls in class. For example, a teacher may read out a love letter that a girl has received to the whole class and she will be teased about it by both girls and boys. The researchers reported that the teacher is less likely to read out a letter written by a boy in the class, but if he/she did, the boy would not be teased; indeed this would be seen as the boy demonstrating his manhood.

Although the Malawi Government is committed to achieving Education For All, it is clear from these findings that some aspects of this initiative have not been attended to, in particular curbing the exploitation of pupils, particularly of girls by male teachers. Even if the number of girls here who claimed to have been propositioned by teachers is low, the fact that they reported that many others had been approached suggests that they may not all be telling the truth about their experiences. The government has also, with the help of external donors, over the past decade put in place initiatives to help promote the education of girls. However, very little has been done to protect the girl child from abuse and harassment. This does not appear as a focal point in the current Education Act.

Abusive behaviour outside the school

Pupils also cited areas outside the school where they felt unsafe. For those in rural schools, the journey to and from school exposes pupils, particularly girls, to various dangers. Some children have to walk through forests and wooded areas, pass near graveyards, cross rivers without bridges, all of which make some pupils feel unsafe. Girls in particular talked about fearing wild animals as they pass through bushes, gardens and forested areas. However, their fear is not just confined to wild animals and environmental dangers but people are also a potential source of danger for them. Girls talked about boys and men from the village intercepting them on their way home. They reported being harassed by boys and men who are under the influence of marijuana and alcohol, who stop and propose love to them and when they refuse subject them to threats and verbal abuse. In some cases, boys were reported to waylay girls on their way home in order to fondle their breasts or pinch their bottoms. In

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the peri-urban school, it was reported that in the previous school year, boys from the village had raped a girl from their school on her way home. The case was reported to the police but when the researchers tried to follow it up, it appeared that the file had been mislaid.

Some of the statements made by girls included:

We pass near the College's male hostels and the male students shout bad things about us (urban)

We leave home very early and we are accosted on the way by labourers and minibus drivers who 'propose love' to us (urban)

Boys physically harass us, sometimes verbally harass us, when we rebuff their propositions (all three schools)

When asked if any men outside the school had proposed to them, just under half in the urban school (18 girls), 60% in the peri-urban school (21 girls) and 28% in the rural school (7 girls) said that they had been, usually on the way to or from school. Five girls in the urban school said that they were accosted by men who waited for them on the road and asked for sex in exchange for money. Other instances involved the man writing a letter and sending it through a friend, a girl being offered a lift and being invited to the man's home. The majority of the girls said that they felt angry, some felt embarrassed or scared, at this behaviour. However, teachers reported that many girls took free lifts with minibus drivers in exchange for sex; the drivers would drop them off in the morning and wait to pick them up after school.

4.3.2 Boys' perspectives

Problems that boys face in schools

Although the main focus of this study is on the abuse of girls, it was also felt necessary to investigate abusive behaviour experienced by boys, even if not in as much detail. This offered an interesting comparison and helped establish the relative degree of vulnerability of girls and boys to abuse in the school setting. 65 boys were interviewed.

The problems identified by boys during the workshops were similar to those that girls faced, but with a lower frequency. The most frequently mentioned were: in the urban school, lack of learning materials, discouraging remarks by teachers, and poverty; in the peri-urban school excessive punishments and fighting and bullying among pupils; and in the rural school teachers' inappropriate behaviour, excessive punishments, being beaten by teachers and/or other boys and fighting and bullying. It was interesting that all the girls had admitted that they had problems at school, whereas 20% of boys in the urban and peri-urban schools and 15% of boys in the rural school said that they had no problem. This may be part of what is considered an appropriately male response, a reluctance to reveal any weakness.

Boys were asked whether these problems were typical for boys. 76% of all respondents in all the study schools said yes, while a small percentage (6.5%) said that they were problems that both boys and girls face.

Boys were also asked to indicate what problems they think girls face. By far the most frequently mentioned problem was girls engaging in sexual activities with teachers and fellow pupils. Others were: discouraging and abusive remarks by boys, corporal punishment, poverty, inadequate learning resources, sexual harassment, early marriage, early pregnancy and STDs. The list was similar to that produced by the girls themselves.

Some boys did admit that sexual and verbal harassment of girls existed in schools. 80% of boys in the urban school, 68% in the peri-urban school and 85% in the rural school acknowledged that boys do sometimes use threatening behaviour towards girls. It was not clear whether they included themselves in this statement.

School chores and punishments

Only two boys said that they had to do school chores, in marked contrast to the girls' responses. It would appear that boys only did school chores as a form of punishment. 84.6% of the sample revealed that they had been given punishments by teachers. Reasons for being punished were mostly similar to those given by the girls but there were some differences like being disobedient to teachers and leaving the class without permission. Boys also indicated being punished for using abusive language. Types of punishment administered were similar to those cited by girls.

Participation in class

Boys were asked if they sometimes felt shy about asking or answering a question in class, and perhaps surprisingly, as already indicated nearly half said that they did, with the highest percentage being in the rural school. Reasons given included lack of confidence, fear of being booted if they give a wrong answer and problems with English language. The majority feared being booted.

This revelation by boys shows that verbal abuse can be just as disturbing for them in the classroom as physical abuse, and that boys as well as girls experience anxiety and fear humiliation. In the Malawian culture both in the home and at school, boys are socialised to be tough and to have self-confidence in themselves. This is seen as advantageous in difficult situations so that as they grow up they will develop self-esteem and persist in executing tough tasks. However, this finding reveals a more vulnerable aspect of boys' character.

Relationships with girls

80% of respondents admitted girls can be a source of problems for boys. Reasons given for this were: the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, the risk of being expelled if they impregnate a girl and getting hooked into an early marriage.

Many young people associate relationships with the opposite sex with sexual activity and marriage. It is not uncommon in some Malawi cultures to find teenage marriages. Such marriages are usually insisted upon by parents when the boy impregnates a girl. The studies

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already referred to above reveal that children in Malawi are starting sexual activities at a very tender age, sometimes at around 9 or 10 years of age. HIV/AIDS is now well known to most Malawians, hence the boys' fear of association with girls leading to sexual relationships. The knowledge of how HIV/AIDS is contracted does not however appear to deter young people from having sex and HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among teenagers are high.

Table 4.7: Boys' views of girlfriends

	Urban (Total Number 20)		Peri-urban (Total Number 25)		Rural (Total Number 20)	
Know of boys having sex with girlfriends in the school	10	50%	13	52%	12	60%
Know a boy in his class having sex with a girlfriend	9	45%	16	64%	17	85%
Know a girl in his class having sex with her boyfriend	13	65%	21	84%	18	90%
A lot of girls in the school have boyfriends	15	75%	21	84%	20	100%
Know a teacher having sex with a girl in the school	8	40%	15	60%	19	95%
Know boys with girlfriends outside the school	7	35%	10	40%	13	65%
Girls prefer older boys and men	16	80%	18	72%	17	85%

As to whether they think girls in their school have boyfriends, the great majority thought they did, with the boyfriends either inside or outside the school. They also think girls prefer older boys for boyfriends: three-quarters think this is because they want financial support. A few also because they want 'to satisfy their desires', consider themselves mature or (in the rural school) think they are afraid of being beaten if they refuse. Older boys referred to here are those outside school, usually earning some income through farming or vending. Due to the prevalence of poverty, many girls fall prey to older men as they are wooed with gifts and money with which they can support their families. For boys there are means of earning money, e.g. on tobacco farms for those in the rural school and vending in the peri-urban school.

Sexual activity among boys

When asked if they knew of any boys in their class having sexual relationships with girls, in all the schools some boys indicated that they did. In the urban school, the numbers of boys known ranged from 1 to 5, in the peri-urban school 1 to 25, and in the rural school 2 to 7. As for girls in their class who were having sexual relationships with boyfriends, the numbers were higher. In the urban school, they ranged from 1 to 20, in the peri-urban school from 1 to 32 and in the rural school from 3 to 50. It was not established how the boys acquired this information. It does however suggest that boys' perceptions of girls are that they want (and have) sex frequently, whereas they are more reluctant to admit that boys are sexually active.

Boys revealed various ways of getting themselves girlfriends. In the urban school, offering money and/or gifts was the most common (35%) and showing off riches (20%); 10% also said writing a love letter, proposing verbally and using a friend to pass the message. In the peri-urban school, the most common way was verbal proposals (28%), followed by offering money or gifts (24%), showing off (16%) and writing a love letter (12%). Boys in the rural school indicated verbal proposals as the most common way of getting a girlfriend (30%) or writing a love letter (20%), while only 15% indicated offering money or gifts. The findings suggest that, not surprisingly, boys in the urban school find it easier to lure girls into love relationships using money or gifts than in the other schools, as their economic status is likely to be higher. Boys in all three schools however admitted to high levels of competition to get girlfriends (60%, 79.2% and 66.7% respectively). Evidence given for this was that boys were always fighting over girls or quarrelling and threatening each other.

These findings suggest that most boy-girl relationships start after a mutually agreed transaction. Only two respondents indicated that they threaten girls; however when probed further, 76.9% admitted that boys do sometimes use threatening behaviour towards girls to get them into a love relationship. In the urban school, 80% admitted this, 68% in the peri-urban school and 85% in the rural school. Threatening to beat the girl was the most common means but also threatening physical assault or rape, and the use of abusive language were mentioned.

Seriousness about their relationships and studies

An attempt was also made to find out whether boys or girls were more serious about their relationships and their studies.

Table 4.8: Boys' views of who is more serious about their relationships/studies

	Urban (Total Number 20)	Peri-urban (Total Number 25)	Rural (Total Number 20)
Boys are more serious about relationships	8 47.1%	12 48%	12 63.2%
Girls are more serious about relationships	8 47.1%	5 40%	9 26.3%
Boys are more serious about their studies	12 60%	16 64%	18 90%
Girls are more serious about their studies	5 25%	5 20%	- -

Nearly half the boys in Schools A and B, and over 60% in School C believed boys are more serious about relationships. It appears, however, that the most common reason for relationships being taken seriously in all three schools was that pupils boast about them.

An even higher percentage believed that boys were also more serious in their studies than girls, 60% and 64% in Schools A and B respectively and as high as 90% in School C. Various reasons were given such as:

Boys work hard to get high positions in the class

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Boys participate more in class than girls

There is high competition in class

Boys are more punctual in class activities than girls

Pregnancies

When asked who was to blame if a girl got pregnant while in school, the majority of boys would blame the girl. Boys in Zimbabwe were similarly harsh (66%) in blaming the girl, slightly less so in Ghana (55%). This is an indication of boys' sense of superiority over girls and the belief that girls are weak-willed and have only themselves to blame for their troubles. Boys expect girls to be aware of, and responsible for, the consequences of indulging in sexual intercourse. Some of the reasons given to back up their responses were:

The girl herself accepted to be in a love relationship

Girls mislead each other to get into love relationships

Girls may not have listened to advice

She is after financial gain

Table 49: Who to blame when a girl gets pregnant while in school

	Urban (Total Number 20)	Peri-urban (Total Number 25)	Rural (Total Number 20)
The girl	14 70%	15 60%	11 55%
The boy	2 10%	5 20%	3 15%
Both	2 10%	5 20%	6 30%

However, some recognised that the boy or man will exploit the girl and then abandon her, her future will be ruined and so he should also be blamed. Very few, however, would blame the boy alone.

4.3.3 Teachers' and head teachers' perspectives

A total of 13 teachers (6 female and 7 male) from the three schools were interviewed. Four were also members of the school Disciplinary Committee, two female and two male. The head teachers of the three schools (all male) were also interviewed.

All the teachers agreed with the view that abuse of girls in school is very common, but mostly of a physical and verbal nature. Bullying was said to be widespread in all schools, usually perpetrated by boys against girls. For example, boys were reported to frequently snatch writing materials from girls in class.

When asked what problems girls faced in school, the teachers' responses concurred with those of both female and male pupils. The most common problems mentioned were:

- Girls feel inferior in class particularly in mixed sex settings.
- Girls are given too much work at home.
- Girls are harassed by boys.
- Girls are attracted to men and boys and as a result do not concentrate in class.
- Girls get into love relationships with boys.
- Verbal harassment by both boys and teachers.

Over ninety percent of the teachers interviewed agreed with the statement that physical and verbal abuse of a sexual nature was widespread in their schools, but they saw it as perpetrated by male pupils, and also by adult men and boys outside the school compound, rather than by male teachers. Teachers, both male and female, rarely mentioned other teachers as being responsible. Only three were ready to accept openly that some male teachers engaged in sexual misconduct. Both male and female teachers sought to downplay the fact that this goes on.

On the other hand, they all agreed that bullying was very common. The majority of cases handled by the Disciplinary Committee in the three schools were a result of bullying and harassment of pupils, mostly girls, by fellow pupils. The most usual cases involved fights between pupils and older boys snatching or stealing writing materials or food items from younger boys and girls. Some teachers blamed democracy and its associated freedoms as being responsible for the widespread misbehaviour by male pupils. Drug abuse was also commonly mentioned (also by pupils themselves), as was poor classroom management and teacher absenteeism.

On whether they thought that boys experienced physical abuse and bullying as well, all the teachers interviewed except one female teacher agreed that they do. The types of abuse mentioned varied from being given household chores to verbal abuse and corporal punishment and conflicts usually with male teachers. Interestingly two male teachers also cited boy-girl relationships and getting attracted to girls as some of the experiences of abuse that boys face. This perception was echoed during the strategy workshop, when both male and female teachers felt that male teachers who have love affairs with girls were victims of circumstance as it is usually girls who invite their attention through their provocative dressing and the way they sit in class.

During the research period, it became clear to the researchers that Malawi schools are very insensitive to the needs of their pupils. The authoritarian school environment gives pupils very few opportunities to express their views. If pupils do not follow the rules and regulations, they are subjected to corporal punishment. For example, during the initial workshops, boys and girls mentioned the staff room and the head's office as areas where they feel unsafe because school regulations do not allow them to go there for no apparent reasons and if found they are punished. The incident described in the box below demonstrates the impact of such an environment on pupils. Nevertheless, most teachers were aware that harassment and abuse does impact negatively on pupils' schooling, especially girls. The effects on performance were seen to be withdrawal from classroom participation, frequent absenteeism and eventual dropout.

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Box 4.4: a school incident

This incident happened in the head teacher's office in the urban school the day we the researchers went to conduct the strategy workshop for teachers. A girl of about 9-10 ran straight into the office looking very distressed. Immediately, the head shouted at her to go out at once (obviously annoyed that she had not stopped to knock, although the door of his office was wide open at the time). Outside the office we could hear a commotion and the noise of running feet which easily explained the distressed look and fear on the girl's face. We immediately followed her outside. We found a group of girls and saw an older boy of around 13 to 16 walking away. When we asked the girl what was her problem, she narrated that the boy was chasing her and wanted to beat her for telling her friends in class about his misdemeanours. Apparently, the boy used to stalk the girl's older sister who was ignoring his advances on their way home and on several occasions he had accosted her and pulled down his pants showing his private parts in the process. When the girl reported what had happened to her friends as he was passing her, the boy threatened to beat her up and on this day was trying to do just that. The head did not intervene.

This incident was used during the strategy workshop as a typical example of why pupils fail to report incidents of abuse because of the insensitivity to their needs and concerns shown by the school authorities.

Corporal punishment was commonly practised in all three schools and had been mentioned by the pupils as a form of abuse as they considered it to be excessive in proportion to the offence. The majority of the teachers interviewed concurred with this view but were quick to point out that it is a form of abuse only if excessive. They saw the need for some form of what they considered 'appropriate' punishment as a way of controlling pupils' behaviour. Teachers, like pupils, said that boys are punished more than girls because they are troublesome and drug and alcohol abuse is higher amongst boys, which leads to lack of respect for teachers. Teachers therefore use corporal punishment to assert their authority.

After some prompting, teachers agreed that there had been cases of teacher misconduct in their school. In both Schools B and C, there had been cases of teachers impregnating schoolgirls. Most indicated that the matter was dealt with by the head and the School Committee and had been reported to the District Education Officer (DEO) for appropriate action. The majority of the teachers in the rural school reported on a recent case that had just happened at the school, although they differed in their details about the incidence. It was particularly noticeable that the male teachers were reluctant to report that the teacher had actually made two girls in the school pregnant.

4.3.4 Focus group discussions with School Committees and Disciplinary Committees

In the rural school (School C), three members of the School Committee took part in a focus group discussion, as did two members of the Disciplinary Committee. Much of the discussion revolved around cases of teachers having affairs with schoolgirls, and in some cases getting them pregnant. In this school there had recently been a case of a teacher who had made two girls in the school pregnant, one in Standard 6 and the other in Standard 7. He had subsequently married the second girl. The parents of the first girl complained to the committee, which arranged a meeting between the teacher, the parents and the committee, at which the teacher agreed to provide financial help. When despite numerous requests, the teacher did not pay any support to the girl's family, the committee wrote to the DEO to ask him to take action. They also asked for the head teacher to be transferred as he was not pursuing this case and he was suspected of other alleged malpractices. Subsequently, other teachers and the girls' parents wrote to the DEO to complain about the teacher. The DEO then suspended him on half pay and ordered him to stop all his teaching duties.

The committee admitted that it found itself hampered by the lack of explicit procedures to follow in this case. One member reported that they had heard on the radio that a teacher who impregnates a schoolgirl should be dismissed, but they had not handled such a case before and did not know how to proceed apart from asking the DEO to take action. Subsequently, they had received a two-day training course from CRECCOM and had realised that they have the power to bypass the head teacher on the matter, but in the meantime the DEO had told them to wait for the final decision. The committee hoped that the fact that this case has been reported and taken up might act as a deterrent to other teachers, although they knew that some teachers were continuing to have affairs with girls in the school. CRECCOM had advised them to appoint two pupil representatives, one male and one female, through which complaints can be passed on to the PTA. The PTA however was inactive.

During this focus group discussion, one of the mothers revealed that a teacher from this school (the deputy head at the time) had made her own daughter pregnant some years ago when she was in Standard 8 but the girl had kept the identity of the father a secret until after the child was born as she was frightened that he would be suspended. So the mother had been unable to make a complaint. The teacher married her daughter but later left her and married a girl in another school. He got himself transferred and is according to the mother the head teacher in his new school.

An interesting case of alleged sexual harassment *by a female teacher* was reported by a member of the Disciplinary Committee in this school. She was working in another school and allegedly invited a Standard 8 boy to her house and started flirting with him. He ran away and told his parents who reported the incident to the school. Such incidents are rare but not unheard of (there was a similar story in the earlier Zimbabwe study).

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The members of the Disciplinary Committee who were interviewed (two in School B and two in School C) said that they dealt mainly with fights between boys or between girls (usually concerning relationships) but there were also cases of older pupils (girls as well as boys) forcibly taking food items from younger ones (usually girls). Older boys may waylay girls on their way home to punish them for rejecting a proposal, or two girls may fight over a boy. The committee sometimes asks parents to come and discuss the matter with them, and it advises the pupils. They acknowledged that girls were bullied most and had the greatest problems and they thought that the number of pregnancies was increasing. In some cases, girls attending school are already married because their parents were keen to arrange it. Some return to school after delivery. They blamed parents for actually encouraging their daughters to have affairs with teachers - they see the teachers as potential husbands. The girls themselves do not want to report cases to the committee as they distrust teachers, think that they will gossip about them or tell the teacher's wife. They also see a distance between them.

4.4 Conclusions

These schools revealed high levels of bullying and aggressive behaviour by boys, and excessive punishments by teachers, probably higher than in Ghana, though not necessarily higher than in Zimbabwe. Teachers taking advantage of girls to run personal errands for them, or to do chores around the school, also appeared to be commonplace. Two of the schools had current cases of teachers having affairs with girls and several girls getting pregnant. There is clearly much to be done if girls are to be encouraged to stay on in school and to be given a supportive environment for learning. Although a relatively small number of girls admitted to being propositioned by teachers, there was evidence that such liaisons were commonplace, with many saying they knew of other girls having affairs. To date, very little has been done in Malawi to protect the girl child from abuse and harassment. Sexual abuse is a violation of human right, and it is even more critical when children's rights are violated by the very professionals who are entrusted with their development, care and protection. It is especially alarming given the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is devastating the country.

4.5 Strategy Workshops

The second phase of the research consisted of a number of workshops and follow up visits. Each workshop lasted one day and took place in July 2001. The main purpose was to discuss issues of abuse openly, develop action plans and make viable recommendations as a way forward to help address the issue in schools. The workshops were held separately for different groups: boys, girls, teachers and head teachers, School Committee members and PTAs, and district government officials and NGOs directly involved with issues of child abuse.

Objectives

To provide participants with the opportunity to:

1. examine issues relating to abuse in schools
2. examine their own attitudes and behaviour towards female and male pupils
3. identify strategies to address abuse at their level of organisation - school, DEO, college.
4. develop a small scale action plan to try out some strategies, with planned outcomes and a timescale for implementation and monitoring.

Workshops were intended to be held with 20 girls and boys from each of the three schools which participated in the study; however, teacher strikes first in the urban schools and then the rural schools prevented this happening except in School A (the urban school).

Workshops with pupils in School A

For the workshops in School A, 20 girls and 20 boys from Standards 5, 6 and 7 were selected, with ages ranging from 10-18 years. Once again, the approach was participatory in order to empower the pupils to express themselves. Findings from the first phase of the study were fed into the activities, with the purpose of developing strategies with the pupils to address issues of abuse in their school.

Activities with girls and boys were conducted in separate workshops. They included writing down on paper and sharing what they would and would not want to be in ten years' time, separating cards which described abusive situations from those that could not be considered abusive, and making 'decisions with power'. For the latter, the pupils were presented with steps in decision-making to help them to choose strategies in pursuit of a solution:

- Step 1:* Identifying a problem
- Step 2:* Identifying options
- Step 3:* Weighing the options identified
- Step 4:* Selecting the best option
- Step 5:* Making the decision
- Step 6:* Evaluating the effectiveness of the decision.

They were then given scenarios to role play which invited them to use the above decision making steps in reaching their preferred course of action. From there they were invited to propose strategies that they felt would be feasible to address issues of abuse that they experienced in and around their school. One scenario was as follows:

'Mavuto, a Standard 8 boy, has made Jane, a fellow Standard 8 girl pregnant.
Together they sit down to make a decision on the course of action to take.'

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The exercise on ‘making decisions with power’ and the scenarios helped clarify the girls’ thinking on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in schools. They then identified strategies to address what they considered to be abusive situations in their school setting (Box 4.5). They were also asked to name whom they thought should be responsible for carrying out the strategy.

Box 4.5: Girls’ strategies to address abuse in School A

Strategy	Responsible persons/parties
• Giving teachers extra responsibility to protect younger children from being bullied by older ones	Government
• Teaching pupils to resolve conflicts among themselves on their own	Teachers
• Banning bullying in schools	Government
• Reminding parents to give breakfast to their children	Head teacher
• Protecting girls in school from all forms of abuse	Teachers
• Giving girls freedom to report to head teachers on what they do not like in the classroom	Head teachers
• Establishing a body to punish teachers who abuse pupils	Government
• Reminding parents to be interested in their children’s education	Head teacher
• Girls should not let boys touch their bodies	Girls
• Putting tough measures in place to take boys who touch girls’ breasts to the police	School
• Advising male teachers and pupils not to touch girls’ bodies	Radio
• Punishing boys who touch girls indecently	Teachers
• Teaching parents about children’s rights	School
• Pupils should develop their own study timetables at home	Pupils
• Advising girls to keep away from boys	Parents
• Sensitising parents on gender issues	Teachers
• Holding meetings with parents and pupils together	PEAs
• Educating pupils on the dangers of premarital sex	School
• Girls should not get too intimate with male teachers	Girls
• Pupils should not join the public in criticising teachers	Pupils
• Girls should dress properly – not put on mini skirts to seduce teachers	Girls
• Developing booklets on how girls should behave	Government
• Teaching pupils about gender issues	School, PEAs
• Educating parents and teachers on how to keep orphaned children	Government

Workshops with teachers in Schools A, B and C

Strategy workshops were also conducted with teachers and head teachers in each school, using participatory techniques. 12 teachers from School A, 22 from School B and 8 from School C attended. Each workshop followed the same format. Teachers were engaged in a

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range of activities, which included: exploring their understandings of the term abuse, identifying problems that both girls and boys face in school and also those that they as teachers face with pupils, identifying strategies to address these problems and discussing how they would handle certain scenarios involving harassment and abuse.

After exploring their own understandings of abuse, the teachers were asked to classify forms of abuse based on the original pupils' lists compiled at the PRA workshops into those which they considered as common, **most** common and those that they would not describe as abuse. They then discussed their own problems as teachers in dealing with male and female pupils as well as the problems they believed that the pupils themselves faced. From these two sets of perspectives they compiled a set of strategies to minimise abuse and other problems in the school. Finally, they were presented with a set of scenarios depicting forms of harassment and abuse and invited to suggest ways of addressing them. At the end of each scenario they were asked what action they would take in each case.

Below is a list of strategies to eliminate abuse in the school developed by teachers in School C, including how to handle cases of teacher misconduct.

Box 4.6: Teachers' strategies to eliminate abuse in School C

Strategy	Responsible persons/parties
• Transferring teachers who get involved in abuse of pupils	The head
• Civic education of both pupils and teachers	Researchers
• Interpreting Government policy to the community through the PTA and school committee	Resource persons to facilitate
• Having regular meetings with the PTA/school committee	Resource persons to facilitate
• Counselling for pupils	Teachers and PTA
• Pupils to queue when entering classrooms	Class teachers
• Giving talks during assembly	Teachers
• Punishing offenders and recording cases	Teachers
• Discussing abuse issues in staff meetings	Teachers

Scenarios

Below are a number of scenarios and the suggestions made by teachers in School B as to how to react to them.

²² These were modelled on scenarios contained in the manual for educators entitled *Opening Our Eyes: Addressing gender based violence in South African schools*, which was developed by Mamlleli et al (2001). This manual was featured in the special issue of *Insights*, as outlined in Chapter 2.4

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Scenario 1

Some female pupils tell you that they are uncomfortable walking around the school grounds. They claim that male pupils often make comments about their bodies and call them insulting names. If the girls get angry or risk telling the boys to stop, the comments get worse. The boys seem to enjoy getting the girls upset. Most of the girls try to avoid the school grounds or try to get by the boys as quickly as possible without showing any visible response to the harassing behaviour.

How would you deal with this situation?

- call the boys who harass the girls; guide and counsel them
- after guiding and counselling give them group work to do together
- call parents to discuss the issue together

Scenario 2

You have observed a group of older boys teasing young boys in school. They call them names, snatch their food and pencils and sometimes beat them up for no apparent reason. It is obvious that the younger boys are upset but they don't say anything.

How would you deal with the situation?

- report to the head teacher
- enquire into what happened from both older and younger pupils
- call their parents and talk to them and find out a solution together
- counsel and guidance
- punish according to their ages
- report to the disciplinary committee

Scenario 3

As you walk home after school, you see that the girl in front of you is being grabbed by boys on both sides of the road. She is giggling, but trying to push her way through. The boys are laughing too, and making comments about her body.

How would you deal with this situation?

- go near the scene and calm the situation
- ask the pupils what is happening, try to ask from both parties
- counsel them on the spot
- report the matter to the head teacher for more counselling

Scenario 4

One of your pupils has a hard time staying awake in class. You suggest she might want to get more sleep. She tells you that it's hard to sleep at their house, sometimes because her uncle is always bugging her. When you ask her to explain how the uncle 'bugs' her, she says

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that he gets into her bed and gives her too many hugs and kisses. She tells you she really likes the uncle but wishes he wouldn't touch her so much. Sometimes she pretends she is sleeping but he still doesn't stop.

How would you deal with this situation?

- Call the uncle and explain to him the problem of sleeping in class and ask the uncle to suggest why she doesn't get much sleep at home. Hopefully, the uncle will reproach himself and if possible stop the behaviour.
- If this fails, call the elders from their neighbourhood and discuss with them so that they counsel the uncle at their home.
- If this fails, help the child to go and report to the social welfare for further assistance.

Scenario 5

You have overheard a group of pupils saying that their classmate is going out with a male teacher. The pupils giggle, peep out of their class windows whenever they see the teacher talking to the girl. In class the boys and girls tease her and make rude remarks about her. You have also observed the teacher concerned talking to the girl.

How would you deal with this situation?

- counsel the teacher
- observation
- counsel the girl
- if the situation continues then involve the disciplinary committee.

It was noticeable through these two activities that teachers' strategies to address problems of abuse in schools were conceived in narrow terms and revolved largely around counselling (which usually meant reprimanding) and punishment. This is in contrast to the girls' more wide reaching and imaginative suggestions, as seen above, and reinforces the observation made above that Malawi schools are very authoritarian and provide pupils with few opportunities to express themselves. There were few occasions when teachers saw the need to refer matters to a body or individual outside the school e.g. community leaders or social welfare officers. In the scenarios above, this was suggested only in the case of a relative who was sexually abusing a girl and, even then, the suggested action seemed woefully inadequate. There are few suggestions for engaging in attempts to understand the pupils' point of view.

Strategy workshop with PTA and School Committee members

Participants at the strategy workshops for PTA and School Committee members held in November 2001 in all three schools developed action plans and progress was followed up by the researchers in April 2002.

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School B (peri-urban)

This school had been active, with both the School Committee and teachers taking action to address issues of abuse identified in the earlier workshop. These are detailed below.

Box 4.7: Actions taken by School B Committee

Issue	Action taken	Responsible
Love affairs between teachers and pupils	School Committee members called for a meeting with parents and informed them of the issue. Some parents were not keen to discourage the practice since they said their children do it because of poverty. However, the majority present were not happy with the idea of teachers having love affairs with their children.	School Committee chair
Lack of uniforms by pupils	The issue was discussed at the same meeting. Parents agreed to buy uniform for their children. Some parents admitted they will have difficulties since they have several children at the school so it may take a long time before they buy for them all.	School Committee
Initiation ceremonies taking up school time	Issue discussed at the same meeting, where 8 chiefs were present. Chiefs agreed to ensure that all initiation ceremonies take place during the long holiday at the end of the academic year.	School Committee
Pupils going to video shows/ the market on market days during school time	Issue discussed at the PTA meeting. Issue discussed again with CRECCOM ²³ officials. CRECCOM held sensitisation meetings for the community on the importance of education and mobilised vendors at the market to chase school pupils away from the market and video houses during school times. Teachers called for a meeting with video house owners and asked them not to admit pupils during school hours.	School Committee CRECCOM
Pupil impregnated by a teacher at the same school	No action has been taken. Parents of the girl (father is a village Headman) came to complain to the School Committee since the teacher has not been punished. He is still around the school. The School Committee has not taken any further action since the school's head teacher is now just acting.	School Committee
Teachers giving harsh punishments to pupils	School Committee went around the school to discuss the issue with teachers and the school head.	

It can be seen that the School Committee has initiated several meetings and actions relating to the issues identified at the workshop. There are two significant points to note: firstly, that some parents were not totally opposed to teachers having affairs with schoolgirls (due to poverty),

²³ See footnote 19

which makes it difficult to tackle the issue at the school level, and secondly that, in the specific case of the teacher who had got a girl in the school pregnant, no action had been taken despite the father making a complaint. The excuse for inaction was that there was only an acting head teacher.

In the case of School C (rural school), where the workshop was attended by five School Committee members and four PTA members (four female and five male), the follow up is particularly interesting because it exemplifies the difficulties faced in prosecuting teachers for sexual misconduct. The workshop and subsequent events are detailed here.

Problems boys and girls face

Members identified a number of problems that schoolboys and girls face in their area:

- Parents forcing girls to get married and abandon school
- Initiation ceremonies for girls, which have a negative impact on education of girls (they consider themselves as adults of equal status with their parents and become unruly, as they will get married soon they lose interest in school)
- Teachers being in love relationships with school girls and making them pregnant
- Pupils having to come from very far and cross dangerous rivers (without bridges) on the way to school and back
- Pupils absconding from classes to watch videos in video houses at the trading centre
- Being orphaned – many parents and guardians are burdened with looking after orphans and fail to provide for their necessities due to poverty
- Pupils not being given textbooks and exercise books, not even writing materials, because they have no school uniform.

Of these problems listed, two were isolated as critical and requiring immediate attention. These were prioritised and an action plan was drawn up as follows:

Box 4.8: School C Committee action plan

Problem	Action	When	Responsible	Indicators
1. Love affairs between teachers and pupils	Code of conduct for teachers on love affairs and pregnancies with pupils	by 31.12.01	CERT/MIE to identify the person	
	Selection of a sub-committee from PTA/SC to act as a counselling body	by 31.12.01	PTA/SC	
	A meeting with teachers	by 31.12.01	PTA/SC	
	A meeting with parents	by 31.01.02	PTA/SC	
	Meetings with pupils	Once a term	Counselling Sub-Committee	
2. Pupils without uniforms are sidelined	A meeting with teachers	by 31.12.01	PTA/SC	
	Check MOE regulations on uniform	by 31.12.01	CERT/MIE	

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With regard to the first problem, the following steps were agreed:

- The Laws and Regulations (Ministry of Education policy) on the code of conduct for teachers regarding love affairs with pupils and issues of pregnancy by teachers should be obtained so that PTA/School Committee members can have a basis to check on the conduct of teachers
- The PTA and School Committee should choose two members from each, a male and a female member, to form a Counselling Sub-Committee to provide counselling to pupils as well as to receive complaints/cases of abuse from pupils
- A meeting should be convened by the PTA and School Committee with all teachers to inform them about their code of conduct for teachers in relation to love affairs with pupils and in cases of pregnancies caused by teachers
- A meeting with pupils should be convened to counsel them on various issues and to give them opportunities to tell the Counselling Sub-Committee about any abuses or any problems they may have encountered.

After the strategy workshop, the School Committee and PTA came together and constituted a Counselling Sub-Committee as agreed, with members drawn from the School Committee and the PTA (two each). Two of these members were female. The first step taken by the Counselling Sub-Committee was to meet the school pupils and teachers during assembly when the committee was introduced to the school. The pupils were advised to bring to the attention of this new committee any grievances and complaints that they may have. Although no pupil had approached the sub-committee directly by the end of the research period in late May 2002, the head teacher has become more pro-active in following up matters. In particular, he referred a case of teacher misconduct to the School Committee: this involved a married male schoolteacher who has been accused of having an affair with a Standard 6/7 girl, but who denied the charge. The teacher was one of three teachers consistently mentioned by both girls and boys during the one to one interviews as having affairs with schoolgirls. The case was then brought to the attention of the School Committee, which arranged a meeting between the teacher, the girl's parents, the committee and the head. The girl's parents also strongly denied the charge that the teacher was having an affair with their daughter. Instead they supported the teacher's assertion that he was in fact going out with the schoolgirl's older sister who was currently not in school. Both the teacher and the parents claimed that the schoolgirl was used by the teacher as a go-between to carry letters between the older sister and the teacher. The School Committee had however received information from reliable sources within the community to the effect that the teacher threatened the girl's parents just before the meeting and told them that if they reveal that he was having an affair with the schoolgirl than he would immediately lose his job. Apparently the affair had been conducted with the full knowledge and consent of the parents and many people in the community were fully aware of it and had actually seen the two together. After the investigation, however, the teacher has asked for a transfer to another school.

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It was clear in this case that neither the School Committee nor the head seemed to know what to do, although the committee did probe further and got more evidence about the case (the head teacher seemed to accept the teacher's version of events). However, it did not attempt to revive the case or even to follow up with the girls' parents. They appeared to have been defeated by the attitude of the girl's parents who seemed to condone the whole affair.

The School Committee also reported that another teacher who was consistently named by pupils as having affairs with schoolgirls had asked for a transfer to another school and had since moved. However, the teacher who got two girls pregnant in 2000 and was suspended on half pay (referred to above) had continued to live on the school compound in a teacher house until recently when he moved into his wife's village close by. The investigation was not yet complete two years on.

In terms of impact of the research and the strategy workshops on the school, the head teacher had become more eager to report incidents to the School Committee given the new mandate of counselling that the PTA and School Committee had given themselves. In addition to the above case involving a teacher, there had been two incidents involving schoolgirls who had received 'love letters' from boys. In both cases the head referred the matter to the Counselling Sub-Committee where perhaps in the past he would not have bothered to do so. The fact that a girl had chosen to report a boy to the head was also an indication of increased openness and willingness to take action on the part of female pupils.

Workshop with district level personnel

A one-day workshop was also held with a number of participants working in education at the district level. These included officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), the Ministry of Gender Youth and Community Services, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Police and NGOs working with children. Among those participating were one District Education Officer (DEO), one assistant DEO, six Primary Education Advisers (PEAs), the District Social Welfare Officer, the police officer responsible for handling cases of domestic abuse, and a range of NGOs including MASP (Malawi Schools Parents Association), CRECCOM, the Civil Liberties Committee (CILIC), and the Youth Network and Counselling (YONECO).

The participants were familiarised with the research study and the workshops held with pupils on the nature and extent of abuse in schools. They worked in groups to develop action plans to address the issues raised, as detailed below.

Group 1: National and District Level

(DEOs and Assistant DEOs, Ministry of Gender, Police)

- Networking with other stakeholders on issues pertaining to child abuse in schools.
- Sensitising the PTA, school committees and all community leaders.

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- Reminding head teachers of the need to interpret the policy clearly within the school and to ensure its implementation with regard to teacher misconduct.
- Improving communication between the schools and the DEO/HQ.
- Taking prompt action when issues of child abuse are reported.

Group 2: School Level (PEAs, Coordinating PEAs)

- Sensitisation of teachers on girls' abuse
- Induction of teachers on acts of misconduct and their penalties
- Improving school discipline
- Sensitisation of community on acts of misconduct and penalties for teachers
- Guiding and counselling of pupils and teachers
- Induction of school committees and PTAs on their roles and how to handle cases of misconduct by teachers
- Appointment of head teachers to be on merit not by crisis (to fill a vacancy)
- Location of toilets to be considered in terms of sex
- Pupils to be monitored for cases of abuse at all times
- Tenure of office on school committees and PTAs should be strictly followed
- Head teachers need to be supported by the district
- Teachers committing serious cases of misconduct with girls should be punished
- Apply punitive measures.

Group 3: Community, School, District and National (NGOs)

Action	Stakeholder
Community 1.1 Sensitisation 1.2 Civic education (including human rights, child rights, women rights). 1.3 Child abuse watch groups (establish and train).	MASPA, YONECO, CILIC Religious Institutions MOE, Police Social, welfare
School 2.1 Sensitisation of teachers 2.2 Sensitisation of pupils 2.3 Establish and orient child abuse watch groups. 2.4 Train PTAs and school committees on child abuse.	MOE NGOs Police Social Welfare
District 3.1 Civic awareness 3.2 Orientation of DDC/DECs on annual basis. 3.3 Establish drop-in centres (Victim support centres)	NGOs, Police MOH, MOE, Social welfare
National 4.1 IEC material on girl child abuse 4.2 Stakeholders' meeting (annual) 4.3 Laws/ policy enforcement 4.4 Lobbying and advocacy for change in some rules and laws. 4.5 Sensitise the Parliamentary committee on children's and women's affairs.	MOE NGOs Police Social Welfare Research Institutions MOH, MOJ

4.6 Recommendations

Recommendations arising from the Malawi study are provided below.

4.6.1 School level

Community sensitisation and awareness raising

- Communities and their representatives such as members of School Committees and PTAs need to be empowered with knowledge to address the problem of teachers abusing girls that is common especially in rural schools. They need to be made aware of the rules and regulations governing teacher conduct so that they can take appropriate action in cases of teacher misconduct involving pupils. This should be taken up by NGOs, such as CRECCOM, the Story Workshop and others dealing with human rights issues and women's issues, using radio drama, participatory theatre and community meetings and discussions. Local leaders such as MPs, local councillors, traditional and religious leaders should also be sensitised and encouraged to address such issues in their areas when they are conducting meetings.
- School Committee and PTA members' knowledge of MoEST rules and regulations is very scanty and they are generally ineffective in dealing with issues concerning management of the school, in particular where this concerns the head and teachers. The training that School Committees and PTAs receive has been grossly inadequate to prepare them for the challenging role of monitoring teacher performance and conduct. Although some players on the ground have produced training manuals, these have tended to emphasize their statutory roles and have failed to address emerging issues such as abuse of girls by teachers in schools. It is therefore essential that the training of School Committees is urgently addressed so that they can cope with this growing problem.

Community/school/DEO linkages

- School management arrangements should be reviewed with the aim of strengthening community linkages to zonal and district offices. Community structures such as School Committees are usually poorly linked to district level officials. This has resulted in situations where school personnel have been able to ignore or mislead School Committees, particularly in cases of teacher sexual misconduct with pupils, as these rely on school personnel to contact the DEO. Statutory provisions require that School Committees have one member appointed by the DEO to represent the DEO's interests on the committee but evidence emerging from this and other studies shows that there is very little collaboration between the DEO and his representative on the committee. In most cases the person selected is a community member who has little knowledge about the operations of the education system. PEAs can play a critical role in ensuring that communities are properly linked up to the higher levels of education management, but

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currently, they seem to be playing very little part in providing the necessary linkages. In some cases there is evidence that they are not always conversant with the rules governing teacher misconduct.

Creating child friendly schools

- Concerted efforts should be made to create a conducive gender-sensitive environment for all children within schools. This environment should promote the rights and well-being of all children and protect children from all forms of abuse. This will require intensive training of school heads and teaching staff in child friendly methodologies. UNICEF is currently promoting child and girl friendly schools in its country programme. This needs to be scaled up to all schools. Current and future school or zonal based programmes should incorporate these concepts and methodologies.

Box 4.9: Visualisation of a child friendly school (based on UNICEF material)

A Child Friendly School is a rights-based school – it demonstrates, promotes and helps monitor the rights and well being of ALL children. It seeks out and traces children excluded from education and includes them. It is gender sensitive/girl friendly; is child centred; encourages child participation; is flexible and responds to diversity; is affordable and accessible.

It is:

Healthy for Children—promotes physical, mental, emotional health and nutrition; life skills based education; positive experiences for children/psycho-social development

Effective with Children—structured, child centred curriculum, appropriate teaching and learning methods for the child; promotes quality learning outcomes—learning how to learn; reality based; enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment—teacher friendly.

Protective of Children—from abuse; guarantees safety, respects diversity – girls, boys, working children, children with abilities & disabilities, war victims; no stereotyping; no discrimination.

Involved with Families—deals with the whole child - before, during and after class, family focused—supportive of parents, encourages local partnerships in school based management, works with others with constant attention to children’s rights and well-being.

Sensitisation on harassment/abuse training

- Head teachers and teachers should be provided with sensitisation training in gender based violence and harassment. It was clear during the strategy workshop with teachers that many of them do not understand girls’ problems and perceive solutions in terms of either (more) punishment or counselling (which usually involves reprimanding). A rights based approach should be incorporated in their training to ensure that schools promote and do not abuse the rights of children. This should also be a strong component in the curriculum of teacher training colleges.

School clubs

- Evidence from the study shows that fellow pupils perpetrate much of the abuse that occurs within schools. There is therefore a need to develop programmes that target pupils in schools on rights, sexuality and abuse. An opportunity is available to do this through the various clubs existing in schools, particularly the Anti-Aids TOTO clubs. There is a need therefore to integrate abuse issues and sensitisation training into Anti-Aids Club activities so as to empower pupils to take appropriate action in cases where their rights are being violated by those in authority.

Guidance and counselling

- There should be formal training in guidance and counselling for Disciplinary Committee members. Guidance and counselling are non-existent in primary schools; instead there is a Disciplinary Committee composed of teachers only, whose responsibility is to settle disputes between pupils, between pupils and teachers, and between teachers and parents. There are no detailed MOE guidelines on the committee's functions and composition and committee members have not had any formal training in guidance and counselling. As the name suggests, they are more like school 'courts' that are used to settle disputes within schools and in particular to ensure that the schools rules and regulations are observed and followed with punitive measures for offenders. They spend their time mainly on resolving disputes and do not deal with issues of teachers' discipline.

The lack of professional counselling services within schools has resulted in a situation where most abuse cases go unreported. Pupils do not feel comfortable enough to approach their teachers and do not have much trust to confide in school authorities particularly with the authoritarian environment existing in most schools in Malawi. In response to the need for counselling services in schools, School C has created a Counselling sub-Committee composed of members of the School Committee and the PTA. It has however not worked effectively, perhaps because pupils are still distrustful of it.

4.6.2 District level

- DEOs should devise the means of collaborating more effectively with School Committees on the ground. The DEO's representative on the committee should act as a link between the committee and the school.
- School Committees should be provided with guidelines on how to run the school, including how to deal with teachers' sexual misconduct.
- DEOs should ensure that district education personnel, in particular PEAs, are fully conversant with the rules and regulations governing teacher misconduct. Not all PEAs are able to take decisive action when presented with clear evidence of teacher misconduct. In particular there is evidence showing that little or no action is taken against teachers having affairs with female pupils unless it involves a pregnancy.

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4.6.3 National level

- MOE should widely disseminate and make available the current national education policy on sexual abuse of pupils by education staff and the national policy on corporal punishment.
- MOE needs to review the current procedures for dealing with teachers' sexual misconduct. The evidence from the study indicates that many cases of sexual abuse go unreported and are condoned by school personnel, sometimes with the consent of the girl and her family. DEOs, schools and School Committees/PTAs should be provided with detailed guidelines on how to deal with sexual abuse of pupils. Currently all cases are dealt with at the ministry headquarters causing huge delays in processing them. DEOs should handle and make decisions on all cases of abuse in their districts. This will require intensive training of DEO staff in personnel policy and legal provisions dealing with abuse. A window of opportunity exists with the current decentralisation process, which will devolve power to hire and fire teachers and other education staff to the lower levels.
- MOE needs to make a functional review of School Committees and PTAs and empower them to monitor teacher behaviour as well as performance. Current statutory provisions do not allow School Committees to sanction teachers.
- MOE needs to take prompt and decisive action in all cases of teachers' sexual misconduct with pupils. Where there is evidence of criminal offence, i.e. statutory rape, MOE should take appropriate action by committing the case to the justice system. At present this has not occurred even though it is very likely that some teachers form sexual relationships with under-age girls (defilement).
- Teacher training curricula should cover fully issues of abuse and harassment, so that teachers understand the MOE policy, the consequences of forming sexual liaisons with pupils and the procedures that are followed in bringing cases of teacher misconduct to court. Awareness raising for both trainers and trainees, especially greater emphasis on issues of ethical standards of behaviour, can be built into existing initiatives in teacher education. All training should be provided with the aim of creating and promoting a child and girl-friendly schooling environment.
- Guidance and counselling: MOE should intensify efforts to establish a national programme of guidance and counselling in schools in view of the rising cases of abuse and also in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is affecting the operation of schools. Guidance and counselling services are not currently provided at the primary level, where it is clear that they are needed.

Chapter 5

Zimbabwe

5.1 Introduction

The objectives of this second phase of the study in Zimbabwe were to:

- Disseminate the findings of the earlier study to a selected audience through a three-day regional workshop
- Develop action plans and strategies to be tried with various groups represented at the workshop to reduce schoolgirls' vulnerability to abuse, e.g. schools (including pupils and teachers from the original schools which featured in the research), non-governmental organizations and teachers' colleges;
- Monitor these strategies over a six month period against an agreed set of indicators;
- Use this experience to inform a set of strategies that could be used in the other two countries where similar studies are being conducted;
- Disseminate the findings of these strategic interventions as widely as possible among interested parties.

5.2 The dissemination workshop

This workshop was held at Africa University in Mutare on 24-26 January 2001 and was organized by Pamela Machakanja, with the help of two facilitators from Harare. It was attended by 42 participants from different interested institutions including schools, teachers' colleges, government departments, non-governmental organisations, legal institutions and women's groups. Only individuals who through their organizations were considered suitably committed to addressing the issue of abuse and would be prepared to trial strategies were involved. Participants included: education officers from the Ministry of Education, social welfare officers, head teachers, teachers and pupils from a number of schools, including those who took part in the original study, lecturers from the regional teachers' colleges, rural development and social workers, representatives from FAWE, UNIFEM and a number of NGOs including the Women's Action Group (WAG), the African Network for the Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Women and AIDS Support Network (WASN) and the Musasa Project.

Introductory speeches were made by the Vice Chancellor of Africa University, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Manicaland Province, and the Acting Director of the Africa University Outreach Office.

The workshop aims were to:

- familiarise the workshop participants with the research findings regarding the abuse of girls in the four selected junior secondary schools in the province
- raise awareness as to the causes and consequences of this abuse (in particular in the light of the HIV/AIDS epidemic)

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- agree with the participants a set of objectives for the workshop in terms of their commitment to see something done about the issue
- identify possible strategies to address the issue, taking into account possible constraints
- assist participants to develop individual and/or collective action plans that they will commit themselves to
- help participants develop possible indicators to monitor the implementation of these action plans

Anticipated outcomes included:

- A common understanding of the problem of child abuse in schools in general and the abuse of girls in particular
- A multi-dimensional intervention, comprising a range of appropriate strategies to be implemented by different educational actors
- Action plans that define the role of each institution represented in solving the problem

Workshop methodology

Participatory facilitation methods were used and included: group discussions, brainstorming sessions, visual aids, handouts, energizers, buzz groups and storytelling. The workshop started with introductions in pairs to develop a conducive collaborative environment, followed by an exploration of the participants' expectations and fears, which were written on cards and displayed on the wall of the hall. A range of expectations of what would be achieved were articulated and clustered around the following themes:

- Increased knowledge of the rights of the girl child
- Strategies to apply the knowledge acquired within schools and other institutions
- Suggestions for monitoring and evaluating the strategies developed
- Stakeholder involvement: understanding how the various actors present would collaborate in dealing with the problem at hand.

The action plan

A collective action plan (Appendix 8) was developed, based on the outcomes of the original research and the dissemination workshop. It was considered important to involve as many people as possible in its development so as to ensure a high level of awareness and to motivate those who had attended the workshop to implement the action points that related to them. The principal researcher, Pamela Machakanja, would lead and co-ordinate these actions with the various stakeholders.

The action plan comprised the following:

- continued visits to the original four schools and to three other schools not included in the initial study. A programme of activities would be devised which would allow for participatory and intervention-oriented strategies to be developed and monitored.

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- continued dissemination of the research findings to as many groups as possible, including presentations by the researcher to invited audiences based on the research and focus group discussions (a process which in itself provided insight into the perceptions and reactions of the participants towards the issues raised)
- collaborative work with other organizations sharing the same concerns, especially NGOs and other civic organizations, including NGOs working to end violence against women.

Within the schools and colleges, there was a strong focus on staff development. The range of activities engaged in are detailed below in 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.

Target groups

The following groups were included in this phase of the study:

- The four original junior secondary schools plus three other junior secondary schools in the region, one located in a peri-urban area and the other two in rural areas. Of the additional three schools, one head was female and the other two were male.
- Two teacher training colleges in the region, whose representatives had attended the January workshop.
- Policy makers from the region, including regional and district education officials, representatives from the School Psychological Services and the Department of Social Welfare, guidance and counselling teachers, officials from the Ministry of Health and the Police.
- Representatives from NGOs, church organizations and other civic groups with an interest in children's issues.

Representatives from most of the organizations involved had attended the workshop.

The range of activities with pupils (mostly girls) included engaging them in story telling or story writing (e.g. about child abuse), poetry writing and simulations/role play, drawing mobility maps of places they frequented and discussing how to minimize risk, brainstorming to identify problems they face in school and in the community, ranking them in order of priority and then suggesting possible interventions, and drawing daily activity lines, which showed the tasks they carried out every day, thus prompting discussion of gender roles. (Some of these activities were started in the PRA workshops which took place at the end of the original study, so this was a natural progression).

5.3 Outline of Commitments

Below is an account of some of the activities which were included in this part of the study, carried out by a range of stakeholders. The first part summarises the actions which the provincial education office, the two teachers' colleges, the four schools which took part in the original study, the Department of Social Welfare, the Child Friendly Court (run in conjunction with the local police) and two NGOs (Musasa and Women's Action Group) had

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committed themselves to, and an indication of whether these had been implemented or not. In many cases, activities were able to build on on-going work around the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which the government had declared as an emergency. A series of 'Let's Talk' information booklets is being used in schools to raise awareness among pupils and to facilitate discussion around the topic.

The second part provides additional detail of some of the activities engaged in. However, the opportunity to monitor the impact of the activities was limited, as the researcher was required to complete the work three months early due to departure for training overseas. The current economic and political climate also made it very difficult to implement new initiatives.

Provincial Education Office, Mutare

- recruitment of an officer to help with the professional development of teachers and to speed up the response to issues relating to the professional conduct of teachers (this has had to be postponed through lack of funds and the current requirement to cut costs by scaling down government officials);
- greater sensitivity in handling issues related to the welfare of children;
- more workshops with heads of schools and teachers on issues related to child abuse and professional development;
- better and faster response to reported cases of teachers suspected of abusing pupils (no concrete evidence of this but the Minister of Education is on record as committing himself to the application of stiffer disciplinary measures against offending teachers and officials);
- encouraging advocacy and awareness programmes in schools, for example UNICEF has a programme in which a van moves round schools teaching pupils about the consequences of HIV/AIDS, going out with sugar daddies, drug and substance abuse and child abuse. This programme has proved popular with communities; the van displays different messages to warn children and adolescents in particular about the dangers of early sexual activity;
- The Minister of Education when he visited Mutare in July and held a meeting with some heads of schools announced a new national policy that from January 2002 all married female teachers not living with their spouses would be relocated to where their husbands are teaching. (This has not as yet been implemented on a large scale due to the lack of vacant posts, especially in urban areas, but the intention is to make such transfers where possible). This change of policy is the result at least in part of this research, as it was recommended to and discussed with the Minister at the heads of school meeting in Mutare which followed on from the workshop.

Mutare Teachers' College and Marymount Teachers' Colleges

- Staff development sessions on issues relating to child abuse, HIV/AIDS and the welfare of children;
- More information from the college nursing sister on health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases;

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- Encouraging students to train as peer educators on HIV/AIDS and counselling, so that they can support others in times of bereavement and ill health; through this they understand issues relating to their own welfare and that of the pupils that they will teach and develop counselling skills that can be used at the family, school and community level
- Greater openness on issues related to child abuse and HIV/AIDS (in the period January–April 2001, the two colleges have lost 7 or 8 students to HIV/AIDS);
- Setting up of a Counselling Committee to provide a support system for students, given the rise in AIDS related deaths among students and staff; this committee is made up of representatives from the administration, lecturers, staff, students, together with the nursing sister and the wardens.

The colleges have been implementing these commitments through their Counselling Committees and the college clinics. There is much discussion around HIV/AIDS since the government declared it an emergency and this has encouraged an open debate on issues relating to sexual health. This has facilitated the introduction of the topic of sexual abuse into the college, where guidance and counselling is now a compulsory course.

School A (original study)

- A report back on the workshop - this was made to all teachers by the school head and the teachers who attended the workshop;
- A report by the school head on the January workshop to the Secondary Heads of Schools Association in February;
- Staff development sessions with teachers focusing on issues of teachers' conduct and professionalism, pupils' welfare and child abuse and HIV/AIDS;
- The requirement that each pupil should be a member of at least one club in the school, including the drama, debating and HIV/AIDS clubs – this is being enforced more strongly (see 5.4.1 below);
- Creation of an AIDS awareness club where pupils under the guidance of a teacher will visit the sick in hospital at intervals and those at home, especially if the family has a child in the school – in some cases, pupils are making contributions to help families such as sweeping the yard, and fetching water or firewood.

School B (original study)

- Debriefing on the workshop held at Africa University;
- More staff development sessions on issues related to child abuse, HIV/AIDS and professional matters such as teacher-pupil relationships, discipline etc;
- Involving parents in matters relating to sexuality and reproductive health. Some parents on the school development committee have discussed various issues with girls and the female teachers in the school. The school is also involved in a number of community related projects with women.
- Inviting various speakers to come and talk to teachers and pupils on various topics e.g.

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the nursing sister or health officer at the Rowa clinic came to address teachers and other people on matters to sexuality and reproductive health

- More emphasis on guidance and counselling by all teachers;
- Drama clubs and debates on child abuse and HIV/AIDS by pupils as an awareness campaign at various gatherings.

School C (original study)

- The head discusses matters relating to their welfare with the girls every Wednesday and with the whole school on Friday
- Staff development sessions focusing on child abuse, HIV/AIDS and the professional conduct of teachers;
- Encouraging participation in clubs by all pupils, including debating, gardening, and Interact (a club aimed at linking pupils to the community by encouraging them to involve themselves in community activities such as cleaning the market or streets, visiting orphanages or fundraising for the needy)
- Introduction of more sports to keep pupils occupied and interested
- Setting up of drama groups
- The encouragement of better and healthier relationships between teachers and pupils (see 5.4.1 below).

School D (original study)

- A report back on the workshop to teachers;
- Staff development sessions on child abuse, HIV/AIDS and professional development;
- Encouraging participation in clubs, including sports clubs; inviting peer educators to talk about HIV/AIDS
- Introducing a school suggestion box where girls can drop in suggestions and concerns about their welfare;
- Encouraging Guidance and Counselling.

The researcher led one staff development session in each school. In all schools Guidance and Counselling is being taken more seriously as a result of the AIDS epidemic.

Other Organisations

Musasa Project

(an NGO which works to address domestic violence against women and children)

- Debriefing on the January workshop;
- Formation of a steering committee on Violence Against Women in all provinces (the researcher has been invited to sit on this committee). Plans to carry out a nation wide research project to look at the nature of violence against women in Zimbabwe;
- Liaising with schools by distributing brochures on child abuse and violence against women.

Women's Action Group

(an NGO which engages in advocacy work on abuse of children and women)

- Report back on workshop
- Including issue of abuse of girls in schools in in-house workshop sessions and advocacy work
- Dissemination of information related to abuse of girls in schools through pamphlets, booklets, newsletters.

Department of Social Welfare

- Working in closer collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Police on matters of children in need;
- Organization of Child Forums in collaboration with other organizations;
- Will refer affected children to relevant ministries e.g. Health or Education.

Child Friendly Court – Mutare

(provides counselling and support to victims of child abuse, and assists with rapid prosecution of accused child rapists)

- Liaising with various social groups who work with children, for example Social Welfare and Education;
- Advocacy on child abuse issues especially sexual abuse.
- Training of more women officers to counsel child victims and attend court proceedings with them.

5.4 Activities with Schools

5.4.1 Teachers

A number of activities based on the action plan developed at the workshop were carried out with teachers aimed at awareness raising and the development of strategies to address abuse in their schools and communities. Summaries are provided below.

1. Workshop Follow Up

At the January workshop, it was agreed that all participants should go back to their respective organizations or schools and give feedback to their colleagues. This would form the basis of any follow up by the researcher. It was also agreed that the researcher would meet later with the respective groups and facilitate further discussion and clarification on issues coming out of the feedback. Perhaps not surprisingly, some reactions to the feedback reports from teachers in the four schools involved in the original study were negative and critical. They included comments such as:

- the report was a direct attack on male teachers, leaving out female teachers who equally abuse Form 3 and 4 boys by wearing mini skirts and strong perfume;
- some of the issues raised were too trivial to warrant mentioning or to be a cause for

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concern, for example boys chasing girls after school. Some teachers felt that this was part of growing up and they had all gone through the same process;

- some parts of the study were biased in that they gave too much power to the girl child to do whatever she pleases in the name of exercising human rights. Teachers felt that a minimal amount of corporal punishment was necessary for all school children to be disciplined.

To address the issues and concerns raised by the teachers, the researcher went round all the four schools at the invitation of the head teachers to talk about the research findings and explore with them ways in which abusive behaviour can be avoided in schools. Participation at the subsequent set of meetings was as follows:

Table 5.1: Teachers' attendance workshops

School	Female teachers	Male teachers	Total participants	Total teaching staff
A	11	7	18	24
B	14	8	22	26
C	13	10	23	35
D	8	5	13	38
Total	46	30	76	123

At each meeting facilitated by the researcher, the participants were asked to:

- identify one positive aspect that the research was trying to achieve (responses included: highlighting the problems of the girl child, promoting awareness about abuse, sensitizing teachers to the consequences of playing around with children, especially girls, helping girls to articulate their problems)
- identify at least one thing that they had learned from the research findings and would try to do in order to provide a more secure and conducive learning environment for girls in their respective schools (responses included: ceasing to use corporal punishment, avoiding being too friendly with girls in the school, teachers acting in loco parentis, encouraging parents to give adequate support to their children, especially girls, treating boys and girls equally in and out of class, trusting what pupils tell you about their problems)
- engage in a listening activity emphasizing the importance of listening and being listened to, and showing how people feel when others do not listen to them even when they have something important to say. In some instances, this could be a child wishing to talk about his/her experiences of abuse.

The following questions were also posed for discussion:

- In what ways are children in your school encouraged to express their views and allowed to talk about their lives and feelings?
- Do you think that children in your school are likely to feel that they are listened to and

that there is always someone to talk to if they wish to share anything that worries them?

- How can you work to make the situation more encouraging for children, especially girls, in your school?

In addressing the first question, there was consensus that most of the schools were not doing enough to encourage pupils, especially girls, to express themselves or even to know more about their pupils' lives. Except for a few form teachers who might take their own initiative, it was felt most pupils who tried to express themselves were seen as troublesome or trying to show off. Although pupils were encouraged to express themselves in class on subject-bound communication, there was little encouragement for the expression of feelings except during extra-curricular activities such as debates, sports, drama and music, but then only a minority of pupils participated in these activities (hence the commitment by schools to encourage or make compulsory participation in school clubs).

In addressing the second question, it was agreed that most pupils would feel that they are not listened to because teachers are too busy, with the possible exception of their form teacher or a senior lady teacher. Pupils also feel that teachers do not listen to them because they are seen as liars. It may be that those labelled as good pupils are more likely to be listened to than those who are either quiet or seen as troublesome. If an issue is very personal, most girls would rather talk to their friends than confide in their teachers. A girl coming to a male teacher to tell him about her personal problems might be seen as seeking to attract the attention of the teacher.

When the same question was asked of the girls in later meetings, over half felt that they were not listened to because teachers do not trust those girls who express themselves. They are seen as wanting to gain attention or some favours. The other half felt that they were listened to but it all depended on the type of issue and the teacher. Not all teachers were seen as helpful. As one girl said, some of the teachers are dangerous. There was great suspicion that teachers would gossip to other teachers once the girls confided in them. This opinion was also expressed during the original research.

In terms of ways in which teachers could make the school environment more encouraging for pupils, the teachers made the following suggestions:

- Provide activities that emphasize the value of children's choices and views, for example debates and open discussions during lessons in which pupils can share their views and experiences;
- Encourage pupils to share their good and bad experiences with friends, e.g. on their way to and from school, during break and in lessons. Once they see this as part of their learning experience they may be willing to say more and be open with themselves;
- Share their own personal experiences, the good and the bad, with pupils so that pupils see that they are not the only ones to have problems and that teachers may also need

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advice from pupils. However, some teachers were very sceptical about this approach, saying that pupils would not respect them and they would tell other people.

- Help other pupils in class to listen and not laugh or ridicule the person sharing her or his experiences. This was seen as a very important aspect of this approach.
- Encourage pupils to join social clubs within the school. Almost all the teachers indicated that every pupil was expected to join at least one school club because one afternoon a week is set aside for clubs.

It was pointed out that all teachers should be prepared for the fact that pupils may talk about aspects of their home life which may indicate abuse or family troubles of another kind. They therefore need to think about children's needs and to listen to them with a sense of care and responsibility. The way a school organizes its work with children can be vital in making sure that the school is a safe place for children and a source of help when they are in trouble.

Finally, the teachers were asked to suggest at least one way they could build a healthy relationship with their pupils through a change of behaviour. Although this was at first seen as suggesting that their behaviour was bad, they were encouraged to look at daily behaviour as dynamic, whereby some days one can feel low and other days one's spirits can be high, and that this can affect the way one relates to children in class. Suggestions included: listen to what pupils tell you, help them to develop confidence and the ability to say NO, learn to detect early signs of abuse in pupils; see every schoolgirl in class as your own child; put yourself in the situation of the abused girl or the beaten child; communicate with pupils' parents more often, especially on consultation days.

2. Staff development activities for teachers

Ministry of Health presentation on sexual and reproductive issues affecting women and men

A presentation was given by a Ministry of Health official to teachers from School B at one of the school's staff development sessions. 22 teachers attended the session, as did five members of the School Development Committee and the researcher.

In the presentation, the official stressed the link between sexual abuse of children and HIV/AIDS, the critical role men should play in the prevention of HIV/AIDS as being considered the dominant partner in sexual relations and the strategic role of the school in disseminating correct information about HIV/AIDS to pupils and parents. This requires the involvement of both parents and community leaders. She praised some schools for being aware of this problem and involving pupils through drama to disseminate information and advocate for changes in people's behaviour.

After the presentation, discussions centred on what the school could do to help in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and also help pupils gain more information about their sexuality.

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The question that stimulated debate was: What specific activities can the school and community undertake to help pupils have a better understanding about their sexuality and in so doing to counteract abuse? Suggestions included:

- Have HIV/AIDS as a timetabled subject together with Guidance and Counselling (others thought this should be integrated into every learning activity that the pupils do).
- Invite more people to talk to both teachers and pupils about sexuality;
- Have teachers and pupils trained as peer educators;
- Involve teachers and pupils in HIV/AIDS and child abuse campaigns and advocacy programmes. It was noted that School B was already doing a lot of work in drama and debate on the subject but there was a need to reach out to the community.
- Involve the community in discussion of these issues. There is a key role for the School Development Committee in building bridges between the school and the community so that they can work together on social issues that will impact on their children's welfare, such as lobbying for more health clinics. Families also need help from the school in addressing HIV/AIDS, especially where children were involved in caring or were infected. If the family had a child in the school, teachers should feel obliged to help support the child by visiting his or her family. Teachers need to show the sick that they do care and are supportive.

A Child Sexual Abuse Case Study

Teachers from seven schools in the region (the four original schools plus three others) were invited to a staff development session in their school. One activity that they engaged in was a child abuse case, aimed at developing understanding of the feelings of children exposed to sexual abuse, finding ways of dealing with such situations and providing help in the form of support, empathy and the ability to listen. Attendance was as follows:

Table 5.2: Teachers' attendance at staff development sessions

School	Female teachers	Male teachers	Total
A	10	7	17
B	11	8	19
C	16	10	26
D	9	5	14
E	11	10	21
F	7	6	13
G	4	5	9

The teachers were given a story to read about a little boy called Jo who was abused by a male student living next door, who used to look after him when his parents were out. After reading it, they went into groups and were asked to think and to feel like Jo when answering a number of questions. These related to his feelings about what had happened, about the

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abuser, about what his friends would say if he told them, and what good or bad might happen to him as a result. They then had to address a number of questions from an adult or teacher perspective. In particular, they had to decide what to do and say if Jo disclosed the abuse to them and what they might notice as a teacher that might alert them to Jo's problems. Answers to the latter included: low achievement, lack of interest in school, being reserved or quiet, lack of communication, aggressiveness, being emotional or insecure, showing a hatred for men or older boys, abusive language.

Staff Development Meeting Held at Mutare Teachers' College

This meeting was coordinated by the Staff Development Committee of the college as one of the activities following on from the dissemination workshop in January. The committee had invited the researcher to give a talk on Strategies for Increasing Educational and Economic Opportunities for Women and Girls, and within that the issue of teachers' misconduct with pupils was addressed. This session was attended by 42 lecturers out of the 68 lecturers in the college (24 men and 18 women). Six student representatives of the Students' Union (2 women and 4 men) also attended.

There was a general discussion of ways in which the educational and economic status of women and girls could be addressed. The college was promoting educational awareness among its students about sexuality and reproductive health and providing information on issues related to HIV/AIDS through lectures, debates and discussions. There were now clubs that focused on peer education for HIV/AIDS awareness raising through the college nurse. The Staff Development Committee was also extending invitations to its sessions to different groups of people whose interests were on the needs of women, girls and children in general.

Regarding policy issues, the Government had now changed its policy on pregnant students; they could continue with their course unlike previously when they had to withdraw. However, the principal reported that the college was now witnessing more pregnancies and two female college students had given birth in the hostels; their clinics were not equipped to deal with such emergencies.

5.4.2 Pupils

During several sessions, girls were taken through a range of activities. These showed that the pupils were capable of analysing their own situation skilfully and could make very sensible and creative suggestions as to how the school environment could be improved to their benefit. Each of the sessions allowed them a voice on issues - where usually they are ignored - and in this respect this was an empowering experience. This opportunity to hear girls' voices about their school experiences and their views of teachers raises issues about teacher education and school leadership. Between 15 and 23 girls from Forms 1-3 attended in each school.

The girls were also encouraged to express themselves through poetry. A sample of their poems is reproduced in Appendix 9.

1. Views of teachers

The first set of activities aimed to help them reflect on what they observed as positive or negative teacher behaviour and its effect on their overall performance in school. This group activity was also aimed at helping them identify positive and negative role models which encourage either high self-esteem or low self-esteem.

Negative teacher behaviour consisted mainly of shouting derogatory remarks such as ‘You think you’re beautiful?’, ‘All you think of is men’, ‘Why do you bother coming to school?’ or ‘You are useless’, and calling them names such as ‘stupid’, ‘lazy’ or ‘good for nothing’. However, the most detested behaviour was from male teachers when they touched the girls’ shoulders, or stood too close to them so that they felt very uncomfortable. Positive teacher behaviour was mainly speaking in encouraging ways such as ‘Well done’, ‘Keep trying’, ‘Be positive’, ‘Keep up the good work’, ‘I knew you could do it’ and ‘Learn to say No’.

In explaining how the negative behaviour affected them, most of the girls said that they felt confused and they hated themselves because they did not know how to respond to such teachers, especially when they were female. They said that they wanted to look at female teachers as role models or as their mothers, who should give them the support they need. This is very difficult to do when the help is not forthcoming. Some of the girls indicated that such negative teacher behaviour actually gave them strength to fight back, although they recognised that their power was limited.

The girls summarized their feelings about positive teacher behaviour as feeling good and having a closer sense of attachment to their teachers. It was observed that teachers who had a positive attitude towards their pupils were themselves positive about life and did their work well. The teachers got along well with other teachers in school, did not gossip and acted as role models. Positive comments and behaviour were said to be motivators in the girls’ lives and they worked hard and had a positive attitude towards school. They said they felt good about themselves.²⁴

The girls then put forward suggestions as to how the quality of teacher behaviour could improve their school lives. These included:

²⁴ When the same exercise was given to male and female teachers and they were asked to reflect back to their childhood days when they were in school, they saw negative teacher behaviour mainly in terms of corporal punishment and other heavy handed punishments and being sent home for non-payment of fees. Positive behaviour was seen as being praised for hard work and being chosen for a position of responsibility such as class monitor. However, despite the negative memories about their own teachers, they insisted that their teachers had noble intentions and the harsh disciplinary stance taken was meant to make them work hard. They thought the same held true today, with the disciplining of pupils leading to positive results.

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- Teachers should go on courses to learn about the impact of their behaviour on pupils;
- Schools should have policies that help teachers to relate favourably to pupils in school, especially girls;
- Teachers who portray negative behaviour tendencies should be disciplined because the effects of their behaviour on pupils especially girls are very negative and can affect the pupil for life;
- Teachers and adults should be encouraged to believe what pupils tell them;
- Schools should have suggestion boxes for pupils in the school;
- The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Police and the Department of Social Welfare, should publicise cases of teachers who assault or abuse pupils.

2. A case study

The girls also examined a story about a girl who lived with her aunt and who committed suicide because she had failed her 'A' levels. After reading it, they had to answer questions about how the situation had occurred, how it could have been avoided and what needed to be done to avoid a similar situation from happening again. The purpose of this activity was to help them to analyse a problem, identify its root causes and suggest possible strategies as to how it could have been avoided. It also taught them the importance of taking control of their lives.

The girls felt that the situation could have been avoided if:

- she had received help from home or school in her school subjects
- teachers had communicated with her and if there were channels open for her to trust people
- the school had noticed that she was not doing well or was unusually reserved, and had followed it up
- other pupils who were friendly with her had hinted to her teacher that she had no real friends to confide in.

When asked to identify strategies to avoid a similar situation from happening again, they believed that what was required was:

- a clear policy on child protection which defines teacher's roles and head's roles
- providing a conducive school and home environment for all pupils
- providing love, care, trust and respect for all children
- training teachers to recognise the symptoms of problematic behaviour in pupils that might lead to crisis situations
- parents, guardians and teachers not to have excessive expectations on pupils' performance as this might push the pupils to overstress themselves
- providing motivation and support for all pupils especially those who may be struggling in their subjects and those subjects thought to be male dominated like Science and Maths
- communicating with pupils at home and school and trusting what they tell you

- helping pupils to develop healthy relationships with each other
- schools creating opportunities for all children to have confidence in themselves, to be assertive and believe in themselves
- developing skills in children to be problem solvers.

The pupils were then encouraged to be open with each other, make friends and care for each other's welfare especially with those pupils in their classes.

These activities were clearly empowering for the girls and in this respect are very illuminative for educators. In the PRA workshops which took place at the end of the first phase of this study, the girls who participated had had great difficulty in thinking of how to change their lives for the better and finding practical solutions to their problems at school. Such activities as the above allow them to think through their problems and also to develop strategies to prevent problematic situations (e.g. with teachers or with male pupils) from happening.

3. Interviewing an adult

Groups of girls from two of the schools were given the opportunity to interview an adult person about his/her own experiences of childhood. The objective of the activity was to increase awareness of the importance of significant others in building relations of trust and increasing understanding in pupils of the childhood experiences of someone of a different generation. 11 mothers and three female community leaders were brought together with 27 girls, who were organized into small groups of 2-4 to interview them about their childhood years, e.g. the kind of problems or challenges they faced as they were growing up as girls, who they talked to if they had any problems, their relationship with boys, the people they interacted with for social development and the changes that have taken place today in terms of being a girl. Not surprisingly, the adults' responses revealed that they had belonged to a much more supportive family and social structure, with adults to confide in and structures in place to help young people. Sexual relationships with boys were delayed because of the counselling a girl received from her aunt and the elderly women in the community. In the rare cases where a girl fell pregnant, the man responsible would be forced to marry her, and, if he failed to do this, his parents would have to pay a heavy penalty in the form of cattle or goats. However, this did not mean that girls did not have any problems. Not only were boys more respected and more likely to be sent to school, but during drought or hunger girls as young as 2-3 years were given to rich families as servants or wives as a way of getting food or grain. Girls were sometimes given in reparation for crimes committed by family members, especially in murder cases, and arranged marriages did not give girls a choice to choose their own partner or husband.

The girls ended their interviews by asking the adults for their suggestions as to how to reduce cases of child abuse. These included:

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- Put in place heavy deterrent penalties for child abuse offenders.
- Develop community structures that can be used by girls to address their problems.
- Involve parents more in school activities especially those activities that help develop the girls' social lives.
- Respect the girl just as much as the boy within the home
- Balance responsibilities between boys and girls
- Help girls to trust adults whom they can confide in and report without fear cases of abuse.
- Encourage teachers to respect the parental roles bestowed on them by society and to counsel pupils who need help.

This activity is interesting as it offers an opportunity for females from two generations to talk about growing up and adolescent problems together. This is unlikely to happen often in family life and may serve to promote understanding on both sides, so that the girl may feel more confident about confiding in a female adult and the adult may be more sympathetic to the girl's problems.

Meeting of the Child Parliamentary Forum: Manicaland Chapter

The Child Parliamentary Forum²⁵ Manicaland Chapter held a meeting in March 2002 to hear the concerns of the girl child in particular as they affect her schooling. The Forum meeting was organized by the Child Forum Network in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Department of Social Welfare. The Forum attracted a wide representation from the various junior secondary schools in the province, with 78 pupils, both boys and girls, from the seven schools taking part in this phase of the study, participating. Two teachers from each school accompanied the pupils. Also present was the Regional Director of Education in Manicaland (who in her speech reminded the audience not to neglect the needs of boys in the attempt to empower girls), officers from the Department of Social Welfare, the Police and selected heads of junior secondary schools.

The pupils, in same sex groups, engaged in a number of activities to identify ways in which they think the girl child could be helped in school. The girls' groups came up with suggestions which included: giving the girl the same responsibilities and opportunities as the boy; introducing sports played by boys to girls so as to make them feel equal; encouraging girls to aim for the so-called male jobs such as doctor, lawyer, engineer; teaching boys to respect girls and giving girls a chance to express their views and ideas; teaching girls to be more responsible for their lives (if she gets pregnant in school she will be expelled); stopping old age traditions that say that boys should be educated more than girls; helping teachers and people to understand the girl's point of view; teaching girls to confide in an adult person, who must be able to provide trust and care, if they are abused; teaching girls to report any cases of abuse or harassment or bullying from anyone or anywhere even if it is in the home;

²⁵ The Child Parliament is a national event when schoolchildren bring issues that affect their lives to the attention of parliamentarians. There is a Child President and child parliamentarians, who hold simulation parliamentary sessions when they can ask adult parliamentarians questions about the welfare of children.

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ensure longer jail terms for men, especially teachers, who are found guilty of abusing girls (some recommended no less than 10 years, life imprisonment and even execution!); exposing teachers who abuse or harass girls by publishing their names and dismissing them.

The boys' group shared some of the same opinions, e.g. when girls are raped they must tell other people, girls must be regarded the same as boys; people must not say boys are better than girls as this discourages them and they drop out of school. They were in favour of introducing sports played by boys so that girls can feel equal and encouraging girls to aim for jobs done by boys such as pilot and electrician. They also valued talking about each other's problems, as they were doing in this forum. They also thought girls should not get married under 18 and should be discouraged from having many boyfriends because that will distract them from schooling and they should be discouraged from accepting money or gifts from male teachers.

However, disturbingly, some boys favoured segregation of boys and girls in education. They were of the opinion that girls should not learn alongside boys; instead they should be taught by female teachers and should be in boarding schools where they do not walk long distances or pass through town where they are given lifts by men. This shows that there is a long way to go in countering some of the biases which still prevail against girls.

5.5 Activities with regional and district education officers and selected heads of schools

A one-day meeting was organized in collaboration with the Regional Education Office in Mutare and was attended by 15 heads of schools (5 women and 10 men), 3 education officers (all men) and 5 district education officers (1 woman and 4 men). The purpose of the meeting was to present the research findings in brief and discuss ways of using them to make the school a safer environment for all pupils.

In her introductory remarks, the Regional Director said that she agreed with most of the research findings although some heads might find the results disturbing. She regretted that within the first term of the year five new cases of teacher misconduct with schoolgirls had been reported to her office and this did not include pending cases. Four cases from last year had finally been referred to the courts. Despite stern measures being taken, evidence shows that these cases are just the tip of the iceberg. She urged heads of schools together with the district education officers to be more vigilant. She also appealed to the heads present to help change the behaviour of some of the teachers in their respective schools. She also warned that their efforts are complicated by those heads who are also involved in unprofessional behaviour, which makes a mockery of the teaching profession.

In groups, the participants then discussed what they thought of the findings and suggested strategies they felt would be useful in helping teachers be aware of their responsibility

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towards children in difficulties. Although some members were very sceptical about the findings, it was generally agreed that the problem existed and something had to be done.

The following were some of the suggestions:

- There was a need to have married couples stay together because most teachers who end up behaving improperly live separate from their families and this brought temptations.
- The teaching of Guidance and Counselling (G&C) should be given a higher status than at present. It was observed that not every teacher was responsible for G&C and some see it as just a time for senior teachers to talk to pupils about almost anything.
- Those taking G&C lessons should focus on developing a healthy relationship with pupils rather than just telling them what to do and what not to do. There was a need to develop good communication networks with pupils so that they build trust and do not feel threatened by teachers, as is the case at present.
- Heads should also know their teachers, not by name alone; they should understand their behaviour and problems so that when such things happen they are not taken by surprise. At times some heads leave too wide a gap between themselves and their staff.
- The regional office should support heads when reports of abuse of pupils are made. At times it was the head who ended up being harassed as if he or she was the one who would have committed the crime. As soon as a case is reported, there is a need for an investigation team to be set up rather than wait for months asking the heads to provide evidence.
- Heads should hold more discussions with male teachers indicating the consequences of such behaviour. It was suggested that district education officers could play a leading role in this because they would be seen as outsiders and neutral.
- Heads should also facilitate better communication with parents so that parents feel accommodated by the school. Parents also need to play their part in safeguarding the welfare of their children. Issues that could be emphasized were: open communication between parents and girls, attending to pupils' basic needs, healthy living conditions. Discipline should start in the home but it should not lead to abuse. It was observed that many parents expect the school to do a lot for their children and this leads to some neglect on the part of the family.
- Guidelines or advice sheets should be drawn up on how to respond to the suspicion of a child in trouble or in danger for the attention and guidance of the G&C teacher or school head; also guidelines on how to make sure that the guidance was followed in practice and that the girl was being helped.

After the groups had presented their suggestions, the delegates were asked to discuss some of the problems they think they might face in trying to address these issues. The following are some of the issues raised:

- Lack of support from the regional office: 'They always think that when you report such issues you are weak and failing to enforce discipline in your school'. This leaves some heads with no choice but to postpone reporting such issues.

- At times the regional office might think that the head is also involved in cases and will view the report with suspicion
- Lack of cooperation from some of the teachers who might actually know what is happening but keep quiet about it because they do not want to implicate their colleagues. Most of the time when issues come to the surface it is too late and the girl might actually be pregnant or have dropped out.
- Lack of time to discuss these issues with teachers especially where a head has a teaching load.
- Some teachers connive with the parents of the girl and this makes it very difficult to accuse the teacher. In some cases parents invite the teacher home with the hope that he will agree to marry the girl. When this fails, that is when the parents come asking for help.
- Some district education officers were accused of being friendly with some of the implicated teachers and they end up ganging up against the head. This makes the life of the head very difficult because he/she will be unable to enforce discipline on such teachers. However, the district education officers present denied this accusation and pointed out that where such things happened the head had the right to report it to the regional office which would then investigate the case.
- Some teachers were said to turn the issue into politics and accuse the head of being an opposition party member. As a civil servant employed by the government, this would leave the head very unprotected and in extreme cases heads have been beaten up or transferred without any notice or explanation.

However, at the end of the day it was agreed that in order to control the abuse of girls in schools all heads and the regional office should work together. The worst fear of a child who is abused is that when he or she finally gathers courage to tell someone, it becomes clear that the people she thought she could trust do not believe her or that even if they believe her no action is taken. The aim of every school is to make sure that the child is heard and that protective action is taken. All heads and district officers agreed to work towards change in their schools and promised to meet again at a later date to review the situation and progress being made.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a wide range of activities engaged in at the level of the school (with both teachers and pupils), teachers' colleges, provincial and district education offices, and several NGOs. These have raised awareness of the issue of abuse in schools and have encouraged the participants to analyse the causes of this and to identify possible solutions. All the activities were presented in a participatory format, which allowed the participants the freedom to reflect on and discuss issues relating to the abuse of girls and the school culture that helps to perpetuate it. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to systematically monitor the impact of the activities against the prepared indicators, although progress in implementing the actions plans has been recorded.

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For girls in particular the activities provided an empowering experience, as they believed that they were usually discouraged from expressing themselves, were not listened to and not taken seriously. Instead, they showed themselves able to engage fully with their problems and to think of strategies to address them. They were particularly critical of teachers, even suggesting that they needed to be sent for training in how to change their behaviour. Female teachers were a disappointment to girls: they looked to them for help and positive role models but in vain. As for the teachers, the activities allowed them also space to reflect on the situation and to think of options to address it. When teachers opened up during sessions, they did in fact show sympathy for girls, but girls did not appear to see it during the course of the usual school day. As in Ghana and Malawi, there appeared to be a serious need to encourage teachers to think creatively of ways to address the problem of abusive behaviour in school, and to re-think their own role with regard to pupils. In the meeting with regional and district officials, there were interesting insights into the communication gap and mistrust between school heads and district officials; research into school issues largely ignores the latter's views, yet they are crucial if change is to be effected.

Recommendations:

- schools need to create spaces for girls and boys to think through their problems and resolve them collectively
- pupils, and girls especially, need to be encouraged to talk about their experiences and in so doing to think of ways of changing their lives for the better
- more trusting relationships need to be established between pupils and teachers, and between teachers and the district authorities
- teachers need to take on their counselling role more seriously.

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1 Summary and evaluation of the study

The overall aim of this study was firstly to take further the research into the abuse of girls in Zimbabwean schools (Leach and Machakanja 2000) and secondly to bridge the gap between research and action in addressing this serious human rights issue. This was achieved through a number of objectives tied into three broad components to the study (as detailed in 1.3 above):

Information gathering and dissemination

1. To raise awareness of the widespread abuse of children's rights in schools, in particular of girls
2. To disseminate information about abuse and effective ways of tackling it to a global audience through both electronic and print media

Extension of the original study

3. To gather new information about the prevalence of abuse of girls in schools and its impact on their participation and achievement in two new national contexts

Trialling of a range of small scale strategic interventions

4. To trial and monitor a range of small scale strategies to counteract abuse in schools in the three countries and identify those that were successful
5. To monitor mechanisms whereby policy and practice are changed as a result of such research.

The first three objectives can be considered as having been fully achieved, the fourth and fifth as only partially achieved given that the opportunity to monitor the strategies and the mechanisms whereby research influences policy and practice was more limited than anticipated (as is explained below). However, in all cases, research capacity was clearly strengthened, with the researchers acquiring new or enhanced skills, in particular in participatory research and facilitation.

The id21 initiative allowed for wide dissemination of the findings of the Zimbabwe study and other studies in the area of abuse and gender violence in schools. Accounts of a range of innovative and effective interventions from different parts of the world, with the potential to tackle the problem, were also disseminated. This initiative has served to raise awareness of the issue generally, as have the research activities in the three countries. The latter involved open interviews and discussions with individuals at different levels of the three educational systems and in some cases with other bodies such as the police, social welfare and NGOs; this was for the respondents an awareness raising exercise in itself. The field work in schools in Ghana and Malawi largely confirmed the findings of the earlier study in Zimbabwe, while contributing some new insights, e.g. into boys' problems, into the impact of teacher abuse on the quality of the learning environment, the extent to which abusive behaviour feeds on poverty and ignorance (in terms of seeking redress) and the ambivalent attitude of some parents, teachers and schoolgirls themselves towards teachers having sexual relations with pupils.

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Although a range of strategies were tried out in the three countries, mostly in schools, and a range of measurable indicators produced, it proved impossible to monitor them fully so as to make unambiguous statements as to their success in reducing the abuse of girls, either in the schools involved in the study, or more generally. In terms of improved understanding of the mechanisms of change, certainly there was evidence that individuals at the school, community and district levels had acquired a clearer picture of the complexity and difficulty of change through participating in the study, and also of what needed to be done to address the situation. However, there was insufficient time, funding and institutional support for the researchers to monitor the extent to which the proposed strategies and action plans were implemented and the impact that they had on changing behaviour and practice.

With hindsight, it is clear that the aims of trialling and monitoring strategies, and learning about the mechanisms whereby policymakers and practitioners respond to research findings are difficult to achieve within the context of a one-year research study. The process did however (as with most exploratory research) raise new questions and highlight gaps in our understanding of the complexities of the problem. **In particular, it suggests that there is a need for long term evaluation of the impact of interventions to reduce gender violence and create more constructive adolescent relationships in school and other educational settings.** This can probably best be done by introducing strategies in a controlled manner at intervals into existing educational programmes and monitoring them regularly over a significant period of two years or more against an agreed set of indicators. This recommendation is included in 6.2 below.

The salient findings in each of the three components of the study and their implications for policymakers and practitioners are outlined below.

6.1.1 Information gathering and dissemination

The id21 initiative to disseminate information about the widespread abuse of girls in schools has been of particular note. Specific outcomes have been documented in Chapter 2. Particular achievements have been: broadening the scope of the study beyond sub-Saharan Africa, beyond an exclusive focus on girls and beyond the setting of formal education. Key points to make in respect of this component are:

1. There are still very few in-depth research studies on sexual abuse and violence in schools (Leach and Machakanja 2000 and the Human Rights Watch report 2001 being the main ones, both in an African setting; also Mirsky 2003).²⁶ It is interesting to observe that other dimensions of abuse relating to children have been extensively publicised and researched, e.g. child abuse, including incest, within the family, child abuse in children's homes and religious

²⁶ A publication entitled *Violence against Women and Children in Ghana* (1999) by Appiah and Cusack contains some statistical data on sexual harassment in schools, which supports the findings presented here.

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institutions, child labour and slavery, and child prostitution. As noted in the earlier study, there has been a peculiar reluctance to admit that the school is also a site of sexual abuse, most of it directed at girls, despite persistent reports in the media which suggest that it is widespread. Whether the dearth of studies is due to the difficulty of securing funding for research into such a sensitive issue, ignorance of the scale of the problem, or failure to appreciate the negative impact that school-based abuse has on efforts to achieve the international development targets of universal primary education and gender equity in education, is not clear.

Despite contacting development agencies, academics and researchers, and searching the internet, the researchers found no research studies (in English) into this phenomenon at the school level in schools in Asia or in Latin America, although a number of studies of corporal punishment exist, and a number of others allude to sexual violence in schools (as outlined in Chapter 1). If any exist, they are likely to be small scale and not readily available in either electronic or print form. Even in the research-rich environment of the USA, although statistical surveys exist which document the scale of sexual harassment in schools, according to Stein (see id21 item on high school shootings) there has been no in-depth study exploring the relationship between abusers and victims in schools. However, as has been noted, there is relevant work in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention in schools which covers some of this ground and highlights the difficulty of changing sexual behaviour among young people, even when their knowledge of HIV/AIDS is good (e.g. Bennell et al 2002, Mirembe 1998, Coombe 2000).

2. There appear to be relatively few initiatives to counteract abuse and violence that have targeted schools. As has been documented in Chapter 2, much of the innovative work with adolescents has been carried on outside the school setting, among dropouts, those above compulsory school age and in some cases those who have never been to school. Items which appeared on the id21 web site as exceptions are: the Storytelling Group and Dramaide work in South Africa, the Safe Spaces work with girls in Nepal and the Zero Tolerance Trust in the UK; also the University of Western Cape training initiative and the manual 'Opening Our Eyes' are examples of work with teachers. However, these are examples of small-scale experimental work carried out with pupils and teachers by outside agents such as NGOs and academics, not educational activities integrated into the school curriculum²⁷. There are lessons here for educationists, whether they be teachers, trainers, curriculum developers, managers or planners, who could usefully look to such work for ideas on innovative and effective approaches adaptable to a school setting.

3. The message contained in the later id21 items that document interesting interventions is that changing attitudes and behaviour in sexual relationships cannot be done through a formal classroom setting using didactic teaching methods. Raising awareness of sensitive

²⁷ The 'Opening Our Eyes' manual was produced as part of a CIDA funded programme with the South African Department for Education involving McGill University in Canada.

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issues, e.g. around gender violence or HIV/AIDS, is relatively easy; persuading people to change their sexual behaviour is much more difficult. There is now a body of evidence from work on HIV/AIDS prevention (e.g. from ActionAid's Stepping Stones programme) that behaviour change of this type requires participatory methods, methods which experienced teachers are poorly equipped to deliver and which are not taught effectively to trainee teachers in college programmes. There is also emerging interest in the use of various media using topical issues to facilitate behaviour change among adolescents; drama, film, radio, video, art, comics, poetry, storytelling and life histories are all potentially suitable.

4. These later id21 items also make the strong recommendation that to counteract gender violence there is a need to involve boys and men (including in an educational context male teachers), to encourage them to engage in an analysis of male power both in the private and public arena, to reflect on and change their own behaviour where necessary, and to offer themselves as positive role models and mentors in bringing about change in others. However, mobilising men to work towards gender equity will only be successful if they see benefits to themselves as well as to women (being released from the burden of always conforming to the male stereotype may be one). At the same time, some of the items (e.g. the University of Western Cape curriculum programme) also suggest that there is a need for teachers, both female and male, to examine their own knowledge and attitudes towards gendered behaviour, including gendered violence, in their schools. Teachers need to ask themselves individually and collectively why some teachers engage in abusive behaviour, whether this be sexual or physical (excessive beatings), and what messages they send to pupils in this respect. Views of what is acceptable and 'normal' behaviour among both pupils and staff needs to be challenged.

6.1.2 Extension of the original study

As documented in Chapters 3 and 4, the research in Ghana and Malawi revealed remarkably similar patterns of abusive behaviour towards girls as the Zimbabwe study. Although the number of schools (three in each of these two countries) is too few to draw any conclusions as to the precise scale of the problem, taking the earlier Zimbabwe research and other studies into account, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that:

1. Schools are a breeding ground for potentially damaging gendered practices, as aggression goes largely unpunished, male dominance both by pupils and teachers is not questioned and pupils are strongly encouraged to conform to explicit gender (heterosexual) roles and norms of interaction. The gendered power relationships that develop between boys and girls will set the pattern for adult male-female relationships. Socialisation processes that occur in schools between teachers and their pupils also contribute to the perpetuation of male dominance over females. This sends messages to boys and girls about what can be tolerated and what can therefore be considered as 'normal'. The majority of pupils featured in this study are in

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the post-puberty age group (11-14), which research suggests is the stage of development when young people are most impressionable to peer influence and close friendships. In the research context here, there is strong peer pressure for boys to secure girlfriends in the school, which not infrequently leads to coercive methods and physical assault. Girls too are subject to peer pressure in terms of making themselves attractive to boys, developing a recognisable femininity, and acquiring the 'grown up' status that comes with having a boyfriend or sugar daddy.

2. As in the Zimbabwe research, it was difficult to gauge whether girls were forced into sexual relationships, and once in them found it difficult to detach themselves (as described in the Woods and Jewkes article in *Insights*), or whether they entered into them freely. A recent study by Luke and Kurz (2002) into cross-generational and transactional sexual relations in sub-Saharan Africa suggests a range of motivations, which include financial, the desire for love and/or marriage, the most important of which is financial. The interviews conducted as part of this study with girls in all three countries suggest that some girls enter freely into these relationships but for many poverty pushes them into relationships that they may not have considered otherwise. There are very few opportunities for schoolgirls in Africa to obtain casual paid work as schoolboys can. Coercion is more likely to succeed where boys and men can take advantage of girls' adverse economic circumstances by virtue of their greater wealth. At the same time, the fact that schools are characterised by relatively high levels of bullying and intimidation (in particular of girls by boys) and that, despite widespread use of corporal punishment, aggressive behaviour by boys towards girls goes largely unpunished, suggests that intimidation and threats are likely to feature in these relationships. Interview data also suggest that among girls themselves there is a widespread belief that girls are forced into sexual relationships either by the man or out of financial need.

3. As in Zimbabwe, it appeared to be common that teachers openly proposition girls for sex. In Ghana the three schools were chosen at random with a single criterion of location, and one of the three by chance exposed a head teacher with a long history of demanding sex from girls. In Malawi it was not difficult for the researchers to identify three schools in relatively close proximity according to the same criterion of location where there had been reported cases of teachers having affairs with schoolgirls. Also striking was the fact that among the relatively small number of parents interviewed in each country, two parents (one in Ghana and one in Malawi) revealed that they had a daughter who had been made pregnant by a teacher. Ministry and District Education Office officials confirmed that there are many such cases. In Ghana 62% of girls and in Malawi 34% reported that they knew of a girl in the school who had been made pregnant by a teacher. However, it is important to note that, although girls in the PRA workshops in both countries cited sexual advances by teachers as a problem, it was ranked as less important than problems with their studies and with paying school fees in Ghana, and less important than excessive punishments by teachers, including beatings, in Malawi. Excessive domestic chores in Ghana (four to seven hours a day) and school chores in Malawi emerged from the interviews as additional problems for girls.

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4. There was some limited evidence that bullying and aggressive behaviour is not only male to female; there were cases of girls bullying other girls (teachers as well as girls during the Malawi workshops reported that older girls steal food from younger girls) as well as boys bullying other boys (clear from the Zimbabwe peri-urban school and from teacher's reports in all three countries). Evidence of girls bullying boys did not emerge (although boys – and teachers – widely believed that girls tempted them into relationships through their provocative clothing and demeanour).

5. In terms of impact of abusive behaviour on girls' participation in education, in the Ghana peri-urban school, where the head teacher was demanding sex of girls, the consequences were all too starkly shown. This school had very low enrolment of girls (125 girls to 218 boys, with particularly low figures for girls in JSS 1-3²⁸) and on the two days when we ran the PRA workshops at the start of the study, every girl in Primary 6 and JSS 1 was invited to attend: there were only nine and eight girls respectively (out of the fourteen and nine recorded on the register). Moreover, in this village, despite its relative poverty and lack of infrastructure (no tar road, electricity or piped water), there is a private, fee-paying nursery/lower Primary school. While there may be other reasons why parents decide to send their younger children to a private school (a perceived higher quality of teaching and suspicion that funds are being misappropriated in the government school being but two), the fact that the head teacher's misconduct was an 'open secret' was no doubt a major incentive in persuading parents to send their daughters elsewhere, or to withdraw them from school completely.

Many girls reported being frightened of teachers who resorted to severe corporal punishment and/or verbal abuse. Some girls said they sometimes did not come to school for this reason. Boys in the Malawi study claimed to be sometimes reluctant to participate in class out of fear of being booed by other pupils or humiliated by the teacher. This suggests that physical, verbal and sexual violence are all deterrents to the achievement of high quality education for all, and that this affects boys' participation as well as girls'.

As for the impact on girls' learning, this is difficult to assess. However, it was clear that girls felt constrained by the conditions that prevailed in their schools. In both countries, they admitted that physical, verbal, and at times sexual, abuse had an adverse effect on their behaviour in class and their full participation in school life. Those girls who did not actively solicit male attention were frightened and nervous. However, in Malawi boys also admitted that the fear of being booed by other pupils or humiliated by the teacher prevented them from participating fully in class, and teachers generally in both countries were of the opinion that boys also had problems which affected their studies. Despite this, girls would appear to experience many more constraints on their learning opportunities: their private 'space' is invaded regularly by boys, their time for study reduced by school and domestic chores, and

²⁸ Enrolment in the rural school was also imbalanced: 144 girls to 210 boys at the start of the year. However, other factors such as child labour and severe poverty may have accounted for the low enrolment to a greater extent than in the peri-urban school.

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negative attitudes expressed by both teachers and male pupils as to their intelligence and seriousness reduce opportunities to excel in class and encourage low self-esteem and low aspirations. It is perhaps alarming that in both Ghana and Malawi, there appeared to be evidence that where girls decide to confide in a teacher or to seek advice, they prefer to go to a male teacher than to a female. Female teachers, who should understand the difficulties and risks they face all too well, appear cold and distant to them.

Though unquantifiable, it would appear that violent behaviour that goes unpunished in schools creates a hostile environment in which learning is clearly undermined, and girls are the greater victim. It was perhaps not by chance that in the peri-urban school in Ghana, where the head teacher was 'misbehaving', the pupils' level of English and attentiveness and responsiveness to tasks during the workshops appeared to be lower than in the poorer and less well resourced rural school (in the latter, too, there appeared to be less corporal punishment). This is an important consideration at a time when governments and the international community are seeking not only to achieve universal primary education but also to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

6. Because the negotiation process around adolescent sex lends itself easily to aggressive male behaviour, and because this is the stage of their development when young people acquire modes of social behaviour that will remain with them throughout adult life, the school environment is critical. Evidence from the three country study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on education in sub-Saharan Africa suggests that sexual harassment is less of a problem in schools in Uganda than in the other two countries (Botswana and Malawi) in part because the government has made a greater effort to curb such behaviour (Bennell et al 2002: 89), and some school heads take an uncompromising approach to the prosecution and conviction of teachers who misbehave (Hyde et al 2001: 82).

7. In terms of risky sexual practice, and in particular the risk of HIV/AIDS, in schools, a study by Mensch et al (1999) found evidence that girls are less likely to engage in premarital sex when they attend a school characterised by girl-friendly teachers and a gender-neutral atmosphere - and that boys are more likely to use contraception in such an environment, especially where students have greater knowledge of reproduction, whereas they are less likely to if they attend a school where strong pressure to have sex is reported. This suggests that efforts to create a more supportive environment conducive to learning will also encourage safer sex and therefore contribute to HIV prevention. HIV is driven as much by socio-cultural as by economic conditions and agencies working to reduce the spread of the disease recognise the role that gender violence has played in its rise. The limited choices available to women and girls about when to have sex, sometimes with whom they have it, and whether it should be protected sex are the result of an imbalanced gender relationship of power and status, one which encourages this violence. A supportive and understanding school environment where such issues are discussed openly and consensual and equal relationships encouraged can do

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much to change these socio-cultural conditions. Not all boys want to manifest aggressive and ‘macho’ behaviour but peer pressure and the school culture make it almost a requirement.

8. In Malawi, although there was some suggestion in the follow up that not all parents condemned affairs between teachers and schoolgirls (see especially the case of School B in 4.5 above), it was broadly accepted that poverty was largely responsible for encouraging schoolgirls into such relationships. Parents who participated in the focus group discussions pointed out that where a daughter had been impregnated by a teacher and the parents were unable to provide for an extra child in the family, they had no choice but to approach the teacher for financial support, or persuade him to marry the girl. If the teacher is suspended or dismissed, they are less likely to receive that financial help and so they may ask the head teacher not to make a formal complaint. Such considerations inevitably help to perpetuate the climate of inaction and apparent indifference to sexual misconduct that characterises all three educational systems and complicate efforts to produce a strong coherent institutional response.

9. Within all three educational systems, there was a culture of silence and ‘passing the buck’. Almost all teachers interviewed denied that there were male teachers having affairs with girls in their school, although they might concede that it happened elsewhere. Officials and head teachers would talk about the difficulty of bringing cases to court because the parents would intervene as they were in negotiation with the teacher for compensation. In Malawi, teachers said that they were not ready to take action on any incident involving pupils that took place outside the school compound – this was not seen as their concern. In Ghana, the police officer interviewed from WAJU talked of the frustration of parents withdrawing their case just before it came to court because some deal had been struck with the teacher. At the same time, as the case of the School B head teacher in Ghana showed all too clearly, parents are left in the dark as to how to proceed with a complaint. Teachers can take advantage of their position of relative power to threaten parents and pupils to remain silent. At the same time, few pupils confide in their teachers or seek advice from them; girls in particular are distrustful, believing that any confidences will be the subject of staff room gossip. This endorses findings from the earlier Zimbabwe study.

6.1.3 Trialling of a range of small scale strategic interventions

The third component of the study was the trialling and monitoring of a range of small scale strategies aimed at counteracting abuse in schools in the three countries, with a view to identifying successful strategies for wider application. The range of strategies developed and implemented in each country has been documented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Work on this component has revealed a clear distinction between the relatively straightforward requirements of awareness raising and ‘sensitisation’ and the *implementation* of aspirations which resulted from the awareness raising/sensitisation activities and were in many cases ‘concretised’ in action plans. Awareness raising around the issue of abuse and gender violence

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can be considered as having been effective here insofar as positive feedback was obtained from participants and they were willing partners in formulating action plans and engaging in some activities in their own institutional setting. Particular highlights were: the dissemination workshop in Zimbabwe, which was featured on prime time national TV; the *durbar* in Ghana which increased several communities' understanding of the mechanisms for making formal complaints against teachers' sexual misconduct and which also made the District Education Office realise how inadequate these procedures and their own knowledge of them were; the actions taken by parents in School C in Malawi in insisting on setting up a Counselling sub-Committee to hear cases of abuse (even though it did not appear to function well); and the participatory activities with girls (and some with boys) in all three countries which allowed them to discuss abuse openly and to think through strategies to improve their safety and their learning environment. The poems written by girls in the Zimbabwe schools are particularly revealing and moving (Appendix 11).

This component however was less successful in monitoring the impact of these events, in part due to the limited period of time and funds available and the absence of a clear supporting structure for doing this (see recommendations for further work below). In Ghana, the researcher returned to two of the schools twice after the activities were completed. During her second visit to School C in April 2001 (five months after the completion of the strategy work) the head teacher provided her with information on ways in which the school situation had changed for the better: fewer pregnancies, more self-confidence among the pupils, parents' greater willingness to pay school fees promptly, and even to start paying weekly study fees for extra tuition. This suggests that the sensitisation workshops for parents have served to change their perception of the value of education as well as raising their awareness around issues of abuse. Some girls in this school also reported improvements in their home lives as a result of their parents/guardians' greater appreciation of the benefits of schooling. In School B, where the head teacher's misconduct had been exposed, the investigation by the District Education Office would eventually lead to improvements as the community had been empowered to act and would no longer tolerate the head teacher's behaviour (or hopefully that of other teachers). However, the researcher was under the circumstances not able to visit the school itself and so was unable to gather more information on impact.

In Malawi, a return visit to the three schools after three months revealed that in two of them, a start had been made on the action plans. In School B, the School Committee had arranged a meeting with parents to discuss the two priority issues that they had identified: how to address sexual affairs between teachers and schoolgirls and the lack of uniforms for pupils, which resulted in them not being given learning materials. They had also discussed the issue of excessive punishments with teachers and pupils. However, the apathy of the school leadership and the district officials to the issue of abuse, combined at times with parents' collusion with a teacher who gets a schoolgirl pregnant, to prevent him from being suspended or transferred, suggests that there is a long way to go in reducing abusive

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behaviour and in particular teacher misconduct in schools in Malawi. In Zimbabwe, as already explained, the researcher left for overseas training three months before the end of the research, which curtailed the opportunities for monitoring. Nevertheless, there was evidence of greater attention being paid to the issue of abuse and a range of activities engaged in which over time could lead to a change in attitude among actors at different levels of the educational system.

As for identifying effective strategies among those that were tried out, as noted above it was difficult from the partial implementation of the action plans to draw conclusive evidence of what interventions might be successful in changing behaviour and be applicable elsewhere. However, common to many of the strategies tried out was the active involvement of girls in identifying and thinking through their problems as well as suggesting possible solutions, some of them were quite imaginative. This is particularly significant because, in all three countries during the PRA workshops, the girls had had great difficulty in thinking of ways of dealing with their problems (as expressed through the 'problem wall' they constructed) and changing their circumstances for the better. Yet, in the subsequent strategy workshops, as the Zimbabwe account reveals (5.3.2.2), girls expressed firm views of what they liked and disliked about their schools and what they wanted changed; and they were able to think constructively in terms of action points and solutions. These activities would appear to have increased their self-confidence and their ability to articulate not only their problems but also possible solutions. Recommendations for further work would include working with boys and girls together, so that they can discuss problems and identify ways of resolving them together, and in so doing perhaps change their own views and behaviour towards each other.

For teachers, it was clear that the choices that they saw available to them in terms of their own role in helping to address girls' and boys' problems (and their own problems with both) were very limited. The strategies directed at teachers in Malawi in particular appeared to be less successful than those with girls in challenging dominant attitudes towards pupils. Teachers' attitudes are a major stumbling block to stamping out abusive behaviour in schools and there is clearly a long way to go. However, much can be done through teacher training and staff development to broaden these horizons and to reduce their stereotypical views of girls in particular. The work with two regional training colleges in Zimbabwe, especially when combined with awareness raising and support in the context of HIV/AIDS, is promising.

6.1.4 Impact of the research

As already stated, it was difficult within the context of a short research study to monitor the mechanisms whereby policy and practice were changed as a result of this research - and hence to prove a causal relationship. However, evidence that the research, and in particular the awareness raising and strategy formulation activities, has influenced policy and practice is available. Examples include:

Discussion

1. In all three countries, the researchers worked closely with official bodies, in particular with District Education Officers, PTAs and School Committees, as part of an explicit attempt to influence decision-makers and raise awareness of the importance of their taking action. The reports from all three countries on the second phase of the study show a range of activities with stakeholders, which at the least has resulted in improved awareness and information, and which in the longer term can encourage informed decision-making and action. For example, in the Malawi rural school, the head teacher has started referring cases of teachers having affairs with schoolgirls to the School Committee, where in the past he would have ignored them. In the peri-urban school in Ghana, the District Education Office and the community have taken action against the head teacher, with a formal investigation being conducted into his actions and those of other male teachers. In Zimbabwe, a number of schools committed themselves to a set of staff development activities to raise awareness and develop procedures to deal with abuse in their schools. None of this would have happened if the research had not taken place.

2. In Zimbabwe, there was no doubt that the two-day dissemination workshop had raised the issue of the abuse of girls nationally, with the event featuring on prime time TV. Since then, the Ministry has issued a new instruction that married teaching couples should be transferred where possible to the same location (although it had not been implemented by the time the study was completed). It would appear that the research, and in particular the dissemination workshop, was instrumental in this change of policy.

3. In Malawi, staff from one of the NGOs which attended the strategy workshop have used the material distributed to include a component on abuse in their funding proposal to teach counselling in schools. Another NGO called the Story Workshop, which is involved in drama and radio work with young people, discussed issues of strategic intervention with the researchers with a view to introducing the topic of abuse into its radio programme.

4. In Malawi, before the research started, a new local radio talk show series had started, inviting people to send in news items from their communities. During the period of field work, there were many items about teachers abusing and impregnating schoolgirls discussed on the show, suggesting that news of the research may also have helped to focus attention on this topic. In Ghana, radio also featured as part of the strategic intervention, with the researcher arranging a phone-in discussion on national radio between the public and schoolchildren after the *durbar*. It is clear that the media, and in particular radio, can do much to raise awareness and inform the public as well as mobilise individuals and communities to take action.

5. In the UK, ActionAid has taken gender violence in schools as one of the themes covered in its participatory video programme. Discussions are underway with ActionAid and Oxfam on further research (see below).

Discussion

6.2 Recommendations

Tackling the issue of abuse and gender violence in schools requires a holistic approach, involving all stakeholders, teachers, parents, pupils, government officials in education, health and social welfare, the police and child protection agencies, and NGOs working with women and children. Without this, there is the risk of one off interventions, without support systems to protect children where cases of abuse are uncovered.

School level

Initiatives to improve the school's response to abusive behaviour can be integrated into ongoing efforts to strengthen Guidance and Counselling, life skills and HIV/AIDS education, especially through the teaching of negotiation and communication skills. Promoting consent, negotiation and consultation rather than power, domination and control in adolescent relationships, sexual or otherwise, is key. Discussions should revolve around children's experiences, using alternative pedagogies such as art and drama where feasible. However, there are important constraints on promoting such work more widely within the formal education system: it is labour intensive and slow, it can only engage small groups, and it needs highly skilled facilitators and hence significant funding. It requires space for reflection, analysis and open discussion of topics traditionally seen as taboo such as sexuality and domination.

Schools need to become less authoritarian and more supportive of pupils, especially girls. Head teachers and teachers need to be aware of the importance of creating a pupil friendly environment, especially for girls, which will ensure effective learning, support pupils' personal development and protect their rights. The introduction of Student Councils and democratic management practices will be helpful. The curriculum should address the issue of abuse within a human rights framework.

Schools need to provide pupils with the necessary information and support so that they can report cases of abusive behaviour in reassuring circumstances and know that action will be taken by the appropriate authorities. In all three countries, pupils especially girls showed a clear distrust of teachers, which suggests that outside facilitators are required to initiate this work. Schools also need to provide counselling services to deal with sexual violence and HIV/AIDS.

Schools need to transform the teaching of Guidance and Counselling, which is currently seen as a low status subject (not examinable) and is taught in a traditional didactic classroom manner. This fails to engage pupils with the issues or to allow for discussion and understanding. This could be done by training dedicated G&C teachers in pupil centred and participatory methods.

The education authorities should consider engaging peer educators (adolescents or young adults who can visit schools to talk to pupils about sexual violence and other issues that

Discussion

concern them), as is currently being done in some instances with HIV/AIDS education. This is an effective way of encouraging more positive and consensual relationships between male and female pupils. Given that the three country studies show that much of the abuse in schools is perpetrated by male pupils against female pupils, much can be done to create a conducive learning environment by working with pupils themselves.

Teachers and head teachers need training of a type that will raise awareness of the importance of taking action on a serious complaint by a pupil, that will provide them with counselling skills and familiarise them with the appropriate procedures to follow. To take effective action against abusive behaviour in the school, they need to confront their own attitude towards the issue. The almost universal denial from teachers that sexual abuse goes on in their school, combined with a very limited vision of what needs to be done to address more general problems that pupils, especially girls, face in school, points to the need for intensive training. More punishment and more discipline will not solve the matter, especially when disciplining pupils for abusive behaviour towards girls is not considered as serious as disciplining them over, for example, being late for school, not completing homework, failing exams or being noisy during lessons.

This approach to bringing about change in sexual behaviour in a school setting depends on a clear strategy that tackles gender inequalities in school, and involves both learners and teachers, male and female. As some of the items featured in the id21 initiative stress (Chapter 2), it is important to have a whole school approach, which allows for teachers and pupils to work together on common aims and to ensure that supporting and monitoring processes are in place.

Teacher training

The research shows that there is a very important role for teacher training colleges. Teachers are key to change in the school setting but to do this effectively they need to begin by addressing their own attitudes and experiences. The researcher in Zimbabwe carried out an interesting exercise with teachers in which they acknowledge that they too had been beaten and severely punished as pupils but knew that their teachers 'had had their best interests at heart'.

Teachers' colleges need to provide awareness raising among trainees, and place greater emphasis on ethical standards of behaviour so that they understand the seriousness of abusing the trust that has been placed in them. The curriculum should deal explicitly with such issues.

Trainees should also be exposed to gender training, so that they are made aware of the ways in which teachers perpetuate negative stereotypes about female and male behaviour, often unconsciously; they should be able to treat boys and girls equally.

A cadre of specialist Guidance and Counselling teachers should be trained in participatory methods.

Discussion

Ministry level

Ministries need to ensure the effective enforcement of regulations about teacher misconduct. Very few cases result in dismissal or are even brought to court, let alone result in convictions. There is an urgent need for public information on procedures, channels for complaints, and the rights and entitlements of pupils. It was striking that in neither Ghana nor Malawi did the School Committee, the PTA or the community know how to act when faced with a case of sexual misconduct by a teacher. In Uganda, where sexual harassment and abuse appears to be less of a problem, offending teachers are prosecuted more vigorously, and there have been a number of adolescent males imprisoned for having sex with underage girls (Bennell et al, 2002: 89).

There needs to be wide dissemination of the Ministry's policy on sexual harassment and abuse, a review and strengthening of procedures, and prompt action taken to prosecute those accused of sexual relations with pupils. Teachers should be suspended during investigations.

National campaigns should be conducted by the Ministry on the radio and TV and in the press, to make the public fully aware of the scale of the problem of sexual and physical abuse, including bullying, and the negative consequences for pupils, girls especially. The public needs to know what the correct procedures are to follow in reporting a case and what the rights of parents and pupils are in this respect.

The Ministry should consider setting up a special unit to deal with cases of abuse (in Ghana the suggestion is for a special unit on children's rights and protection).

Clear guidelines should be provided for schools, school committees and PTAs, detailing the appropriate action to take and providing easily accessible procedures. Members of committees and PTAs should be provided with training in how to handle cases.

District level

Linkages between district education offices and school committees (and through them parents and communities) need to be strengthened. In both Ghana and Malawi there was a clear failure of coordination and communication, with the school committees and parents seemingly powerless to act, and DEOs themselves not knowing how to proceed when confronted with cases of abuse (in Malawi a teacher had been suspended on half pay for two years and no decision taken on his case).

Prompt action needs to be taken to suspend teachers and investigate cases thoroughly, referring them to the courts where necessary. DEOs need training in how to handle accusations of teacher misconduct.

Community level

There needs to be awareness raising around issues of abuse, in particular teacher sexual misconduct. Communities need to understand how serious it is and that accepting financial

Discussion

compensation from teachers in the case of pregnancy does not help resolve the problem. Parents and other community members need information on the rules and regulations regarding teacher misconduct (not only on sexual abuse but also on corrupt management practices, absenteeism etc). Official bodies which include community members as representatives, e.g. school committees and PTAs, also need this information, and training should be made available to help them make use of this information so that teacher performance and conduct can be monitored and the whole schooling process be more transparent and accountable.

Participatory strategies which involve a wide range of stakeholders in communities might be very effective in this respect. Some international agencies and NGOs already have training programmes to strengthen school committees and PTAs, e.g. USAID in Ghana, CRECCOM in Malawi. Tackling the issue of abusive behaviour by teachers and pupils should be an explicit component of such programmes.

6.3 Follow up

The intention in the short term is to engage in a set of dissemination activities. These will include:

- Workshops in Ghana and Malawi for major players, Ministry and DEO officials, school heads and teachers, NGOs and agencies working in education, health, social welfare etc.
- A new id21 *Highlight* featuring this study and possible others
- Publication of the report in the Education Research series (if approved by DFID). The first report on abuse in Zimbabwe schools was very widely distributed in Zimbabwe, among teachers, ministry officials, teacher trainers and NGOs working with women and children.
- Circulation in-country of the three national reports (to Ministries, DEOs, participating schools, international agencies etc in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe)
- A number of academic papers (one already published in the South African journal *Perspectives in Education*, 20,2 2002, a special issue on HIV/AIDS and education edited by Carol Coombe, another in *Compare*, 33,3)
- Conference presentations (including the BAICE conference in Nottingham in September 2002 and the Oxford Conference in September 2003).
- Printed leaflets summarising the research (similar to the id21 *Health Highlights*) to be distributed mainly to those without ready internet or email access both in the countries where the research was carried out and elsewhere (e.g. teachers, district education officials)

Discussion

- A bid to be prepared for production of a manual of training materials drawing on the participatory and multi-media approaches outlined in some of the initiatives documented in the *Highlights*.

In the longer term, a further extension to the research study, located in South Asia, is being contemplated, as is a proposal for a programme of rigorous and in-depth monitoring of controlled interventions within ongoing gender-oriented programmes. Preliminary discussions have already held with ActionAid and Oxfam.

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insights

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Special

Conspiracy of silence? Stamping out abuse in African schools

Schools in sub-Saharan Africa tolerate serious sexual harassment and abuse, most of it perpetrated by older male pupils and male teachers. Why is the school a violent place for girls? How does school culture encourage gender violence? In the light of the AIDS crisis, sexual violence against young girls needs to be vigorously tackled.

This special issue of insights is part of an effort to break the conspiracy of silence on this most serious of human rights violations, one which exposes young people to a range of abusive institutionalised practices. Children are frequently abused in the very place where they should feel most safe, sometimes by those entrusted with their care – namely teachers and principals.

Yet the silence and denial surrounding abuse is deafening. It is difficult to accept that the school is a site of abuse rather than a haven against abuse perpetrated elsewhere. Sexual abuse in schools is not a new phenomenon, nor an exclusively African problem. What is new is that it is finally being researched in Africa. Talking about abuse widely – in the community, in schools and within homes – and implementing policies and strategies to stamp it out are the vital next steps.

This IDI initiative is linked to an ongoing study funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) on the abuse of girls in schools in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Ghana. The research is investigating the extent and nature of abuse, disseminating key findings and recommendations, and testing strategic interventions. Reports for this issue come from South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Ghana (see Insights 425 for a report from Namibia).

Statistics are hard to come by, but in all these countries it is clear that the sexual abuse of girls is widespread, institutionalised and pervasive. Sexual abuse of male pupils by male and female teachers and of female teachers by male pupils probably also exists, though much less widespread and almost totally un-researched.

- Important findings from the research are that sexual abuse of girls by male pupils and teachers is accepted, along with corporal punishment, verbal abuse and bullying, as an inevitable part of much of school life. It exploits unequal power relations and the authoritarian ethos within schools.
- The reluctance of education authorities to address the issue and to prosecute perpetrators allows abuse to flourish unchecked. By their inaction, authorities condone and encourage it. Male

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- Schools: safe haven for girls?

teachers who openly pursue sexual liaisons with girls are indicating to boys that such behaviour is acceptable. Fear of abusive teachers and mistrust of other staff who turn a blind eye prevents pupils from reporting incidents.

- Sexual abuse of girls in school is a reflection of gender violence and inequality in the wider society. Domestic violence against women and children is commonplace, as is rape and forced sex within relationships. Women are considered as "belonging" to men and hence accorded lower value and status.
- The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS has increased girls' vulnerability to sexual abuse by "sugar daddies" and by male teachers, relatives and neighbours.

The insight that AIDS can be cured by having sex with a virgin exposes girls as young as six to rape. Gifts, money and promises of marriage lure teenage girls into sexual relationships that put them at risk of HIV infection. Addressing sexual abuse in schools is an important human rights issue and a tool in the fight against HIV infection and AIDS. It is also crucial in the struggle to achieve universal primary education. Progress over the past decade on meeting the Education for All (EFA) targets set at Jomtien in 1990 has been disappointing; it



August 2005

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Appendix 1

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The sugar daddy trap

Peer pressure pushes girls into sex

Male sexual aggression against girls is endemic and institutionalised in Zimbabwe. Girls are propositioned by male pupils and teachers inside the school, and by 'sugar daddies' outside. Money, gifts and promises of marriage tempt girls into sexual liaisons. What is the role of the peer group culture in encouraging abuse? How can the school help to change attitudes and behaviour?

Recent research by the University of Sussex and Africa University, Zimbabwe investigated the nature and pattern of abuse among 112 girls in three co-educational junior secondary schools and an all-girls secondary school in Zimbabwe. Findings suggest that adolescent peer group culture within the school environment encourages male and female pupils to conform to certain stereotypical behaviours which make girls particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Boys want sex, girls want money

Money is crucial for girls within the peer culture. Pupils need basic necessities for school attendance such as uniforms, books, and money for school fees and bus fares, but also pocket money. Pupils who can afford to buy food and drink from the school tuck shops, for example, are admired or envied. In their desire to be popular and gain acceptance and status amongst their peers, girls are easily tempted into accepting money or snacks from male pupils who have more opportunity to earn cash from casual work. Likewise, gifts or money from teachers and sugar daddies may be difficult to resist. In this way girls are gradually and unwittingly coerced by obligation into a dependent and exploitative sexual relationship. Even girls from more affluent middle class homes are drawn into the sugar daddy trap by the desire to be seen as grown up, receiving gifts, and having fun.

Equally, male peer group pressure requires that older boys aggressively demand the attention of younger girls. Having a girlfriend and competing over girls are essential features of the adolescent masculine identity. Boys in the upper forms may go girls in Form 7, force girls to read love letters, invade their private space by touching them, enter their classrooms uninvited during break times, accost them in the school grounds with propositions and beat them up if they refuse. Much is at stake: by buying a girl sweets or snacks, the boy is showing that he is ready to pay for sexual favours.

Girls' perceptions of abuse

Those who have many girlfriends are regarded as 'big studs'

Girls and boys in the study (the latter with much condemnation) agreed that girls enter sexual relationships with adult men primarily for money. In doing this, however, girls are rarely acting out the role taught them by society, one in which they will look to men for physical, financial and moral support.

Aware of their low status in society and lacking in self-esteem and confidence, girls rarely take direct action when harassed or physically assaulted and for accept male aggression with passivity. For girls and women this is how things are: they are always at fault, even if they become pregnant through coerced sex. Female sex is fundamentally flawed.

It is vital to discuss the issue of school-based abuse at all levels. Strategies to achieve such communication include the need to:

- encourage girls to act as a group to discuss problems, support each other and learn about their rights
- hold school-based workshops with teachers and parents to raise awareness about abuse and to develop school-based action plans to address it
- invite girls who have dropped out of school because of pregnancy to talk about the difficulties they now face
- create a helpline and/or message box at regional ministries for boys to report abuse
- include awareness raising and discussion of ethical behaviour in all pre- and in-service teacher training
- provide imaginative careers guidance for girls to help broaden their horizons beyond a future as housewife and mother, and to raise self-esteem and expectations

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Mixed Messages

Can education spearhead the fight against the government uses the first to promote sexual health in schools, but it is gender inequality - a fundamental cause of government strategy work? Are schools spread of this deadly virus?

Research from the University of Kampala, Uganda with 13 to 18-year old pupils government boarding school in Uganda, the practices which themselves and girls' role in preference for male dominance and power in context of the school culture meant women within the school culture meant knowledge that Ugandan schoolchildren may count for nothing given the reality of gendered practices at the school level:

- preference for male pupils and high status
- restricted access for girls to high status (science)
- different disciplinary measures for boys
- strict 'zoning' of girls' sexuality by the
- attempt what to resist, how to sit in
- sexual harassment goes unacknowledged
- in class, boys control the language and forcing them into silence
- girls endure insults whenever they sit

Outside the classroom discrimination of girls being taught on all parts of the female body through abusive language for boys is clear: girls are 'available', leadership, manhood and male rights

Dangerous love? Challenging male machismo

In South Africa, can be a dangerous game for girls. Boys use violence in relationships to assert their masculinity. The reliance by some boys, however, on excessive control of girlfriends belies their own vulnerability. How the 'normality' of sexual violence has been challenged?

Physical assault, rape, and coercive sex become the norm in male/female relationships in South Africa making it very difficult for young women to protect themselves against unwanted sexual intercourse, pregnancy, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted diseases. A recent Medical Research Council study involving 30 Xhosa youth aged 16-24 from two township schools in the Eastern Cape examined the circumstances and contexts of violence in adolescent sexual relationships.

Beating is perceived as a normal strategy for punishment and a way of gaining secondary and control

Source of emotional stress and disappointment. For girls the main sources of unhappiness in relationships are of unavailability, excessive male infidelity, abandonment, excessive male control, forced sex and violence. For boys, control, forced sex and violence appears to be the main preoccupation appears to be the threat of the reality that girlfriends are being unfaithful.

Masculinity is largely defined by numbers of sexual partners, choice of main partner, and ability to control girlfriends. It is on the whole socially taboo in South Africa not to have a girlfriend. Indeed, acquiring girlfriends is viewed the possibility of a relationship ending is common practice. Multiple sexual partners feature in intensely competitive struggles for position and status within male peer groups.

Men are independent on women. Status within the relationship subsisting to the 'rules' of the relationship and to their strategies of control. If girls fail to abide by the rules - reject 'proposals of love', attempt to end a relationship, refuse

AIDS in transition to culture reinforces spread - will factor in the

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culture, and passed on through the generations to boys and girls. Challenging this common cultural practice in schools is the new HUMANIS curriculum. Central to the 'cultural' message is that negotiation and partnership in sexual relationships are fundamental to HIV prevention strategies. Negotiation and partnership, however, require equal power and status between partners. Endemic harassment denies girls the right to make a choice, voice independence, or fight back on an equal standing. The inevitability of boy-girl relationships, if girls fail to follow a boy's lead puts them in the direct path of HIV infection, pregnancy or a violent relationship. To refuse a boy's advances is viewed the risk of beating, abusive language, physical harassment or assault.

A better understanding of patriarchy and gender roles in Uganda and their contribution to the AIDS epidemic is crucial. Equally important is the agency for the Ministry of Education to address gender inequality in schools and to promote democratic learning in sex and HIV/AIDS education programmes within the curriculum.

- Practical suggestions for education policy include the need to address a wider concept of sexual health including positive aspects such as sexual orientation and the good sides of sex) within the school curriculum
- Teach sex education in single-sex groups to give pupils greater freedom to discuss sensitive issues and gender control of their learning
- Have a whole school approach (human rights, family planning, democratic learning) that challenges the social injustices brought about by gender discrimination
- Initiate teacher training courses that explore ways in which gender discrimination can be challenged within schools
- Embark on serious gender mainstreaming initiatives offering equal opportunities for all. ■

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Insights

to have sex or check up on their boyfriend's fidelity - they must face the violent consequences.

Permanently, on the other hand, is based on girls' desirability to the opposite sex. Girls find it difficult to resist violent men for fear of losing the status of having a relationship. Competitiveness within the peer group makes it impossible for girls to admit having been beaten. Further findings reveal that

- Men use sex as their right including forced sex.
- Male teachers convey the message that young girls are 'for game'.
- Girls prefer wealthy partners who give gifts and money and whom they can boast about to other girls.

For young people to be free from the threat of abuse and inherent vulnerability there needs to be:

- recognition by government that assault and forced sex are criminal acts and that more visible street policing and swift, effective action by the police is essential
- provision of basic self-defence and escape strategies training for women
- improved communication within communities on sexuality
- more equal socialisation of boys and girls from childhood
- improved life skills education classes in schools addressing issues of gender violence, non-violent conflict resolution and focussing on self-esteem, trust and team building
- community education campaigns directed at children and adults challenging the 'normality' and inevitability of violence in relationships. ■

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See also
 'Dangerous love: reflections on violence among those learning youth' by K. Wood and R. Jewkes, in 'Changing Men in Southern Africa' edited by R. Maman, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2001
 'There is a dangerous thing: neo-dynamism of violence in sexual relationships of young people in Limpopo' by K. Wood and R. Jewkes, MRC Technical Report, 1998

SUBSCRIBE

Two annual newsletters over the coming months will report on further research into gender violence. Subscribe to the newsletters by sending an email to lyndee@crisisline.ac.uk with the message 'subscribe to gender violence newsletters'. To contribute please, contact Caroline Nicholson at caroline@crisisline.ac.uk. We welcome input from other parts of the world.

Appendix 1

Integrating special

► some African contexts, the gender gap in enrolments is widening.

Why, despite all the public commitments and policy statements, has progress been so slow? Part of the answer must lie in the nature of the schooling experience itself – ignored in the haste to expand school places. Even responses to high dropout rates, especially among girls, and to poor learning outcomes have looked to formal aspects of schooling (such as teacher preparation, classroom teaching, school management) for answers, rather than to informal school practices. The articles in this issue help explain this oversight.

The Comprehensive Human Rights Watch report on sexual violence in South African schools documents the chilling scale and nature of the violence, its effects on children's education and the education authorities' responses to reported cases. George's article focuses on sexual abuse by teachers of their female pupils. The authors recommend that the South African government urgently implement a national policy on how to deal with sexual violence in schools. A national plan of action should include wide scale dissemination of standard procedural guidelines governing how schools address allegations and treat victims of violence. Only when perpetrators are punished in the courts, and schools enforce disciplinary measures, will the message be understood.

Research in the north has shown how boys' and girls' culture and social influences are instrumental in the construction of masculine and feminine identity. Two articles here look at this in the African context. The Zimbabwe study by Leach and Machingira reveals that the peer group culture places great pressure on boys and girls to conform to male and female stereotypes at a time when their sexual identities are still developing. Vitrod and Jovkie vividly illustrate how excessive control and violence in adolescent sexual relationships in a South African township are integral to male identity.

Mimbe highlights the inherent contradiction of trying to promote adolescent sexual health through the school curriculum in Uganda, with its messages about the importance of negotiated sex, equal partnership and the freedom to say 'no', when the school culture clearly promotes male domination and leadership. Karloemia and Swainson suggest ways in which schooling in Malawi might successfully change teachers' and learners' behaviour.

Training and awareness raising are crucial in the fight against gender violence. One example of an initiative to train educators is provided here. Open Our Eyes is a training module developed for South Africa but of relevance to other countries too.

We need to recognize the complex set of roles involved in gender violence in schools. Tackling it requires concerted efforts at all levels – including the need for:

- governments to initiate media and community-based campaigns aimed at changing attitudes, human rights, social exclusion and HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives
- ministries of education that professional codes of conduct are enforced and offenders prosecuted quickly and severely
- schools to promote a more supportive culture by facilitating the reporting of abuse, curbing bullying and corporal punishment, providing effective counselling, encouraging constructive and equal relationships between pupils and supporting positive role modelling
- teacher training curricula to provide awareness raising around abuse and gender issues
- communities and families to work closely with schools, ministries and NGOs to tackle violence in the home, within communities, and in schools

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See also:
Stared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools, Human Rights Watch, USA, March 2001
www.hrw.org/washingtonoffice

Criminal justice? Tackling sexual abuse in schools

Decades of violent enforcement of apartheid policies have fuelled a culture of violence in South Africa. Girls are raped, sexually abused, harassed and assaulted at school by male classmates and male teachers.

When governments and communities tolerate this in school environments, the message to men and boys is clear: violence and gender inequality are legitimate. How can schools begin to challenge the notion of violence as a societal norm? What can be done to ensure that sexually abused girls are not lost in the shuffle between school officials, police and prosecutors?

A recent Human Rights Watch report extensively documents the scope and scale of the discriminatory impact on girls' education and health. Girls of every race and economic class encounter violence and harassment at school. Although male teachers are the main perpetrators, abuse by other staff is also widespread.

► **male teachers may sexually proposition girls and degrade them with highly sexualised language, sometimes reinforcing demands with threats of physical violence or corporal punishment**

- male teachers bribe girls for sexual favours
- sexual relations with students are regarded by some male teachers as fringe benefits
- cultural practices giving girls a subordinate status increase their vulnerability to adult
- poverty, deprivation, and fear of retaliation make it difficult for girls to resist or complain when sexually propositioned
- sexual involvement with a teacher may even be encouraged by parents keen to free the financial burden of their child's education.

Girls of every race and economic class encounter violence and harassment at school.

Who is responsible for tackling cases of abuse? School officials, police, and prosecutors often shift responsibility to each other, leaving perpetrators unpunished.

However, the report finds that there is increasing interest amongst educators in finding solutions to gender violence and that opportunities for change do exist within South Africa. The government needs to develop a proactive, coordinated, system-wide response involving schools, police, the judiciary, medical and legal systems. This can be achieved by ensuring that:

- schools are provided with guidelines detailing appropriate responses to allegations of rape, sexual assault or harassment by fellow pupils and staff
- school procedures are accessible so that pupils can make confidential complaints that will be investigated promptly and effectively
- prompt and appropriate disciplinary action is taken and teachers facing allegations are suspended pending the outcome of prosecution
- those convicted are not permitted to teach anywhere in the South African school system
- teachers, trainee teachers, pupils, parents and local communities are all included in educational initiatives to end sexual violence and harassment
- education and training is provided for pupils and staff on issues related to sexual violence, harassment and gender discrimination

Appendix 1

Risky behaviour Can education help?

Transactional sex between young girls and older men is common place in Malawi and in most cases sexual misconduct among teachers goes unpunished.

Survey findings from Malawi, part of a three-country study based at the University of Sussex, which includes Tanzania and Uganda, show that:

- Students are indulging in risky sexual behaviour, involving multiple partners for example, despite being generally well informed about HIV

- Five key aspects of Life Skills programmes**
- Communication, interpersonal relationships
 - Decision making, problem solving
 - Self awareness, self esteem, empathy
 - Creative and critical thinking
 - Coping with emotions and stress

What can be done to help break this culture of silence and change the behaviour of both teachers and learners?

Policy implications include the need to develop peer education and drama techniques to open up discussion of AIDS issues between students, school staff and the local community.

Developing links between community and schools through existing structures such as Parent Teacher Associations to help change attitudes towards girls' schooling

provide access to non-formal education and income generating projects for out-of-school youth and adolescents

include effective life skills classes throughout primary and secondary schooling, at present only operating in standard 4

provide greater use of child-centred teaching methods especially in relation to AIDS and health subjects

provide teachers and management with practical training on how best to communicate with and teach pupils about the importance of safe sex

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insights
August 2010

SITES FOR SORE EYES

The issues of sexual gender violence in schools have been considered a taboo area for discussion until recently. Excellent material is now beginning to emerge alongside related information on HIV/AIDS and adolescent sexual health, violence against women and girls' education.

A good springboard for information is UNICEF reports and other information, information linking sexual harassment information to the gender gap in education can be found at the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) site:

www.unicef.org/contents/newsletter/html/transactionalsexandschooldropoutinKenya is an interesting piece of research available at:

www.pansosintell.org/pdfs/wpi124.pdf. Check out PANOS, www.panos.org.uk, for materials covering a range of gender issues including 'Young Lives at Risk'

www.oneworld.org/panos/briefing/young_lives_at_risk.htm and an article examining sexual harassment in schools in Kenya, 'Tested to their limit', under the 'Women and Health Section' on The Panos site.

The Medical Research Council in South Africa, www.mrc.ac.za, has research papers on adolescent sexuality and violence against women and girls. Excellent links on adolescent sexual health can also be found at www.unesobok.org/info/en/whr-web/links.html.

Several reports examine issues of gender violence and HIV/AIDS, including 'Dying of sadness: gender sexual violence and the HIV epidemic' at www.undp.org/inis/publications/. UNDP's Men, Masculinities and Development site has relevant links to men's roles in ending gender violence at www.undp.org/gender/programmes/men/men_gd.html. The role of men and boys in ending gender-based violence will soon be examined at a new but still unfinished web site: www.whiteribbon.org and by UNICEF at www.unicef.org.

A site for young people, www.iggi.org/iggi/01/, provides magazine style on love and relationships, providing guidance on friendship, sexuality, contraception, and sexual and reproductive health.

Further links can be found at www.unfem.org/, www.tnsc.org, www.sccwelfare.org/harassment/index.html, and www.col.mogil.ca/casepage/default.html.

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Student Responses
Survey question:

	Primary		Secondary					
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree				
Students have not changed their sexual behaviour as a result of HIV/AIDS (%)	88	88	87	80	87	81	80	79
Love relationships among students are common in the school (%)	98	97	93	93	71	72	18	18
Love relationships between students and teachers are common in the school (%)	30	23	14	67	22	28	58	57

Teacher Responses
Survey question:

	Primary		Secondary					
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree				
Students are changing their sexual behaviour in response to HIV/AIDS (%)	5	13	58	67	22	26	41	52
Self-harm/abuse of students by teachers is a big problem in the school (%)	0	8	92	81	3	0	83	68
Self-harm/abuse of students by teachers at the school has got worse in recent years (%)	3	3	72	89	8	8	83	89

OR category excluded

Appendix 1

insights

Child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwe

Analysis of 346 reported cases of abuse by teachers in secondary schools in Zimbabwe, 1990 to 1997, identified 212 cases of sexual abuse, 22 cases of physical abuse and one case of emotional/physical abuse.

Sexual abuse
The tables below show 212 cases of sexual abuse perpetrated (99.1 percent) were male, 81.6 percent of perpetrators had had sexual intercourse with their pupils and other abuses include writing love letters, fondling breasts, buttocks, thighs, private parts, kissing or flogging, rape, attempted rape, and showing pornographic material to a pupil.

Teacher gender		
	No. of cases	%
Male	212	99.1
Female	2	0.9
Total	214	100

Teacher status		
	No. of cases	%
Trained	173	81.6
Untrained	39	18.4
Total	212	100

Nature of sexual abuse by teachers		
	No. of cases	%
Sexual intercourse	178	84.6
Wrote love letters	15	7.6
Fondling, kissing, flogging etc.	11	5.6
Rape or attempted rape	4	1.9
Showing pornographic material	1	0.5
Total	212	100

Physical Abuse
Analysis of the 22 cases shows that most perpetrators (94.1 percent) were male and trained. Most pupils (75.9 percent) had been caned, beaten, whipped, or hit without the head teachers' authority. Others had been slapped, punched, and one pupil was severely injured. 80 percent of the pupils caned, beaten, whipped or hit were male. 20 percent of the pupils caned, beaten, whipped or hit were female. All pupils (except punishment of female pupils in the past) were male. All pupils punched or kicked by perpetrators were male whilst female pupils were slapped or caned.

Emotional/physical abuse
One case of emotional/physical abuse was reported: a male teacher had made male and female pupils lined on hot cement surfaces without shoes and all had developed blisters on their feet.

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See also
Who guards the girls in schools? A study of reported cases of child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwe secondary schools, see Education, 31

Safe haven for girls?

Rape, sexual harassment, abuse, assault, homophobia – the list is endless. In South Africa, girls in particular are the victims of school-based violence. How can schools and their staff – part of the problem – become part of the solution?

Opening our eyes: addressing gender-based violence in South African schools – a module for educators has been developed as part of a 5 year partnership between the South African National Department of Education, McGill University in the USA and CIDA. The training manual is a response to the growing number of reports on the extent of gender-based violence in South African schools.

Successful implementation rests on the commitment of national and provincial governments to take seriously the magnitude of the problem

Designed to be used at the school or district level with teachers, school management and governing bodies, the module draws on research supporting the belief that teachers must first possess the knowledge themselves in order to implement a curriculum of change. The 8 interactive workshops are intended to show school staff what is happening in their schools and how they can respond to gender violence. Specifically the workshops aim to:

- heighten awareness of gender-based violence and sexual harassment and why they happen
- provide tools and strategies for addressing gender-based violence
- increase awareness of the links between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS
- contribute to 'whole school' strategies for enhancing the culture of learning and teaching within a safe environment

Rolled in schools including Mpumalanga, the Free State and Northern Cape, the module is now being rolled out nationwide. National and provincial governments are urged to take seriously the magnitude of the problem. Further challenges are:

- Local education authorities need to ensure that the workshops take place in every school in South Africa. This may be problematic as gender change efforts have often been gender or are only in an 'acting' capacity.
- The module is a professional development tool and not part of the national curriculum. There is a danger that it will get lost by the way side.
- Teacher training establishments should also have access to the module.
- Acknowledgement of the links between the module and HIV prevention.

Strong leadership with a clear vision, targets for implementation, financial support and cross-country 'buy-in' are all prerequisites for successful nationwide training. ■


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See also
Opening our eyes: addressing gender-based violence in South African schools, a module for educators, Gender Directorate, Western National Department of Education, 2002/1

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Printed in UK by Colsonweb Ltd
025 1480-4225

insights is supported by DFID, as part of the ID21 programme. Views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect the official position of DFID. Copyright remains with the original authors. Printed rights are reserved in specific editions. However, this article may be copied or quoted without restriction, provided each source (insights and authors) are properly acknowledged.



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DFID

Appendix 2

id21 education - *communicating development research*

Gender Violence in Schools

Welcome to the Gender Violence in Schools webpage. This is part of a DFID-funded research project to raise awareness about gender violence in schools and disseminate information on interesting initiatives.

Latest Gender Violence Research

Candid camera: putting men in the picture?

In South Asia, initiatives addressing issues of violence against women have largely focused on women's empowerment. But where do men fit in? Can the use of film put men into the picture?

Challenging masculine stereotypes: focus on Brazil

Much research and thinking on adolescent boys focuses on the negative aspects of their behaviour such as violence, delinquency, callous attitudes towards young women and unsafe practices. What can we learn from research on the differences of socialisation of young men with more gender equitable attitudes and behaviour?

Violence against women: what do we want to teach our teachers?

South Africa has a history of very high levels of violence which dates back to the apartheid era, if not further. A woman is raped every 35 seconds, estimates the South African Police Service. Gender-based violence (GBV), and its link to HIV infection, is very gradually being discussed in the public domain, but educators have no choice but to provide learners with the basic skills to cope with the dual threat of gender violence and HIV/AIDS now. But how, and when, can this be done within an education system?

Men aren't from Mars: challenging machismo in Nicaragua

Can men unlearn machismo? A report by the Catholic Institute for International Relations documents a pioneering programme by the NGO CANTERA (Centre for Communication and Popular Education) in Nicaragua. Through training courses on masculinity and gender, CANTERA encourages men to examine and question and change traditional male values and behaviour.

From guns and drugs to gender safety

School shootings have attracted the most national attention and incited the most panic in the USA out of all forms of school violence. The national and educational media reporting on these acts focuses exclusively on gangs, guns and drugs and fails to consider the gendered dimension of school violence. How can an awareness of this dimension be developed?

Appendix 2

Story telling for change

Violence in dating relationships has increasingly become an accepted social norm for men, women, boys and girls in South Africa. How can aspects of popular culture support work in schools and convince adolescent youths that it's cool not to be cruel?

Safe space for girls?

Many parents in Nepal refuse to send their daughters to school, fearing girls are at risk from being abused which will affect theirs and their families' reputations. How can children, especially girls, change their environment and make it a safer place to be and study? How would this impact their educational lives?

Recent Gender Violence Highlights

Mobilising men to care?

Respect yourself

Tackling taboos: abuse of girls in Zimbabwean schools

August 2001 Insights Gender Violence Special Issue:

Conspiracy of silence? stamping out abuse in African schools - Editorial

Criminal justice? Tackling sexual abuse in schools

The sugar daddy trap. Peer pressure pushes girls into sex

Dangerous game of love? Challenging male machismo

Mixed messages

Child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwe

Safe haven for girls: can teachers challenge gender violence?

Risky behaviour: can education help? Sites for sore eyes

Appendix 3

Comments from readers of Insights

I have just come across your 'Conspiracy of Silence' article on the ID21 education website. I am familiar with the research of Katherine Wood and Rachel Jewkes (and others) in SA, but did not realise the extent to which the same challenges are being experienced in other southern African countries. (offered to write about his work in this field).

South Africa

Just to let you know that I had a chance to view the Gender Violence Special Issue. It looks great, and is just so jam packed with useful information! I have already been to 'site for sore eyes'. We are just in the process of developing a website for our research group "Gender, Adolescent Sexuality and HIV/AIDS" and will definitely be adding in both the various websites and of course a link to ID21.

Canada

Thank you for the two copies of Insights. The information included is both very interesting and educative. Most encouraging, is your effort to break the conspiracy of silence on this very important issue of violation of human rights; sexual harassment and abuse, which is very dangerous for the young people, especially the young girls.

It is very encouraging to see you get out into the open, and denouncing this very evil practice. It gives us hope and courage to also following your footsteps. The information availed will be used in our resource center, for the benefit of the entire membership, and readership.

Thank you, and we hope to continue working with you.

Uganda

I read with interest your special issue of August 2001. Your effort in bringing to surface core gender-sensitive issues thru this publication is commendable. I am passionately working in the field of human development for the past 12 yrs in..... I'm one of the founder-members of Men Against Violence & Abuse, a voluntary organisation run by a core group of sensitive, concerned men from diverse fields, working for the past 8 yrs on gender issues(which have been seen largely as women's issues). One of our projects is an annual publication, brought out in vernacular language, consisting of expressions/write ups exclusively by men on gender issues. Any other relevant material on gender issues, esp. efforts by men from various parts of the world in tackling issues of violence and abuse against women sent by you will be highly appreciated.

Thanks for this - I will keep a closer eye on the site.

India

Appendix 3

I read with great interest your special number on sexual harassment and abuse – this is obviously a very important subject these days. However, I find that almost all authors who contributed assume that to reduce or eliminate such harassment and abuse education etc must focus almost exclusively on the male offenders. I want to alert you to the fact that in many cases women are extremely willing victims. For instance, in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea women are convinced that to be beaten by their male partners is a sign of their love. A number of my male informants told me that their female partners left them because they did not beat them and they were told that they therefore do not love them.

I therefore suggest that in programmes that aim to reduce sexual harassment the focus needs to be also on the women concerned. If I were to do this I would begin by conducting "Culturally-Adapted Social Market Research" to discover how the concerned women and men perceive what has been happening and what their change aspirations - if any - really are. This would then provide the basis for an effective Social Marketing Strategy.

UK

I did receive the Gender in Violence email - it was of particular interest as it reflected our son's experiences - he has just returned from teaching (18-25 yr olds) in rural Ghana. The pregnancies from this gender violence resulted in high risk, induced abortions in the unsupervised girls' hostel being commonplace.

UK

What has been so significant for me about the publication is its economy/succinctness and comprehensiveness at the same time. I have referred so many people to it and have used it in countless presentations. Its genre makes it so accessible and allows one to make a point very quickly about the far reaching effects of gender based violence. I know that the internet itself is also contributing to how people get a sense of what's going on, but a hard copy document like this also does that.

My work at the moment is very much concentrated on getting a gendered analysis on HIV and AIDS both in North America and South Africa. I am working on a couple of research projects related to youth culture, gender and HIV prevention - and that newsletter has been a key document.

Canada

Appendix 4

allAfrica.com: Silence On Sex Abuse in Schools 'Deafening'

The Namibian (Windhoek) March 11, 2002 Posted to the web March 11, 2002

By Chrispin Inambao

THE silence surrounding the sexual abuse of learners in Namibia is "deafening", says Basic Education Deputy Minister Clara Bohitile.

She was speaking at an HIV-AIDS sensitisation workshop attended by scores of school principals in Windhoek on Friday.

Addressing 'sugar daddy relationships', in which teachers have sex with students, she said: "It is a known fact that children are frequently abused in the very place where they should feel most safe, sometimes by those entrusted with their care, namely teachers and principals."

Said Bohitile: "The silence and denial surrounding sexual abuse of learners is deafening. It is difficult to accept that the school is a site of abuse rather than a haven against abuses perpetrated elsewhere."

She said she had been informed by the Public Service Commission that "the Windhoek Education Region is one of the regions where these cases are not taken up seriously and brought to their logical conclusion. "

The reluctance of concerned officials to discipline wayward teachers "allows abuse to flourish unchecked. By your inaction you will be condoning it and encouraging it, and the spread of HIV-AIDS will be rampant."

Bohitile said sexual abuse at schools is an important human rights issue.

"I am fully aware of the desperate principals out there who need guidance in terms of how to deal with sick teachers, hostel workers, and what to do with the children in the absence of staff members," Bohitile said.

Statistics indicate that 63 per cent of Namibia's teachers are categorised as young, under the age of 40, and 60 per cent of these are female, suggesting a relatively high risk for infection, she observed.

A confidential draft report, discussed last Thursday by senior officials from both Education Ministries, estimates that the cumulative loss of teachers to full-blown AIDS between 2002 and 2010 could be 3 360 people or 20 per cent of the total teaching staff countrywide. It is estimated that last year up to 60 per cent of deaths in the education sector were related to complications from HIV-AIDS.

Hardest hit tend to be schools in traditionally disadvantaged areas.

"While we ponder long-term solutions, a short-term solution needs to be found urgently" said Bohitile.

Appendix 5

Websites visited

www.endvaw.org

*John Hopkins University Center for
Communication Programmes
End Violence against Women*

www.girlsrights.org

Working Group on Girls

www.sdn.org.mw/index.html

Girls Situation

www.wcwoonline.org/harassment

Wellesley Center for Women

www.comminit.com

The Communication Initiative

www.speakout.org.za

Speak Out

www.mapev.org

*Men as Partners for Ending Violence Against
Women and Children*

www.asia-initiative.org

www.unesco.org

*UNESCO – World AIDS Campaign, United
Nations Girls Education Initiative*

www.unicef.org/programme

*UNICEF Gender, Partnerships and
Participation programme aimed at gender
equity and ending violence against women
and girls*

www.safenetwork.net

Safenetwork for Girls

www.cedpa.org

CEDPA

www.ngosatunicef.org

www.tarsc.org

Training and Research Support Centre

www.women3rdworld.about.com

Scared at School Report

www.mrc.ac.za

Medical Research Council, South Africa

www.whiteribbon.ca

White Ribbon Campaign

www.undp.org/unifem

UNIFEM

www.elimu.org

Elimu Education campaign

www.amref.org

African Medical Research Foundation

www.thurrock.commmunity.org.uk

South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre

www.zerotolerance.org.uk

Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust

www.scf.org.uk

Save the Children

[www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/gender/
mandmweb/contents.html](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/gender/mandmweb/contents.html)

*Bradford University, Men, Masculinities and
Gender Relations in Development.*

www.panos.org.uk

PANOS

www.womenkind.org.uk

Womenkind

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin

Youth at the United Nations

www.popcouncil.org

Population Council

www.soulcity.org.za

Soul City

Appendix 6

Workshop summaries: Ghana

School A: This school (the original one selected) had a female head and a teaching staff of 11. Seven girls and six boys were selected at random from each of the two streams of JSS 2 (C and D), using the school register, to make a total of 14 girls and 12 boys. Pupils were between the ages of 13 and 16. The activities were conducted in an empty classroom. When the substitute school was identified, the researcher spent time in the Primary 5 and 6 and JSS 1 classes in order to take the pupils through several of the activities. As in the other schools, they were informed of the purpose of the research and discussed the meaning of ‘abuse’.

The workshop was run by the Ghanaian researcher, Vivian Fiscian, and the local consultant, Leslie Casely Hayford. It started with the 14 girls, who in two groups were invited to draw a school map, marking with red and green stickers places where they felt unsafe and safe respectively. They seemed to enjoy this activity. They then came together to explain the location of their stickers. Unsafe places were identified as: the playing fields as boys would chase them away and they had nowhere else to go; teachers’ quarters, especially the male teachers’ quarters, as teachers may ask girls to come to their house to do something for them; the road way as they may get hit by a car; the toilet area as boys from the neighbouring (boys’) school would come to smoke ‘wee’ (marijuana) and cocaine, and would try to kiss girls or touch them up; the boys’ school (‘boys stand naked and call out for girls’); the ocean because of the risk of drowning; and storm drains because of the risk of falling in.

The girls then moved on to drawing an ‘abuse’ spider, labelling the legs with the types of abuse that exist in and around the school, and then placing coloured sticky dots where they thought the abuse was most serious. The girls became very excited by this activity. They then came together to discuss the forms of abuse they had identified and why they chose to put the dots where they did. Types of abuse identified were: beatings or rape by boys who have smoked ‘wee’ in the market; boys forcing a girl who becomes pregnant to take some medicine to abort the baby (girls reported at least two cases of girls dying as a result); boys paying money to have sex with a girl, forcing a girl to have sex; threatening behaviour from men at the community market place when they sell food at weekends or after school (some claimed to have seen women beaten and raped in the market); men cheating them when they sell food stuffs in the market place; beatings by parents when they do not do their chores; beatings by teachers when they misbehave, don’t complete homework or come late to school; boys touching their breasts at home and at school; boys using abusive language to girls (‘if you tell the teachers, the boys will threaten and beat you’); domestic chores; unhappiness due to divorce or separation. The most serious forms of abuse were considered to be: abuse in the market place, drug abuse, insults by parents, beatings and abuse by teachers and sexual abuse.

Appendix 6

On the second day, the girls started in groups to draw a 'cause and consequence' tree, with one group working on 'Why girls have sex with boys/why girls have sex with teachers' and the other on 'Why boys have sex with girls/why teachers have sex with girls'. Girls were thought to have sex for gifts, money, to show love to boys, for love and to have a child. Boys have sex with girls for peer influence, pleasure, to show love, to get something from girls, to give them money and sweets, because of a girl's beauty. As for consequences, the girls listed HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, getting thrown out of the house by parents, dropping out of school, abortion, and being a teenage mother with no father to take care of the baby. The girls seemed to have a practical knowledge of HIV/AIDS: they were aware of the need to use condoms, to avoid having sex and to be faithful to one partner.

Similar activities were then carried out with two groups of boys (12 in total). One group worked on the school map and the 'cause and consequence' tree answering why girls have sex with boys/why boys have sex with girls, while the other group worked on the 'abuse' spider and the 'cause and consequence' tree answering why girls have sex with teachers/teachers have sex with girls. The groups then came together for a discussion. They did not have any place where they felt really unsafe apart from the road and the ocean side, although some spoke of abuse of other boys in the science block by those who do not want to learn. As for types of abuses, they thought that rape is the most serious, drug abuse and child abuse come next, followed by insults and bullying, and then beating.

On 'Why teachers have sex with girls', they thought this was because girls stick out their buttocks to attract the teachers, because of the way they dress, girls going to teachers' house for extra lessons, and taunting and flirting with the teachers. The boys blamed the girls for provoking and attracting the male teachers, sometimes forcing themselves on them. On 'Why girls have sex with teachers', they listed threats by teachers (if the girls refuse), teachers helping them to pay their fees, teachers giving them the exam questions in advance or helping them to pass their exams, and to avoid getting punished in class. As for consequences, this will bring about disgrace to the girl, the whole world will be against the girl, other teachers will support him and defend the teacher if he is caught, STDs and HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and the girl being expelled from the school.

The boys knew a lot about rape and explained that they had watched this on television, read about it in the newspapers and heard it on the radio. They were also familiar with abortion. They believed that girls abort babies because their parents are poor. They thought that the girls feel unsafe in the Science block, canteen and classrooms and behind the toilets because this is where they are verbally harassed. It also became apparent that the boys knew they were not letting the girls play on the field but they did not have any valid reason for this. They were aware of the problems these abuses create for girls: disease, preventing them from attaining higher levels of education, hurting the girls, and disgrace. They did not however mention that it was against the basic rights of the girl.

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The boys spoke of the abuse they experienced in their own lives. Some parents beat them regularly and insulted them without any reason. One boy had witnessed a rape after school behind the toilets and told another boy who said he should not tell anyone. They had learned about teachers wanting to have sex with girls through story books, TV, radio, newspapers and youth magazines. They also knew a lot about STDs through the radio and books and 'sometimes university students come and teach us'.

The girls then returned and started work on constructing a 'problem wall'. They were asked to write one problem each that they face at school on a 'post-it' and to stick it on a large sheet of white paper stuck to the wall. The girls took turns to stick their post-it to build up the wall. The whole group then discussed the problems and prioritised them with the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom.

Problems that emerged were prioritised as follows: absenteeism by teachers, laziness and poor teaching, walking to school, punishment at school, beating, insults, expulsion from school due to lack of money to pay fees. When asked to do the activity a second time, they added inability to study privately at home, insults by parents, poor parental care and money related issues. When asked to prioritise, they listed poor teaching, walking to school, punishment, beating, insults and expulsion from school for not paying fees.

Most of the girls said that they had to walk to school. They believe this is a big problem because it affects their learning, they get scorched by the sun, get body pains and it leads to lateness, which results in being punished. They complained of poor performance by teachers; one girl claimed that 'sometimes the teachers are tired and when we go and call them, they tell us to read our books, they will come but they do not show up. Teachers at times give us notes but do not explain them to us'. They also saw problems in being beaten at school by teachers and in the way teachers behave towards teaching.

The girls then prepared and performed two role plays: the first involved boys from the neighbouring boys' school propositioning girls and trying to kiss them, this then turning into a dangerous situation, the second involved boys in the school aggressively touching the girls on the breasts and buttocks. The girls confirmed that such things happen.

The researcher then led a discussion on how the girls can protect themselves: e.g. when the boys call them, the girls should ignore them; they should use a different path away from the boys, they should walk faster; if other girls are around they should shout. Girls should be careful when boys are around, they must not wear fitting or revealing dresses, they should walk in a smart manner. This led into an activity to draw solution circles, identifying who was responsible for resolving certain problems ('me', the school or the community). Beatings, punishments, insults and showing seriousness in their studies (e.g. doing their homework, doing what the teacher says and stopping telling lies) were issues that they saw

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as their own responsibility. With their studies they thought this was the joint responsibility of themselves and the school, 'We should behave seriously at school so that teachers would know that we are serious about our studies'. It was noticeable, however, that the girls tended to see themselves as solely responsible for their problems.

School B: This workshop was run by the Ghanaian researcher, Vivian Fiscian, and Fiona Leach from Sussex University. All the JSS1 and Primary 6 girls present in school that day were invited (eight and nine respectively). Their ages ranged from 12 to 16, with the average for the Primary school girls being 13.6 years and for the JSS 14.1 years. We ran the workshop in the JSS3 classroom as this was empty. There were language difficulties throughout, although the girls seemed to grasp what was required of them better than the boys, and the local language was used much of the time. Out of the 12 teachers on the staff, we say only five on the first day and six on the second.

The first day started with ice breakers (gospel songs, poems and hand clapping). The researcher explained that we were looking at girls' problems in the school. We started the activities with the school map, with the Primary 6 and JSS 1 groups working separately. They were shy and nervous and worked slowly on a very detailed drawing. They then placed their green and red stickers. Unsafe areas were identified as: the school field where boys played football during break time, the road where vehicles could knock you down, the toilet where you could fall into the pit, or someone could frighten or harm you after school, and the trees because a snake may bite you. The Primary group said that the JSS block was unsafe for them as the seniors (girls and boys) may bully you.

The two groups then went on to draw spiders, the legs of which they labelled with different forms of abuse. These were: child abuse, insults, beatings, rape, proposing and touching (breasts) and drug abuse. They were more relaxed now. They explained that strange men accost them in the market, and boys on the road touch them on the buttocks and breasts. One girl said a boy clasped her round the neck. Already at this stage, they acknowledged that teachers approach them for sex. Examples given were: if you carry the teacher's bags for him from his car, he starts asking you for sex, he calls you to his house for the same reason. One girl said one teacher did this, another said two teachers (it turned out to be the head teacher and one other teacher).

The girls then placed coloured sticky dots on the spider's legs according to how serious they considered the abuse to be. The rough order was: rape, touching, beatings, proposing, child abuse and insults.

The third activity was drawing a 'cause and consequence' tree. The Primary and JSS groups were mixed for this, the first group addressing the question 'Why do girls have sex with boys?' and the second group 'Why do boys have sex with girls?'

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Causes for why girls have sex with boys were: lack of parental care, for money or gifts or dresses, to get money for school fees, to show love, for peer influence. Consequences were: she will get HIV/AIDS, will get “baba so” (STDs), will get pregnant, will suffer, the boy will leave her, she cannot take care of the baby, parents will ask her to go to her boyfriend, the baby will not have a father. Causes for why boys have sex with girls were: to practise the things they see on video, girls wearing sexy clothes, he wants her to wash and cook for him, to boast to his friends, to prove to her that he wants to marry her. Consequences were: pregnancy, diseases (HIV), he will be forced to marry her, he will have to look after her and the baby.

The two groups then went on to address the questions ‘Why do teachers have sex with girls?’ and ‘Why do girls have sex with teachers?’ For the former, causes were: girls go to teachers and ask for money and gifts, because she has no money, if a girl is a high performing pupil, when they misinterpret the actions of girls, because they admire girls, when a teacher invites a girl for private lessons at home. Consequences were: the teacher will be sacked, will be punished, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, the girl will stop school, the teacher will be disgraced. As to the latter, causes for girls having sex with teachers were: so that teachers won’t punish them, for money, gifts or clothes, to get help during exams, she hopes he will marry her. Consequences were: she will stop school, she will get pregnant, diseases.

The second day started with a problem wall. The girls were asked to write each problem on a ‘post-it’ and to stick it on the wall. Most related to lack of money for school fees and problems with learning their lessons. After some hesitation, three girls wrote about teachers proposing: ‘my teacher has been calling me to his house’, ‘my teacher has been insulting me for not giving in to him’ and ‘I hear that my headmaster after school sends a girl to his house and sleeps with her’. (Three girls came later to the researcher individually outside the room to tell her that the head teacher was propositioning them. They were clearly reluctant to write this on their post-its.

Problems were clustered and later prioritised as: 1. school studies, 2. stealing/rape/ killing and school fees, 3. boys and (men) propositioning, 4. shouting, 5. beatings at home and 6. household chores. In the subsequent discussion, they explained that school studies were a problem because pupils don’t attend regularly as a result of not paying fees. They also have to work for money (selling in the market) and they need to buy exercise books. Also, in JSS they don’t have time to read/revise each subject and so fall behind. There is a lack of teachers and teacher absenteeism. Primary 6 has no teacher and sometimes the head fills in. Also, the teachers do not help them; if they don’t understand or can’t answer, the teacher canes them. Sometimes they don’t come to school because the teacher frightens them.

As for boys, if one proposes and the girl doesn’t accept, he will victimise her by beatings or insults. A boy may wait along the way for a girl and then beat her or pinch her breasts. A

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girl may be mocked or verbally abused because she doesn't have a boyfriend. A boy propositions a girl by telling her he likes her, they should start a relationship, he will buy her anything she wants etc. These were mainly boys from JSS3 and from the village, but also boys from JSS2.

The girls then stuck sticky dots according to how frequent the problem was: propositioning, school fees, school studies and shouting were marked as the most frequent.

The second activity was drawing solution circles to address the problems already identified. The girls discussed where the solution to each problem lay (in terms of 'me', the school, the family or the community). School studies were seen as the responsibility of both the individual and the school, school fees as both the individual and the family, boys and teachers propositioning as both the individual and the family, and rape as the community's responsibility. As with School A, it was striking how the girls saw themselves as primarily responsible – their problems were their own fault.

They then went on to perform a role play based on issues that had emerged during the workshop. The topics were:

- boys lie in wait for girls and snatch them, clutching them and trying to kiss them
- two teachers summon girls to tell them to go to the market to buy something for them, and when they return they try to seduce or rape them
- girls are sent by their families to trade in the market, where male strangers try to touch them aggressively etc

Appendix 7

The Spectator, Saturday 17 November 2001



Appendix 8

Zimbabwe workshop action plan the following action plan was developed through the active participation of all the participants present. In most cases participation will be in liaison with Pamela for monitoring purposes.

Strategy	Activities monitoring	Whose responsibility	With whom	When	Resources available	Resources external	Means of verification
Empower girl child and boy child	Clubs speeches at assembly	Students Pamela	Headmaster and teachers NGOs	24/02/01 On-going	Venue Human Time	Experts Stationery	Reports
Building student - teacher communication	Create students parliament in schools	Students representatives	Teachers Pamela	End of term	Venue Human Time	Experts (to resolve problems) Guidance (in creating parliament)	Reports
Advocate for changes in government with regard to channeling more resources for children	Petitions	Students	Children's parliament (MP) NGOs	End of 2 nd term	Human knowledge	Transport Stationery Financial support	Reports
Awareness campaign	Day of the Girl Child Women's day	NGOs and Govt Depts	Communities Media Schools Africa University	by June 2001	Services Human Material Venue		Actual activities and media coverage

Appendix 9

Zimbabwe School-based Strategies with Girls

Poetry

In order to help the girls to express themselves freely the researcher asked them to do this through poetry and story telling. The following are some of the sample writings of the girls from three of the schools.

Child Abuse / Harassment

I tried to concentrate but to no avail
My classmate's drunken father had returned
It had been the tenth time she had screamed in agony
Every morning she looked like a rotten tomato
Because of the consistent beatings she received
The father is always sorry the next morning
But it is painful to see her in such a state

Every morning she receives a portion of the beatings
Once she was admitted into hospital
She refuses to believe that her father is abusing her
It seems child abuse has triumphed over her and many others
Child abuse has become the gateway to her relationship with her father
A way of showing his anger and excuses for his own problems
I know many children are like her
They are at the receiving end of their parents' frustrations

My friends let me tell you this
Even a word can destroy a child's future
Why are we as children taken as punching bags
We are always in agony, but I find no one to soothe my pain
I hear many speeches against child abuse
But the battering continues
The pain continues
Hope is something the abused child has lost

Appendix 9

Child Abuse / Harassment

Children walking in the streets
Looking for something to eat
Scraping in bins for a scrape of food
How can we help them
As they asking for money
We just ignore them
As though they are not people

Men and women won't you help them
They are also people like you and me
We should treat them as our own children
Just the way you treat your own children

Don't harass them
Don't abuse them
They will grow up
They will remember it all
Treat them like your own children

Why can't we all live as a family
As children we hate being abused
As children we hate being harassed
We are all children of God
When will this abuse stop

Child Abuse

Working in the harsh weather
With heavy tools which I can hardly lift
Trying to stretch my back
Which is now as hot as charcoal
Since I have been bent for the past hour

“Do not just stand there doing nothing
Do you want your breakfast?
I f you just stand there my dear
I am going to beat you up
And just forget about your breakfast

That was my uncle giving orders
After he had had his heavy breakfast
And what I hope to get from him
Is just a cup of black cold tea
And a small piece of stale bread

I have heard some say
This is child abuse
But to me this is my life
Why such harassment?
To an innocent little soul

Appendix 9

Abuse I Hate You

Abuse, Abuse that word Abuse
I walk in the streets asking for food
People looking at me and whispering in
each other's ear

If it was not for you Abuse
I would not have been in this mess

My mother left me when I was five
Now I am ten
My father is using me as a slave
Yes he is using me as wife
Abuse, Abuse that word Abuse

He tells me to go into the streets
Asking for food and money
When I bring the money home
He says give it to me
I want some beer
Abuse, Abuse that word Abuse

He a pot and hits me with it
I try to run but he grabs my hand
I try to scream but no one hears
He tears my pants and does what he wants
Abuse, Abuse how I hate you

My Life as a Street Kid

I am a well child
They call me Filthy, Dirty, Mad
Yes that's my name

They laugh at me
As if they are seeing a movie
Yes that's what they do to me

They know where I sleep
In the drain, on the pavement
Yes that's what they know about me

They know what I wear
Rags, scruffy clothes and no shoes
Yes that's what I wear

No one wants to help me
No one wants to be my friend
Yes but I bring them joy in laughing at me

Orphan

Pupils in my school know me as an
ORPHAN. No one seems to know what
that means to me until I told them that I
have been;

O - Ordered to do things against my will
R- Raped
P- Punished
H - Harassed
A -Abused, Abandoned
N - Neglected

Appendix 9

Who Am I?

I am a girl child
I don't know my father
They say my mother abandoned me at birth
I try to ask about my parents
No one seems to care
Or even to find out
My life is at the mercy of other people
Life is just as I live it by the day
Tomorrow is just a distant far
Yes, I am a girl child
That's me, a girl child

What Is It Like To Be Born A Girl?

To be born a girl is the most beautiful thing in a family but at the same it is the most difficult time. To be a teenager is the most difficult thing in a girl's life. When it comes to household chores all the burden is put on girls. But Why? Besides doing the household duties girls are the ones who are given the most difficult advice every now and again. Maybe elders or adults think that girls have little minds, that is why they keep a close eye on us.

But why is it that boys are allowed to do as they please. They are not blamed for anything. They are allowed to go out to movies or even come home late. Do parents know what the boys will be doing? Even if they are harassing other girls parents say, 'Boys will always be boys'. If a boy harasses a girl, adults say it was the girl's fault. What was she doing with the boys?

Girls do not even have the chance and time to read, play like other children or even visit places of interest. Asking to go out would be as if you have committed a crime. They ask you with a barefooted face, What is the purpose of going out? With whom are you going out? They see you walking with your class mate, they want to know about the relationship. You tell them that he is just a friend, they say you are lying.

I do not understand the life of a girl. It is full of complications and suspicions from the adults. These complications will always follow us in later life. You try to get married, the husband says I have bought you. He expects me to pay back heavily by having as many children as I can. If the children are all girls, life is complicated further. Who will continue with my name. Yes, to be born a girl is something else. Life is full of complications.

