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SELECT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE LITERATURE REVIEWS

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES: AN EVIDENCE REVIEW

Prepared under Contract No.: GS-I0F-0033M / Order No. 7200AA18M00016, Tasking N008

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS

EGR	Early grade reading
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICAST	International Child Abuse Screening Tools
LARA	Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity
NORC	National Opinion Research Center
SBCC	Social behavior change communications
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VACS	Violence against Children Surveys
WEI/B	Bantwana Initiative of World Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Harsh psychological and physical punishment in school can slow down or halt children's academic achievement, completion rates, and safe, healthy, development into adulthood. Corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries is a widespread, under-addressed form of gender-based violence that exacerbates public health and socio-economic inequalities. At the request of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago conducted an evidence review in response to guiding questions:

- What is the extent, nature, and consequences of corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries?
- How is corporal punishment in schools gendered in processes and outcomes in low-income countries?
- Do studies from low-income countries address social norms in upholding or challenging corporal punishment in schools as a widely accepted practice?

METHODOLOGY

The review identified, appraised, and synthesized available evidence between 2013 and 2019 on corporal punishment in schools in low- and lower-middle income countries. Broad searches of social sciences databases of academic peer-reviewed articles identified over 3,800 academic sources, which inclusion criteria reduced to fewer than 80. The review included studies based on conceptual clarity on corporal punishment, strength of evidence, transparency in analyses and reporting, and on their contribution to the knowledge base on prevention to inform policy and practice. Studies that provided further information on the context, and detail on research and evaluation design, added valuable insight. Outcomes relevant to the evidence review were broad and complex concerning children's education, health, and development. The review prioritized rigorous studies exploring causality, such as those with experimental, randomized, or longitudinal designs. Synthesized findings sought to answer the guiding questions above.

NORC'S KEY FINDINGS

Evidence review findings can inform future program design, research, evaluation, and both education and public health policies. Important insights from the review follow:

- Policy makers around the world increasingly view corporal punishment as a form of violence against children.
- Corporal punishment in schools is highly prevalent in low-income countries.
- Corporal punishment is gendered.
- Corporal punishment affects child development negatively.
- Attitudes, beliefs, and norms underpin yet contest corporal punishment.
- Evaluation results show corporal punishment is preventable.

From these flow suggestions for program design and for research and evaluation.

NORC'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN

- Combined whole-of-school within whole-of-community programs, coordinated within and across education, health, and child protection sectors, are needed to prevent and respond to corporal punishment, among other forms of gender-based violence against children in schools and homes.
- Intervention development through careful co-design with evaluation and implementation partners for school, home, and community contextual relevance and sustainability, can help maximize and measure interlinked education and child development outcomes.
- Longer-term gender norm change community-wide is required for cultivating safe, supportive, stable, and nurturing schools and homes that value girls and boys equally and use alternative, positive, non-violent discipline methods with students of all genders.
- Further, prevention program design for reducing corporal punishment among all forms of gender-based violence in schools should consider the unique needs and rights of disaster- and conflict-affected, displaced children of all genders as they seek to access education in a safe, stable, and nurturing learning environment.
- Strategically, the need for building adults' scientific knowledge of the developmental harms of corporal punishment, and skills for ending the practice, extends also to pediatricians and other health workers in their vital roles in child health and safety, and potential public health educational role in schools.
- Taken together, laws, policies, and increasingly school-based gender-based violence prevention programs, call for promoting a safe and supportive learning environment, training all teachers on positive, non-violent discipline methods, and ending violent punishment of children both at school and home.

NORC'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

- Rigorous research and evaluation designs, along with the use of mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) are required to build the evidence base on outcomes and pathways for preventing and responding to corporal punishment as a form of gender-based violence in schools.
- Teachers' self-reported behaviors concerning corporal punishment perpetration must be triangulated with students' reports of violence exposure in school surveys.
- Qualitative unpacking of perceptions of what constitutes, "corporal punishment," can help contextualize quantitative measures to be included in epidemiological and social science research and program evaluation data collection instruments on school violence.
- Experimental, randomized evaluation designs, and longitudinal, mixed-methods research across diverse low-income contexts and populations also are required to expand the evidence base on the causal mechanisms and effects of school corporal punishment as a form of gender-based violence and its effects on academic retention, achievement, and healthy child development.

- Sex- and age-disaggregation of future research and program evaluation using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, are required to better understand gendered power dynamics, social norms, and pathways of reducing school corporal punishment among all forms of gender-based violence against children.
- Clear definitional framing of corporal punishment as encompassing multiple, gendered psychological, physical, or sexual acts of violence, humiliation, and intimidation, can improve measures to evaluate student exposure to corporal punishment beyond “caning.”
- Epidemiological self-reported violence exposure measures are further needed for students, given the insight that past efforts to measure student or teacher attitudes or perceptions alone as proxies for behavior change have been unreliable.
- Qualitative inquiry is required to interpret statistical results, through investigating the change pathways of programs to prevent corporal punishment.
- Further, survey design and administration methods must be developed to accommodate functional impairments in child and adult respondents’ capabilities to see, hear, walk, or talk to include actively, rather than intentionally or unintentionally exclude, children, caregivers, and teachers with disabilities.
- Finally, to be successful in preventing and responding to gender-based violence against children, corporal punishment prevention programs, and research and evaluation, will require improved accountability and support from currently under-resourced formal and informal, government and community-based child protection initiatives.

A two-page summary for this Literature Review can be found at:
https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XTZP.pdf

INTRODUCTION

Corporal punishment in schools is a widespread, under-addressed public health and socio-economic issue that affects children’s education, health, and developmental trajectories into adulthood.

Text Box I. What is corporal punishment?

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment Number Eight on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, defined corporal punishment as: “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement. [...] In the view of the Committee, corporal punishment is invariably degrading. In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment that are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.”

The World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health,” highlighted in 2002 that corporal punishment across contexts, “kills thousands of children each year and injures and handicaps many more.”¹ Recent reports also recognize that ending corporal punishment against children in homes and schools in low-income countries is vital for progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.² Economic costs of school dropout as a consequence of corporal punishment are estimated “between \$1.5 billion and \$7.4 billion in lost benefits to society each year, which is equivalent to between 0.13% and 0.64% of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] in India alone.”³ Non-violent, positive, alternative discipline methods in the classroom yield better academic, social, and human development results than physical and degrading punishment.⁴

USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, Learning, Evaluation and Research II Activity (DRG-LER II), Gender-based Violence Learning Agenda commissioned NORC at the University of Chicago in 2019 to review and synthesize evidence about corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries. USAID’s Africa Bureau’s Office of Sustainable Development, Education and Youth Division developed the below core research questions in collaboration with NORC at the University of Chicago.

- What are the extent, nature, and consequences of corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries?

¹ Krug, E.G., Dahlberg, L.L., Mercy, J.A., et al. (2002). World Report on Violence and Health. Available at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en-introduction.pdf.

² (2017). Prohibiting All Corporal Punishment of Children in Africa: An Essential Step toward Fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.

³ Perezniето, P., Harper, C., Clench, B., & Coarasa, J. (2010). *The Economic Impact of School Violence*. London: Plan International & Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear>; cited in Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention,” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.; (2016). Corporal Punishment of Children: Summary of Research on its Impacts and Associations. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.

⁴ Ogando Portela, M. J. & Pells, K. (2015). Corporal Punishment in Schools Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam – Innocenti Discussion Paper 2015-02, Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.

- How is corporal punishment in schools gendered in processes and outcomes in low-income countries?
- Do studies from low-income countries address social norms in upholding or challenging corporal punishment in schools as a widely accepted practice?

METHODOLOGY

Following three main steps to identify, appraise, and synthesize available evidence on preventing and responding to corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries, this review aims to inform future research, programs, and policies. Broad searches of social sciences databases of academic peer-reviewed articles, and published and forthcoming civil society reports, identified publications that were then screened for inclusion eligibility. Inclusion criteria included recent study publications between 2013 and 2019, from low- and lower-middle income countries, that interviewed children directly about corporal, physical, harsh, or violent punishment in schools, or that provided a review of relevant evidence prior to 2013. Social sciences database content providers searched included Academic Search Complete, Complementary Index, Supplemental Index, JSTOR Journals, Directory of Open Access Journals, Openedition.org, Arts and Humanities, Citation Index, and the Teacher Reference Center. Internet searches used Google Scholar, and targeted searches for published reports on websites of relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and advocacy campaigns. E-mail requests to the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence sought relevant internal reports. Over 3,800 academic sources identified were reduced to fewer than 80 after removing duplicates and articles irrelevant to school-based corporal punishment in low-income countries. Some from high-income countries that provide scientific evidence of the effects of physical punishment on child cognitive, social, and biological development were retained given the small number of relevant scientific studies from low-income countries.

A recent review of systematic reviews on preventing school violence found only a small body of rigorous research, with few primary studies in low-income countries.⁵ Studies retained for the review also included those from countries, such as South Africa, which may be considered a middle-income country, but for which most of the population is low-income due to wide and long-standing structural economic inequalities. Studies included were assessed for conceptual clarity on corporal punishment, strength of evidence, transparency in analyses and reporting, and contribution to the knowledge base on prevention. The review considered the extent to which available evidence is methodologically rigorous, relevant, useful, and feasible, and reports clearly about concerned populations, interventions, comparisons and outcomes. Studies that further investigated the influences of the study context, and research or evaluation design provided additional valuable information.

Outcomes relevant to the review were broad and complex, with available data spanning basic and formative research through summative program evaluations. As such, studies with experimental, randomized, and longitudinal designs were prioritized for exploring evidence with indications of causality on what we know about school corporal punishment extent, nature, and consequences for children in low-income countries. Efforts were made to identify scientific evidence of the existence and nature of

⁵ Lester, S., Lawrence, C., Ward, C.L. (2017) "What Do We Know about Preventing School Violence? A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews," *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 187-223, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2017.1282616

harmful versus beneficial effects of corporal punishment, given contentious debates across low-income countries on the merits and harms of corporal punishment. Included study designs produced a diversity of data, with conceptual, definitional, methodological, and statistical differences, and may be grouped broadly into randomized, non-randomized, and qualitative studies. The review treated this heterogeneity of available evidence considering: 1) conceptual appropriateness; 2) usefulness to decision-makers; and 3) the quantity and quality of available evidence. Data were of mixed type, quantitative and qualitative, and widely varied in quality and rigor. Findings were extracted and synthesized from across studies that met the inclusion criteria to answer the research questions.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS INCREASINGLY VIEWED AS A FORM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Growing consensus recognizes corporal punishment as a form of violence against children. Corporal punishment is often one of the first forms of physical and psychological violence that children experience. The United Nations 2006, “World Report on Violence against Children,” sparked a global campaign to eliminate corporal and other humiliating physical, and psychological punishments against children in schools, homes, and communities.⁶ In 2014, a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, “Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children,” described corporal punishment as “the most common form of violence against children.”⁷

Text Box 2. Corporal punishment is illegal in schools in 128 countries

Of the 67 countries where corporal punishment in schools is still legal:

- Thirty-five or more have policies, ministerial orders or similar instruments that prohibit its use in some or all schools.
- Fifty-six or more are undergoing processes of law reform.
- Six are “pathfinding” countries under the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.
- Two have endorsed the #SafetoLearn Call to Action aiming to end school violence by 2024, including prohibiting corporal punishment and promoting positive discipline.¹

Existing reviews of research on the prevalence and outcomes of corporal punishment in any context have repeatedly shown harmful effects and no benefits to the practice.⁸ A 2016 systematic review into the types of perpetrators of violence against children found that children face high risks of violence from teachers and other authority figures.⁹ For example, more than 75% of nine to 16-year old’s interviewed

⁶ Pinheiro, P.S. (2006). World report on violence against children. Geneva: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.unviolencestudy.org/>

⁷ UNICEF. (2014). Hidden in Plain Sight. A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children. New York: UNICEF.

⁸ Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at *Intervention*,” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.; (2016). Corporal Punishment of Children: Summary of Research on its Impacts and Associations. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.

⁹ Devries, K., Knight, L., Petzold, M., Merrill, K. G., Maxwell, L., Williams, A., [...] Abrahams, N. (2018). “Who Perpetrates Violence against Children? A Systematic Analysis of Age-specific and Sex-specific Data.” *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 2(1), e000180. DOI:10.1136/bmjpo-2017-000180

in Uganda’s Violence against Children Survey reported past-year physical violence from a teacher,¹⁰ despite Uganda’s legal ban on corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment has been banned in 128 countries in schools in recognition that it encompasses multiple forms of violence against children.¹¹ Of the 67 countries where corporal punishment is legal in schools, 56 are undergoing processes of legal reform, while more than 35 already have policies, ministerial orders, or rules against its use in some or all schools.¹² While six “pathfinding” countries under the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children remain among countries that have not yet banned corporal punishment in schools, two of the six have endorsed the #SafetoLearn Call to Action to end school violence by 2024, prohibiting corporal punishment, and promoting positive discipline methods.¹³ The number of countries with legal bans against corporal punishment in all contexts has also risen to 58 countries and 16 territories.¹⁴ A further 56 countries are reforming laws to bring about a full legal ban against corporal punishment in all contexts.¹⁵ A 2018 study, “The Global Adoption of National Policies Protecting Children from Violent Discipline in Schools and Homes, 1950-2011,” found that formal prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, to be not only a growing, “global norm,” but also that “the percentage of women in parliament is associated with the adoption of anti-corporal punishment policies in both schools and homes [...]”¹⁶ Despite long-standing, widespread use in schools aimed at controlling student behavior, an alternative consensus continues to grow that corporal punishment constitutes violence against children and an ineffective disciplinary method with long-term negative effects on children’s education, health, and development.

Emerging evidence over the past 15 years shows that many parents, teachers, and children disagree with the use of corporal punishment as a discipline method.¹⁷ In the nationally representative Violence against Children Survey in Honduras, “[e]ndorsement of the necessity of physical violence by teachers was significantly lower among females (5.3%) and males (7.7%) in urban areas.”¹⁸ In Uganda, 2016 baseline results from a cluster randomized controlled trial for NORC at the University of Chicago’s external impact and performance evaluation of the USAID Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA P&IE), found that when asked whether corporal punishment is effective as a disciplinary method

¹⁰ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Violence against Children in Uganda: Findings from a National Survey, 2015. Kampala, Uganda: UNICEF, 2015.

¹¹ Source: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/schools/>

¹² Source: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/schools/>

¹³ Source: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/schools/>

¹⁴ Source: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/schools/>

¹⁵ Source: <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/schools/>

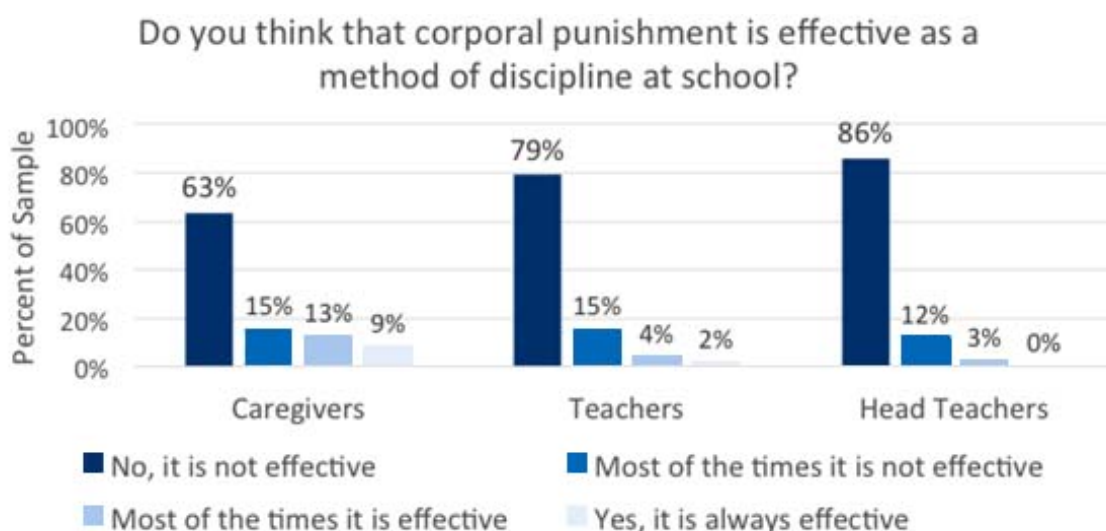
¹⁶ Nyseth Brehm, H. and Boyle, E.H. (2018), “The Global Adoption of National Policies Protecting Children from Violent Discipline in Schools and Homes, 1950–2011.” *Law & Society Rev*, 52: 206-233. doi:10.1111/lasr.12314

¹⁷ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala; Mujenja, F. (2015). Zambians overwhelmingly disapprove of domestic violence and corporal punishment. Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 20. RuralNet Associates Ltd.; Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

¹⁸ Government of Honduras, Sub-Secretariat of Security in Prevention, Secretariat of Security. Honduras Violence Against Children Survey, 2017. Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 2019.

at school, 63% of caregivers, 79% of teachers, and 86% of head teachers interviewed responded, “no, it is not effective.”¹⁹

Figure I. Attitudes toward corporal punishment in Ugandan primary schools²⁰



Focus group discussions with teachers in Uganda in the NORC at the University of Chicago LARA P&IE baseline revealed conflicting views on corporal punishment. While some teachers saw corporal punishment as “necessary” for classroom discipline and expressed frustration at efforts to end the practice, others argued that the practice is ineffective and promoted alternative, positive non-violent methods of discipline:

“I think it would be good to do counseling [with] such students than caning because caning doesn’t change the behavior of the students. It is important to invite the parent and we both do counseling to the child.” – Senior woman teacher, Luganda-dominant area²¹

Following the LARA P&IE baseline, NORC evaluation teams in Uganda, Tanzania, and Ghana²² recognized that varied local understandings of the term, “corporal punishment,” or its translated equivalent, often excluded its most socially accepted form, “caning,” (i.e., hitting a child with a wooden cane, stick or similar object). Subsequently, NORC evaluation teams added survey questions specifically about caning. Results from new survey questions on caning estimated that in Ghana, 57% of teachers interviewed reported they believe caning is an effective way to promote student discipline in primary

¹⁹ Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

²⁰ Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

²¹ Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

²² Ardington, C., and Menendez, A. (2018). Impact Assessment of IDP Foundation, Inc. and Sesame Workshop’s Techniques for Effective Teaching Program in Ghana. NORC at the University of Chicago.

school.²³ In corroboration of teachers' reports, an estimated 51% of students (n=3,846 primary school children in Ghana), agreed that "[b]oys and girls are sometimes afraid to go to school for fear of punishment."²⁴

Figure 2. Attitudes toward caning in Ghana²⁵



Teachers believe that caning is an effective way to promote discipline.



P2 pupils said children are afraid to come to school for fear of punishment.

In contrast to students' reports, only 15% of teachers interviewed agreed that they believed children are afraid to come to school for fear of punishment. Mismatches between students' and teachers' reports in Ghana primary schools point to what emerges in the wider evidence base as persistent gaps between students' and teachers' self-reported experiences and perceptions of student safety, freedom from violence, and freedom from fear of violence at school. Across available studies, students widely report feeling less safe and more afraid of violence at school, along with higher rates of exposure to violence in school, than what teachers report in surveys.

Reasons why some teachers continue to use corporal punishment at school, despite legal bans, policies, or rules against it, include perceived social expectations from caregivers and other teachers that they use physical punishment with students.²⁶ Some teachers view corporal punishment as widely normalized among other teachers and students' caregivers. Other reasons for continued use of corporal punishment may include: lack of awareness that many other teachers and parents privately disagree and disapprove of the practice; lack of scientific knowledge about the harmful effects of corporal punishment on children's education, physical and mental health, and development; and lack of training and skills for alternative, positive, and non-violence disciplinary methods that support children's long-term healthy development.

²³ Ardington, C., and Menendez, A. (2018). Impact Assessment of IDP Foundation, Inc. and Sesame Workshop's Techniques for Effective Teaching Program in Ghana. NORC at the University of Chicago.

²⁴ Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

²⁵ Ardington, C., and Menendez, A. (2018). Impact Assessment of IDP Foundation, Inc. and Sesame Workshop's Techniques for Effective Teaching Program in Ghana. NORC at the University of Chicago.

²⁶ NORC at the University of Chicago (2020). Midterm Impact Evaluation and Final Performance Evaluation Results for USAID Uganda, Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). Washington, DC.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS HIGHLY PREVALENT IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

Corporal punishment in schools is highly prevalent in low-income countries, yet likely widely underestimated.²⁷ Estimates of prevalence of school corporal punishment in countries that have legally banned the practice range from 13% of students in Kazakhstan to 97% of students in Cameroon.²⁸ In a review of data from 63 countries, nine were found to have corporal punishment rates of over 90% of students, and 11 with rates of between 70% and 80%.²⁹ A cross-sectional analysis of data from the Global School-Based Student Health Survey in 2003-2004 in Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe found that survey definitions of physical violence excluded beatings by parents or teachers, acknowledging that, therefore, these studies underestimated the prevalence of children's physical violence exposure in homes and schools.³⁰ Even when surveys ask about type of perpetrator, some children who have experienced school violence may choose not to disclose violence exposure fearing retaliation from school staff, violations of their privacy and confidentiality, social stigma, and a belief that school staff will not help them. Still, while children's under-disclosure in surveys of exposure to violence in homes and schools likely lead to underestimates, data from administrative sources alone, such as medical and police reports, are inadequate for estimating population-based prevalence. Surveys with self-reported responses to quantitative measures asking about psychological, physical, sexual, and economic violence exposure lead to higher disclosure rates than those captured through routine administrative education, health or justice sector data.

“Self-reports are now considered an essential measurement tool and will be foundational for informing new investment opportunities associated with the SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] aims to end violence against children.”³¹

Results from nationally representative Violence against Children Surveys (VACS) reveal high prevalence of physical violence against children by teachers. In Tanzania, a “pathfinder” country of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children³², yet also a country where corporal punishment in schools remains legal to date, more than one-half of young women and men interviewed ages 13 to 24

²⁷ Morrow, V., Singh, R. (2014). *Corporal Punishment in Schools in Andhra Pradesh, India: Children's and Parents' Views*. Oxford: Young Lives.; Parkes, J., & Heslop, J. (2013). Stop Violence against Girls in School: A Cross-country Analysis of Change in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique. Washington, DC: ActionAid International. Retrieved from http://www.actionaidusa.org/sites/files/actionaid/svags_review_final.pdf; cited in Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention.” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

²⁸ Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention,” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

²⁹ Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention,” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

³⁰ Brown, D., Riley, L., Butchart, A., Meddints, D.R., Kann, L., Phinney Harvey, A. (2016). “Exposure to Physical and Sexual Violence and Adverse Health Behaviours in African Children: Results from the Global School-based Student Health Survey.” *Bull World Health Organ* 2009;87:447–455. DOI:10.2471/BLT.07.047423

³¹ Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates. *Pediatrics*. 2016;137(3):e20154079.

³² See <https://www.end-violence.org/impact/countries/tanzania>, last accessed December 17, 2019.

reported experiencing physical violence from school teachers prior to age 18.³³ In this same study, a large majority of 13 to 17-year-olds (eight out of ten girls and seven out of ten boys) reported that a teacher had punched, kicked, or whipped them more than five times before age 18 years.³⁴ It is unclear whether punches, kicks, or whipping were operationally defined in survey measures or experienced by respondents as part of an intention to discipline or punish a child at school. Yet, these reports from children about teacher-perpetrated violence in the school context remain relevant, concerning, and fall within the definition of corporal punishment as encompassing forms of violence against children. In fact, reports from other nationally representative VACS efforts suggest that most children perceive experiences of physical violence from an adult at home or school as intended discipline or punishment. For example, in the Haiti VACS, “[n]inety percent of females and 85.7% of males aged 13-17 years perceived that their most recent experience of physical violence by an adult household member or authority figure [including teachers] in the past 12 months was intended as disciplinary action or punishment.”³⁵ Also among results of the Haiti national Violence against Children Study, 90% of girls and 95% of boys interviewed reported experiencing physical violence by teachers.³⁶

In Kenya, boys interviewed in the also nationally representative VACS reported teachers as the most common type of perpetrator of physical violence by an authority figure.³⁷ Among young people interviewed in Kenya who reported being punched, kicked, whipped, or beaten with an object by an authority figure before age 18 years, “teachers accounted for 99% of perpetrators reported by females and 96% of perpetrators mentioned by males.”³⁸ Children participating in the VACS in Zimbabwe also reported that among authority figures, the primary perpetrators of physical violence against children were teachers.³⁹ In Cambodia, “[t]eachers were the most common perpetrators of physical violence outside of home settings among females and males ages 13 to 17 and 18 to 24 [years], with male

³³ Violence against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey, 2009. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioural Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: UNICEF Tanzania, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, 2011.

³⁴ Violence against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey, 2009. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioural Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: UNICEF Tanzania, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, 2011.

³⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development, Comité de Coordination. Violence against Children in Haiti: Findings from a National Survey, 2012. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014.

³⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development, Comité de Coordination. Violence against Children in Haiti: Findings from a National Survey, 2012. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014.

³⁷ Violence against Children in Kenya: Findings from a 2010 National Survey. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioral Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Children’s Fund Kenya Country Office, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2012.

³⁸ Violence against Children in Kenya: Findings from a 2010 National Survey. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioral Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Children’s Fund Kenya Country Office, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2012.

³⁹ Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Collaborating Centre for Operational Research and Evaluation (CCORE), 2013. National Baseline Survey on Life Experiences of Adolescents, 2011.

teachers more likely to be cited than female teachers across all groups.”⁴⁰ In Uganda, girls and boys ages 13 to 17 who participated in the national VACS reported teachers as the most common perpetrator of physical abuse by an adult in their community, despite Uganda’s legal ban against violent punishment of children.⁴¹ Whether identified through survey response options as a type of “authority figure” or “adult in their [child respondents] community,” teachers emerge repeatedly across survey results to date as the most common type of perpetrator of physical violence against children outside the home context. Children cite corporal punishment as a critical reason why many dislike or leave school.⁴²

Corporal punishment affects students disproportionately who are younger, girls, food insecure, refugees, disabled, HIV positive, or other stigmatized groups. Boys and girls in early childhood, adolescent girls, students navigating mental health challenges, those with functional impairments and disabilities, those from lower socio-economic status households, and refugee children face higher rates of corporal punishment in schools. Students who most need a voice, agency, and protection in school, enjoy the least. The Young Lives longitudinal study found corporal punishment in schools in Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam to be highly prevalent despite legal prohibition, with the “incidence of corporal punishment at age eight more than double the rate reported by 15-year olds in all four countries.”⁴³ Among children aged eight, “over half in Peru and Vietnam, three-quarters in Ethiopia and over nine in ten in India reported witnessing a teacher punishing another student physically in the past week.”⁴⁴ Another study described how corporal punishment in schools was viewed as appropriate for young children, but not for older adolescents and young women.⁴⁵ Girls have been found to be at higher risk than boys of psychologically humiliating treatment as a form of corporal punishment, and of sexual exploitation and abuse at school, at times in exchange for being spared corporal punishment.⁴⁶ Corporal punishment in schools against girls can compound risks of negative effects on education, physical and mental health, cognitive development, and other developmental outcomes⁴⁷, as many girls face multiple, overlapping

⁴⁰ Ministry of Women’s Affairs, UNICEF Cambodia, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Findings from Cambodia’s Violence Against Children Survey 2013. Cambodia: Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2014.

⁴¹ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Violence against Children in Uganda: Findings from a National Survey, 2015. Kampala, Uganda: UNICEF, 2015.

⁴² Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF Office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>

⁴³ Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF Office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>

⁴⁴ Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF Office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>

⁴⁵ Morrow, V., & Singh, R. (2014). Corporal Punishment in Schools in Andhra Pradesh, India: Children’s and Parents’ views. Oxford: Young Lives. Cited in Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

⁴⁶ Nyyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC. Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>; See also: Ngakane, M.V., Muthukrishna, N., & Ngcobo, J.E. (2012). “Experiencing Violence in Schools: Voices of Learners in the Lesotho Context.” *The Anthropologist*. 14(1), 39-48.

⁴⁷ Devries, K.M., Child, J.C., Allen, E., Walakira, E., Parkes, J., Naker, D. (2014). “School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda.” *Pediatrics* 2014; 133; e129; originally published online December 2, 2013; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2013-2007.

forms—psychological, physical, and disproportionately sexual—of violence in childhood. For example, in the Haiti VACS, researchers found that experiences of sexual, physical, and emotional violence before age 18 overlapped for one-third of females and one in four males aged 13 to 24 years.⁴⁸ Experiencing multiple forms of violence in childhood in turn increases girls’ risks of intimate partner violence exposure and its negative health and socio-economic effects as adult women.⁴⁹

Baseline results from a cluster randomized controlled trial in Pakistan found also that food insecure and lower socio-economic status children faced more corporal punishment in school and from parents.⁵⁰ Further, refugee and returnee children in Angola, South Africa, and Zambia have reported feeling singled out for corporal punishment at school due to their status as displaced children.⁵¹ Additionally, the Good Schools Study in Uganda critically found that 84% of students with a disability reported physical violence from school staff compared to 53% of control group students with no functional impairments.⁵² A secondary analysis of baseline data from the Good Schools Study also found that disabled girl students reported higher rates of physical violence (99.1% versus 94.6%, $p=0.010$), and yet higher rates of sexual violence (23.6% versus 12.3%, $p=0.002$) than girls with no reported functional impairments.⁵³ The NORC at the University of Chicago LARA impact evaluation baseline in Uganda also found that learner functional impairment status was associated with exposure to psychological, physical, and sexual violence in the school context.⁵⁴ Further, studies in South Africa and Malawi found that children who reported exposure to harsh discipline also showed poorer academic progress. “For children HIV positive a detrimental effect of harsh physical discipline was found on school performance (Odds Ratio 0.10; 95% Confidence Interval 0.02 to 0.61).”⁵⁵

CHILDREN’S PERCEPTIONS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Children’s and adults’ qualitative narratives about corporal punishment deepen interpretation of survey data and understanding of the contexts of violence against children.

⁴⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development, Comité de Coordination. *Violence against Children in Haiti: Findings from a National Survey, 2012*. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014.

⁴⁹ Guedes, A., Bott, S., Garcia-Moreno, C., Colombini, M. (2016). “Bridging the Gaps: A Global Review of Intersections of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children.” *Global Health Action*. 2016;9:10.3402/gha.v9.31516. DOI: 10.3402/gha.v9.31516.

⁵⁰ Khuwaja, H.M.A., Karmaliani, R., McFarlane, J., Somani, R., Gulzar, S., Ali, T.S., Premani, Z.S., Chirwa, E.D., Jewkes, R. (2018). “The Intersection of School Corporal Punishment and Associated Factors: Baseline Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Pakistan.” *PLoS ONE*. 10/24/2018, Vol. 13 Issue 10, p1-14; Reena Cheruvalath & Medha Tripathi. 2015. “Secondary School Teachers’ Perception of Corporal Punishment: A Case Study in India,” *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 88:4, 127-132, DOI: 10.1080/00098655.2015.1045821

⁵¹ UNHCR (2005). *Refugee and Returnee Children in Southern Africa: Perceptions and Experiences of Violence – A Qualitative Study of Refugees and Returnee Children in UNHCR Operations in Angola, South Africa and Zambia*. Pretoria, UNHCR.

⁵² Devries, K.M., Kuper, H., Knight, L., Allen, E., Kyegombe, N., Morgon Banks, L., Kelly, S., Naker, D. (2018). “Reducing Physical Violence Toward Primary School Students with Disabilities.” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 62 (2018) 303-310.

⁵³ Devries, K.M., Kyegombe, N., Zuurmond, M., Parkes, J., Child, J.C., Walakira, E. J., Naker, D. (2014). “Violence Against Primary School Children with Disabilities in Uganda: A Cross-sectional Study.” *BMC Public Health* 14:1017. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/14/1017>.

⁵⁴ Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). *Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA)*. NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

⁵⁵ Sherr L, Hensels IS, Skeen S. (2016). “Exposure to Violence Predicts Poor Educational Outcomes in Young Children in South Africa and Malawi.” *International Health*; 8:36–43.

All children have a human right to express themselves and to be heard about matters that affect their education, safety, health, development, and future. Listening to how children feel about corporal punishment through research makes it clear that physically and psychologically violent punishment harms them emotionally, socially, cognitively, academically, and physically.⁵⁶ Yet, few studies report on children’s qualitative accounts of their experiences of violence in schools in low-income countries—in their own words. The NORC at the University of Chicago LARA P&IE explored students’, caregivers’, and teachers’ views on corporal punishment as a form of school-related gender-based violence. Students expressed both that corporal punishment seemed “normal” and “inevitable,” yet also that it left students feeling afraid and sad, and negatively affected students’ academic performance:

“When you do a paper and the teacher promises to beat the number of canes equal to the numbers that you have failed, you feel so afraid.” Girl learner, Runyankore/Rukiga-dominant area

“When the teacher gives you any work and he is supposed to beat you when you fail, you feel afraid.” Girl learner, Runyankore/Rukiga-dominant area

“While in class, a teacher can beat up some learner so badly and the other learners start feeling so sad. At that moment, whatever the teacher is teaching, they don’t care because the teacher has caned the child more than he should have. So that causes learners to be sad. They even become bored in that lesson.” Boy learner, Runyankore/Rukiga-dominant area

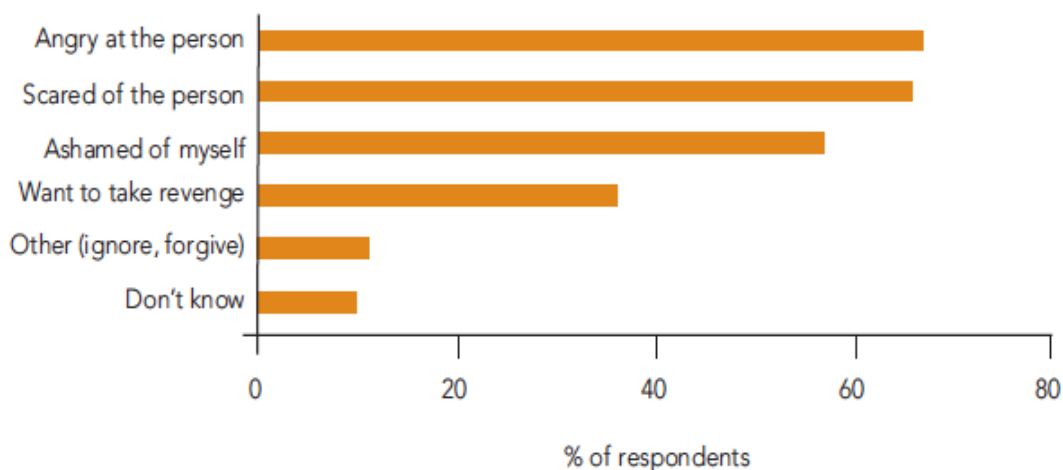
The NORC at the University of Chicago LARA Performance and Impact Evaluation and the Good Schools Study of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have been rare in that these evaluations triangulate qualitatively and quantitatively students’, teachers’, and other school staffs’ views on: How they conceptualize violence against children; the types and frequency of violence teachers perpetrate against students; how teachers understand discipline versus punishment; how students perceive and experience psychologically and physically violent punishment; and how corporal punishment affects students’ academic performance.

A 2007 study from Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda explored both quantitative prevalence and qualitative narratives of children’s experiences of violence and adults’ rationales for and perpetration of violence against children at home and in school.⁵⁷ Interviewing 1,406 children and 1,093 adults from five districts in Uganda, the study included questionnaires, focus group discussions, narrative role plays, key informant interviews, and journal writing.

⁵⁶ Naker, D. (2005). *Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults*. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.; Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). *Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA)*. NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.; 34.; Kyegombe, N., S. Namakula, J. Mulindwa, J. Lwanyaaga, D. Naker, S. Namy, J. Nakuti, J. Parkes, L. Knight, E. Walakira, K.M. Devries. (2017). “How Did the Good School Toolkit Reduce the Risk of Past Week Physical Violence from Teachers to Students? Qualitative Findings on Pathways of Change in Schools in Luwero, Uganda.” *Social Science and Medicine*. 180 (2017) 10-19.

⁵⁷ Naker, D. (2005). *Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults*. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

Figure 3. Types of feelings Ugandan children have when experiencing physical violence (n=50 girls and 50 boys)



In the 2007 Raising Voices and Save the Children study, child respondents shared accounts of violence at home and in school, naming older students and teachers as the most frequent perpetrators in the school context. The study found that older boys were more likely to report having experienced physical violence, while older girls were more likely to report having experienced sexual violence.

“You can’t escape it. From when you are born to when you are grown-up, they beat you, shout at you, insult you, and do what they like to control you. I don’t know why it has to be like that.” 16-year-old boy, Apac district.

“He [the headmaster] said every teacher will have to beat each one of us with three strokes. There were more than 20 teachers there. I could see that some were not happy but what could they do. They all beat us and I lost count how many strokes rained on me. All I remember is that I could hardly walk for two days afterwards. The headmaster, at the end of it, turned to all the students and said, “This is what happens to students who break our rules.” 17-year-old boy (district withheld to protect child’s identity)

Children explained that experiences of violence at home and in school reduced their trust in adults. They also expressed feeling not only humiliation, anger, and fear of the adult who used violence against them, often a teacher, but also thoughts of revenge and suicide.

“Teachers call students’ buttocks ‘government meat.’” 12-year-old boy, Wakiso

“If they come to bury me, at least they will have to ask why I had to die.” 14-year-old girl, Nakapiripirit

“I feel threatened and feel like I am in jail not school.” 18-year-old boy, Wakiso

“I feel like going to hang myself.” 16-year-old girl, Nakapiripirit

“I feel like dying and joining my late parents.” 14-year-old boy, Iganga

Children also expressed that they felt no one would assist them if they sought help, and that adults routinely disbelieved them and belittled their emotional reactions to violence. Children’s narratives of

school staff-perpetrated violence in schools show their sense of having no control over it, and that teachers, who are adults in positions of authority, abuse their power with impunity. Children voiced that they want and need solutions to violence at home and in school, proposing engaging adults across their community in, “dialogue about how to relate more equitably with children,” and creating, “local response mechanisms that would meet the needs of children when violence was perpetrated against them.”⁵⁸

“Take photos of bad acts that happen to children and those who do them to the children and advise children how to avoid falling victims of such acts. Take them round in different schools to make children aware that those acts are wrong and should not be done to them.” 13-year-old girl, Wakiso

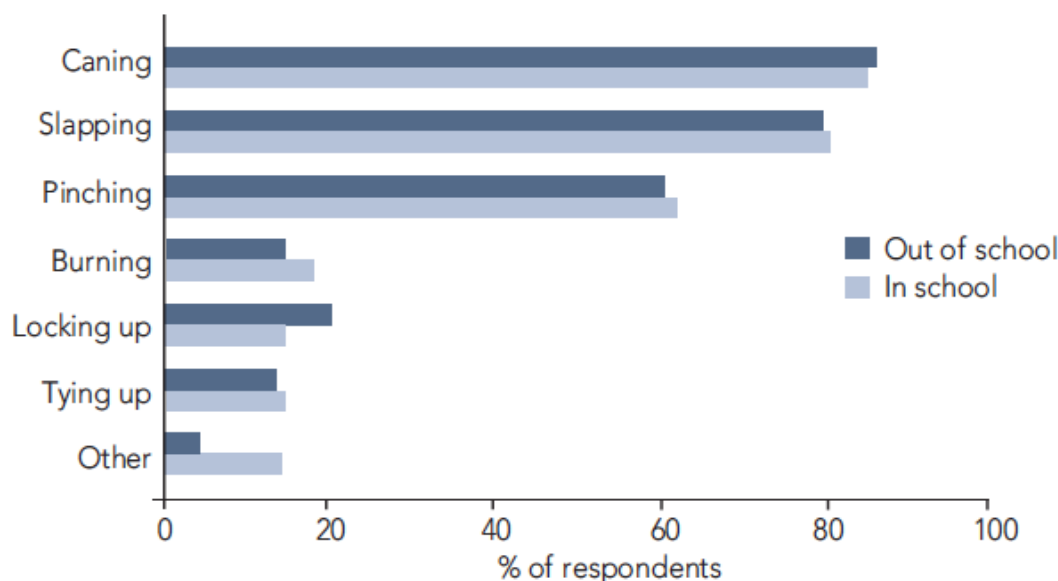
“Teachers should treat all children in school equally and stop hurting and punishing some particular children all the time, because we are all people.” 15-year-old boy, Nakapiripirit

“Teachers should guide students and show them their mistakes without beating.” 8-year-old girl, Iganga

“I feel like the community should gather all adults and teach them to stop beating children.” 8-year-old girl, Apac

The study reported further that although many teachers participating, “repeated the ‘official’ policy” that they do not beat children, 60.4% of in-school children reported routinely being beaten and humiliated.⁵⁹

Figure 4. Types of physical violence experienced by in and out of school children in Uganda⁶⁰



⁵⁸ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

⁵⁹ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

⁶⁰ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

Adult respondents in the Raising Voices and Save the Children study in Uganda acknowledged in their interviews having committed specific acts that constitute violence against children, such as beating, shouting, and denying food or basic needs, yet they framed these acts as “punishment,” that adults use “to guide children.”⁶¹

Figure 5. Persons who commit violence against children at school in Uganda, by sex of respondents⁶²

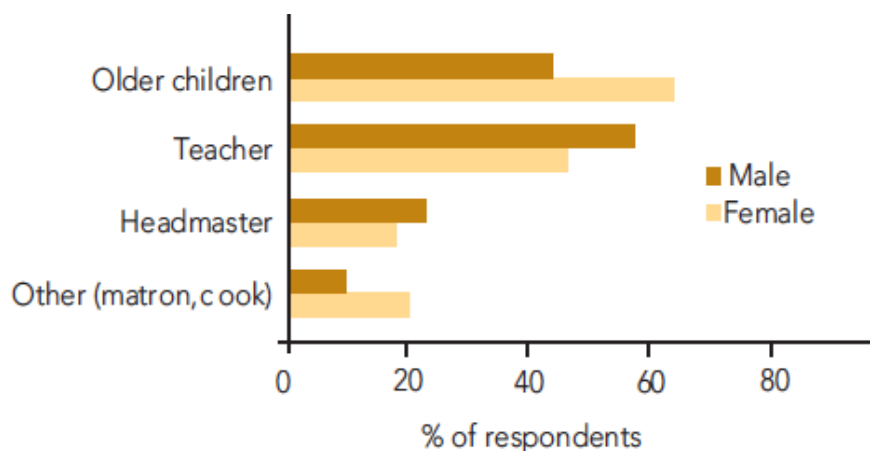
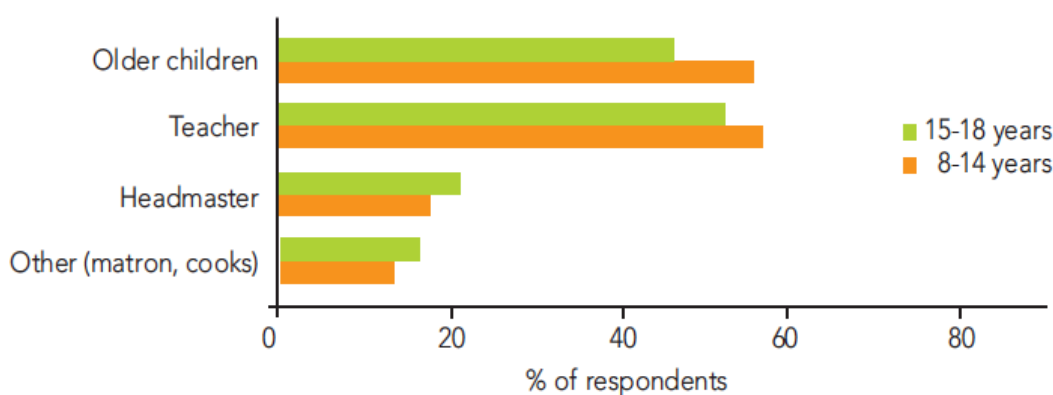


Figure 6. Persons who commit violence against children at school, by age of respondents⁶³



Parents and teachers in the Raising Voices and Save the Children Uganda study expressed views on physical punishment that contrast starkly with those of children. Adult respondents voiced disapproval for holding other adults to account for acts of violence against children, and resentment about discourses of children’s rights and prohibition of corporal punishment. Adults in the study added that

⁶¹ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

⁶² Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

⁶³ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

they believed holding other adults to account for corporal punishment “cultivated uncontrollable behavior in children,” and “prevented them from discharging their duty as adults.”⁶⁴

“Every child needs punishment to grow. Yes, I beat. The harder you beat, the better he will learn what you are teaching.” Female, teacher, Nakapiririt

“Physical pain is a good teacher. It burns lessons in your head in a way that soft-soft words never can. I make sure the child feels the pain when I slap him.” Male, teacher, Wakiso

“If I want to punish him quietly, I press his finger near the nails really tight.” Female, teacher, Apac

“If I walk into a class, they know that I have to be able to hear a pin drop. If not, they know what will happen.” Male, teacher, Iganga

“I insult them publicly, and then if they continue, I administer several strokes.” Male, teacher, Apac

Thematic analysis of adults’, including teachers’, narratives in the Raising Voices and Save the Children Uganda study identified key beliefs, values and practices that underpin and perpetuate violence against children in homes and schools:

- “Adults have a different understanding of violence compared to children.”
- “Adults under-report and discount violence against children.”
- “Adults are aspiring to create compliant children.”
- “Adults believe in a hierarchy of violence.”
- “Adults claim jurisdiction over children.”
- “Adults feel conflicted regarding the efficacy of violence.”
- “Adults are not a monolithic group with homogeneous views.”
- “There exists a disjuncture between declared intention and practice.”

Study findings illustrate that many adults, including teachers, in home and school contexts, hold contradictory beliefs, attitudes and practices concerning violence against children, and struggle to clearly delineate what constitutes acceptable “discipline” or “punishment,” versus what is defined as and what children experience as violence. Adults in the study commonly voiced the view, “If not beating then what?” Many need support, training and mentoring to create and sustain new alternative visions, beliefs, values, and practices for positive, non-violent discipline of children at home and in school.

⁶⁴ Naker, D. (2005). Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

Nationally representative Violence against Children studies in Haiti⁶⁵ and Cambodia⁶⁶ also used qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires, providing further insights into corporal punishment as a form of violence against children in homes and schools in low-income countries. The Haiti Violence against Children qualitative study in particular describes contexts of violence characterized by abuse of power in positions of authority:

“Authority figures have a high measure of influence over children, which may be misused in an abusive manner. Authority figures were identified as parents and older relatives, teachers, political and religious figures, or those with money or power over others; the ability to inflict punishment was an important marker of authority.”⁶⁷

Findings from qualitative research conducted to contextualize statistical results of the Cambodia VACS found that children’s psychological and emotional responses to experiencing violence were:

“[...] universally negative. Children indicated that while some violence elicits feelings of shame and embarrassment, other instances of violence provoke suicidal tendencies. Within this range of adverse effects, many children reported that behavior could be affected by an inability to study, feelings of unhappiness, not wanting to go to/stay at the place the violence occurred, and avoidance of those who perpetrated the violence.”⁶⁸

A study of the impacts of school violence on girls’ education in Nigeria argued that “the main driver of violence in schools is a general cycle of violence in the broader society that is reflected in school environments.”⁶⁹ Qualitative results from this study in Nigeria corroborate findings from numerous other studies that corporal punishment as a form of physical violence is both the most reported and most widely normalized form of violence against children in schools and homes.⁷⁰

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS IS GENDERED

Corporal and harsh physical punishment encompasses widely normalized forms of school-related gender-based violence. Growing consensus that corporal punishment constitutes violence against children increasingly also recognizes corporal punishment as concerning gendered forms of violence against children. A global review of policy and programs to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence highlighted that corporal punishment, bullying and sexual violence each, “have

⁶⁵ Violence against Children Survey (VACS) Haiti: Focus Groups to Inform VACS Haiti. Report for the Comité de Coordination. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development, 2011.

⁶⁶ Ministry of Women’s Affairs, UNICEF Cambodia, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Findings from Cambodia’s Violence Against Children Survey 2013. Cambodia: Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2014.

⁶⁷ (2011). Violence against Children Survey (VACS) Haiti: Focus Groups to Inform VACS Haiti. Report for the Comité de Coordination. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Women’s Affairs, UNICEF Cambodia, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Findings from Cambodia’s Violence Against Children Survey 2013. Cambodia: Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2014.

⁶⁹ (2019). Research on the Impact of Violence in School on Girls’ Education in Nigeria: A Mixed-Methods Study under the UNICEF/Nigeria Girls’ Education Programme, Phase 3. Research Report. FHI360, UNICEF and UKAID.

⁷⁰ (2019). Research on the Impact of Violence in School on Girls’ Education in Nigeria: A Mixed-Methods Study under the UNICEF/Nigeria Girls’ Education Programme, Phase 3. Research Report. FHI360, UNICEF and UKAID.

their roots in inequitable gender relations. Indeed, it can be argued that the three types of violence are inter-related and difficult to isolate both conceptually and practically.”⁷¹

In contrast to often-repeated teacher intentions of student ‘discipline’ in using corporal punishment in school, existing evidence reveals gendered inequitable power relations in schools as institutions, the negative effects of corporal punishment, and its different effects on girls’, boys’, and gender-non-conforming children’s education, physical and mental health, and development.

Text Box 3. What is school-related gender-based violence?

Acts or threats of physical, sexual, or psychological violence or abuse that are based on gendered stereotypes or that target students on the basis of their sex, sexuality, or gender identities. School-related gender-based violence reinforces gender roles and perpetuates gender inequalities. It includes rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying, and other forms of non-sexual intimidation or abuse such as verbal harassment or exploitative labor in schools. Unequal power relations between adults and children and males and females contribute to this violence, which can take place in formal and non-formal schools, on school grounds, going to and from school, in school dormitories, in cyberspace, or through cell phone technology. School-related gender-based violence may be perpetrated by teachers, students, or community members. Both girls and boys can be victims, as well as perpetrators.”

Source: USAID (2018). [Education Policy](#).

Corporal punishment is gendered—its risk and protective factors, processes, and outcomes affect girls, boys, and gender non-conforming children differently across diverse populations and contexts. Teachers and other school staff often use different types or levels of severity of corporal and degrading punishments with girls versus boys, communicating adults’ expectations for gendered and inequitable behaviors demonstrating girls’ and gender non-conforming children’s lesser normative status and value in a given society.⁷² In the Uganda VACS, “[a]mong girls and boys who experienced physical violence by an adult in the community in the past 12 months, about 72.9% of girls and 76.9% of boys experienced the most recent incident by male teachers while 21.0% of girls and 13.6% of boys experienced the most recent incident by female teachers.”⁷³ Corporal punishment (re)produces inequitable gender norms in schools, homes and communities, and contributes to perpetuating structural gender inequality through

⁷¹ Leach, F., Dunne, M., Salvi, F. (2014). A Global Review of Current Issues and Approaches in Policy, Programming and Implementation Responses to School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV) for the Education Sector. Background Research Paper Prepared for UNESCO.

⁷² Pinheiro, P. S. (2006). World Report on Violence against Children. Geneva: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.unviolencestudy.org/>

⁷³ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Violence against Children in Uganda: Findings from a National Survey, 2015. Kampala, Uganda: UNICEF, 2015.

its associations with: school dropout; low educational attainment; negative mental and physical health; and child development, affecting girls often disproportionately⁷⁴.

Gendered attitudes, beliefs, and norms underpinning corporal punishment at school differ across contexts and change over time. Where boys may be beaten more frequently or severely than girls, corporal punishment may be based on normative expectations of hyper-masculinity and stoicism in the face of pain.⁷⁵ While boys in some normative contexts may be more harshly disciplined than girls, across low-income countries more girls than boys report exposure to corporal punishment in available nationally representative survey data, possibly indicating boys' reluctance to report what they are often socially expected to endure in silence.⁷⁶ Available relevant data from nationally representative VACS results in Cambodia,⁷⁷ Haiti,⁷⁸ Tanzania,⁷⁹ and Zambia,⁸⁰ show similar patterns that young people ages 13 to 24 report higher perpetration of physical violence against them by men teachers than women teachers. For example, in Tanzania 46.2% of boy students surveyed reported experiencing physical violence by only men teachers, while only 5.8% reported physical violence by only women teachers.⁸¹ In Nigeria, both girls and boys ages 13 to 17 were more likely to report men teachers as having perpetrated the most recent incident of physical violence by an adult in their neighborhood (69.2%, 95% CI: 61.3 – 77.1 for girls, and 64.5%, 95% CI: 57.2 – 71.8 for boys).⁸² In Uganda in the Good Schools

⁷⁴ Devries, K.M., Child, J.C., Allen, E., Walakira, E., Parkes, J., and Naker, D. (2013). "School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda." *Pediatrics*. 2014;133:e129. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2013-2007 originally published online December 2, 2013.; See also: Pinheiro, P. S. (2006). *World Report on Violence against Children*. Geneva: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.unviolencestudy.org/>; Gershoff, E.T. (2017). "School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention". *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

⁷⁵ Khuwaja, H.M.A., Karmaliani, R., McFarlane, J., Somani, R., Gulzar, S., Ali, T.S., Premani, Z.S., Chirwa, E.D., Jewkes, R. (2018). "The Intersection of School Corporal Punishment and Associated Factors: Baseline Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Pakistan." *PLoS ONE*. 10/24/2018, Vol. 13 Issue 10, p1-14. 14p.; Cheruvalath, R., Tripathi, M. (2015). "Secondary School Teachers' Perception of Corporal Punishment: A Case Study in India." *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 88:4, 127-132, DOI: 10.1080/00098655.2015.1045821

⁷⁶ See "Violence Against Children Surveys" reports from fourteen countries at: <https://www.togetherforgirls.org/violence-children-surveys/>. See also: Chiang, L.F., Kress, H., Sumner S.A., et al (2016). "Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS): Towards a Global Surveillance System." *Injury Prevention* 2016; 22:i17-i22.

⁷⁷ Ministry of Women's Affairs, UNICEF Cambodia, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey 2013*. Cambodia: Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2014.

⁷⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development, Comité de Coordination. *Violence against Children in Haiti: Findings from a National Survey, 2012*. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014.

⁷⁹ *Violence against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey, 2009. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioural Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: UNICEF Tanzania, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, 2011.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, University of Zambia, United Nations Children's Fund, Save the Children International, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Violence against Children in Zambia: Findings from a National Survey, 2014*, Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development, Lusaka, 2018.

⁸¹ *Violence against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey, 2009. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioural Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: UNICEF Tanzania, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, 2011.

⁸² National Population Commission of Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Violence Against Children in Nigeria: Findings from a National Survey, 2014*. Abuja, Nigeria: UNICEF, 2016.

Study, students that reported higher rates of experienced corporal punishment also reported more exposure to other forms of violence, including sexual violence against girls.⁸³ In Tanzania, roughly one in ten females who reported experiencing childhood sexual violence in the nationally representative VACS, said that a teacher perpetrated the violence.⁸⁴ Girls have reported further how some teachers used threats and acts of corporal punishment and low marks to intimidate and coerce them into keeping quiet about sexual exploitation and abuse.⁸⁵

The gendered nature and consequences of violent physical and psychological forms of punishment extend into adulthood. A report analyzing data from 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, from interviews with over 180,000 women, found an association that the proportions of women who reported experiencing intimate partner violence were often twice as high for those who had also reported experiencing physical punishment in childhood.⁸⁶ The International Men and Gender Equality Surveys—with adult men in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico and Rwanda totaling over 8000 interviewed—found that those who reported experiences of physical violence in childhood, including corporal punishment, also reported more: Intimate partner violence perpetration; gender inequitable attitudes; involvement with physical violence outside the home; paying for sex; low-self-esteem; and depression.⁸⁷ Gender and age become vital variables for better understanding corporal punishment in schools as a form of school-related gender-based violence that negatively affects education, health, and child development in the transition to adulthood.

EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Scientific evidence from existing rigorous studies reveals exclusively negative effects of corporal punishment on child education, health, and developmental outcomes into adulthood. A broad range of harmful biomedical and developmental outcomes are associated with corporal punishment in childhood: Injuries and mortality; behavioral dysregulation; impaired cognitive development; among other poor

⁸³ Clarke K., Patalay P., Allen E., Knight, L., Naker, D., Devries, K.M. (2016). Patterns and Predictors of Violence Against Children in Uganda: A Latent Class Analysis. *BMJ Open*. 2016;6:e010443. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010443.

⁸⁴ Violence against Children in Tanzania: Findings from a National Survey, 2009. Summary Report on the Prevalence of Sexual, Physical and Emotional Violence, Context of Sexual Violence, and Health and Behavioural Consequences of Violence Experienced in Childhood. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: UNICEF Tanzania, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, 2011.

⁸⁵ Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

⁸⁶ Bott, S., Guedes A, Goodwin M, Adams Mendoza J. (2012). Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Comparative Analysis of Population-based Data from 12 Countries, Washington DC: Pan American Health Organisation & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁸⁷ Contreras, M. et al (2012), Bridges to Adulthood: Understanding the Lifelong Influence of Men's Childhood Experiences of Violence, Analyzing Data from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey, Washington DC: International Center for Research on Women & Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo.

mental and physical health effects.⁸⁸ Childhood exposure to harsh physical punishment also increases a child's odds of exposure to and re-victimization by overlapping emotional, sexual, physical abuse, and neglect,⁸⁹ particularly for girls. Studies from high-income countries have repeatedly shown negative effects of corporal punishment on mental health, cognitive development, and socio-emotional functioning—all of which are necessary for success in education and development into a healthy and productive adulthood. While there are limited scientific studies to date from low-income countries, available evidence corroborates these findings.

A review of the outcomes of school corporal punishment across low- and high-income countries show high rates of physical injuries from the practice:

“School children in Zambia reported pain, physical discomfort, nausea, and embarrassment as well as feeling vengeful (Clacherty et al., 2005a). In Egypt, 26% of boys and 18% of girls reported that they had been injured by school corporal punishment, including bumps, contusions, wounds, and fractures (Youssef et al., 1998). A remarkably similar rate of injury was found in the United Republic of Tanzania, where nearly a quarter of the 408 primary school children surveyed said they experienced corporal punishment so severe that they were injured (Hecker, Hermenau, Isele, & Elbert, 2014).”⁹⁰

A study in Tanzania found links between corporal punishment and “externalizing behaviors,” including poor emotional regulation and behavioral problems.⁹¹ This same study in Tanzania also found that harsh disciplinary methods, while culturally normative and highly prevalent, “closely linked to children’s internalizing mental health problems, which are in turn associated with lower cognitive functioning and school performance.”⁹² In the Nigeria Violence Against Children Study, young women ages 18 to 24 years of age who experienced physical or sexual violence in childhood were found to be, “significantly more likely to have ever had symptoms or diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) than those who did not experience sexual abuse or physical violence in childhood.”⁹³ Also from the Nigeria Violence Against Children Study, girls ages 13 to 17 years of age exposed to physical or sexual violence

⁸⁸ Hecker, T., Hermenau, K., Salmen, C., Teicher, M., Elbert, T. (2016). „Harsh Discipline Relates to Internalizing Problems and Cognitive Functioning: Findings from a Cross-sectional Study with School Children in Tanzania.” *BMC Psychiatry*. 16: 118.; Hecker T., Hermenau K., Isele D., Elbert T. (2014). „Corporal Punishment and Children’s Externalizing Problems: A Cross-Sectional Study of Tanzanian Primary School Aged Children.” *Child Abuse Negl.* 2013;38(5):884–892pmid:24360761; Gershoff, E.T. (2017) “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention.” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.; Gershoff, E.T. (2008). Report on Physical Punishment in the United States: What Research Tells us about its Effects on Children. Columbus, Ohio: Center for Effective Discipline. Gershoff, E. T. & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). “Spanking and Child Outcomes: Old Controversies and New Meta-Analyses.” *Journal of Family Psychology*, advance online publication, 7 April 2016.;

⁸⁹ Affifi, Tracie O, Natalie Mota, Jitender Sareen and Harriet L. MacMillan. 2017. “The Relationships Between Harsh Physical Punishment and Child Maltreatment in Childhood and Intimate Partner Violence in Adulthood.” *BMC Public Health* 17:493. DOI 10.1186/s12889-017-4359-8.

⁹⁰ Gershoff, E.T. (2017) “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention.” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

⁹¹ Hecker T., Hermenau K., Isele D., Elbert T. (2014). “Corporal Punishment and Children’s Externalizing Problems: A Cross-Sectional Study of Tanzanian Primary School Aged Children.” *Child Abuse Negl.* 2013;38(5):884–892pmid:24360761.

⁹² Hecker, T., Hermenau, K., Salmen, C., Teicher, M., Elbert, T. (2016). “Harsh Discipline Relates to Internalizing Problems and Cognitive Functioning: Findings from a Cross-sectional Study with School Children in Tanzania.” *BMC Psychiatry*. 16: 118.

⁹³ National Population Commission of Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Violence Against Children in Nigeria: Findings from a National Survey, 2014. Abuja, Nigeria: UNICEF, 2016.

in the past 12 months were, “significantly more likely to have ever intentionally hurt themselves than those who did not experience sexual abuse or physical violence in childhood.”⁹⁴

The harmful consequences of corporal punishment for children’s education, health, and development span all spheres of a child’s life. Researchers argue that corporal punishment should be approached in research and program evaluation across the “home-school continuum”⁹⁵ recognizing the multiple sites of violence exposure and its effects on child health, education, and development. Violent physical punishment or, “harsh discipline,” experienced at home or at school can result in poor academic performance and attendance, and result in school dropout.⁹⁶ The Young Lives multi-country longitudinal study in Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam found corporal punishment exposure in early childhood to predict poorer exam scores at age eight, while exposure in early adolescence is negatively associated with exam scores in later adolescence.⁹⁷ In the Good Schools Study in Uganda, boys and girls who reported exposure to past week physical violence from school staff faced, “increased odds of poor mental health and, for girls, double the odds of poor educational performance (adjusted odds ratio = 1.78, 95% confidence interval = 1.19-2.66),” noting also that, “for boys, significant interactions were present.”⁹⁸ Effects may become compounded with cumulative exposures to multiple forms of violence at school and at home—particularly for girls who face higher rates of overlapping childhood emotional, physical and sexual violence.⁹⁹ Consequences of violence against children, “are additive, increasing with increases in types and severity of violence experience.”¹⁰⁰ Harmful effects on students’ mental and physical health, and educational attainment, can be cumulative particularly for children who are: in childhood and early adolescence, girls, food insecure, functionally impaired or disabled, or forcibly displaced from armed conflict, political crisis, or natural disaster.

A 2018 global review of evidence of past-year violence against children, published in the peer-reviewed medical journal, *Pediatrics*, confirmed associations between exposure to violence in childhood and causes of death in adulthood. The harmful consequences of violence experienced in childhood include, “major causes of death in adulthood, including non-communicable diseases, injury, HIV, mental health problems,

⁹⁴ National Population Commission of Nigeria, UNICEF Nigeria, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Violence Against Children in Nigeria: Findings from a National Survey*, 2014. Abuja, Nigeria: UNICEF, 2016.

⁹⁵ Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). *Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review*. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

⁹⁶ Sherr L, Hensels IS, Skeen S. (2016). “Exposure to Violence Predicts Poor Educational Outcomes in Young Children in South Africa and Malawi.” *International Health*; 8:36–43.; Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention.” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

⁹⁷ Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). *Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam* (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF. Office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>

⁹⁸ Devries K.M., Child J.C., Allen E., Walakira E., Parkes J, and Naker D. (2013). “School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda.” *Pediatrics*. 2014;133:e129. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2013-2007 originally published online December 2, 2013.

⁹⁹ Government of Honduras, Sub-Secretariat of Security in Prevention, Secretariat of Security. *Honduras Violence Against Children Survey*, 2017. Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 2019.; Clarke K., Patalay P., Allen E., Knight, L., Naker, D., Devries, K.M. (2016). “Patterns and Predictors of Violence Against Children in Uganda: A Latent Class Analysis.” *BMJ Open*. 2016;6:e010443. DOI:10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010443.

¹⁰⁰ Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. “Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates.” *Pediatrics*. 2016 Mar;137(3):e20154079. DOI:10.1542/peds.2015-4079 2016;137(3):e20154079.

suicide and reproductive health problems.”¹⁰¹ Recent biological evidence of the effects of toxic stress and violence on childhood development:

“[...] may impair brain architecture, immune status, metabolic systems and inflammatory responses. Early experiences of violence may confer lasting damage at the basic levels of nervous, endocrine, and immune systems, and can even influence genetic alteration of DNA.”¹⁰²

Other studies have also found evidence that corporal punishment negatively affects children’s psychological and physical health and development, resulting in:

“[...] aggression, delinquency and conjugal violence [intimate partner violence] later in life,¹⁰³ antisocial behavior,¹⁰⁴ anxiety disorders, alcohol abuse or dependence, externalization problems,¹⁰⁵ psychopathologies in adulthood such as depression, mania, personality disorders,¹⁰⁶ suicide,¹⁰⁷ disruption of the mechanisms of regulation of stress in the brain,¹⁰⁸ and elevation of the level of cortisol¹⁰⁹ [so-called ‘stress hormone’]. Corporal punishment negatively affects the internalization of moral values by the child and [their] relationship with [their] parents¹¹⁰ [also teachers among authority figures and other adult community members]. Physical punishment is linked to a slow regression of cognitive development as well as negative effects on the academic

¹⁰¹ Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. “Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates.” *Pediatrics*. 2016 Mar;137(3):e20154079. DOI:10.1542/peds.2015-4079 2016;137(3):e20154079. 2016;137(3):e20154079.

¹⁰² Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. “Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates.” *Pediatrics*. 2016 Mar;137(3):e20154079. DOI:10.1542/peds.2015-4079 2016;137(3):e20154079.

¹⁰³ Durrant J, Ensom R. (2012) “Physical Punishment of Children: Lessons from 20 Years of Research.” *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 2012 Sep 4;184(12):1373–1377.

¹⁰⁴ Straus MA, Sugarman DB, Giles-Sims J. (1997) “Spanking by Parents and Subsequent Antisocial Behavior of Children.” *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 1997 Aug;151(8):761–767.

¹⁰⁵ MacMillan HL, Boyle MH, Wong MY, et al. (1999) “Slapping and Spanking in Childhood and its Association with Lifetime Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in a General Population Sample.” *CMAJ Can Med Assoc J*. 1999 Oct 5;161(7):805–809.

¹⁰⁶ Affifi TO, Brownridge DA, Cox BJ, et al. (2006) “Physical Punishment, Childhood Abuse and Psychiatric Disorders.” *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 2006 Oct;30(10):1093–1103.

¹⁰⁷ Straus MA, Kantor GK Durham, NH: US Dept of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute of Mental Health. [Internet]. (2017) Physical punishment by parents: a risk factor in the epidemiology of depression, suicide, alcohol abuse, child abuse, and wife beating. 1991 Dec 11 [cited 2017 Nov 2]. Available from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED341907>

¹⁰⁸ McGowan PO, Sasaki A, D’Alessio AC, et al. (2009) “Epigenetic Regulation of the Glucocorticoid Receptor in Human Brain Associates with Childhood Abuse.” *Nat Neurosci*. 2009 Mar;12(3):342–348.

¹⁰⁹ Bugental DB, Martorell GA, Barraza V. (2003) “The Hormonal Costs of Subtle Forms of Infant Maltreatment.” *Horm Behav*. 2003 Jan;43(1):237–244.

¹¹⁰ Gershoff ET. (2002) Corporal Punishment by Parents and Associated Child Behaviors and Experiences: A Meta-analytic and Theoretical Review. *Psychol Bull*. 2002 Jul;128 (4):539–579.

pathway,¹¹¹ non-cognitive performance and executive functions¹¹² as well as alterations in the dopaminergic regions associated with substances and alcohol abuse¹¹³. In particular, negative experiences in childhood predispose later in life, to multiple sexual partners, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, and early initiation of sexual activity.¹¹⁴ No studies have demonstrated a positive long-term effect of corporal punishment. Moreover, most studies have shown short-term and long-term negative effects of corporal punishment.”¹¹⁵

Another study of the associations between exposure to physically violent punishment and maltreatment in childhood and intimate partner violence in adulthood found increased odds of experiencing adult intimate partner violence among those exposed to violent punishment as a child.¹¹⁶ Negative effects of violence at home and school follow children into adulthood.

ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND NORMS UNDERPIN YET CONTEST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Cultural beliefs and social norms underpin corporal punishment, despite available scientific evidence of its harmful effects on child education, health, and development. Few studies have explored the interactions between cultural beliefs, social norms, and corporal punishment in schools or homes. Findings from a qualitative, ethnographic study in Tanzania found the international definition of corporal punishment, which is grounded in child rights, to be, “in conflict with local understandings and beliefs which described corporal punishment as excessive beating.”¹¹⁷ In rural areas of northwestern Tanzania, ethnographic findings showed that physical punishment is, “seen as a necessary and normal part of child upbringing.”¹¹⁸ Across numerous studies, caregivers’ and teachers’ arguments for intended effects of corporal punishment as a discipline method focus mainly on behavioral compliance. Still, a

¹¹¹ Straus MA, Paschall MJ. (2009). “Corporal punishment by mothers and development of children’s cognitive ability: a longitudinal study of two nationally representative age cohorts.” *J Aggress Maltreatment Trauma*. 2009 Jul 23;18(5):459–483.; Berlin LJ, Ispa JM, Fine MA, et al. (2009) “Correlates and Consequences of Spanking and Verbal Punishment for Low Income White, African American, and Mexican American Toddlers.” *Child Development*. 2009;80(5):1403–1420.; Bodovski K, Youn M-J. “Love, Discipline and Elementary School Achievement: the Role of Family Emotional Climate.” *Soc Sci Res*. 2010 Jul 1;39(4):585–595.; Margolin G, Vickerman KA, Oliver PH, et al. “Violence Exposure in Multiple Interpersonal Domains: Cumulative and Differential Effects.” *Journal of Adolescent Health Off Publ Soc Adolesc Med*. 2010 Aug;47(2):198–205.; MacKenzie MJ, Nicklas E, Waldfogel J, et al. (2013) “Spanking and Child Development across the First Decade of Life.” *Pediatrics*. 2013;21:peds.2013–1227.

¹¹² Talwar V, Carlson SM, Lee K. “Effects of a Punitive Environment on Children’s Executive Functioning: a Natural Experiment.” *Soc Dev*. 2011 Nov 1;20(4):805–824.

¹¹³ Sheu Y-S, Polcari A, Anderson CM, et al. “Harsh Corporal Punishment is Associated with Increased T2 Relaxation Time in Dopamine-rich Regions.” *NeuroImage*. 2010 Nov 1;53(2):412–419

¹¹⁴ Anda RF, Felitti VJ, Bremner JD, et al. “The Enduring Effects of Abuse and Related Adverse Experiences in Childhood.” *Eur Arch Psychiatry Clin Neurosci*. 2006 Apr;256(3):174–186.

¹¹⁵ Bassam, E., Boulos Marianne, T., Khabbaz Rabbaa, L., Gerbaka, B. (2018). “Corporal Punishment of Children: Discipline or Abuse?” *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, 13:1, DOI: 10.1080/19932820.2018.1485456.

¹¹⁶ Affifi, Tracie O, Natalie Mota, Jitender Sareen and Harriet L. MacMillan. 2017. The Relationships Between Harsh Physical Punishment and Child Maltreatment in Childhood and Intimate Partner Violence in Adulthood. *BMC Public health* 17:493. DOI 10.1186/s12889-017-4359-8

¹¹⁷ Kelly, S.A., Kyegombe, N., Nnko, S., Kahema, J., Charles, M., Bond, V. (2018). A Liminal Relationship: Global Rights Discourse and Experiences of Child Discipline in Northwest Tanzania. Poster presented at: MITU International Scientific Symposium on Health of Adolescents and Young People in Africa; 27-29 November 2018; Mwanza, Tanzania.

¹¹⁸ Kelly, S.A., Kyegombe, N., Nnko, S., Kahema, J., Charles, M., Bond, V. (2018). A Liminal Relationship: Global Rights Discourse and Experiences of Child Discipline in Northwest Tanzania. Poster presented at: MITU International Scientific Symposium on Health of Adolescents and Young People in Africa; 27-29 November 2018; Mwanza, Tanzania.

preponderance of scientific evidence of the harmful effects of corporal punishment on children’s health, education, and development contrasts with and challenges varied cultural, gendered beliefs and norms that uphold the practice. Across cultural contexts, meta-norms of ‘children must be seen and not heard,’ obedience to adults, hierarchy, authoritarianism, adult-ism, and the social dominance of men underpin the perpetuation of physically violent and degrading punishment of children in schools and homes. Culture-versus-child rights arguments may set up a spurious dichotomy, as cultural values of nurturing and protecting girls’ or boys’ health, education, and development could align with scientific evidence on child development for the need to contest and eliminate corporal punishment in schools and homes. Who decides what disciplinary and punishment practices a given social group does or does not approve of in the school or home context reflects existing gender and age inequities in power, decision-making, and resource allocations in schools and homes. A 2019 systematic review of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on social norms and corporal punishment concluded that, “more careful attention to social norms theory, leveraging of protective norms, consideration of power hierarchies, and an examination of punishment along the home-school continuum may enable deeper analysis and better interventions to address corporal punishment.”¹¹⁹ Shifting social norms to end school corporal punishment requires everyone’s participation across the home-school continuum—especially primary caregivers and other household members, community members and leaders, school staff and officials—to set new expectations disapproving of physical and degrading punishment, and approving of positive, non-violent disciplinary methods. Social norm change for preventing and responding to corporal punishment in schools further requires resources for school staff and caregiver training in alternative, non-violent, positive discipline methods, in both rural and urban schools and homes.

While corporal punishment in schools remains a widely normalized, although increasingly contested form of gender-based violence, few studies further address both social norms and gendered hierarchies in corporal punishment in schools, and how inequitable gender norms underpin and perpetuate it.¹²⁰ In the Honduras nationally representative VACS, “significantly more males (62.4%) than females [ages 18-24 years] endorsed traditional norms about gender [...],” with 18.5% of young men versus 13.5% of young women agreeing they “thought it was necessary for teachers to use corporal punishment.”¹²¹ Similar results from the El Salvador VACS found that 37.3% of young men and 25.6% of young women endorsed traditional norms about gender [...],” while also more young men (7.8%) than young women (3.2%) “agreed it is necessary for teachers to use corporal punishment.”¹²² A study in Vietnam suggests that girls may be punished physically more than boys when teachers see them as ‘good’ students from whom misbehavior appears as socially unexpected.¹²³ Another study from Vietnam links physical

¹¹⁹ Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

¹²⁰ Lundgren, R., Burgess, S., Chantelois, H., Oregede, S., Kerner, B., & Kågesten, A.E. (2019). “Processing Gender: Lived Experiences of Reproducing and Transforming Gender Norms over the Life Course of Young People in Northern Uganda,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 21(4), 387-403; International Center for Research on Women & Plan International (2014). Are Schools Safe and Gender Equal Spaces? Findings from a Baseline Study of School Related Gender-based Violence in Five Countries in Asia, International Center for Research on Women & Plan International.

¹²¹ Government of Honduras, Sub-Secretariat of Security in Prevention, Secretariat of Security. Honduras Violence Against Children Survey, 2017. Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 2019.

¹²² Government of El Salvador, Ministry of Justice and Public Security. El Salvador Violence Against Children Survey, 2017. San Salvador, El Salvador, 2019.

¹²³ Horton, P. (2015). “Note Passing and Gendered Discipline in Vietnamese Schools.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(4), 526-541, cited in Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (manuscript, 2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

punishment of girls to son preference.¹²⁴ Other studies link gendered power hierarchies within schools as directly shaping the use of physical punishment, consolidating the ‘masculine disciplinary system’¹²⁵ of the school.¹²⁶ A sociological study with Palestinian refugee children on violence at school and home investigated teachers’ use of physical violence as embodying systems of power abuse, domination, and manipulation of children within institutions.¹²⁷

Persistent cultural beliefs and social norms framing corporal punishment as ‘discipline’ at home or in school contradict directly the global scientific evidence of the harmful health and developmental consequences of violence against children, including corporal punishment. Overwhelming evidence shows that physical punishment and humiliation are ineffective at regulating children’s behavior in homes and schools, and harm children’s education, health, and development into and through adulthood. In the available literature globally, no methodologically rigorous or ethically sound scientific studies exist of ‘positive’ effects of corporal punishment in homes or school on children’s education, health or development. Calls for evidence of the positive effects of corporal punishment remain unsatisfied, because there is no evidence of positive effects of corporal punishment on child development. It would be unethical to design and conduct studies hypothesizing positive effects of violence against children. In contrast, there are no calls for evidence of the positive effects of intimate partner violence, often rife with physical punishment and humiliating psychological abuse. One researcher who has focused intensively on investigating the prevalence, outcomes and prevention efforts against corporal punishment wrote: “[a]rguments about its [positive] effects on children are, or at least should be moot. After all, we have not needed research to decide that violence against women should be unlawful.”¹²⁸ Physical assault of an adult is criminalized in most countries; yet proponents of corporal punishment frame violence against children by adults as a socially acceptable disciplinary method, despite that many themselves see corporal punishment as ineffective at regulating child behavior, and regardless of legal bans. If parents, teachers, community and religious leaders, and also pediatricians knew about the scientific evidence of the array of harmful consequences of physical punishment and abuse of children, then each could play a fundamental role in shifting norms to end the practice in schools and homes.¹²⁹ In Lebanon, a recent study explored and supported the possibility that pediatricians could serve an educational, preventative and legal role in ending corporal punishment.¹³⁰ Expanding pediatricians’ scientific knowledge of the harmful physical and mental health effects of physical punishment of children, and developing their skills

¹²⁴ Vu, T.T.H. (2016). Understanding Children’s Experiences of Violence in Viet Nam: evidence from Young Lives, Innocenti Working Papers no. IWP_2016_26, Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.

¹²⁵ Humphreys, Sara. (2008). “Gendering Corporal Punishment: Beyond the Discourse of Human Rights.” *Gender and Education*: Vol 20, No 5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250701797150>

¹²⁶ Humphreys, S. (2008). “Gendering Corporal Punishment: Beyond the Discourse of Human Rights.” *Gender & Education*, 20(5), 527-540.; Ngakane, M.V., Muthukrishna, N., & Ngcobo, J.E. (2012). “Experiencing Violence in Schools: Voices of Learners in the Lesotho Context,” *The Anthropologist*, 14(1), 39-48.

¹²⁷ Kortam, M. (2018). “Palestinian Refugee Children: Violence in School and Family.” *International Sociology*, 33(4), 486-502.

¹²⁸ Gershoff, E.T. (2017) School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

¹²⁹ Bassam, E., Boulos Marianne, T., Khabbaz Rabbaa, L., Gerbaka, B. (2018). Corporal punishment of children: discipline or abuse?, *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, 13:1, DOI: 10.1080/19932820.2018.1485456.

¹³⁰ Bassam, E., Boulos Marianne, T., Khabbaz Rabbaa, L., Gerbaka, B. (2018). Corporal punishment of children: discipline or abuse?, *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, 13:1, DOI: 10.1080/19932820.2018.1485456.

for sharing that knowledge with parents and teachers, and diagnosing health problems tied to corporal punishment, could contribute vitally to preventing and responding to violence against children.¹³¹

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IS PREVENTABLE

Available rigorous impact and process evaluation results show that physical punishment in schools can be prevented. Results from cluster randomized controlled trials combining quantitative with qualitative methods have been published to date from three trials in low-income countries: 1) the Good Schools Study in Uganda (2012 to 2015)¹³²; 2) the NORC at the University of Chicago LARA P&IE in Uganda (2015 to 2021)¹³³, and 3) Waache Wasome, “Let Them Learn” trial in Tanzania (2018 to 2021). Randomized controlled trial evaluation designs with integrated qualitative studies allow for causal investigation and systematic exploration of mechanisms of behavior change in corporal punishment, among other forms of gender-based violence at school, as well as new non-violent discipline methods. The Good Schools Study, an impact and process evaluation by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine of a complex behavior change intervention, The Good Schools Toolkit, designed by Raising Voices in Uganda, showed an estimated 42% reduction in the prevalence of past week physical violence by school staff toward students.¹³⁴ Acceptance of physical discipline also decreased as a result of the Good Schools Toolkit intervention.¹³⁵ Along with quantitative data collection and analysis for impact evaluation of the Good School Toolkit, the Good Schools Study also investigated the qualitative mechanisms of change in the intervention’s aims to prevent violence against children in primary schools through transforming schools’ operational culture to provide a safe and stable learning environment. Thematic qualitative analysis, comparative, and deviant case analysis techniques allowed researchers to identify three main pathways by which the intervention achieved its estimated 42% reduction in student risk of past week physical violence:

“First, improved student-teacher relationships resulted in improved student voice and less fear of teachers. Second, the intervention helped schools to clarify and encourage desired behavior amongst students through rewards and praise. Third, many teachers valued positive discipline and alternative discipline methods, including peer-to-peer discipline, as important pathways to reduced

¹³¹ Bassam, E., Boulos Marianne, T., Khabbaz Rabbaa, L., Gerbaka, B. (2018). Corporal punishment of children: discipline or abuse?. *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, 13:1, DOI: 10.1080/19932820.2018.1485456.

¹³² Devries, K.M., Knight, L., Child, J.C., Mirembe, A., Nakuti, J., Jones, R., Sturgess, J., Allen, E., Kyegombe, N., Parkes, J., Walakira, E., Elbourne, D., Watts, C., Naker, D. (2015). “The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1).

¹³³ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2016). LARA Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) Evaluation Design Report. Washington, DC.

¹³⁴ Devries, K.M., et al. (2015). “The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1).

¹³⁵ Merrill, K.G., Knight, L., Namy, S., Allen, E., Naker, D., & Devries, K.M. (2018). “Effects of a Violence Prevention Intervention in Schools and Surrounding Communities: Secondary Analysis of a Cluster Randomised-controlled Trial in Uganda,” *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 84, 182-195.

use of violence. These shifts were reflected in changes in the views, use, and context of beating [in schools].”¹³⁶

Results to date suggest that positive discipline alternatives, supportive teacher-student relationships and safer school culture can contribute to reducing learners’ risks of poor academic performance, dropout, poor mental and physical health, and other compounded problems affecting child development.¹³⁷

The USAID-funded intervention, “Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity,” external performance and impact evaluation (LARA P&IE) evaluates a complex intervention to improve early grade reading (EGR), and retention through fostering a safer school climate and preventing and responding to school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in Ugandan primary schools. NORC at the University of Chicago, in partnership with subcontractor Panagora Group and RTI International (RTI), are conducting program evaluations from 2015 to 2021. The external LARA P&IE uses mixed methods, combining a quantitative cluster randomized controlled design with qualitative evaluation, and a child protection protocol¹³⁸, referral services mapping, and referrals and monitoring over two months following each data collection period. Midterm findings of the LARA P&IE from quantitative data collected in 2019 and 2020 highlight the gendered nature of corporal punishment. While girls and boys both expressed fear of being caned for giving wrong answers or low marks on exams, girls reported more often than boys that at times they avoided attending school due to fear of harsh physical punishment at school.¹³⁹ Preliminary results suggest that pupil exposure to corporal punishment from teachers is gendered. Boys described receiving up to 20 blows of a cane, while girls described receiving five in a single incident.¹⁴⁰ Quantitative findings suggest modest effects of LARA SRGBV prevention and response implementation activities, however.¹⁴¹ A statistically significant percentage of teachers and head teachers in schools that did not implement “Journeys” – LARA’s SRGBV prevention and positive school climate training activities – reported they believed that hitting a learner with a cane or stick was an effective discipline method compared to those surveyed in schools that did implement Journeys.¹⁴² Midterm impact evaluation findings also detected statistically significant decreases in teachers’ uses of insults toward learners,

¹³⁶ Kyegombe, N., S. Namakula, J. Mulindwa, J. Lwanyaaga, D. Naker, S. Namy, J. Nakuti, J. Parkes, L. Knight, E. Walakira, K.M. Devries. (2017). “How Did the Good School Toolkit Reduce the Risk of Past Week Physical Violence from Teachers to Students? Qualitative Findings on Pathways of Change in Schools in Luwero, Uganda.” *Social Science and Medicine*. 180 (2017) 10-19.

¹³⁷ Devries, K.M., et al. (2015) “The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1); Devries, Karen M, Jennifer C. Child, Elizabeth Allen, Eddy Walakira, Jenny Parkes, Dipak Naker. (2014). “School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda.” *Pediatrics* 2014;133:e129; originally published online December 2, 2013; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2013-2007.

¹³⁸ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2017). Child Protection Protocol for Data Collection: USAID/Uganda Performance and Impact Evaluation for Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity. Washington, DC: USAID. <https://www.norc.org/PDFs/LARA/LARA%20P%20BIE%20Child%20Protection%20Protocol%20Feb2018.pdf>

¹³⁹ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Performance and Impact Evaluation for Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA): Midterm Impact and Final Performance Evaluation Report. Draft. June 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴⁰ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Performance and Impact Evaluation for Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA): Midterm Impact and Final Performance Evaluation Report. Draft. June 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴¹ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Performance and Impact Evaluation for Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA): Midterm Impact and Final Performance Evaluation Report. Draft. June 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴² NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Performance and Impact Evaluation for Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA): Midterm Impact and Final Performance Evaluation Report. Draft. June 2020. Washington, DC.

refusal to speak to a learner, or locking a learner up as a form of discipline in Journeys implementing schools.¹⁴³

The USAID-funded Waache Wasome, “Let Girls’ Learn,” complex intervention in schools and homes in Tanzania, designed and implemented by Bantwana Initiative of World Education (WEI/B), is also undergoing external performance and impact evaluation by NORC (from 2018 to 2021). Among holistic school and community-based aims, Waache Wasome sought specifically to increase girls’ school retention through fostering a, “girl-friendly and supportive school environment.”¹⁴⁴ USAID and WEI selected four districts for implementation across diverse regions of Tanzania taking into account available prevalence data on violence against children.¹⁴⁵ Similarly to the Good Schools Study and the LARA P&IE, the Waache Wasome external performance and impact evaluation design also combined a quantitative randomized controlled trial with qualitative methods, and included a comprehensive child protection protocol, referral services mapping, and referrals monitoring after data collection. Preliminary endline results as of August 2020 indicated that girls in treatment schools, as compared to those in control schools, perceived a reduction in socially normative expectations among their parents that teachers cane students. Using an innovative “list experiment” approach for measuring normative expectations concerning corporal punishment as part of a strategy to reduce socially desirable responses, the evaluation team also found a statistically significantly lower fraction of girls in treatment schools who agreed with the statement, “Teachers shouting at a student in front of other students is part of good discipline practice,” was true, compared to girls surveyed in control schools. Qualitative results indicate potential changes in teachers’ practices interacting with students, with word content frequencies suggesting a focus among teachers centering on discussion of “punishment, listening, caning, and [...] students.”¹⁴⁶

ActionAid’s Stop Violence against Girls in School (2007 to 2013) was “a multilevel intervention designed to reduce violence across multiple settings, including schools, through a combination of advocacy and education about topics such as the importance of gender equity and about the harms of corporal punishment.”¹⁴⁷ Implemented in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique, the Stop Violence against Girls in School program evaluation demonstrated reductions in the percentages of girls who experienced corporal punishment in schools.¹⁴⁸ Girls reporting having been caned in the past 12 months fell from 59% to 29% over the course of the program. Also, schools where the program was implemented reported increases in girls’ school enrollment, “by 14% in Ghana, 17% in Kenya and 10% in Mozambique

¹⁴³ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Performance and Impact Evaluation for Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA): Midterm Impact and Final Performance Evaluation Report. Draft. June 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴⁴ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Impact and Performance Evaluation of the Waache Wasome ‘Let Them Learn’ Project (Tanzania): Endline Report. Draft. August 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴⁵ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Impact and Performance Evaluation of the Waache Wasome ‘Let Them Learn’ Project (Tanzania): Endline Report. Draft. August 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴⁶ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2020). USAID Impact and Performance Evaluation of the Waache Wasome ‘Let Them Learn’ Project (Tanzania): Endline Report. Draft. August 2020. Washington, DC.

¹⁴⁷ Parkes, J., & Heslop, J. (2013). Stop Violence against Girls in School: A Cross-country Analysis of Change in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique. Washington, DC: ActionAid International. Retrieved from http://www.actionaidusa.org/sites/files/actionaid/svags_review_final.pdf; cited in Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention.” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

¹⁴⁸ Parkes, J., & Heslop, J. (2013). Stop Violence against Girls in School: A Cross-country Analysis of Change in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique. Washington, DC: ActionAid International. Retrieved from http://www.actionaidusa.org/sites/files/actionaid/svags_review_final.pdf

over the five years of the evaluation and an accompanying decrease in dropouts among both boys and girls in Ghana and Kenya.”¹⁴⁹ Qualitative findings, though, revealed that teachers felt they had not been trained in alternative discipline methods and lacked non-violent strategies to manage student behavior.¹⁵⁰

RESEARCH GAPS

Strengths and limitations of relevant studies to date point toward opportunities for future research and program evaluation. Strong available published evidence to date of the interactions between corporal punishment and children’s education and development has come from only a small number of mixed methods, cluster randomized controlled trials, such as the Good Schools Study, and the NORC at the University of Chicago LARA P&IE, Waache Wasome external evaluations, as well as from longitudinal research, such as the Young Lives study. Mixed-methods experimental program evaluations and longitudinal studies in schools in low-income countries can provide valuable causal investigation into effects of corporal punishment on education and child development trajectories. Rigorous evidence has emerged from randomized controlled trials to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence, of which there have been only five trials to date in low-income countries.¹⁵¹ Of these, only three trials—the Good Schools Study and the NORC LARA P&IE in Uganda and Waache Wasome performance and impact evaluation in Tanzania—have used both quantitative and qualitative methods, and been adequately statistically powered to support exploring causal inference and drawing evidenced conclusions. Quantitative trials must be sufficiently statistically powered to support analyses of causality and generalizability to a wider school population of the effects of corporal punishment on child education, health, and development. Longitudinal studies are further needed to explore the causal pathways and effects of corporal punishment on child development, health, and education outcomes in schools in low-income countries during children’s transition to adulthood. Longitudinal research could also explore, for example, a critical finding of the Young Lives longitudinal, multi-country study in

¹⁴⁹ Parkes, J., & Heslop, J. (2013). Stop Violence against Girls in School: A Cross-country Analysis of Change in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique. Washington, DC: ActionAid International. Retrieved from http://www.actionaidusa.org/sites/files/actionaid/svags_review_final.pdf; cited in Gershoff, E.T. (2017). “School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention.” *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

¹⁵⁰ Parkes, J., & Heslop, J. (2013). Stop Violence against Girls in School: A Cross-country Analysis of Change in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique. Washington, DC: ActionAid International. Retrieved from http://www.actionaidusa.org/sites/files/actionaid/svags_review_final.pdf; cited in Gershoff, E.T. (2017). School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 224-239, DOI: 10.1080/13548506.2016.1271955.

¹⁵¹ Jewkes R, Gevers A, Chirwa E, Mahlangu P, Shamu S, Shai N, et al. (2019) “RCT Evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-based Violence among South African Grade 8s.” *PLoS ONE* 14(10): e0223562. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0223562>; Khuwaja, H.M.A., Karmaliani, R., McFarlane, J., Somani, R., Gulzar, S., Ali, T.S., Premani, Z.S., Chirwa, E.D., Jewkes, R. (2018). “The Intersection of School Corporal Punishment and Associated Factors: Baseline Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial in Pakistan.” *PLoS ONE*. 10/24/2018, Vol. 13 Issue 10, p1-14.; Devries, K.M., Knight, L., Child, J.C., Mirembe, A., Nakuti, J., Jones, R., Sturgess, J., Allen, E., Kyegombe, N., Parkes, J., Walakira, E., Elbourne, D., Watts, C., Naker, D. (2015). “The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1); Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.

Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam,¹⁵² that, “Importantly, in none of the countries did school corporal punishment at age 8 predict better school performance at age 12.”¹⁵³

Survey instruments used in rigorous studies to date have included or adapted widely field-tested measures such as the International Child Abuse Screening Tools (ICAST)¹⁵⁴ or Violence against Children Survey¹⁵⁵ items, and align with the World Health Organization’s research and evaluation guidance resources concerning school-based violence prevention and ethics in researching sensitive subjects with children.¹⁵⁶ While few existing prevalence studies have measured a full range of types of violent and degrading punishment of children, locations, and perpetrators,¹⁵⁷ a couple of trials exist that do include these measures. Survey instruments for the Good Schools Study and the NORC LARA P&IE measure distinct acts of school-related psychological, physical, and sexual violence while associating these acts with self-reported information on the types of perpetrators and the site of violence—in school or on the way to or from school. In addition to measuring violence exposure, quantitative and qualitative measures in the NORC LARA P&IE surveys further explore levels of normative acceptance of corporal punishment,¹⁵⁸ students’ perceptions of protective behaviors, as well as help-seeking behavior, which the NORC LARA P&IE also explores through qualitative focus group discussion guides.¹⁵⁹ Increases in help-seeking behavior could indicate improved trust and confidence in available or new in-school gender-based violence (GBV) counselors, reporting mechanisms, referral assistance, or community-based child protection follow-up support. Surveys from the Good Schools Study and the NORC LARA P&IE also include measures to estimate the prevalence of functional impairments among students interviewed.

Definitional framing of corporal punishment as encompassing multiple psychological, physical, or sexual acts of violence, humiliation, and intimidation can improve measures to evaluate student exposure to this varied practice beyond “caning.” Clear definitional framing aligns with both the child rights definition of corporal punishment, and growing efforts to measure the prevalence and incidence of emotional, physical, and sexual forms of violence against children in schools with the possibility to compare across contexts.¹⁶⁰ It has been noted further that measuring attitudes alone serves as an unreliable proxy for

¹⁵² Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). *Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam* (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF Office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>

¹⁵³ Ogando Portela, M. J., & Pells, K. (2015). *Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Viet Nam* (Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02). Florence: UNICEF Office of Research. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/>

¹⁵⁴ See “International Child Abuse Screening Tools (ICAST) of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), accessed here: <https://www.ispcan.org/learn/icast-abuse-screening-tools/>

¹⁵⁵ See “Violence Against Children Surveys” reports from fourteen countries at: <https://www.togetherforgirls.org/violence-children-surveys/>

¹⁵⁶ World Health Organization. (2019). *School-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook*. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

¹⁵⁷ Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. “Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates.” *Pediatrics*. 2016 Mar;137(3):e20154079. DOI:10.1542/peds.2015-4079 2016;137(3):e20154079.

¹⁵⁸ For an example of a norms measurement scale concerning GBV, see: Perrin, N., Marsh, M., Clough, A. et al. “Social Norms and Beliefs about Gender Based Violence Scale: A Measure for Use with Gender Based Violence Prevention Programs in Low-resource and Humanitarian Settings.” *Conflict and Health*. 13, 6 (2019) doi:10.1186/s13031-019-0189-x

¹⁵⁹ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2016). *Qualitative Focus Group Discussion Guides from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA)*. Washington, DC.

¹⁶⁰ World Health Organization. (2019). *School-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook*. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

behavior change.¹⁶¹ Measuring student and teacher perceptions of school safety alone also does not serve as a proxy for child violence exposure. Teachers' self-reported behaviors concerning corporal punishment perpetration must be triangulated with students' reports of violence exposure in school surveys, such as in the data collection instruments of the Good Schools Toolkit evaluation and the LARA P&IE in Uganda.¹⁶² Teachers' self-reported estimates and narratives of using violent punishment often appear more conservative than students' reported experiences of violence from teachers¹⁶³, calling for the use of private methods to foster higher disclosure teacher rates and greater candidness in self-reports of school violence perpetration. Interview methods for surveys including both exposure and perpetration questions could include self-administered surveys for teachers or the use of audio-computer assisted self-interviewing (A-CASI) for teachers and students.

While evaluations of social behavior change communications (SBCC) interventions to reduce teacher perpetration of school violence have shown gains in near term attitude change,¹⁶⁴ rigorous evidence of behavior change remains elusive without violence exposure and perpetration direct questions, and other improved evaluation measures beyond attitude change to assess change in the social norms that perpetuate corporal punishment or protect against it.¹⁶⁵ Qualitative investigation into change pathways of programs to prevent corporal punishment has generated valuable insights into the role of improved teacher-student relationships, decreased fear of teachers, as well as increased student voice in school matters, positive discipline methods, rewards, and praise in reducing teacher-to-student physical violence.¹⁶⁶ Cluster randomized controlled trials with qualitative methods allow for causal investigation and systematic exploration of mechanisms of behavior change in corporal punishment, among other forms of gender-based violence at school, as well as new non-violent discipline methods.

Many existing studies share limitations to be overcome to build a larger rigorous evidence base on preventing corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries. Several available studies to date on violence against children or school-related violence in low-income countries show limitations in researching and evaluating teacher-to-student violence, including corporal punishment. Many studies:

¹⁶¹ Leach, F., Dunne, M., Salvi, F. (2014). A Global Review of Current Issues and Approaches in Policy, Programming and Implementation Responses to School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV) for the Education Sector. Background Research Paper Prepared for UNESCO.; Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

¹⁶² Devries, K.M. et al. (2015). The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda. *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1); NORC at the University of Chicago. (2016). LARA Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) Evaluation Design Report. Washington, DC.

¹⁶³ For examples: Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.; Naker, D. (2005) Violence Against Children: The Voices of Uganda Children and Adults. Raising Voices and Save the Children in Uganda. Kampala.

¹⁶⁴ For example, see Development Links Consult. (2019). USAID/Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity Social and Behavior Change Communication to Reduce Primary Teachers' use of Corporal Punishment in School: Endline Report. USAID and RTI. Kampala.

¹⁶⁵ Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

¹⁶⁶ Kyegombe, N., S. Namakula, J. Mulindwa, J. Lwanyaaga, D. Naker, S. Namy, J. Nakuti, J. Parkes, L. Knight, E. Walakira, K.M. Devries. (2017). "How Did the Good School Toolkit Reduce the Risk of Past Week Physical Violence from Teachers to Students? Qualitative Findings on Pathways of Change in Schools in Luwero, Uganda." *Social Science and Medicine*. 180 (2017) 10-19.

- are small-scale;
- are statistically underpowered; or
- are not representative of wider populations;
- rely on attitudinal or perception-based measures instead of student self-reported violence exposure and teacher self-reported violence perpetration;
- use attitudinal measures as an unreliable proxy for behavior and social norm change;
- use a single method (i.e., quantitative or qualitative method instead of both);
- capture only one or two cross-sectional time points in child development;
- define and operationalize narrow survey questions not drawing on or adapting internationally field-tested epidemiological surveys for measuring violence against children;
- lack measures on corporal punishment as encompassing a range of psychological and physical acts of violence against children;
- focus on only one location or context;
- interview or ask about only one type or perpetrator;
- collect little or no data on academic and health outcomes;
- exclude children who attend boarding schools, or finally:
- exclude children with functional impairments affecting their ability to participate in a face-to-face, verbal structured interview.

A further issue with many existing prevalence surveys, among even those that are nationally representative, is that definitional measures of violence against children exclude items clearly defined as corporal punishment. For example, a global prevalence study of past-year violence against children excluded “spanking” in its “base case analysis.”¹⁶⁷ However, the same study conducted a “sensitivity analysis,” showing higher prevalence of violence against children when including measures of physical violence that a teacher enacted that may or may not have been corporal punishment.¹⁶⁸ Across available studies of violence against children, differences in definitional measures of violence against children may not be identified as corporal punishment, but given the type of location or context and perpetrator, may be considered as corporal punishment and a form of violence against children in schools. Additionally, surveys with measures on violence against children or school-related gender-based violence often also exclude children with disabilities during survey administration citing inability to interview children with

¹⁶⁷ Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. “Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates.” *Pediatrics*. 2016 Mar;137(3):e20154079. DOI:10.1542/peds.2015-4079 2016;137(3):e20154079.

¹⁶⁸ Hillis S, Mercy J, Amobi A, et al. “Global Prevalence of Past-year Violence Against Children: A Systematic Review and Minimum Estimates.” *Pediatrics*. 2016 Mar;137(3):e20154079. DOI:10.1542/peds.2015-4079 2016;137(3):e20154079.

functional impairments in seeing, hearing, or walking, that affect their capacity to participate in a face-to-face interview involving reading or writing tasks during informed caregiver consent, informed child assent, or survey question processes. Surveys also often exclude students who live in boarding schools away from home. Taken together, limitations in study designs, methods, definitional measures in identifying violence against children in schools, combined with a lack of studies with children with disabilities, or those living at boarding school away from home, contribute to statistical underestimates of extent of corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries, as well as qualitative insights into the nature, contexts, consequences, and causal pathways of SRGBV.

Critically, integrating sex- and age-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data, targeted measures, and analyses into specific types of corporal punishment perpetrated against girls, boys, and gender non-conforming children disproportionately in a given context or social group is essential. This kind of comprehensive integration would enable the capacity of future research to prove and improve the effectiveness of programs and policies to prevent and respond to corporal punishment among all forms of SRGBV in low-income countries. Moreover, qualitative inquiry in formative research to inform the design of both interventions and their evaluation designs and measures, should explore the ways in which socially normative expectations shaping teachers' behavior towards students, is gendered in both practice and outcomes for student academic achievement, health, and development. Opportunities to innovate and improve on existing strategies to measure social and gender norms quantitatively must go beyond gender equitable and inequitable attitudes, to social expectations, the strength of influence of gender norms, and both positive and negative sanctions for transgressing a norm, with a focus on creating new, positive social expectations among parents, teachers, head teachers, and community leaders for non-violent, educative, supportive discipline of children in schools and homes holistically.

NORC'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Below we present recommendations for program design and research for the prevention of and response to corporal punishment in schools.

FOR FUTURE PROGRAM DESIGN

Combined whole-of-school within whole-of-community programs, coordinated within and across education, health, and child protection sectors, are needed to prevent and respond to corporal punishment, among other forms of gender-based violence against children in schools and homes. Advances in program design to prevent and respond to corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries will require coordinated whole-of-school within whole-of-community (or “home-school continuum”) approaches engaging education, health, and protection sectors. All forms of gender-based violence in schools, homes, and communities, including corporal punishment, must be prevented and responded to synergistically across sectors and sites to see mutually reinforcing, sustained gains for educational attainment and healthy child development.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ NORC at the University of Chicago. (2016, 2019). LARA Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) Child Protection Referral Follow Up Report—Baseline; –Midline. Washington, DC.; Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislaghi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

Intervention development through careful co-design with evaluation and implementation partners for school, home and community contextual relevance and sustainability, can help maximize and measure interlinked education and child development outcomes. Multi-sectoral collaboration is needed, with public health expertise on gender-based violence prevention and response with children in school-based and community development programs. A systematic review of evidence assessing strategies of the World Health Organization’s Health Promoting Schools Framework found that it is effective at improving aspects of student health, safety, and related educational outcomes that could be significant at a wider population level within a country.¹⁷⁰ Evidence-informed gender-based violence prevention interventions recognizing the “home-school continuum” can positively affect the next generation’s education, health, human rights, and structural gender equality.

Longer-term gender norm change community-wide is required for cultivating safe, supportive, stable, and nurturing schools and homes¹⁷¹ that value girls and boys equally and use alternative, positive, non-violent discipline methods with students of all genders.

Further, prevention program design for reducing corporal punishment among all forms of gender-based violence in schools should consider the unique needs and rights of disaster- and conflict-affected, displaced children of all genders as they seek to access education in a safe, stable, and nurturing learning environment.¹⁷²

Strategically, the need for building adults’ scientific knowledge of the developmental harms of corporal punishment, and skills for ending it, extends also to pediatricians and other health workers in their vital roles in child health and safety, and potential public health educational role in schools.¹⁷³

Taken together, laws, policies, and increasingly school-based gender-based violence prevention programs, call for promoting a safe and supportive learning environment, training all teachers on positive, non-violent discipline methods, and ending violent punishment of children both at school and home.

FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Rigorous methodologies and mixed methods are required to build the evidence base on outcomes and pathways for preventing and responding to corporal punishment as a form of gender-based violence in schools. There is a clear need to expand on the small, but strong existing evidence base on outcomes and pathways for preventing and responding to corporal punishment in schools in low-income countries for diverse students and contexts. Consensus on how to

¹⁷⁰ Langford, R., Bonell, C., Jones, H. et al. „The World Health Organization’s Health Promoting Schools Framework: A Cochrane Systematic Review and Meta-analysis.” *BMC Public Health* 15, 130 (2015) doi:10.1186/s12889-015-1360-y.

¹⁷¹ Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

¹⁷² For an example, see: Devries, K.M., Fabbri, C., Allen, E., Barongo, V., Shayo, E., Greco, G., Kaemingk, M., Qiu, M., Steinacher, R., Tol, W., Rodrigues, K. (2019). “Preventing Violence Against Children in Schools (PVACS): Protocol for a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial of the EmpaTeach Behavioural Intervention in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp.” *BMC Public Health*. 19: 1295. doi:10.1186/s12889-019-7627-y.

¹⁷³ Bassam, E., Boulos Marianne, T., Khabbaz Rabbaa, L., Gerbaka, B. (2018). “Corporal Punishment of Children: Discipline or Abuse?” *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, 13:1, DOI: 10.1080/19932820.2018.1485456.

measure prevalence and incidence of multiple forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, is growing with adaptations across widely varied contexts of existing instruments, such as those from national VACS efforts and the ICAST, to include measures not only on exposure to violent acts, but also locations and types of perpetrators.

Teachers’ self-reported behaviors concerning corporal punishment perpetration must be triangulated with students’ reports of violence exposure in school surveys, such as in the data collection instruments of the Good Schools Toolkit evaluation and the LARA P&IE in Uganda.¹⁷⁴ Mixed methods, interdisciplinary studies will be useful for investigating and better understanding the mismatches between: 1) children’s and adults’ conflicting accounts of corporal punishment in schools—centering its gendered processes and effects on girls’, boys’ and gender non-conforming children’s education, physical and mental health, and development; and 2) protective factors that influence both sustained reductions in teachers’ and parents’ acceptance and uses of corporal punishment in the home-school continuum; and increases in teachers’ and parents’ uses of alternative, positive, non-violent discipline methods.

Qualitative unpacking of perceptions of what constitutes, “corporal punishment,” can help contextualize quantitative measures to be included in epidemiological and social science data collection instruments on school violence. Definitional framing of corporal punishment as violence against children can improve conceptual clarity, operationalized in epidemiological measures in research and program evaluations in schools. Using widely tested epidemiological measures of childhood violence—psychological, physical, sexual, and economic—adapted for schools and their unique contexts, stands to improve data reliability, validity, and potential comparability of measures.

Experimental, randomized evaluation designs, and longitudinal, mixed-methods research across diverse low-income contexts and populations also are required to expand the evidence base on the causal mechanisms and effects of school corporal punishment as a form of gender-based violence and its effects on academic retention, achievement, and healthy child development. Results from only four relevant mixed methods, cluster randomized controlled trials were available to date from school-based interventions in low-income country contexts¹⁷⁵, with one reporting being underpowered and despite outcomes moving in the direction of intervention aims to prevent physical punishment in school among other forms of gender-based violence¹⁷⁶. More longitudinal studies are further required in particular to identify and track trends over time with investigation into causal inference of not only outcomes, but risk and protective factors that

¹⁷⁴ Devries, K.M. et al. (2015). “The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1); NORC at the University of Chicago. (2016). LARA Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) Evaluation Design Report. Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁵ Devries, K.M. et al. (2015). “The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda.” *Global Health*. 3:7; e378-e386. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(15\)00060-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)00060-1); Nayyar-Stone, R., Menendez, A., Schulte, M.C., Pancratz, S., Owen, R., Onyango, L. (2016). Baseline Results from the Evaluation of USAID Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA). NORC at the University of Chicago. Washington, DC.; Jewkes R., Gevers A., Chirwa E, Mahlangu P, Shamu S, Shai N, et al. (2019) “RCT evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-based Violence among South African Grade 8s.” *PLoS ONE* 14(10): e0223562. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0223562>.

¹⁷⁶ Jewkes R., Gevers A., Chirwa E, Mahlangu P., Shamu S., Shai N., et al. (2019)) “RCT evaluation of Skhokho: A Holistic School Intervention to Prevent Gender-based Violence among South African Grade 8s.” *PLoS ONE* 14(10): e0223562. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0223562>.

mediate outcomes, providing better understanding into how to prevent and respond to school corporal punishment as a form of gender-based violence. Cluster randomized controlled trials with qualitative nested studies, and mixed-methods longitudinal studies would allow for detailed further investigation into the links between corporal punishment and other forms of psychological, physical, and sexual violence in low-income school, home, and community contexts.

Sex- and age-disaggregation of future research and program evaluation using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, are required to better understand gendered power dynamics, social norms, and pathways of reducing school corporal punishment among all forms of gender-based violence against children. A forthcoming systematic review on social norms and corporal punishment in childhood calls for explicit mapping of the linkages between attitudes, behaviors, and norms, as few studies to date explicitly define and measure norms.¹⁷⁷ Comprehensive gender and age analyses will strengthen understanding of how norms shape and gender corporal punishment in practices and outcomes for girls, boys, and gender non-conforming students.

Clear definitional framing of corporal punishment as encompassing multiple, gendered psychological, physical, or sexual acts of violence, humiliation, and intimidation, can improve measures to evaluate student exposure to corporal punishment beyond “caning.” Clear definitional framing also can align the child rights definition of corporal punishment and local understandings of discipline, punishment, and violence. Growing efforts to measure the epidemiological prevalence and incidence of emotional, physical, and sexual forms of violence against children in schools bring possibilities to compare data across contexts.¹⁷⁸

Epidemiological self-reported violence exposure measures are further needed for students, given the insight that past efforts to measure student or teacher attitudes or perceptions alone as proxies for behavior change have been unreliable.¹⁷⁹ Measuring student and teacher perceptions of school safety alone also cannot serve as a reliable proxy for child violence exposure. While evaluations of SBCC interventions have shown gains in near term attitude change,¹⁸⁰ strong evidence of behavior change remains elusive without direct violence exposure epidemiological measurement, and programmatic long-term, reflective dialogue on child rights and positive non-violent discipline. Improved research and evaluation measures beyond attitude change are further required to assess change in the cultural beliefs and social norms that perpetuate corporal punishment or protect against it.¹⁸¹ Teachers’ self-reported behaviors concerning corporal punishment perpetration must be

¹⁷⁷ Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

¹⁷⁸ World Health Organization. (2019). School-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

¹⁷⁹ Leach, F., Dunne, M., Salvi, F. (2014). A Global Review of Current Issues and Approaches in Policy, Programming and Implementation Responses to School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV) for the Education Sector. Background Research Paper Prepared for UNESCO.; Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

¹⁸⁰ For example, see Development Links Consult. (2019). USAID/Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity Social and Behavior Change Communication to Reduce Primary Teachers’ use of Corporal Punishment in School: Endline Report. USAID and RTI. Kampala.

¹⁸¹ Lokot, M., Bhatia, A., Kenny, L., and Cislighi, B. (2019). Social Norms on Corporal Punishment in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Systematic Review. Unpublished manuscript. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. London.

triangulated with students' reports of violence exposure in school surveys, and innovative methods must be developed to reduce social desirability bias in teachers' responses to face-to-face survey questions.

Qualitative inquiry is required to interpret statistical results, through investigating the change pathways of programs to prevent corporal punishment. Cluster randomized controlled trials with integrated qualitative methods allow for both causal investigation and systematic exploration of mechanisms of behavior change in corporal punishment, among other forms of gender-based violence at school, as well as alternative, positive, non-violent discipline methods.

Further, survey design and administration methods must be developed to accommodate functional impairments in child and adult respondents' capabilities to see, hear, walk, or talk to include actively, rather than intentionally or unintentionally exclude, children, caregivers, and teachers with disabilities.

Finally, to be successful in preventing and responding to gender-based violence against children, corporal punishment prevention programs, research, and evaluation, will require improved accountability and support from currently under-resourced formal and informal, government and community-based child protection initiatives. Along with teachers and school officials, child protection mechanisms and community-based committees require resources, training, and supportive supervision to increase skilled, non-discriminatory, child- and gender-based violence survivor-centered referrals and services for girls, boys, and gender non-conforming children affected by corporal punishment, among all forms of gender-based violence.¹⁸²

¹⁸² World Health Organization. (2019). *School-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook*. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.; UNICEF. (2018). *Promoting a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment: Multi-sectoral Approaches to Eliminate SRGBV. Case Studies from Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo and Cameroon*. Global Working Group to End School-related Gender-based Violence. New York.; NORC at the University of Chicago. (2016 and 2019). *LARA Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) Child Protection Referral Follow Up Report—Baseline; –Midline*. Washington, DC.

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