

# TEAM KENYA

In partnership with

Ndhiwa Community Empowerment and Development Project  
(NCEDP)

**School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) in Ndhiwa,  
Western Kenya; causes, extent, success of current interventions  
and recommendations for future work**

**August 2016**



Photo: Team Kenya's Girls Support Group football team with coach Usiku

## **Forward**

This research project was designed and implemented jointly by Team Kenya, a UK registered charity and Ndhiwa Community Empowerment and Development Project (NCEDP) a Kenyan NGO. Team Kenya and NCEDP have worked with the community of Ndhiwa since 2008. Over the years, we have seen that girls and women in this community bear a disproportionate burden of poverty, due to their gender. Gender Based Violence (GBV) and School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) are both issues that the Team Kenya and NCEDP teams have become increasingly aware of over the last 8 years and have witnessed the negative impact these issues have on girl's lives and in the wider community.

The project was led in the UK by Valerie Wilson and Victoria Hancock Fell and in Kenya by Robi Chacha, and Risper Adhanja. Project Leaders had specialist qualifications, knowledge and expertise and extensive knowledge of the community. This allowed us to ensure genuine community engagement, which is the only way to ensure accurate results and ensure long-term changes of attitude. The findings from this project will inform the creation of intervention strategies to address the root causes of SRGBV and to bring about long term lasting sustainable change in the community.

## **Acknowledgements**

Team Kenya would like to take this opportunity to express its thanks to all of the stakeholders and beneficiaries who participated and thank Comic Relief Common Ground Initiative who funded our research.



Photo: The NCEDP team with local stakeholders

Particular thanks go to all of Ndhiwa Community Empowerment and Development Project Girls Education team staff members for the dedication to the difficult task of carrying our community research on the ground in Ndhiwa on such sensitive and challenging issue. Robi Chacha deserves special mention for her enormous contribution not only in terms of collecting the data but for her insight into evaluation of the findings and her devotion to improving the lives of the girls in Ndhiwa. Thanks also to Laura Haworth for support with data analysis and reporting.

## Summary

The key issues in Ndhiwa that this research addresses are violence, exploitation, psychological & sexual abuse against girls and the impact this has on their life chances, ability to actively participate & contribute to society.

There is a direct link between violence in and around schools and negative outcomes in girl's education. There are significant consequences to SRGBV, with some of the clearest relating to physical and psychological health, and academic achievement. The predominance of violence against girls in school reflects deeply entrenched social and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequality and an imbalance of power between males and females and between adults and children. Schools, as respected centres in a community, can unwittingly feed a wider enabling environment in which SRGBV flourishes.

The shockingly high prevalence and extent of SRGBV in Ndhiwa is undoubtedly inextricably connected to the high prevalence of HIV. It is impossible to tackle the HIV crisis in Ndhiwa without addressing SRGBV and child marriage as they are all inextricably connected. Poverty and corruption are key contributing factors. SRGBV is multidimensional and cannot be dealt with as a single cause and effect relationship it demands an integrated and holistic approach and all programmes and actions should operate across a range of disciplines and sectors.

Team Kenya and NCEDP have a proven track record of success; our intervention model builds on adapting and improving existing NCEDP programs and activities and integrates SRGBV prevention and response with the findings and lesson learned from this robust research. We accept that to reduce acts of violence it is crucial to address girls' everyday relationships in schools, families and communities, as well as the educational, economic, socio-cultural and health, political, legal institutions and structures.

Understanding the underlying factors preventing girls' from accessing education as well as what works in terms of prevention and change is key to achieving long-term sustainable impact.



Photo: A girl takes part in a workshop about sexual abuse

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

Before this research was conducted, there had been very little reliable, in-depth data collected about the levels of SRGBV in Ndhiwa and the possible root causes of SRGBV. This research is the first of its kind in the area and we hope it will act as a benchmark to inform further research into this issue and successful interventions.

### *Aims and objectives*

The ultimate goal of this research project is to understand the root causes of SRGBV, the current extent of the problem in Ndhiwa and the effectiveness of current interventions, in order to inform future work and provide girls in Ndhiwa with safety from violence and all forms of abuse in and around school.

The specific aims of this research project are:

- To establish thorough, reliable base-line information on the causes and extent of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) in the Ndhiwa community
- To consult with community leaders (teachers, chiefs and elders, local government, other NGOs) to agree and trial effective strategies for changing public perceptions and eliminating SRGBV in this community
- To support the longer-term sustainability of the existing small network of community leaders who are fighting SRGBV, through training and confidence-building

### *Outputs*

1. SRGBV research will collect together all available information to inform the development of this and future projects. Consideration of the link between GBV & HIV
2. Community research will give a sound baseline for future SRGBV related activities locally and beyond. New information, where none now exists, to demonstrate the extent of SRGBV and its impact on the lives of girls, families and the wider community.
3. Evidence of strategies that work, and the potential for sport to bring about social change.
4. High quality information will be generated (safe environment, people who are trusted). Information also to be collected from boys and men: no such data yet exists.
5. Action Plan & report to be disseminated widely via the GBV network and to all stakeholder



## **Chapter 2 - Background and Context**

For the purposes of this research project, we will use the following definition of SRGBV:

**‘School-related gender-based violence refers to acts of sexual, physical and psychological violence inflicted on children in and around schools because of stereotypes and norms attributed to them because of their sex or gendered identity.**

**’ Plan international - A Girls Right to Learn without Fear, 2013)**

The substance and nature of GBV can be so severe that it is a clear and unquestionable violation of the basic human rights of the victim. Therefore, internationally and regionally there exist a series of instruments meant to protect women and girls against GBV. The state may be held responsible under international law for failure to provide reasonable and adequate measures to prevent or address women’s and girls’ rights violations. Team Kenya and NCEDP’s holistic approach combines research, community engagement and advocacy at community level whilst accepting that the changes that are needed at national and international levels are beyond our current scope and capacity.

To reduce acts of violence it is crucial to address girls’ everyday relationships in schools, families and communities, as well as the educational, economic, socio-cultural and health, political, legal institutions and structures. Schools, in their role of guiding the ‘socialization’ of children, may implicitly legitimize and reinforce harmful gender norms through tacit or explicit approval of the status quo. Educational institutions, as respected centres in a community, can unwittingly feed a wider enabling environment in which GBV flourishes.

In 2013, The United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and UNESCO published a discussion paper on SRGBV. The report highlights the type of violence and where it may occur, which provided the basis for some of our research:

Incidences of SRGBV can occur in the classroom, in teacher residences, toilets, dormitories, and the roads and areas near schools, among others. This type of violence is made up of a variety of actions that include, but are not limited to:

- i) Bullying, including verbal and/or physical harassment;
- ii) Sexual harassment also referred to as ‘teasing’ or insinuation;
- iii) Sexual acts in exchange for good grades or for the paying of school fees;
- iv) Non-consensual touching or sexual assault;
- v) Seduction or sexual harassment of learners by a teacher; and
- vi) Tolerance (or encouragement) of male dominance or aggression within the school environment.’

(UNGEI and UNESCO 2013)

**Links between SRGBV and other forms of violence:** The continued resistance to eliminate corporal punishment in schools and families is closely linked to the social acceptance of other forms of GBV, such as domestic violence and child sexual abuse, and to the culture of male domination that prevails in many school settings. This has important implications for effective interventions

**Understanding of teachers’ perceptions:** Little research has been carried out regarding teachers’ perceptions of SRGBV and how they deal with it in the school environment. We need to know more about the actors that can influence teachers’ attitudes and behaviour regarding the institutional violence they witness, and often take part in, on a daily basis.

## **Ndhiwa Local Context**

Some of the main issues that affect the education sector and impact negatively on girl's education in Ndhiwa have been identified as;

- low learning outcomes for learners as a result of violence against children, especially girls and unsafe learning and home environment
- low community participation due to lack of knowledge, cultural/social attitudes and practice towards girls' education
- Inadequate efforts to tackle violence against girls
- knowledge, cultural/social attitudes and practice towards girls' education

## **NCEDP other Programs and Activities**

NCEDP have been implementing a variety of Girls Support Group activities in Ndhiwa over the last 7 years. Key projects in our current strategic plan include Success for Girls in School, helping 10-17 year old girls to stay in school and be safe, healthy and happy and Advocacy for Safe Communities creating safe communities where girls can survive and thrive, where GBV is a thing of the past.

Specific activities designed to remove barriers to girl's education have included

- Setting up and supporting Girls Support Groups in 4 primary schools
- Recruiting and training NCEDP 'link teachers' and schools' subcommittees focusing on girls' education.
- Regular and ongoing training for parents and school board members on issues relating to children's' rights and girls' education
- Providing monthly support for girls in most need, providing items such as sanitary pads, stationary, soap and other basic needs
- Paying school levies, providing school uniforms, textbooks and solar lamps
- Weekly guidance and counseling in groups and for individuals
- Weekly training sessions including sexual and reproductive health, HIV awareness, life skills and leaderships
- School holiday homework clubs, extra tuition and use of NCEDP library
- Improving toilets and providing clean filtered drinking water in schools
- Support for extra -curricular activities including scouting, drama, music and football

In the 4 primary schools NCEDP & TK support we have had a significant, measurable impact, with increased retention and progression rates for girls, a reduction in teenage pregnancies and forced early marriage and corresponding improvements in recruitment & performance of girls in secondary school. Such changes have not been seen in other local primary schools, a direct correlation between NCEDPs activities and the improved statistics around girls' education is difficult to prove but it seems highly likely that methods used by NCEDP are effective and contributing toward these improvements.

Since 2014, we have been raising awareness in the community and developing capacity for prevention and early detection of GBV in our partner schools. We have been providing emotional support to victims and traumatized girls and providing training for teachers, parents and the wider community. A network of key stakeholders was established to work together to identify challenges, share information

and good practice. It soon became very clear that SRGBV was endemic throughout Ndhiwa Sub County and having a devastating impact on girls' education but that is was highly underreported with no reliable data available. Schools, parents and teachers were in denial and would at all costs cover up violence against the girls. SRGBV is easy to cover up when the perpetrators are in a position of power and the victim is voiceless



Photo: A focus group discussion with parents

### **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

This research uses both primary and secondary research.

#### *Primary research*

In total, 420 participants took part in this research. Workshops were used to bring together key stakeholders in an informal setting and allow individual and small groups across to different sections of the community to interact.

NCEDP Girls Education staff - including a highly experienced social worker - as well known trusted individuals with local knowledge, were given the vital task of interacting with the participants of the research. Training was provided to the local team in terms of the importance of ethical considerations and best practice in dealing with sensitive research issues especially with vulnerable children and victims of SRGBV. NCEDP peer mentors and teachers from each partner school with already established trusted relationships to the children and other teaching staff in schools were also provided with support and training to enable them to participate in assisting with data collection. Workshops and focus group discussions took place in safe environments including, Karibuni Eco Cottages.

Questionnaires were first trialed with a group of 30 children and refined by both Project Leaders in consultation, with clear instructions and training given to those issuing them.

Semi-structured interviews with key individuals were used to allow the researcher to observe the interviewee and their response to the questions and allow the interviewer and the interviewee to build a stronger rapport. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they allow the researcher to interview each participant in great detail and depth and enable a comfortable rapport with participants to maximize potential for open and honest communication. There were some pre-prepared questions to guide the conversation, but they were informal enough to allow the participants the freedom to talk about their experiences in detail. Interviews were chosen as one of the data collection methods in this research project due to their capacity to explore experiences and meaning in detail. Where possible, handwritten notes were taken during the interview, which were then typed up immediately after the interview.

Focus groups were used as another qualitative data collection method in this research. Focus groups with the young boys and girls were used to further probe and investigate themes and findings from questionnaires. Focus groups with other participants were used to establish respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions to SRGBV. Each staff member present was given a specific role and an observer given the task of making detailed notes during the discussions.

The quantitative data collection method of questionnaires was used with the school children. Questionnaires were completed in confidence with boys and girls separately. The lead researcher read out the questions to the pupils in English and translated to mother tongue, Luo. The pupils selected the answer of their own choice whilst sat at separate desks. The children were given the opportunity to talk to staff about any issues or concerns after completing the questionnaire. The exercise was successful and both the teachers and pupils cooperated well, the only challenge was



the language barrier but the research assistants were very helpful since they could read the questions in Luo, a language that the pupils understand.

Participants were from a cross section of the community of Ndhiwa including some individuals and families known to NCEDP and involved in current activities such as table banking or parents of students on the scholarship programme and others with no connection. Pupils were selected randomly from Standard (class) 6-8. Key individuals were interviewed who held positions of authority within the local government or civil society organisations. Some participants lacked enthusiasm for completing the research but only one group (the police) refused to participate. Various reasons were given by other participants as to the possible reasons the police refused to cooperate, for example,

'They feel such information may be used against them, they also lack information on the details of SRGBV.'

The fear factor is instigated by the feeling that such information may leak to the media and be used against them. The law enforcement also feel that their weaknesses in terms of taking action against SRGBV will be exposed and undermine their overall role. Victimisation from their bosses may also arise which may lead to job-loss.

As part of the research into effective intervention strategies contact was made with the British Council via email and then in person by visiting one of the VAGW project sites in Kisumu to participate in workshops and training and a reciprocal visit made to Ndhiwa by football coaching staff. The British Council Premier Skills, Addressing VAWG Project uses football to address GBV against women and Girls. Initial contact was made via email to the British Council to see if NCEDP could be part of the project but Ndhiwa was not within the project area. Since then, we have kept in regular contact with the British Council project staff.

In November 2015, Team Kenya and NCEDP in partnership with Tag International Development launched a new girl's ICT project, 30 girls would learn the requisite skills to use ICT as a tool for research, education and socialization to aid in the development of the life skills to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life and achieve their potential as respected members of society. SRGBV issues were an integral part of the project outcome. Throughout the pilot the Project Leader has been assessing the girls' skills and knowledge using variety of techniques. The initial results from this research are included in the next chapter in the section 'analysing the potential of various intervention strategies'.

### *Secondary research*

A small selection of secondary research was used to support our primary research. The amount of secondary research used was fairly limited due to the location specific nature of our research population. Secondary research was sourced from Team Kenya and NCEDP's own previous experiences and interventions, past and current interventions carried out by other NGOs in the Nyanza province of Kenya, specifically Ndhiwa and Kisumu. Furthermore, secondary data about reported cases of SRGBV was sourced, with permission, from the Ndhiwa Constituency Children's Office. Sources of secondary research were:

- Ndiwa District Children's Office DCO annual case load records of all cases handled by the DCO, not specifically identified as SRGBV.
- Action Aid 2014-16 Safe Schools for Girls and Stop Violence against Girls in schools project in Nyarongi Division Homa Bay.
- NCEDP Behavior Change Communication, using Girls' Football in the Fight against HIV and AIDS 2009-2011

#### **Chapter 4. Results and Discussion**

In this chapter, the data from this research project will be reported and discussed. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the findings from the interviews and focus groups will be reported thematically, rather than discussing each experience individually. Findings will be reported thematically and according to the specific research objectives.

This research suggests that the concept of SRGBV is not fully understood by many people in Ndiwa, although discourse on gender, girls' education and human rights has clearly influenced the understanding of some respondents. Respondents' understanding of violence generally encompassed physical, psychological and sexual violence, and to a lesser extent, verbal abuse, but also extended to include issues of early marriages, denial of rights, child labour and domestic chores, particularly when the abuse led to limiting girls' access to education.

The schools and community participating in this study had been exposed to some sensitization and training activities from NCEDP dealing with issues such as traditional gender roles, HIV/AIDS and human rights which may have shaped their understanding of the key issues.



Photos: Focus group discussions with community members

## **Objective 1: To establish the *causes* of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) in the Ndhiwa community**

### **Poverty and family background**

According to all of the focus groups, poverty and a lack of food security are two of the main factors leading to SRGBV.

When asked 'are girls offered gifts from men in return for sexual favors' 47% of girls reported it was often an occurrence. This demonstrates how girl's perceived and actual poverty leaves them vulnerable to violence. One group of women reported a major cause of SRGBV as,

'Sexual relationships between the Boda Boda guys (motorbike taxis) and school girls because these men provide for them things that their parents cannot provide for them as its very expensive taking care of a girl'.

The consensus amongst the participants of one workshop was that poverty is the main cause of SRGBV- and that lack of basic needs lures the schoolgirls into sexual exploitation. Ignorance and negligence, often due to lack of any formal education of many of the parents, alongside the high death rate, were noted by the same group as major contributing factors. High youth unemployment contributes to dependency on drugs & alcohol especially amongst young men; those that attack the girls on their way to and from school are often drug abusers.

Girls' bodies are seen as economic assets, aggression tends to be seen as normal male behavior, and domesticity and submissiveness are expected of females. Punishments, early marriages, and transactional sex are related to the demands on girls to provide material support to their families.

### **Use of harsh punishments**

Although pupils stated that corporal punishment is widespread, its use in schools in Ndhiwa is against government regulations. It also contradicts the establishment of a welcoming school environment and friendly, learner-centred relations between teachers and pupils that are essential for effective learning. The study further indicates that pupils, parents, teachers and community members view excessive, harsh punishment (including corporal punishment) as both a cause and a consequence of gender-specific attitudes and school-related-gender-based violence.

Teachers' perceived favoritism toward girls leads boys to feel frustrated toward girls, perhaps then justifying their own abuses of girls and to lose interest in school. Responses from boys indicate that enmity between boys and male teachers can result from competition and jealousy over girls, with teachers ultimately having the power to punish or chase boys from the class. Girls' responses, however, show that teachers also use punishment to intimidate, threaten and exert their power over girls, particularly when girls have refused their sexual advances.

### **Lack of awareness and perceptions**

5 of the 7 groups of boys were clearly unsure of the meaning of SRGBV and were unable to offer any response when asked to define it. Boys perception of touching was completely skewed with 0% saying that girls were always touched and 77% saying they were never touched - this is around 3/4 boys who believe girls are never touched by male teachers. 62% of girls' report having experienced

violent or sexual threats; whilst nearly the same amount of boys (63%) believe that it is never an issue. Likewise, almost 3 in 4 girls report having received a relationship request from a teacher, whilst almost 3 in 4 boys state that this never happens.

Knowledge and perception of the boys in relation to SRGBV is clearly problematic.

Girls' safety was much overlooked with almost half of male respondents presuming that girls were likely to always or often feel safe around male teachers or boys (only just over 1 quarter of females reported feeling safe). In fact, 1 in 4 girls reported never feeling safe and 54% reported always or often feeling scared. This was a phenomenon completely masked to boys with 46% reporting that they would presume that girls either seldom or never felt afraid around male teachers or boys at their school.

The fear that girls experience, could likely be linked to a lack of awareness around violence towards women and conflicting views on the level of its acceptability. 1 in 4 girls felt that it was ok to hit a woman either always, often or at some point, with 10% of girls believing that it was always ok to do so. This was even more embedded within the male psyche with 43% of boys reporting that it was always, often or sometimes ok to hit a woman. Overall 62% of boys thought that it was ok to raise a hand to a girl.

In terms of sexual advances boys were more likely to believe that touching wasn't a problem. 41% of girls reported having either experienced or witnessed touching of their private parts, with 19% reporting that this was always or often the case. This highlights possibly one of the biggest discrepancies around issues with awareness, as 77% of boys felt that girls were never touched and absolutely no male respondents reported that this was always the case. Over 3 out of 4 boys don't believe that girls are experiencing touching of their private parts in schools. Likewise, 60% of girls reported having experienced or witnessed sexual touching at some point and 63% of boys believe that girls never experience it. And so the same amount of boys don't believe sexual touching is a problem - as girls that have experienced or witnessed it.

This lack of awareness cannot be attributed to the prevalence of unwanted behaviour out of the sight of males, as 58% of girls and 74% of boys felt that girls didn't spend more time alone with teachers than boys. This means that a level of this behaviour is highly visible to both boys and girls, and so something else must be acting as a barrier to the awareness of this issue. The majority of respondents also felt that girls weren't more likely to have to do private 'house calls' but almost 1 in 4 girls felt that this was always or often the case.

Some of this lack of awareness could be attributed to a cultural normalising of SRGBV towards girls and a lack of understanding as to its impacts. 59% of boys felt that girls were either never or seldom touched when they didn't want to be (which is the same amount of girls that have been touched when they didn't want to be). Although we can't make a big leap in judgement, we can consider the idea that almost every time a girl has been touched when she didn't want to be, the boy or any boys present thought that this was not the case and that the girl had no problem with the contact.

Whilst 67% of girls felt that their school grades could be affected by their willingness to have sex with teachers – 69% of boys felt that this was never the case. And whilst over 1 in 4 girls experience this feeling regularly, nearly 3 out of 4 boys felt that it is not an issue that needs to be considered. This highlights a stark difference in how boys view sexual violence, and a lack of understanding as to



how it impacts girls' daily life, well-being and progression. Sexual activities between boys and girls were not generally viewed as abuse, although boys were blamed as perpetrators of rape and pregnancy among schoolgirls.

Only 3% of boys felt that girls were always pressurised into relationships with teachers in order to improve their grades, which is around the same percentage that noted issues with consent. This highlights a very small percentage of boys who recognise the challenges that girls face and have a holistic understanding of female experience. Awareness is a crucial step in supporting the development of equality, and helping to assist the cultural change required in order to build some practical steps for leveling the playing field.

### **Division of labour**

It was recognised by both sexes that girls spent more time performing tasks such as cleaning or tidying. 84% of girls felt that they tended to do more, and this was echoed by 82% of male respondents. To add to this, it seemed that boys were less likely to view girls as taking positions of power within the school system. Research shows that boys were 16% less likely to believe that girls took on leadership roles within student groups. Although girls felt that they did not lead as much (55%), on the whole girls were less likely to be noticed within these leadership roles by boys.

Male teachers do not only assign girls to do chores at their homes—due to a stereotypical belief that girls are better suited for domestic tasks—but, according to girls, as a reason to isolate them in a private place where they can proposition girls and force them to have sex. According to both boys and girls, male teachers try to entice girls with money or gifts and threaten to fail the girls' exam papers if they refuse. Girls also reported being promised good results in their exams if they reciprocated advances.

In order to improve the way girls and women are treated within society, traditional gender roles would need to be challenged so that girls and women are viewed as more equal to boys and men.

### **Cultural practices and isolation**

The consensus of the majority of the discussions held with parents (73%) and teachers (62%) was that children's attendance at disco matangas (a Luo burial ceremony) contributes to cases of SRGBV. The majority of the head teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) members supported this finding, citing these ceremonies as promoting incidents of SRGBV, because they encourage pupils to become sexually active.

In terms of child marriage, the teachers noted a gender dimension—observing that girls' education was not deemed important in villages in the area. Instead, girls were expected to get married at a young age. One group of women explained that when a daughter got married, parents were held in high esteem and could benefit from gifts from others in the community.

Parent's, predominantly male guardians emphasized that children, girls in particular, were forced to marry early so that they were less of a burden on the household.

Almost half of all girls' groups (48 percent) cited forced marriage as a type of abuse at their school; eight groups gave it the highest ranking.

The traditional practice of polygamy which is widespread in Ndhiwa was not identified in the primary

research as a cause of SRGBV, however there is a link between polygamy and increased risk of HIV and AIDS related deaths and it was noted by several groups that girls who had lost one or more of their parents (orphans) were at particularly high school risk. This is more likely in polygamous families. More research is needed into the connection between polygamy, HIV and SRGBV. It is impossible to tackle the HIV crisis in Ndhiwa without addressing SRGBV and child marriage as they are all inextricably connected.

### **Lack of empowerment in the community and within school**

33% of girls (which totals more than 1 in 4) felt that they seldom or never talked to teachers as much as boys, which marks a clear obstruction in their ability to communicate to those in authority. Whilst a vast majority of girls felt that they could often talk to teachers as much if not more than boys, it is important to address the fact that there are occasions where girls do not feel comfortable or secure enough to utilise the student-teacher relationship. Something that is incredibly valuable to ensuring their safety.

55% of girls' report having felt uncomfortable with sexual touching, and a total of 60% of girls report having experienced or witnessed this at some point. With 47% of boys claiming that girls are never likely to feel uncomfortable with touching, this highlights a potential problem with the normalising of sexual contact without consent. 59% of girls have reported being touched when they didn't want to be and almost 1 in 4 felt that this was always or often the case.

In total 67% of girls felt that if they rejected sexual advances at some point then their grades at school would suffer. 36% of girls' report that this was always or often the case, and overall girls have more than a 1 in 4 chance of feeling that their success at school is dependent upon their sexual submissiveness. 42% of girls reported either always or often being told that they would receive better marks if they had a relationship with the teacher. 72% of girls experienced male teachers and boys using sexual language towards them. Girls in one school noted that teachers called them —'ugly like a dog and commented on their clothing, saying they dress like prostitutes' and that such comments from male teachers are often directed at girls who have 'refused their propositioning or at girls they suspect have a boyfriend'

Certainly, this research shows that boys are frequently physically and verbally abusive toward girls who assert themselves at school by refusing boys' demands for sex, refusing to share their food with boys, refusing to copy notes for boys, or by out-performing boys in class. During focus groups, boys also noted that girls were frequently beaten by boys in retaliation for insulting them. Responses from pupils, teachers and parents indicate that boys attempt to dominate physical and verbal spaces in the classroom.

Teachers noted that where boys and girls shared desks, boys often took the opportunity to molest girls. 43% of girls felt that they never or seldom felt safe sharing desk with boys.

Much of the violence that boys perpetrate against girls is a consequence of girls' refusal to enter into a sexual relationship. Moreover, a boys' interest in a girl is often expressed through cloaked, aggressive behaviour. Frequent molestation of girls, grabbing their breasts or other unwanted touching is seen as a sign by both boys and girls of a boys' desire to propose love.

This is supported by the findings, where several groups of boys agreed that the defilement of a girl was due to boys' frustrated desire for sex. The boys believed that boys and men were unable to

abstain from sex. The blame for defilement is not placed on boys, because it is just in their nature, and the belief that such abuse is often provoked by the girls' behaviour, appearance and clothes - that they look and seem ready for sex & marriage.

At one primary school, pupils stated that teachers ridicule girls who had reported cases of SRGBV by claiming they liked being victimized sexually or accusing them of provoking boys by wearing miniskirts. This research highlights the weak position of girls in school, meaning they are less likely to prosper in adult life. Remaining in a position of vulnerability, without the ability to voice their feelings or change their situation inevitably has an impact on the female psyche.

The Education Officer believes that 'Violence is a big challenge to the life of school going children since it hinders them from exploring their potential fully. Because of this violence some drop out of school, some get pregnant and some get married early'.

### **Lack of remediation and corruption**

A serious concern is when violence goes unreported because victims feel nothing will happen to the perpetrator. The majority of the pupils highlighted that they felt nothing happened even if the cases were reported and it has been considered that teachers' may also be unwilling to report transgressions by colleagues. As socio cultural norms require women to show deference to men, female teachers find reporting male colleagues very difficult.

Some girls stated that they do not report sexual violence because they are too shy to discuss it with their parents or teachers and that no action will be taken. Exacerbating the situation, teachers and head teachers often ask intimate questions of the victim before they take action, which can make the victims feel threatened or scared. Girls also stated that they did not feel comfortable reporting sexual violence to male teachers. This is a heightened problem for girls in rural schools such as those in Ndhiwa.

The general perception was that teachers propositioning girls did not warrant any specific response on the part of the school. This lack of response resulted in pupils feeling that the schools do not assist them effectively. For example, at one primary school, a girl who had been propositioned by a teacher and reported the case to her parents, who then took the matter to the School Management Committee, was not assisted because the head teacher convinced the SMC that the teacher was "only joking". The matter ended with no specific action taken against the teacher.

Two groups of parents noted that there was a lack of adequate punishment for perpetrators, although they related this to the teachers' failure to discipline pupils involved in sexual relationships. In an interview with Education Officer he stated that all such behaviour is against the schools code of conduct and punishable under the Children's Act and that bribery and delays in the legal system as the core reason for adequate justice not being applied in relation to SRGBV. However, even one of the teachers interviewed cited indiscipline and a lack of strong school rules as one of the top three causes of SRGBV in schools. Another challenge raised was the failure of the Education Office to take action when they chose not to transfer a teacher who had been accused of defiling a school girl to another school.

An interview with a local medical practitioner supported the idea that inaction was a big problem in relation to SRGBV, and claimed that unfortunately this isn't helped by situations where 'sometimes the parent's guardians and perpetrators collude to defeat justice by outside court settlement'. Focus

groups also noted that most of the parents do not have adequate finance to use when following up with the cases, 'those who are in authority need a lot of money to go on with reported cases e.g. chiefs and police men. There are cases when teachers give money to victims or the parents of the victims to silence them. Pupils spoke about occasions when teachers, parents and other authorities dismiss victims as liars or blame them for provoking the incident. Pupils indicated that they were unsatisfied with the light punishment given by school authorities in cases of SRGBV. One group of pupils noted that a teacher under the influence of alcohol at one primary school 'excessively beat a pupil' but was merely reprimanded even after parents complained about the issue.

At another primary school a teacher impregnated a Standard 4 (age 13) girl and 'married' her. Later he made another Standard 6 girl pregnant. The same teacher still abuses other girls, but he has not yet been punished.

In one group a statement was made that *'Collusion of the accused and the accuser makes the other perpetrators feel that nothing will be done to them if they did the same'*

We can see here how poverty can act as an additional barrier to justice. Widespread corruption was seen by all focus group participants as a major causal factor in relation to SRGBV.

### **Perpetrators**

The focus group discussions revealed that, according to the perceptions of respondents, the main perpetrators of SRGBV at school were boys and teachers, and certain groups of community members (in many cases men who are well known to the victims such as relatives or next of kin, and some strangers to the girls, like workers in the Sukari (sugar) industry responsible for abuses that occur while pupils travelled to and from school. Girls were generally viewed as victims rather than as perpetrators of SRGBV. Girls beating boys was not cited by any of the groups.

Male teachers were cited as perpetrators of sexual molestation (grabbing girls' breasts or touching girls inappropriately during class or at other times). All focus groups (pupils, stakeholders and parents) blamed male teachers for propositioning girls at school; both stakeholders and parents noted that teachers were involved in sexual relationships with their female pupils. Similarly, the majority of key informants that were interviewed acknowledged that teacher-pupil sexual relationships existed, although a few Boda Boda operators and even one or two SMC members argued that if the girl gave her consent, then it did not constitute SRGBV.

Teachers were said to be abusing their position of power by lying to the girls, who enter into a relationship with them out of fear or in exchange for gifts or false promises. Some groups of girls noted that male teachers would deliberately fail girls if they refused to have sex with them. This abuse of power was just one strategy used by teachers to force girls into a sexual relationship. Girls in particular noted with concern that teachers sent girls on personal errands or to do chores at the teacher's house, which made them vulnerable to teachers' advances. This scenario might be the reason for many boys' complaints that teachers favour girls and give harsher punishment to boys. No group mentioned boys being sexually abused by male teachers; only one focus group cited the example of a female teacher propositioning a boy.

While parents were quick to blame teachers for violence, interviews with those involved in the school seemed to point to alternative perpetrators such as parents and the pupils themselves and



Boda Boda riders. Several Boda Boda riders specified women (mothers, grandmothers and female relatives) as the main perpetrators and cause of SRGBV for sending girls out to have sex in exchange for money to sell produce at markets rather than go to school.

## **Objective 2: To establish thorough, reliable base-line information on the extent of School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) in the Ndhiwa community**

The findings from our primary research suggest that GBV and SRGBV is significantly underreported in Ndhiwa and statistics recorded by the relevant authorities are unreliable.

According to the 2015 caseload from the local Children's Office, there were zero cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse or early pregnancy in Ndhiwa in 2015. There was one case of incest, three cases of early marriage, twelve cases of defilement and twelve cases of child marriage reported in 2015. The findings from the focus groups with 12-15 year old girls suggest SRGBV is much more prevalent than the Children's Office case load suggests. The majority of girls reported that SRGBV is present in their schools. 100% of the girls in one of the groups said that they had been "seduced" by a boy in school, though it is not clear exactly what they mean by the term "seduced" (the girls are not sure of the boundaries of sexual activity - they generalise any approach as seduction), they gave an example of a girl who was '*impregnated*'.

Statistics from Ndhiwa Law courts showing reported sexual offences that proceeded through to trials are in the table below.

### **The Judiciary Ndhiwa Law Courts Case Load:**

Month	Year 2015	2016
January	4	1
February	2	Nil
March	1	7
April	Nil	3
May	3	3
June	4	4
July	1	Nil
August	2	1
September	Nil	
October	Nil	
November	Nil	
December	Nil	

All the 15 cases reported in 2013 were prosecuted and perpetrators convicted. The 14 cases reported to the judiciary in 2014 were all prosecuted while only perpetrators in 12 cases were convicted. A Social Worker employed part time for NCEDP and who is also a long term, experienced volunteer working in Ndhiwa Children Office reported that in the month of July 2016, she personally handled 6 SRGBV cases and interviewed 9 girls aged between 14- 17 who had dropped out of school because of 'early pregnancy'. One of the girls involved in what is locally termed 'survival sex' had contracted an STI. She reports that more cases are brought to her attention but she does not have time to deal with them all.

The Social Worker attended workshops in August 2016 run by a group known as Women Fighting Aids in Kenya; their research was carried out in Nyarongi and Ndhiwa Divisions. She reported that:

‘1 in 5 pregnant girls is HIV positive and the higher the chances of SRGBV the higher the chances of HIV: Ndhiwa leading in the entire county with new infections especially girls below 18yrs. The misconception that a pregnancy case should not be handled until after delivery is a major challenge to cases of SRGBV not being solved and the perpetrators always walk free of charge’

Evidence points to the fact that official records and statistics do not reflect the true extent of SRGBV in Ndhiwa Sub County.

### **Physical & sexual violence**

Research shows that there was a high level of cultural acceptance of physical violence towards girls and women. At least 1 in 4 respondents felt that at some points in time it was ok to raise a hand to a girl.

A high percentage of girls reported having witnessed or directly experienced touching of their private parts, sexual touching and touching without their consent. What stood out here however was not just the high level of physical trespasses but that boys seemed to be completely unaware of its prevalence. Again this suggests a normalisation of unequal treatment towards girls particularly with regards to their sexual value.

3 out of 4 girls have experienced the offering of gifts in return for sexual favours and relationship requests from men including teachers. This problematic treatment of girls has also materialised in the form of physical and sexual threats of violence (62% of girls) and the use of derogatory language (38% of female respondents).

When asked ‘has a male teacher/boy made you feel uncomfortable by touching you?’ all members of one of the focus groups answered yes, always’. One girl stated:

*“Yes, it always happens, they are always touching our private parts”*

When asked ‘Do girls feel scared of male teachers / boys?’ the common response was yes they feel scared. One girl reported feeling scared...

*“...because some of them tell the girls bad words like calling their breasts oranges and when the girls try to cover them the teachers get harsh and insist that they remove the hands they want to admire the oranges so they feel scared of them”.*

Another girl said,

*“Some teachers forcefully touch our private parts whenever they call us to their offices”*

When asked ‘has a male teacher ever asked you to be in a relationship with him/be his girlfriend?’ all the girls in one of the focus groups responded that this “always happens”.

## Experiences of SRGBV

Indicator	Findings
Hitting girls	40% of girls felt that it was ok for a boy to hit a girl at some point 25% or 1 in 4 girls felt that it was always, often or sometimes ok 62% of boys felt that it was ok to hit a girl at some point. 25% so 1 in 4 boys felt it was always ok
Frequency of touching	73% of girls feel that they are never, seldom or only sometimes touched more than boys However, 28% (over 1 in 4) feel that they are always touched more 62% of boys didn't feel that girls were touched more. Only 2% felt that girls were always touched more
Touching of private parts	41% of girls' report having experienced or witnessed the touching of private parts 19% say that this is always or often the case 77% of boys believe that girls are never touched – that's just over 3 out of 4 boys 4% believed they were often touched 4% believed they were sometimes touched
Sexual touching	60% of girls have witnessed or experienced this at some point 20% (nearly 1 in 4) report this always or often being an issue 63% of boys believe that girls are never touched in this way. Only 9% believe it is always or often the case
Sexual touching without consent	59% of girls have reported being touched when they didn't want to be at some point Only 11% of boys felt that this was always or often a problem for girls
Offering of gifts in return for sexual favours	42% of girls' report that they always receive these requests As only 21% report never having had this happen, this leaves over 3 in 4 girls who have had this experience 62% of boys do not see this as a situation that happens to girls
Violent or sexual threats	62% of girls have experienced this at some time, that's more than 1 in 2 27% (just over 1 in 4) girls reported this was always or often the case 65% of boys felt that this never or seldom occurred
Relationship requests	73% of girls have experienced this (that's almost 3 in 4 girls) 54% reported this always or often happened 67% of boys felt that it was never the case
Use of demeaning sexual vocabulary	38% of girls felt that this happened regularly (either always or often) 52% (over 1 in 2) boys felt that this was seldom or never an occurrence

The prevalence of abuse towards girls within the schooling system has inevitably lead some of them to feel unsafe and insecure in their surroundings. 79% of girls reported that they did not always feel safe travelling to and from school. This was largely recognised by boys as well. 1 in 4 girls reported never feeling safe around male teachers and boys and 1 in 2 girls reported actively being afraid of them. Despite earlier recognitions that girls may not feel safe alone or within the institution, boys did not largely feel that this was necessarily attributable to men with almost half of male respondents outlining that they would expect girls to seldom or never be afraid of men. 44% of boys felt that girls should always or often feel safe around them.

Another key area for improvement was the difference in understanding as to the experience of girls when it came to sexual advances. Whilst 1 in 2 girls have reported feeling uncomfortable with sexual touching and 67% feel that their grades will be affected if they don't reciprocate, the majority of boys fail to recognise this issue feeling that this is likely to seldom or never be a problem for girls at school.

#### Psychological impacts of SRGBV

Indicator	Findings
Perceptions of safety travelling to and from school	33% of girls reported never feeling safe In total 79% of girls responded that they do not always feel safe Boys provided a similar response with 33% believing that girls were seldom or never safe
Perceptions of safety with male teachers and boys	51% of girls reported either sometimes or never feeling safe. 25% (1 in 4) reported never feeling safe 44% of boys felt that girls would either always or often feel safe
Fear of male teachers and boys	54% of girls reported always or often feeling scared – that's 2 out of 4 girls. 32% reported always feeling scared 46% of boys believed that girls would never or seldom feel scared – despite earlier recognition that girls were not that safe
Girls made to feel uncomfortable by touching	55% or 1 in 2 girls have felt uncomfortable with the touching they have experienced 29% feel that this is always or often an occurrence 47% of boys felt that this was likely to never be a problem for girls
Pressure to have sexual activity to avoid low grades	67% of girls felt that they may receive lower grades if they did not reciprocate sexual advances For over 1 in 4 girls this was considered to be always or often the case. 74% of boys (almost 3 out of 4) felt that this was seldom or never an issue. Only 4% would consider that this happened often
Pressure to have relationships with teachers to secure better	42% of girls reported that this was always or often the case – that's almost 1 in 2



grades	69% of boys felt that this was never or seldom an issue for girls. Only 3% felt it was always the case
Perceptions of safety in sharing desks with boys	43% of girls (nearly 1 in 2) reported either never or seldom feeling safe sharing a desk with a boy 72% of boys reported that they did not think that girls would always feel safe

## Participation

The direct and indirect violence practiced towards girls can be seen to impact their opportunities in school in a number of ways. There was some disparity over whether or not girls participated in leadership roles as much as boys. Whilst girls felt they were quite strong in this area, boys failed to recognise their input. Both agreed that girls were more likely to be seen doing chores at school such as cleaning, thus reinforcing traditional gender roles within the school system.

Most felt that girls were encouraged in their schoolwork the same amount as boys, yet when it came to communication with their teachers over concerns they might have, 1 in 4 girls felt that they were seldom or never comfortable doing so.

### Limitations to equal opportunities

Indicator	Findings
Sports	Over half of girls (59%) thought that they participate almost or often as much as boys 66% of boys thought that girls participated as much as them, 44% who recognised girls lack of participation
Chores	84% of girls felt that they always, often or sometimes did more than boys 82% of boys felt the same – with 0% feeling that there was never a time that girls weren't doing more than them
Communicating with teachers about concerns	33% of girls felt that they seldom or never talked to teachers as much as boys (over 1 in 4) The boys had a similar result but 50% felt that girls always talked more
Leadership of student groups	75% of girls felt that they participated the same amount as boys. 71% of boys felt that they did not lead as much
Schoolwork	75% of girls felt they were encouraged in their schoolwork as much as boys. Boys largely agreed with 62% feeling that girls received the same amount of encouragement
School activities	42% of girls felt that they always participate as much as boys which is still over 1 in 2 girls that feel their participation is lacking 42% of boys also felt that girls didn't participate as much

The school culture reinforces this view of male superiority e.g. through teachers' tolerance of boys' dominance in the classroom, the celebration of male competitiveness, the allocation of more public and higher status tasks and responsibilities to boys. If the boys feel that their dominance is being eroded, they may engage in more acute forms of sexual harassment and victimisation.

Clearly strategies to actively involve boys are vitally important.

### **Consequences and Impact of SRGBV**

Our rationale for including the consequences of SRGBV in the extent of the problem is to share already known and understood consequences, which are seen widely in the schools in Ndhiwa. They contribute to the understanding of the extent and magnitude of the problem. These consequences are well known and widely documented elsewhere. We have provided only a summary here and some examples noted in our primary research.

There are significant consequences to SRGBV, with some of the clearest relating to physical and psychological health, and academic achievement. The physical health consequences of forced sex include exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS) as well as unwanted conception, high-risk adolescent pregnancy and childbirth, and unsafe abortions. Psychologically, the experience of sexual violence has the tendency to block the development of social skills and undermine self-esteem, and may lead to eating disorders, depression, and insomnia, feelings of guilt, anxiety and suicidal tendencies. Exposing students to violence within the school environment can also lead to further violence that they may perpetrate or receive.

Victims of sexual violence also suffer academically: girls may demonstrate poor performance, reduce their engagement in school activities, or drop out entirely due to low self-esteem, reduced concentration, and anxiety. When teachers demand sex from female students and 'reward' them for sex with high grades in tests and exams, the idea is perpetuated that academic success is tied to girls' sexuality rather than their intellect. Such notions deeply impact girls' perception of themselves as students, and cast academic pursuits in an improperly sexualized light. Also, because of school dropouts relating to SRGBV, girls (who are disproportionately affected by SRGBV) suffer from significantly lowered earning potential, not to mention all the other development outcomes related to girls' education.

When gender-based violence is tolerated and condoned at school, there are broader societal consequences on gender equality. Victims feel less able to take action, and perpetrators may feel immune. These feelings and harmful behaviours go beyond the school setting and contribute to the perpetuation of inequality and GBV more widely in society.

Our primary research revealed very disturbing consequences of SRGBV as mentioned above including one group of girls, discussing the frequent molestation and sexual advances by boys, who stated that such '*constant abuse disturbed girls so much so that they might have thought of committing suicide*'. In the case of girls being '*impregnated*' by teachers, some girls noted that teachers often refused responsibility for the child. Pupils also described how girls who were forced to have sex would be injured, suffer psychologically and be afraid to come to school.

In addition to the obvious consequences for pupils' physical and sexual health and their psychological well-being, a major consequence of the persistent abuse many pupils in Ndhiwa face in schools was noted by the pupils as low participation and poor attendance. Increasing absenteeism often culminates in pupils dropping out of school permanently due to pressures from home and the community. Echoing pupils' perspectives, the majority of teachers in the study (70 percent) agreed that high absenteeism and dropping out were common outcomes of school-related-gender-based violence.

It is widely acknowledged and statistics confirm that girls in Ndhiwa underperform in school, retention rates are poor, and many girls drop out of schools before reaching Standard 8 the top primary class. The reasons are many and complex but SRGBV is undoubtedly a major contributing factor.

### **Objective 3: To consult with community leaders to agree and trial effective strategies for changing public perceptions and eliminating SRGBV in this community**

When asked how SRGBV could be tackled in their schools, many of the girls contributed suggestions that involved them altering their own behaviour, or parents altering their behaviour, but interestingly they did not offer many suggestions about the perpetrators altering their behaviour. For example,

- 'Say no when asked to involve yourself in SRGBV'
- 'Avoid wearing provocative attires'
- 'Parents should provide for their girls' basic needs so they don't have to get from men'
- 'Avoid behaving in a manner that suggests to the boys or teacher that you are interested in them'
- 'Avoid walking at night'
- 'Avoid bad companies'
- 'Avoid peer pressure by choosing good friends'
- 'Learning to say a strong NO and mean NO'
- 'Avoid taking free and unexplained gifts'
- Creating awareness on child rights
- 'Dressing decently'
- 'Avoid disco matangas that expose them to sexual violence.'

There were some suggestions from focus groups with community members that involved community education and education of potential perpetrators, including,

- 'Discussing with parents on sexual issues'
- 'Helping those who come from poor backgrounds'
- 'Forming group discussion where the girls can share the challenges and come up with better solutions'

During consultation with key stakeholders in both FGD's and workshops various intervention strategies were discussed. A group of teachers gave possible solutions and made a suggestion of some of the interventions they felt could help us tackle SRGBV.

- Reporting the cases to the relevant authorities and not trying to solve such cases locally in school
- The judiciary to be strict when handling SRGBV cases. Especially on parents who usually convince the victims – the girls to withdraw the cases due to some of the expectations in the society, that the girl will not get married after ruining a man's life
- Have regular counseling and sensitization in school

Government Officials added two possible solutions to those that the teachers had given more capacity building and the enactment of the Sexual Offence Act

A group of representing local NGOs and Community Based Organisations added their possible solutions:

- Increased Networking opportunities in Ndhiwa
- Having forums for both boys and girls
- Intervention by the judiciary, ministry of health and children office
- Ministry of health to ease its conditions to assist in reporting the cases since they feel the high fees that the hospitals have put in place are limiting the number of people who report defilement cases because they fear the charges

When given the opportunity in community conversations to discuss solutions the women suggested:

- Prevent Disco matangas that expose the girls
- Parents to build bathrooms at home to reduce the issue of girls being defiled at the rivers
- The pupils should be warned not to go to video watching spots where they are exposed to pornographic videos
- The issue of bribery should be stopped and action should be taken immediately
- The parents who withdraw from reported cases should be charged and action taken against them
- Community to involve itself with NGOs working towards ending SRGBV
- Parents should be responsible and should stop Child labour
- A rule should be set to prevent pupils from visiting teachers houses
- Teachers should be enlightened on the code of conduct that relates them to the pupils
- Parents should provide basic needs for their girls
- Parents to prevent their kids from unnecessary visiting
- Parents especially the mothers to be free with their kids to know more about them especially when they are at adolescent stage

An interview with the local Chief highlighted the role of Chiefs. 'As an ambassador we handle SRGBV in the following ways: by reporting to the police, creation of awareness through barazas, through use of guidance and counseling to the teachers and parents, involvement of



all the stakeholders, by training different stakeholders on the same and enhancement of government policy on children’

The Chief stated ‘that future interventions should include proper follow up of incidents, stakeholders to perform their duties more diligently, the implementation of community empowerment programmes and the development of community steering groups including government representatives, NGOs, CBOs, community representatives and teachers’.

### **Potential for sport to bring about change in relation to SRGBV**

*NCEDP Nike Behavior Change Communication, using Girls’ Football in the Fight against HIV and AIDS 2009-2011*

A final end of project report was produced by NCEDP and a full detailed analysis and evaluation of all of the other 65 projects involved in the **Lace Up and Save Lives** campaign was published acknowledging the good work done by NCEDP. The findings for both reports have helped inform our proposed future intervention strategies

*British Council Premier Skills, Addressing VAWG Project*

As part of our evaluation and trialing of possible intervention strategies NCEDP have been working with the British Council Premier Skills, Addressing VAWG Project team. Training has been provided for NCEDP staff and football is being used to provide the platform to sensitise children and young people on issues around violence against women and girls. This will be achieved through the delivery of regular, inclusive football sessions with an emphasis on values and behaviour-led activities, alongside an awareness-raising curriculum around the prevention of violence against women and girls.

### **Chapter 5 – Conclusion**

Our research supports an understanding of SRGBV not only as violent acts removed from social context but as embedded in institutional structures and practices and focuses on where violence comes from. This process has shown that interventions are necessary at all levels to challenge violence against girls and that to reduce acts of violence it is crucial to address girls’ everyday relationships in schools, families and communities, as well as the educational, economic, socio- cultural and health, political, legal institutions and structures.

NCEDP and Team Kenya are ambitious in terms of their role as key stakeholders in the process of long term sustainable change and the elimination of SRGBV in schools in Ndhiwa. We acknowledge that some challenges are beyond the scope of this research and that our future plans, whilst taking into consideration opportunities for scaling up, will require long term partnerships and a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach and multilevel interventions.

More systematic and widespread research is undoubtedly needed especially into the relationship between SRGBV, child marriage, polygamy and HIV. Adolescent girls are disproportionately affected by GBV, child marriage (often polygamous) and HIV.

For our strategies to succeed we have to focus on a process that is participatory, with

stakeholder and community involvement in planning; in particular, we will ensure the school girls and boys have substantive consultation and leadership roles. If GBV is to be eliminated in schools, NCEDP needs to engage with communities in addressing violence more broadly, as violent or abusive behaviour is often first learnt in the home and/or in institutional settings where adults are in close contact with children.

Lessons learned from our successful strategies thus far have helped level the playing field in terms of removing some of the barriers to girls education in our partner schools but clearly now is the right time for further involvement of boys and men .Boys need to be on the girls' side if change in behaviour within schools is to be realised. If they feel that girls are favoured by the project and they are excluded, they may become resentful and pose barriers to change.

Research has shown that boys often have negative attitudes and low regard for girls, resenting them for what they perceive as their preferential treatment in class by teachers (who are often suspected of having affairs with them), even though the boys consider girls to be less intelligent than themselves.

Strong social factors combine to maintain the perpetuate SRGBV which is deeply rooted in many societies including Ndhiwa, and is often sanctioned through cultural practices and norms. The predominance of violence against girls in school reflects deeply entrenched social and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequality and an imbalance of power – between males and females and between adults and children

Social structures and institutions, including families, schools and communities, support these norms. Schools, in their role of guiding the 'socialization' of children, may implicitly legitimise and reinforce harmful gender norms through tacit or explicit approval of the status quo. Our evidence supports the case that schools, as respected centres in a community, can unwittingly feed a wider enabling environment in which SRGBV flourishes. The absence of mechanisms that function to keep harmful gender norms and practices in check allows for the continuation of SRGBV.

Systems for identifying and reporting SRGBV in Ndhiwa are under-resourced and under-developed. In addition, the rights of children are not well understood and are rarely part of the school curriculum. At the same time, judicial systems tend to be poorly equipped to address crimes against children and issues of sexual misconduct. In our partners schools even when girls are aware of their rights and reporting systems do exist, victims of violence may not feel like they are safe or protected to be able to report their experiences of violence. Social service, medical and other support systems for victims are few and poorly resourced.

Our research highlights the complex nature of violence in schools including the link between SRGBV and other forms of violence in particular role of corporal punishment which should be included as form of SRGBV.

## **Chapter 6 - Recommendations**

SRGBV is multidimensional and cannot be dealt with as a single cause and effect relationship it demands an integrated and holistic approach and all programmes and actions should operate across a range of disciplines and sectors. Our model builds on adapting and improving existing NCEDP programs and activities and integrates SRGBV prevention and response with the findings and lesson learned from this research.

Key assumptions- we will:

- Promote non-violent values and awareness-raising
- Enhance the capacity of all who work with and for children
- Ensure participation of children -actively engage with children and respect their views in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them.
- Prioritise prevention
- Increase opportunities for engaging boys and young men
- Integrate awareness raising, capacity and community mobilisation
- Engage fully with the local Education Office as key stakeholders
- Include SRGBV interventions as part NCEDP/Team Kenya's overall five year poverty reduction and empowerment strategy (the minimum period required for long lasting change and impact on SRGBV)

Challenges:

- The assumption that deeply rooted beliefs and behaviours can be changed by a series of short training sessions is misguided. Attitudes can be very entrenched
- Prevention of and response to violence requires *cross-sectoral co-operation and co-ordination* across central government departments, provinces and regions, and between government and civil society
- Corruption is widespread and endemic in Kenya and Ndhiwa is no exception
- Understanding teachers perceptions and encouraging cooperation and collaboration rather than being seen as an external threat to the status quo.

### **Key implementation strategies for this project**

*Direct interventions with children in primary school:*

**Football** - Mixed gender football using the British Council and Premier skills VAGW project materials adapted to suit Ndhiwa and the context of SRGBV. Football sessions will provide the platform to sensitise children and young people on issues around violence against women and girls. This will be achieved through the delivery of regular, inclusive football sessions with an emphasis on values and behaviour-led activities alongside an awareness-raising curriculum around the prevention of violence against women and girls'

**ICT**--Encouraging results from ICT pilot project show untapped potential for the use of ICT with boys and girls in a combination of single sex and mixed gender sessions. Using ICT as a platform to sensitise children, young people, teachers and parents on issues around SRGBV and using ICT as a tool to motivate and involve boys and men in the gender equality community conversation including Boda Boda riders and other perpetrators.

**Girls Support Group** – Review current GSG activities to reflect lesson learned from this research and adequate levels of support where violence does occur. Strengthen peer to peer support as young adolescents find it more comfortable and easier to receive information from a peer. Well-informed peer educators can disperse knowledge and skills in a non-intimidating, non-alienating way. Expand the use of *role models* including NCEDP Social Worker , having a positive image of someone who is older, but not too much older, motivates young adolescents girls to feel that they belong to a kind of community, and that their hopes and dreams are worth spending time on. Include opportunities for sexual and relationship education for older pupils and increase sensitizations on rights and responsibilities including boys

*Interventions' with primary schools:*

**Schools improvement plans** – supporting a 'whole school' approach that integrates SRGBV into a broad programme of educational support including more accountability working with teachers, governors, children and parents to create a memorandum of understanding with the school, including a three- year improvement plan, to form the framework of a development programme, a document unique to each school.

An integral part of the plan will be on-going training for teachers on SRGBV prevention and management and strengthen support for school subcommittees and SMC structure, well functioning and effective SMCs are able to mobilise communities and potentially to change attitudes and behaviour. Gender responsive pedagogy and teacher's code of conduct will also be included

**Tacking corporal punishment** - including teacher training in classroom management and positive behavior management and involving parents in training to sensitively address norms and beliefs about child rearing

**Girl friendly schools** - To improve the quality of education for all students and establishing mechanisms that prevent violence before it happens (see appendix)

*Interventions for families and communities raising awareness and community mobilization through collaboration and accountability:*

**Partnership, Networking and Advocacy** - including regular monthly workshops and training strengthen opportunities for working in partnership with relevant actors and stakeholders to obtain the best outcome for victims and their families; ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice, transform attitudes that condone or normalize SRGBV , including stereotypical gender roles and discrimination, acceptance of corporal punishment, and other harmful traditional practices.

Engaging traditional and religious leaders –Village chiefs are often seen as holding the key to

making positive change at the local level and, with other local opinion leaders, will be engaged in the process.

Engaging families in gender equality conversations and training via existing network for table banking groups, families of sponsored students and girl support group members.

Exploring further research opportunities to establish an advocacy center within NCEDP's Ndhiwa office to provide; Advocacy through empowerment education of the girls and young women, educating the judiciary, police and other civic authorities on the rights of young women and raising awareness in the community at large to reinforce and support respect for the rights of young women and girls. Legal Support for its clients, so that victims of GBV and sexual exploitation will have access to the options available for resolution including community based mediation; restorative justice and the Court process. Protection including provision of counseling for victims of gender based violence or sexual exploitation.

For more information about Team Kenya and NCEDP's work, please visit:

[www.teamkenya.org.uk](http://www.teamkenya.org.uk)

If you would like more information about this research project, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Val Wilson: [val@team-kenya.co.uk](mailto:val@team-kenya.co.uk)

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