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Making the grade

A model national policy for the prevention, management and elimination of violence against girls in school

preamble

The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights – because education plays an important role in enabling girls to secure other rights. Yet this right is systematically violated in more than 70 countries.

In 2000, countries around the world committed themselves to achieving gender parity in education by 2005, and yet almost no progress has been made. Many reasons have been put forward to explain this failure, not least the lack of political will of national governments and the fact that children in many countries still have to pay to go to school. But there is one hugely significant factor that has not been put clearly on the agenda: the violence that girls face at school, which deters many of them from staying at school and blocks the achievement of many others.

Education helps men and women realise their potential in economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender-based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies.



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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a significant number of international and regional human rights instruments have affirmed the universal right to education for all. The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979¹ in article ten obliges states to “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education, and in particular, on the basis of equality of men and women...”

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)² affirms the right of the child to education (Article 28) and when read together with Article 2, the convention addresses discrimination in children’s access to education.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)³ more specifically tackles discrimination against the girl child. It particularly obliges states and parties to “take special measures in respect of female, gifted and disadvantaged children to ensure access to education for all sections of the community.”

There are numerous international and national commitments stating that girls have a legal right to education, including equal access; however, the existence of these international conventions and other tools has not been sufficient to secure education for all girls.

Recognising the lack of progress in achieving this, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA), noted that “discrimination in girls’ access to education persists in many areas, owing to... early marriages and pregnancies, inadequate and gender-biased teaching and educational materials, sexual harassment... Girls undertake heavy domestic work at a very early age. Girls and young women are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities, often resulting in poor scholastic performance and early drop-out from the educational system.”

It is clear that unless discrimination, harassment and violence in schools are addressed, girls will not be able to enjoy the right to education that has been promised to them in so many national constitutions and in so many legal treaties and international declarations. Violence against girls takes place in the wider context of patriarchy, gender-based discrimination and poverty. For girls around the world, exercising their right to education is a very risky enterprise.

1 UN GA Res. 34/180 adopted on 18 December 1979

2 UN GA Res. 44/25 adopted on 20 November 1989

3 Adopted by the Assembly of Heads of States and Government of the OAU on 26 June 1981 in Nairobi, Kenya

They are at risk in the community, in the family, on the journey to and from school, in the school grounds and even in the classroom. In schools, violence takes a range of forms including aggressive sexual behaviour, intimidation and physical assault by older boys, sexual advances by male teachers, corporal punishment and verbal abuse.

ActionAid International conducted research on violence against girls in schools in early 2004 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Vietnam. This showed that the violence faced in and around schools was a significant factor in forcing them out of the education system. Examples that were highlighted included:

- * sexual harassment in the school environment by education staff, teachers and school boys
- * girls being employed as child labour, bearing the main the burden of housework and taking on the role of caring for younger siblings. There was repeated evidence that excessive housework impacted girls’ performance and attendance in schools, resulting in physical and mental fatigue, absenteeism and poor performance
- * corporal punishment and public shaming by school authorities and teachers, which perpetuates the cycle of absenteeism, low self-esteem and violence at home and in schools
- * patriarchal practices, cultures and traditional hindrances, such as early marriages
- * poverty leading to vulnerability, to trafficking and transactional sex, especially with older men⁴
- * limits to the mobility of girls and fear of violence on the route to school which makes it impossible for girls even to reach schools
- * the exclusion of girls who are married (even where they have been forced into early marriages against their will)
- * the exclusion of girls who are pregnant.

There have been many efforts to contain and even eradicate violence against girls in schools. In most countries in the southern Africa development community (SADC) region, there are various policies and laws that deal with violence against children. For example, Zimbabwe has put in place guidelines for addressing child abuse in schools,⁵ while Lesotho and Namibia have put in place child welfare and health legislation that addresses the welfare of children and their protection from abuse. However, these policies and legislation are not specific to violence against girls nor

4 Amnesty International’s report, Women, HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, states that in 2004 there were reports from Democratic Republic of Congo that young girls were agreeing to have sex in exchange for food and other basic products.

5 See *Secretary’s circular* No. 5 – 2000.

are they consolidated; rather they are scattered in various instruments to deal with child abuse and health in general, and they are implemented by different authorities. This fragmentation of policies and legislation is a major challenge.

Though the existence of violence against girls is widely acknowledged, measures to deal with it tend to fall far short of what is required. This is largely because of the wide range of cultural norms, values and traditions that underpin conceptual understandings of what exactly violence against girls is, and of its impact. Thus for example, research and anecdotal evidence show many communities and families will negotiate with a rapist to marry the girl he violates.

Violence against girls has short and long-term impacts on the lives of the affected girls. In the short term, it could mean the end of schooling. The stakes are now higher than ever. This situation of gender inequality and violence exacerbates women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Young women between 15 and 25 years of age are now the most vulnerable. In addition, statistics also show that in the SADC region, HIV prevalence amongst adults is now more than 20%. Challenging violence in this context really can be a matter of saving lives. Without quality education, girls and women stay in the cycle of poverty, violence, exclusion and further discrimination.

The responsibility to promote and protect girls' rights in education not only lies with government. Various stakeholders also have a responsibility to assist, as well as take their own initiatives. Parents, guardians, educators, law enforcement agencies, the media and individuals must all play their part.

Another challenge to the creation of an environment that promotes gender parity and equity in education is the pressure exerted on governments in developing countries by international financial institutions and donors (IFIs). Analysis of several decades of IFI-imposed structural adjustment programmes has shown that progress in the education sector has been severely dented. Thus, despite the best of political will, in many cases donor conditionality pushes gender equality and provision of quality education to the back burner.

Origins of the model policy

It is against this background that this model policy on the prevention, management and elimination of violence against girls in schools has been developed.

The model policy was developed by a group of education policy experts, civil society activists, teachers' unions, and women's rights experts. All of them were participants in a sub-regional conference on violence against girls held in Harare, May 2006, which was convened by ActionAid International and The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa.

This model is designed to help SADC governments develop an integrated single comprehensive policy on violence against girls. It can be adapted to suit the local context because there is never a 'one size fits all' policy. Civil society groups and movements can use it as an advocacy tool in their negotiations with governments.

This model policy focuses only on violence against girls within schools or the education sector. It does not claim to address violence in the family, or in society generally. Therefore in adapting this model to your own context, it will be important to look at what already exists and how this will complement it – policy coherence is important.

Regardless of whether or not governments establish national policies as recommended here, CSOs can also work directly with schools to help them comply with the guidelines and principles in this model policy. ActionAid will work with all schools it supports to bring their own rules and practices into line with these guidelines and principles.

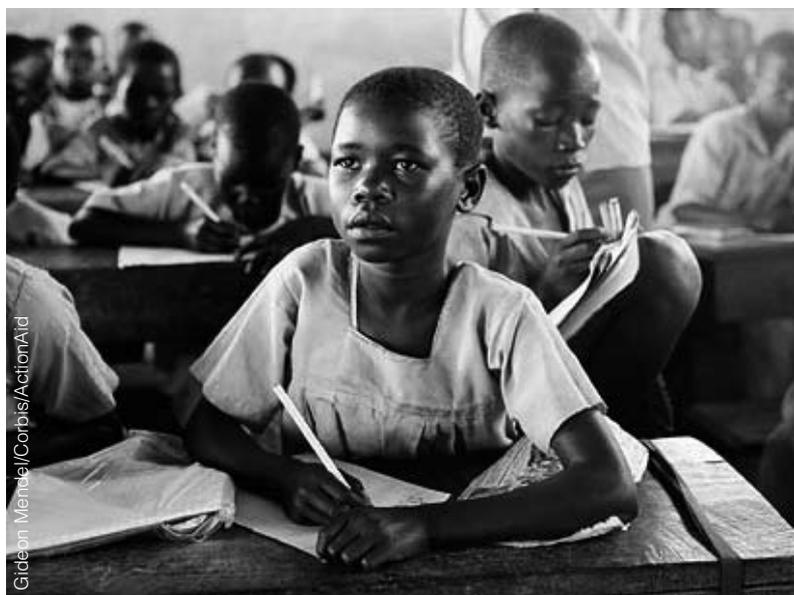


Nick Cobbing/ActionAid

Making the grade

A model national policy for the prevention, management and elimination of violence against girls in school

This model policy is aimed at prevention, management and – in the long term – elimination of violence against girls in schools. This will help ensure girls' access to school, as well as their retention, effective participation and good performance there, in line with the Education for All goals. The policy provides definitions of violence in line with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as the definition of a child.



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Since this policy is being introduced into already existing legislative frameworks, care will need to be taken to ensure coherence between this policy and what already exists. The policy sets out roles and responsibilities for the various stakeholders in the education sector in terms of prevention, identification and reporting of violence against girls, assistance for survivors, how to deal with perpetrators and capacity building.

The policy finally recommends the setting up of a monitoring body made up of stakeholders in the education sector and empowers that body to monitor and evaluate progress in the prevention and elimination of violence against girls in schools.

Rationale

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child state that every child has the right to education. However these rights for the girl child are curtailed by violence, which either prevents them from accessing education entirely or ends their participation in formal education prematurely. As stated in the preamble to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, women and girls do not enjoy human rights as men do because of perceptions of the roles and places of women in any society. It is this discrimination that the Education for All goals acknowledge, particularly goals two and five that relate to the creation of specific conditions for girls and women to access education. It has therefore become imperative to create a policy that recognises the need for girls to be protected against violence in schools and to put in place measures for support when such violence occurs.

By ratifying various conventions and being party to a number of international and regional commitments, government has committed itself to ensuring that women and girls are protected from violence. It must be underlined that, as a result of violence that occurs against girls in their homes, in the community and in the school, there are many girls unable to ever gain access to or complete the education cycle. It is against this backdrop that the policy framework being proposed is envisaged to serve as a tool to curb and eventually eradicate violence against girls in schools. This policy focuses on in-school girls because if schools are made safer, then girls will be able to enrol, stay in school and perform better. And in the longer term, these girls will grow into confident women who can make decisions about their own lives, with better quality of life, and participate in decision making at all levels of society. While private/community schools have come in to provide alternatives to government education or to complement it, there is still a need to ensure that they also comply with this policy – even if they might have different systems. Private/community schools, as with government schools, shall be required to create school/institution-specific policies for addressing violence against girls. Regulations will be crafted to make it mandatory for all private/community schools to develop and adopt school/institution-specific policies and register these policies with the Ministry of Education as a pre-condition for their registration.

Implementation of this policy depends on the commitment of all stakeholders mentioned – not only to the policy itself, but also to the objective of preventing and eradicating violence against girls in schools.

Goal, aims and objectives of the policy

The goal of this model policy is to engender respect for girls' rights to education in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Education For All goals. Its aims and objectives are:

- * to develop a comprehensive policy framework that provides mechanisms and creates guidelines for protecting girls against violence in schools
- * to coordinate and consolidate existing policy frameworks addressing violence against girls in schools
- * to support the development, adoption and adaptation of legislation on issues of violence against girls in schools.

Definition of terms

- * **Violence against girls:** for the purposes of this policy, violence against girls refers to any verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, harassment, torture, inhuman and degrading treatment or any exploitation occurring to in-school girls.
- * **School girls or girls:** any girl below the age of 18 attending a school in a government or private/community school, as well as any place designated as a place for learning and recognised as such by the Ministry of Education.
- * **Child:** for the purposes of this policy a child is any person below the age of 18 years.
- * **Private/community schools:** any school or institution providing primary or secondary education to persons below the age of 18 that is not managed or operated by the Ministry of Education, and includes schools set up by various communities, such as the Greek, Indian, Jewish or other ethnic or religious community.
- * **OVCs:** orphaned and vulnerable children.

The model policy and national legislative frameworks

This policy shall operate in the context of the current national legislative framework and will be implemented in a binding manner as with all legislation, government policies and regulations. In particular, this policy serves to buttress the commitments government has made to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

In addition, this policy consolidates the provisions of the **Education Act** to the extent that it provides for protection of children from any form of violence or abuse in and around the school environment, as well as consolidating government policies with respect to corporal punishment and the non-exclusion of pregnant girls from school. This policy also operates in the context of the current criminal legislation and common law as it relates to verbal and physical assault, sexual violence, exploitation and inhuman/degrading treatment. The policy's implementation is consistent with the government's efforts to protect the health and general welfare of vulnerable persons, especially the girl child.

The provisions in this policy shall be binding upon all stakeholders, except to the extent that they are in direct contradiction or inconsistent with existing national legislation, or the national constitution.

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

1. Government and ministries



1.1 Prevention

All legislation shall be synchronised to be consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child with respect to the right of girls to access education. It is imperative that operatives in government, especially in the Ministry of Education, appreciate that the issue of violence against girls lies in the broader context of discrimination against women and gender-based violence.

Specifically, government shall:

- * Legislate, provide and enforce the right to compulsory and free basic education.
 - Government shall allocate resources to facilitate and monitor implementation of compulsory and free basic education, especially in rural and previously disadvantaged communities.
- * Ensure that the Ministry of Education guarantees all curriculum and learning support materials are gender sensitive and do not depict gender stereotypes.
 - All educational material shall be reviewed for gender stereotypes and accordingly amended.
 - Gender balance in subjects that have been traditionally regarded as male or female must be ensured, and records of the implementation shall be forwarded to the Ministry of Education annually.
 - All schools must be periodically monitored by the Ministry of Education to ensure compliance with the national curriculum and have learning support material that provide learners with positive messages.

- * Accelerate efforts to synchronise all legislation, including codified customary law to define a child as any person below the age of 18 years.
 - In particular efforts must be made to outlaw cultural and other practices such as those that permit child marriages and generally prevent children, especially girls, from accessing education.
 - * Ensure that the Ministry of Education provides policy guidelines that each government or private school/ educational institution shall refer to in developing specific policy on violence against girls and whose enforcement shall be monitored by Ministry of Education inspectors/standards officers.
 - * Commit to accelerating efforts to consolidate all legislation and policies with respect to violence against children in order to create one piece of comprehensive legislation to ensure that:
 - the Ministry of Justice consolidates legislation that protects children from violence and abuse into one act. This act will provide a comprehensive definition of abuse and violence against children as well as make provisions for the punishment of offenders, the protection of survivors and roles and responsibilities for various stakeholders in the implementation of the act
 - violence and abuse against children in the proposed legislation takes into account the definitions of violence and abuse as stated in the Conventions on the Rights of Children and the definitions of violence as stated in the preamble to this policy
 - the proposed legislation shall impose mandatory penalties for acts of violence against girls, including mandatory penalties for verbal and emotional abuse
 - the government shall provide mandatory training in the meaning and effect of the proposed policy for all pre- and in-service school teachers to give effect to the legislation in schools
 - the Ministry of Education shall ensure that the proposed legislation, once enacted, will be incorporated into the training curriculum for teachers as well as into the school curriculum for both primary and secondary education, and that appropriate times and lesson periods are allocated for it
 - learners shall be educated about their rights through awareness programmes conducted by the teachers, civil society organisations, the police, court officials and social welfare officers
 - the national and provincial education departments shall develop mechanisms for coordination with and improved access to schools by officials such as the police, prosecutors and social workers, and for these officials to carry out investigative and child support duties in schools.
 - * Ensure that all incoming expatriate teachers shall be subject to government clearance, to ensure that they do not have criminal records of violence against girls.
 - * Government and other employers of teachers shall provide teaching service regulations that will make violence against girls a chargeable offence and provide sufficient enforcement mechanisms against such acts of violence against girls.
- ## 1.2 Reporting and identification
- The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with other relevant ministries and departments will design tools and methods for collection of sex-disaggregated data on violence in schools.
- * A national database will be set up within six months of the adoption of this policy.
 - * The information collected will be updated on a quarterly basis to reflect trends in violence against girls and will be used to help government to design appropriate intervention strategies based on accurate data.
 - * Government medical health centres, police stations and other designated places shall routinely collect this data and feed into the national database.
- ## 1.3 Dealing with perpetrators
- * Government and other employers of teachers shall draw up teaching service regulations, which will make violence against girls a chargeable offence, and provide sufficient enforcement mechanisms against such acts of violence against girls.
- ## 1.4 Assisting survivors
- * Government shall undertake to provide schools with resources to facilitate the re-entry of pregnant and violated girls into schools.
 - * The government shall commit to raising awareness nationally of the re-entry into schools policy for pregnant and violated girls. This will be done through various media.
- ## 1.5 Capacity building
- * Government shall ensure that parents send girls to receive the first x years of uninterrupted schooling and outline penalties for parents who neglect to send their children to school.

- * To facilitate access to basic education, the welfare arm of government and civil society organisations shall make available resources to orphaned and vulnerable children and other children who, because of poverty, would be unable to access the free and basic education.
- * Government, through the Education for All coordinators, police and the gender directorates in the Ministries of Education and Justice, shall allocate resources for monitoring that all children, and in particular girls, access free and basic education.
- * Government shall provide and enhance resources for adult education and literacy programmes, especially in rural and previously disadvantaged communities.
- * Government shall undertake to make education a continuous process through the provision of alternative and diversified learning modules for youths, especially girls, who may have dropped out of formal education, and ensure that these alternative and diversified modules are not discriminatory in practice or negatively impact on the youths and adults for whom they are designed.
- * Government shall undertake nationwide campaigns using various media, such as community radio and newspapers, mainstream newspapers, radio and television to raise awareness of the availability of free and basic education for children and adults alike.
- * Government shall embark on a nationwide campaign, targeting many audiences and using various media and methods, to highlight the issue of violence against girls in schools and the need to eradicate it.



2. School/institution-specific policies on violence against girls: development and implementation

2.1 Prevention

The government shall ensure that each government or private school/institution offering education to children below the age of 18 years has translated the policy guidelines on violence against girls into a school/institution-specific policy. The said school/institution-specific policies should be reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Education within six months of the adoption of this national policy.

School/institution-specific policies should, among other things:

- * Be framed in language that can be understood by all the learners, teachers, school staff, parents and other school stakeholders.
- * Create specific forums for all learners to be familiarised with the contents of the school policy on violence against girls and ensure that the policy is made a compulsory part of life-skills education.
- * Where possible, ensure that girls are trained in self-defence to avoid violation.
- * Develop a code of conduct for learners in the schools. The development of this code must be a democratic process involving learners, teachers and parents. This will enhance buy-in/acceptance and a sense of ownership by all stakeholders within and around the school. This code of conduct for learners should state:
 - the need for protection of girls from violence in schools and the fact that all learners have a responsibility to prevent violence in general, and against girls in particular
 - what conduct amounts to violence against girls
 - that each student must be furnished with a copy on enrolment and acknowledge receipt of such code through their parent/guardian
 - that parents, guardians and caregivers of learners must also be furnished with such code on enrolment of a child so that they assist their children to uphold the code and foster a culture of mutual respect.
- * Stipulate penalties for acts of violence against girls within the school and state that:
 - penalties for violence against girls within the school should be deterrent
 - the minimal penalty for a learner, for an act of violence against a girl, should be a suspension with rehabilitation and a public announcement made to the whole school
 - where a criminal conviction has been sustained against a male learner, the maximum penalty to be invoked will be expulsion in addition to the normal criminal sanctions that come with the case of violence as established under national law
 - for teachers, if the facts of violence have been proved but there has not been a successful criminal conviction, this should not exonerate the teacher from other disciplinary action, for example suspension
 - where a criminal conviction has been sustained against a teacher, the maximum sentence should be dismissal and relevant criminal sanctions as provided by national law/s
 - teachers who have been convicted of a crime of violence against a girl shall be barred from teaching for life.
- * Curriculum and learning support material as well as subject choice must not reflect gender stereotypes.

2.2 Identification and reporting

Schools shall:

- * Create internal reporting procedures for acts of violence against girls that:
 - place an obligation on the school head to report any acts of violence against any girl – whether occurring within or outside of the school – to the police within 24 hours of having had knowledge of such acts. In the case of the school head being the perpetrator of the act of violence, the teacher(s) designated to channel such cases shall be authorised to make the police report.

- provide for clear reporting structures and channels, and designate a specific teacher/s to receive complaints. In addition, the policy should allow for reports to be made to any teacher to whom the girl may feel comfortable reporting. The said teacher/s on receiving such reports will provide the school head with a report of the said act of violence within 24 hours. In the case of the school head being the perpetrator of the act of violence, the report may be lodged with the designated teacher or any other teacher the girl feels comfortable with in the same school
 - provide for an official report of an act of violence against a girl being lodged with the district education office and the police on the prescribed form, with a copy to parents/guardians within 48 hours of such a report being made
 - ensure that the absence of the school head should not prevent the designated member of staff to whom a report of an act of violence has been made from making a report to the police.
- * Create guidelines for reporting of acts of violence against girls to the police and other relevant authorities, such as:
- mechanisms for anonymous reporting of acts of violence against girls in schools through other means such as letters deposited in 'suggestion boxes'
 - investigation procedures for the acts of violence perpetrated in schools that respect the privacy and security of the affected girl and do not interfere with her right to education
 - seeking support of parents of girls who have been violated during investigations to prevent them from forcing girls affected into silence or influencing their statements and testimony to the police or the courts.
- each school shall allow each student who may have suffered violence both in the school and/or in the home additional time to catch up on school work with the necessary support from teachers and other school resources
 - girls who speak out on violence in school, in their individual capacity, should be given requisite emotional and psychological support, as well as protection from harassment, inducement or humiliation in the school or outside the school by fellow learners, teachers and other members of the school community
 - the Ministry of Health shall ensure awareness and the availability of free and appropriate medical services, including HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), to girls who have been violated.
- * Provide for basic medical and psychosocial support services for abused girls, including girls who may be pregnant, and in particular:
- introduce full day counselling services for learners at all schools, to be offered by child counsellors
 - introduce primary health care facilities and referral services to cater for all learners, and to make it easier for affected girls to access medical care following an act of violence (this should include access to free and safe abortion as provided under the law)
 - provide for the formation of support groups within schools for emotional support and to counter negative peer pressure for girls who have suffered violence
 - empower girls within the schools to be 'whistle blowers' for girls who are not brave enough to report violence committed against them
 - protect whistle blowers from any discrimination, harassment and intimidation and afford them the requisite emotional and psychological support.

2.3 Assisting survivors

Schools must ensure that they:

- * Provide medical, psychosocial and other support necessary for girls who are abused and state that:
 - each school must have mechanisms to access a trained child counsellor to provide counselling and emotional/psychological support to girls who will have experienced violence
 - where acts of violence have been perpetrated within the school, the school shall be obliged to provide professional psychological and psychiatric services should the affected girl so require

2.4 Dealing with perpetrators

School policies shall:

- * Outline interim measures to be taken against an alleged perpetrator of an act of violence and state that:
 - alleged perpetrators of violence should be suspended from the school pending investigation and hearing of the case
 - alleged perpetrators should be prevented from interfering with the affected girl, material witnesses or her friends in the school pending hearing and finalisation of the case.

3. School boards/school governing bodies



3.1 Prevention

It is critical that, as schools develop school/institution-specific policies on violence against girls in schools, school governing bodies should be active participants in the design of the policy. It is recommended that each school/institution-specific policy should make provision for the involvement of the school governing body in addressing violence against girls.

- * School boards and PTAs shall be trained and involved in vetting curricula and learning support material to ensure that learners are not subjected to gender stereotyping through curriculum and learning support materials.
- * Where appropriate such bodies should be involved in awareness raising, and generally support school authorities in enforcement of the policy.

3.2 Identification and reporting

School-level policy development:

- * The school governing body and PTA shall monitor the implementation of the school/institution-specific policy and follow up reported cases of violence against girls, especially with respect to teachers and staff that are employed by the board.

3.3 Assisting survivors

- * The school governing body and PTA as part of the school community, shall identify providers of psychological support for violated children. They will also provide support networks for orphans and vulnerable children, to ensure that they do not become vulnerable or exposed to acts of violence.

3.4 Capacity building

- * School governing bodies and PTAs shall spearhead initiatives aimed at engendering progressive cultural practices and attitudes. Such initiatives may include mobilising mothers and other adults that children will trust to provide emotional and psychological support as well as guidance outside school.
- * School governing bodies and PTAs shall be trained to understand violence as a major hindrance to girls' access to and participation in schooling, its impact, and the role of the school community to reduce incidents.

4. Girls with special needs

4.1 Prevention

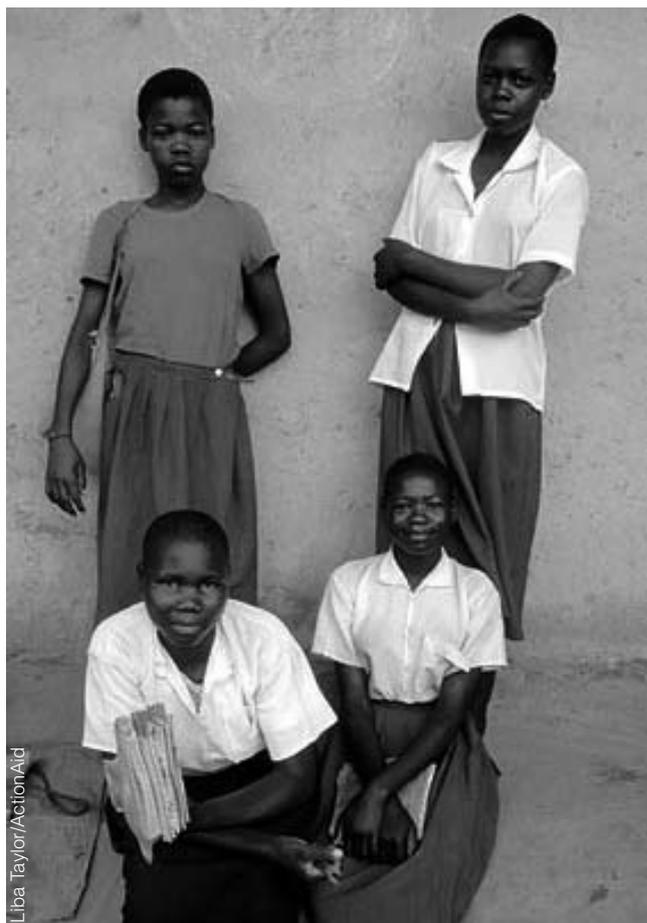
Girls with special needs include girls with disabilities, orphans, refugees, internally displaced girls, pregnant girls and teenage mothers. These girls are more vulnerable to violence because of their conditions. School policies on violence against girls should take these special circumstances into account.

- * Efforts must be made to ensure that these girls are also given specialised reproductive health and sex education.
- * Where possible, girls should be trained in specialised self-defence to avoid violation.

4.2 Assisting survivors

Schools should:

- * Introduce child care facilities to cater for schoolgirl mothers and integrate these with child care facilities for teachers to remove stigma on the girls' children as well as the girls themselves.
- * Aggressively implement the right of pregnant girls to return to school after delivery.
 - Each school should give an annual report to the Ministry of Education of the number of students who fell pregnant and remained in school, indicating to the Ministry of Education the number who chose to transfer or drop out, and the reasons for the action taken.
 - Each school to annually compile a list of vulnerable girls, and indicate what special measures were put in place to promote and protect their rights.
- * Government shall provide schools with a comprehensive referral network for girls with special needs to facilitate the girls' access to various government departments such as the psychological/counselling department, social welfare and survivor-friendly police units.



4.3 Capacity building

Girls with disabilities and other special needs must be empowered through various educational programmes to value themselves psychologically and to resist abuse or exploitation.

- * There may be a need for schools to support girls who head households with assistance from social welfare programmes, so as to minimise their vulnerability to violence. Schools will also equip the girls with the capacity for sustainable livelihoods.
- * There is a need for schools to develop counselling programmes specifically aimed at these girls as they have different emotional and psychological needs to other girls.

5. Teachers and teachers' unions

5.1 Prevention

Teachers constitute the majority of adult persons who closely interact with girls in schools. It is imperative that teachers' unions come up with guidelines for how teachers, as professionals, will interact with girls in schools. Teachers' unions have over the years designed their codes of conduct for teachers, and what follows are some of the issues that they should address in relation to violence against girls in schools.

- * The teachers' union codes of conduct shall:
 - be aligned to the Education International Code of Conduct with respect to definitions of violence against school girls, as well as teachers' obligations and duties
 - provide for the promotion of an ethos or culture of respect in the schools
 - be aligned to the government or teaching service regulations, which make violence against girls a chargeable offence.

- * All teachers' union codes must be registered with the relevant government ministry, to ensure compliance with the provisions of this national policy.
 - Each teachers' union must ensure that it provides a code of conduct to any school/institution where its members are employed.
 - Each code of conduct must state the relevant penalties for the various acts of violence against girls in line with this national policy and national legislation.

5.2 Assisting survivors

With respect to handling reports of violence for teachers' unions, guidelines shall make provision for:

- * a teacher who receives a report of violence to be entitled to legal and other support should s/he be victimised for reporting or bringing to light an act of violence against any girl in a school.
- * any teacher to whom a report of an act of violence has been made to be obliged to treat the report with the utmost confidentiality, only divulging information to relevant authorities for the matter to be prosecuted.

5.3 Dealing with perpetrators

Guidelines for teachers' unions for dealing with teachers who are accused of committing acts of violence against girls should state, among other things, that:

- * any teacher against whom a report of complicity to an act of violence has been made shall be dealt with as if s/he were accused of the act of violence
- * any teacher who is subsequently found guilty of committing an act of violence against any girl shall be barred from being a member or holding office in a teachers' union for life
- * any teacher against whom a report of an act of violence has been made must be suspended from the teachers' union, both as a member and office bearer, pending hearing and determination in the matter.



6. Teacher training and in-service training



6.1 Prevention

There is a need to heighten teachers' commitment to protecting girls from violence in schools both in the general education system and in their classrooms in particular. Government needs to ensure that teacher training institutions integrate violence against girls awareness in the pre- and in-service training curriculum as part of teacher training.

6.2 Capacity building

- * Build teachers' capacity to prevent violence against girls through gender-responsible pedagogy training and training to eliminate gender stereotypes.
- * Curriculum should also provide for exposure to international conventions and instruments to broaden teachers' general knowledge and appreciation.
- * Specialised in-service training should be provided to emphasise the need for teachers, especially male teachers, to take an active role in preventing violence against girls in schools.

Monitoring and evaluation

The success of this policy depends on the commitment of all stakeholders. To that end, government, civil society and the various stakeholders must commit to monitoring the implementation of this policy. All stakeholders must also commit to continuous evaluation of the strategies employed in implementing this policy in order to meet its aims and objectives.

In particular:

- * A national monitoring and evaluation committee shall be established comprising representatives from the education sector, government, civil society and other stakeholders. The Education for All coordinators in the Ministry of Education shall be tasked with setting up this national monitoring and evaluation committee.
- * This national monitoring and evaluation committee shall be given the task of:
 - monitoring the implementation of this policy by the various stakeholders as outlined in this policy
 - evaluating the strategies employed by the various stakeholders in preventing and eradicating violence against girls in schools
 - coordinating all advocacy efforts with respect to changes in legislation, policies and regulations pertaining to preventing and eradicating violence against girls in schools.



Review and revision

The revision of this policy shall be the responsibility of the national monitoring and evaluation committee in consultation with the Minister of Education and the Education for All Coordinators. In addition, this policy will be reviewed:

- * Annually, by the relevant government ministry, following the publication of data on instances of violence against girls in schools.
- * Upon the recommendation of stakeholders in the education sector, following written submission of such request with reasons for the review or revisions. This must be submitted to the Education for All coordinator and the national committee on monitoring and evaluation of this policy.