Intervention and Results of Combating School-Related Gender-Based Violence in Democratic Republic of Congo

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Definition of SRGBV

"School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) results in sexual, physical, or psychological harm to girls and boys. It includes any form of violence or abuse that is based on gendered stereotypes or that targets students on the basis of their sex. It includes, but is not limited to: rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying, and verbal harassment.

Unequal power relations between adults and children and males and females contribute to gender violence. Violence can take place in school buildings, on school grounds, or going to and from school and may be perpetrated by teachers, students, or community members. Girls and boys can be victims or perpetrators."

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Extent of Problem

- "*Global estimates indicate that almost half of all female students and a sizable number of male students experience some form of sexual violence in the educational context.*"
  USAID EQUATE Project Technical Brief

- Health impact: SRGBV has a long-lasting negative impact on students' academic performance as well as their *physical health and mental wellbeing*.

Policy Context

- U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV Globally
- Goal #1 is to *Mainstream and Integrate GBV Prevention and Response Activities Across Sectors*
- States the need for GBV prevention efforts to go beyond stand-alone programs in global health and democracy/governance and integrate GBV prevention work into all sectors of development

Project Summary

- In 2010, with additional funding from USAID Women in Development Office and the Bureau for Africa's Education Division, C-Change began a new initiative promoting positive social and gender norms to prevent and mitigate SRGBV in Katanga Province, DRC.
  - Local implementing partner IDI (Initiatives pour le Developpement Integral)—prior work on USAID Ambassadors' Girls Scholarship Program

Site: Katanga Province, 31 Schools

- Lubumbashi
- Likasi
- Kasumbalesa

Project Objectives

- Equip girl and boy students with knowledge and understanding of SRGBV and the skills to resist/avoid it
- Increase knowledge of school administrators, teachers, and parents to identify, discourage, and intervene in incidences of SRGBV
- Establish policies and structures in the school to discourage SRGBV and encourage school administrators, community members, and parents to enforce and support them
- Increase the number of students who report incidences of SRGBV and seek supportive services
- Increase girls' and boys' understanding of the consequences of SRGBV and change underlying attitudes

Pre-Project Baseline

- In November 2010, local Congolese firm STADDE (Statistique pour le Developpement et la Democratie) was contracted to conduct a baseline study to assess the level of awareness, prevalence of SRGBV, and attitudes/behaviors of stakeholders:
  - Key stakeholder groups (students, teachers, parents) in 42 communities in Katanga Province; 966 students, 923 parents, 457 teachers included in survey; focus group discussions (FGDs) with 618 students, 295 teachers, 389 parents.
- Both the survey and FGDs revealed that school-related violence was widespread in Katanga Province. Teachers and parents recognized its severity and nearly all were aware that students are victims in their schools.

Baseline Study Findings

- *Physical violence:* Punishments for students were reported to be very severe.
  - Many students reported staying away from school because of these punishments.
  - Students, especially girls, reported physical abuse on their way to/from school and during recreation time.
- *Sexual violence:* Sexual threats were reported to be frequent.
  - Perpetrators included teachers and students.
  - Primary and secondary school girls reported that teachers and male students often made sexual advances and tried to touch them inappropriately.
- Less than 1/3 (27%) of students reported that a procedure existed at their school for dealing with cases of SRGBV.

Levels of Intervention

- SRGBV is a very complex issue, resulting from harmful gender norms and a power imbalance between males and females.
- Given the deeply rooted causes of SRGBV, the SBCC interventions were developed at multiple levels:
  1. individual students
  2. local communities
  3. schools (institutions)

Levels of Intervention

1. At the individual student level:

   Based on the USAID *Safe Schools Program*, C-Change developed a life skills training curriculum to increase students' understanding of SRGBV and change underlying attitudes.

   - The training aimed to equip youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to resist and avoid sexual violence

2. At the community level:

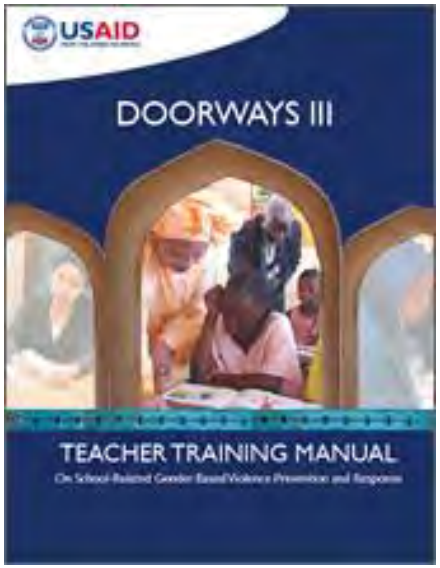
   The project engaged parents and community members through a multi-media communication campaign to raise awareness and encourage active involvement in improving conditions in and around schools and promoting healthy gender norms in the family.

Community Radio Campaign

Levels of Intervention

3. At the school level:

- C-Change worked with teachers and administrators to develop codes of conduct that were transparent, well understood, and enforced
- Teachers were trained to identify and avoid improper behavior.
- Focal teachers at each school were trained as first-responders to assist students who have experienced violence:
  - Referral program to existing services
    - psycho-social
    - judicial
    - health



Project Outputs

- 700+ teachers trained in recognizing and combating SRGBV
- 31 target schools developed teachers' codes of conduct explicitly addressing SRGBV
- 65 SRGBV focal teachers trained as first-responders
- 154 youth club leaders trained in SRGBV prevention and peer-mentoring techniques
- 3 comic book editions based on SRGBV developed and 13,500 copies printed/distributed in 31 target schools

Output

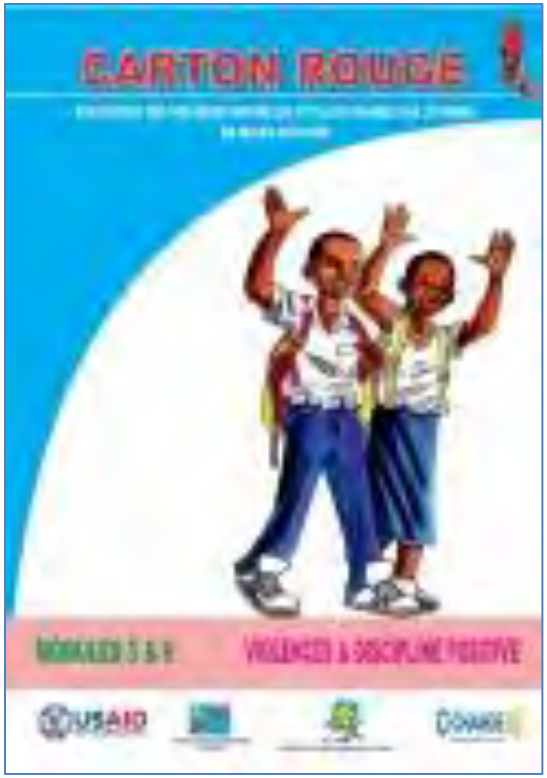
Pre-project	Post-project
• Pre-project, most schools—75 percent of those surveyed—did not have a person designated for dealing with SRGBV.	• Post-project, 100% of 31 target schools had designated SRGBV focal teachers in place as first-responders: 1 female and 1 male teacher in each school.

Focal Teacher

SRGBV Training in School

Pre-project	Post-project
• Only 16% of teachers stated that they were directly addressing issues of SRGBV in their work with students.	• In target schools, 89% of teachers reported that they had directly addressed SRGBV through training and teaching of students.

Training Materials



US Ambassador James Entwistle reviews training materials during his visit to a SRGBV project school

SRGBV Comic Book Series

Youth Club training sessions

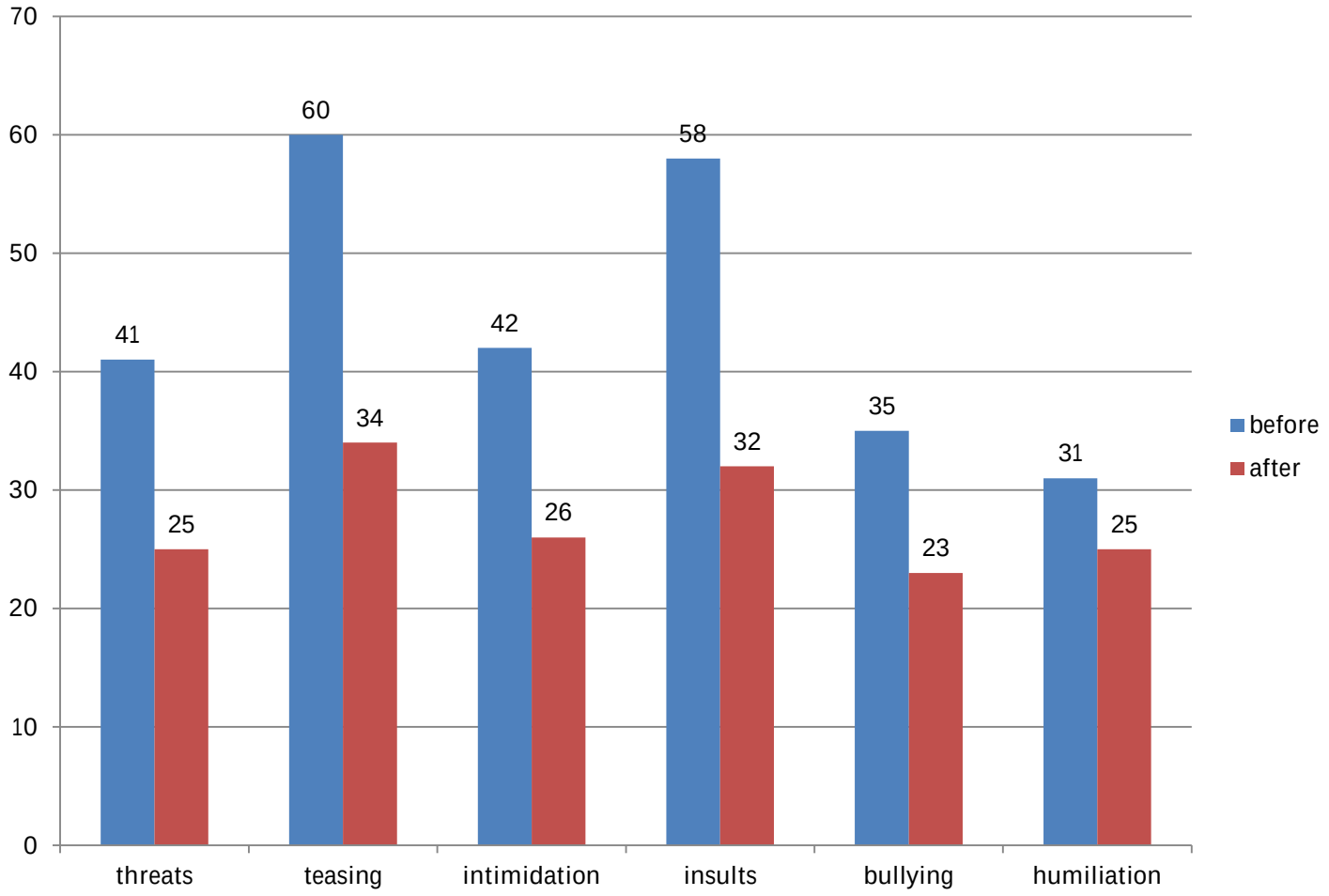
Post-Project Endline

- In May 2012, after 1½ years of concerted programming in schools and surrounding communities, an endline study was conducted to assess levels of awareness, prevalence of SRGBV, and attitudes and behaviors of stakeholders
  - Carried out by local Congolese firm, CODHOD (Human Rights and Development Committee)
- Methodology: Mixed methods—quantitative survey and qualitative FGDs
- 21 of 31 target schools plus 5 control schools
- 500 students, 500 parents, 250 teachers surveyed
- 18 focus groups were conducted with teachers, parents, girl students, boy students

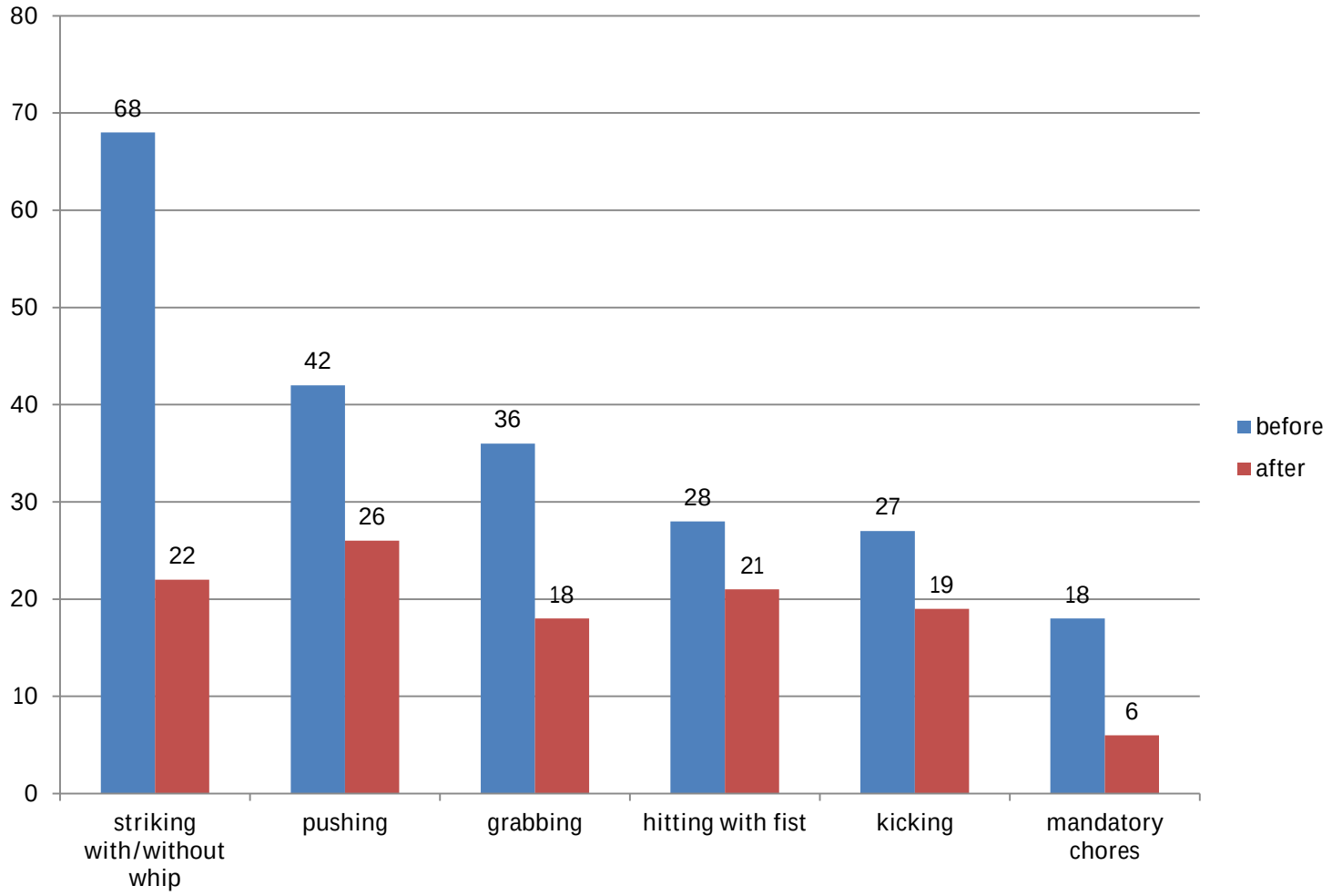
Results in Target Schools

Pre-project	Post-project
• 33% of students aware of how to prevent/avoid SRGBV • 56% of teachers aware of how to prevent SRGBV	• 90% of students aware of how to prevent/avoid SRGBV • 95% of teachers aware of how to prevent SRGBV

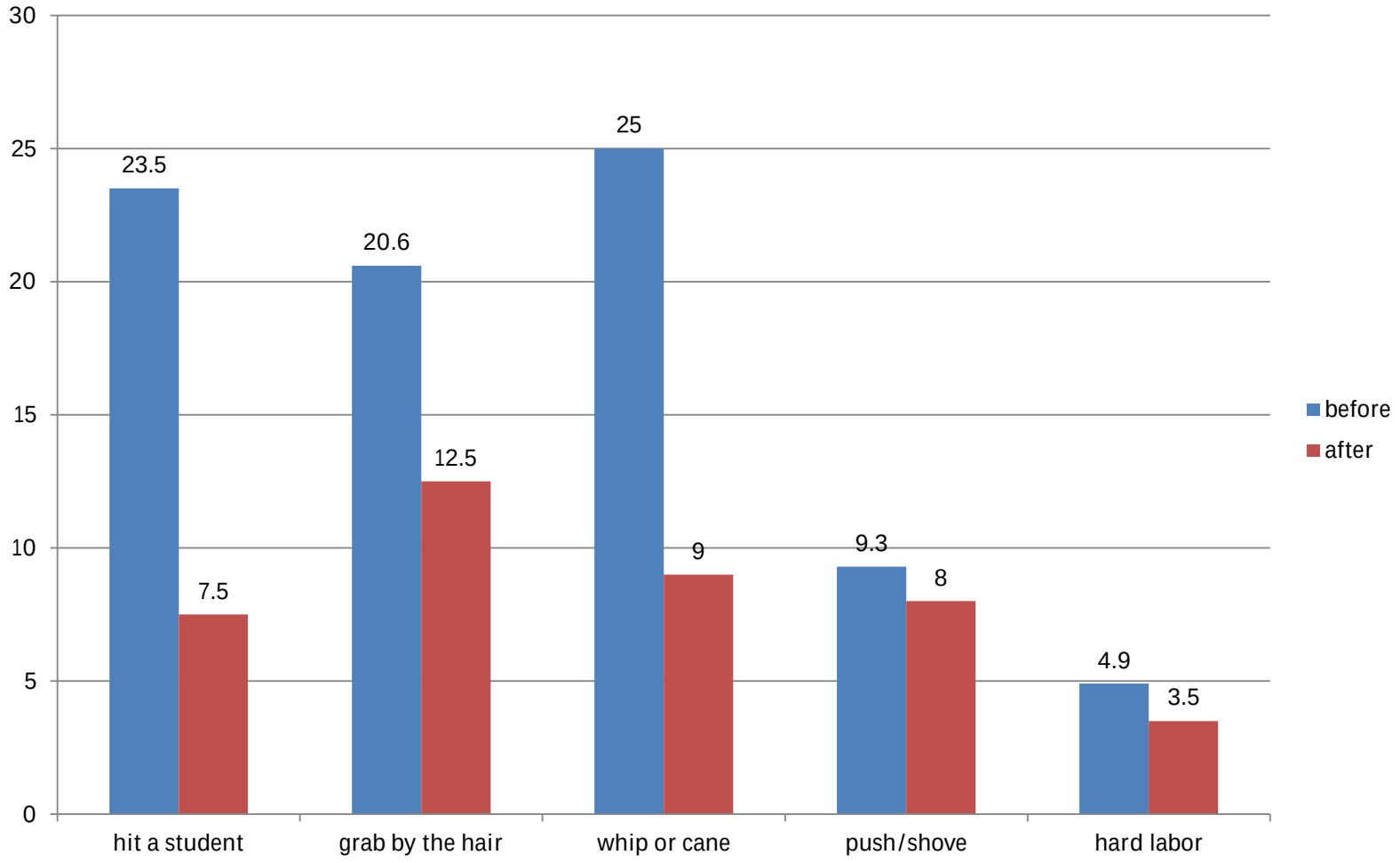
Pre- vs. post-project levels of awareness of instances of *psychological violence* in target schools (as reported by students)



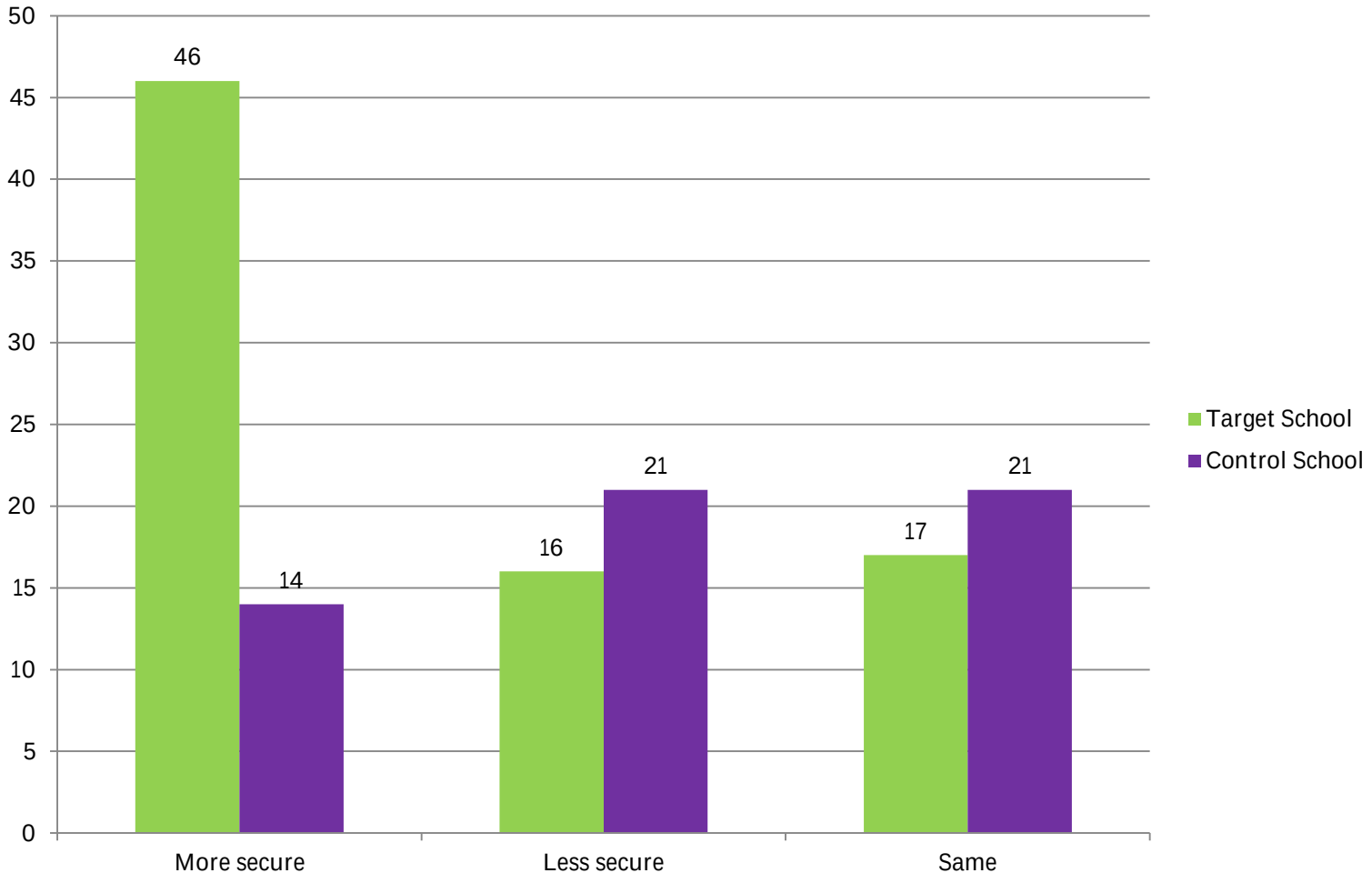
Pre- vs. post-project levels of awareness of instances of *physical violence* in target schools (as reported by students)



Pre- vs. post-project *use of violent forms of discipline* in target schools (as reported by teachers)



Do you feel more or less secure in school compared to previous years?



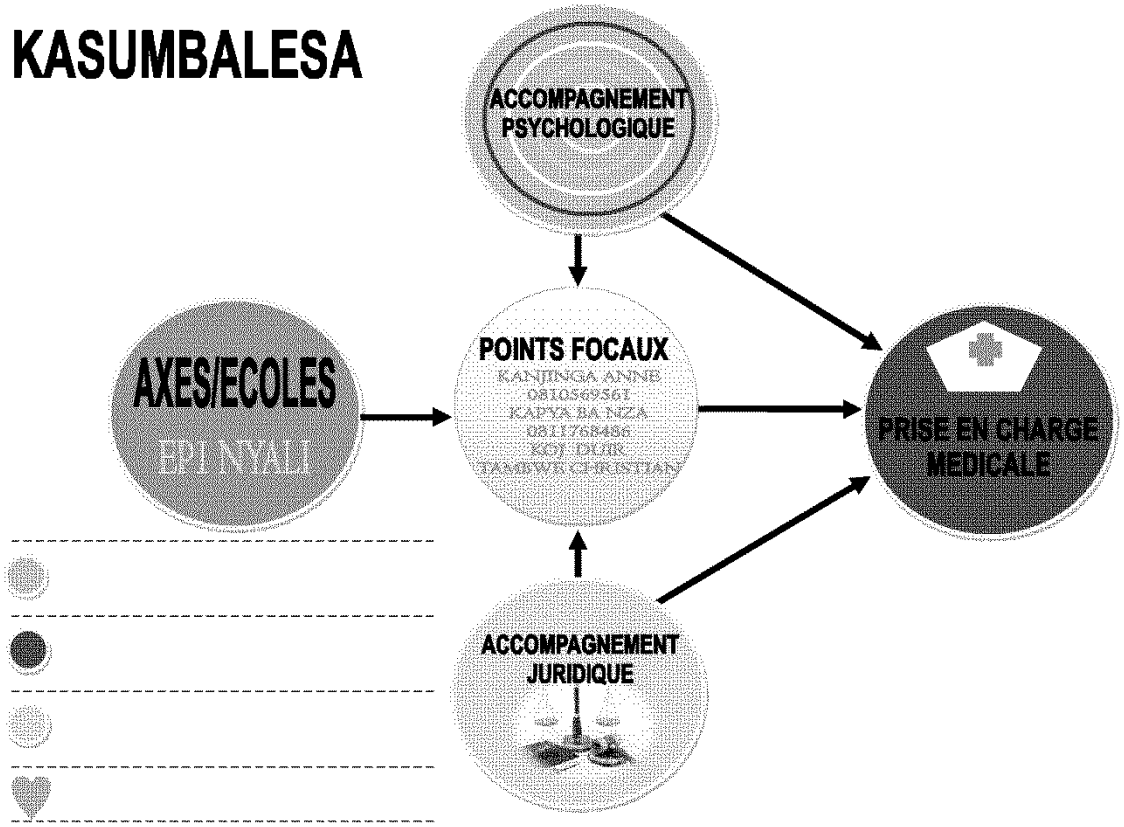
Academic Performance

"We have noted the improvement of results on the national test for end of primary studies in our school. The girls have a 100% pass rate and the boys 90%. In former years, the highest percentage we ever achieved was 83% passing. Since 2010 we started to apply positive discipline in our school. We noticed that even the most timid pupils began to ask questions in class. The use of positive discipline has created a climate of dialogue between teacher and pupils."

Grade 5 teacher in Lubumbashi

« Ecole Sans Violence » (Violence-Free School)

SRGBV Referral Guide



Way Forward: Local Support as Key to Sustainability

- National and provincial authorities:
  - Ministry of Education
  - Ministry of Gender, Family, and Children
  - Police
  - Teachers' Union
- Teachers
- Students
- Parents

Call to Action

- *"In fields such as education, USAID must further develop and implement strategies that ensure gender-based violence is addressed… Generally, the integration of gender-based violence prevention and response efforts in various sectors can increase awareness and reduce acceptance of harmful practices."*
  U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV

- *"Violence against children is never justifiable. Nor is it inevitable. If its underlying causes are identified and addressed, violence against children is entirely preventable."*
  Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan