



# From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World:

## Make Education Safe for all!

### Putting SAFETY and SECURITY at the Heart of EDUCATION

## 16 STEPS to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence

An estimated 246 million girls and boys are harassed and abused in and around school every year.<sup>1</sup> School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) can take the form of psychological, physical and sexual violence against boys and girls in and around and while on the way to and from schools.

SRGBV is a grave violation of human rights and impedes a child's right to education; it affects their psychological, physical and social well-being and ability to learn.

Both boys and girls are vulnerable to different forms of violence in and around schools. SRGBV stems from deeply rooted gender norms, stereotypes, systemic inequalities and unequal power dynamics based on gender. Situations of protracted conflict, displacement and poverty exacerbate children's vulnerability to SRGBV.

SRGBV includes explicit threats or acts of physical violence, bullying, verbal or sexual harassment, non-consensual touching, sexual coercion and assault, and rape. Other implicit acts of SRGBV stem from everyday school practices that reinforce stereotyping and gender inequality, and encourage violent or unsafe environments especially against those who do not conform to mainstream conceptions of masculinity or femininity. Corporal punishment and discipline are also often used in schools in gendered and discriminatory ways. Around the world, male and female educators and students can be victims and perpetrators of violence, although the extent and form can differ and vary across countries and within regions.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence suggests that SRGBV is detrimental to learning and has serious physical and mental health effects. It negatively impacts children's ability to participate in school activities, can cause lower achievement and performance, lead to school dropout.

The Global Working Group for SRGBV is made up of over 30 partners working to end school-related gender-based violence

While schools mirror gender inequalities and discrimination that exists in the home and within communities and societies at large, schools can also play a transformative role in shifting harmful gender norms and discriminatory practices. Schools need to become safe and secure environments where children learn to develop mutual respect and an understanding of gender equality and raise their voices against discrimination and gender-based violence. When a child is able to access a safe, quality education, he or she unlocks his or her own potential and is better able to contribute to the well-being of their community.

When schools are free from gender based violence, there are positive ripple effects beyond the classroom, including a transformation of traditional gender narratives and changes in the way girls and boys see and engage with the world around them.

## act:onaid

Visit the Working Group online: <http://bit.ly/srgbv16days>



# We call on all stakeholders to Respect, Protect, and Fulfil the Right to Education free from Violence

## We call on UN Agencies and Member States to:

1. Recognize that SRGBV is an important barrier to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, Goals 3, 4, 5 and 16<sup>3</sup>

## We call on Governments to:

2. Adopt comprehensive, gender-responsive and multi-sectoral action plans to eliminate SRGBV, including enactment of laws that explicitly protect children from all forms of violence and the provision of specific budget allocations for the implementation and dissemination of plans)
3. Establish safe and effective child-friendly reporting mechanisms and multi-sectoral response services for SRGBV that are clear, proportionate and consistent with the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC)

## We call on Donors to:

4. Prioritize and expand financing to support programs addressing SRGBV, particularly among under-served, marginalized populations as well as prevention programs that address non-violent conflict resolution, shifting harmful gender norms, power inequalities and dynamics
5. Provide funding for formative and action research, program and policy evaluations to build the evidence base and good practice on SRGBV in the global south; particularly its impact on psychological and physical well-being and learning achievement, effective interventions, prevalence, reporting and inclusion in education sector planning

## We call on Ministries of Education, school administrators and education unions to:

6. Adopt a code of professional ethics that explicitly addresses SRGBV and is to be observed by all members; enforce school-based reporting and response protocols for educators, support personnel and managers, including the appointment of 'focus' educators as a first point of contact for children who experience violence
7. Ensure that education content, including curricula, textbooks, pedagogy and classroom practices are gender-sensitive and promote peace and gender equitable norms and attitudes, including through comprehensive sexuality education.
8. Strengthen pre- and in-service teacher education programmes to make them gender-sensitive and improve and boost the capacity of educators to promote gender equitable norms in their educational practice

9. Partner with civil society actors to advocate for the protection of students and staff alike within educational settings, especially in the context of war and armed conflict

## We call on Researchers to:

10. Conduct wide-ranging research to contribute to a strong evidence base and address the gaps in knowledge on the drivers, risks and cultural contexts of SRGBV, including children marginalised by poverty, ethnicity, language, caste, disability, religion, refugee status, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity

## We call on NGOs, civil society and the international development community to:

11. Drive a global movement, together with men and boys, communities and stakeholders to eliminate SRGBV and promote access to schools as violence-free, safe spaces for learning, for all educators and students
12. Expand programming to address SRGBV by educating and empowering communities and stakeholders at all levels, establishing multi-sectoral coordination, fostering community participation and the voices of boys and girls; and integrate SRGBV into other initiatives on HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention in schools, humanitarian response and peacebuilding, children's rights, gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment
13. Develop and disseminate evidence-based program guidance, tools and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which demonstrate how to address SRGBV effectively
14. Advocate with governments, donors and education authorities for the fulfilment and protection of children's rights to access formal and non-formal learning environments that are safe and free from violence; and recognise that SRGBV often increases in conflict affected countries and during emergencies

## We call on Communities to:

15. Unite to end harmful social and cultural beliefs that give rise to violence against girls and boys in schools; end harmful practices; and strengthen reporting and response mechanisms within communities and educational institutions

## We call on Girls and Boys to:

16. Stand up and be recognized as change-makers. Raise your voices to act against SRGBV and demand safe and secure school environments for all girls and boys around the world

1. Plan International. 2013. A Girl's Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to end gender-based violence at school. Woking, UK, Plan International  
2. EFA GMR (2015). School Related Gender Based Violence is preventing the achievement of Education For All. Policy Paper #17. UNESCO and UNGEI  
3. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages  
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities  
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels