

A STUDY OF CHILD ABUSE IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This report presents the findings of a study undertaken in 11 of the 24 dioceses in Kenya. The field data was collected between May and June 2015 using a mixed method and multi-informant approach. The site of the study was the school and 79 schools were reached, with children, teachers and parents serving as main informants. The key finding is that school-going children are not safe. Verbal and physical abuse is very rampant with 8 of every 10 children being victims. Additionally, 3 of every 10 children have suffered from sexual harassment and abuse. The most unsafe place is the home, followed by the school. The study informants see the solution to lie in a wholesome approach that involves the school and the home/community, with emphasis put in guidance and counselling for teachers and various 'information and empowerment' programs for children and their parents. A successful approach will however demand appraisal of our value system for children seem to be victims of a lapsing morality. Programs will also need to be gendered to ensure that the needs of boys and girls are sufficiently addressed.

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Finally, we dedicate this piece of work, to the children, who strive on to achieve an education despite the very harsh circumstances they have undergone.

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1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This section introduces the context, objectives of the study, operational definition of terms and conceptualization of the study.

1.1 THE CONTEXT

Violence against children is a global phenomenon that spans continents, countries and socioeconomic classes. This is affirmed by UNICEF, 2011:1 who state that ‘millions of children worldwide from all socio-economic backgrounds, across all ages, religions and cultures suffer violence, exploitation and abuse every day. Millions more are at risk’. There is significant evidence that violence, exploitation and abuse can affect a child’s physical and mental health in the short and longer term, impairing their ability to learn and socialize, and impacting their transition to adulthood with adverse consequences later in life (UNICEF, 2010; UNICEF 2011). It is a problem that cannot be ignored.

Abuse against children is often categorized in three broad areas: sexual, physical and verbal/psychological/emotional. It is not easy to estimate the extent and magnitude of violence meted against children. Most of the analyses on child abuse and neglect, focusses on sexual abuse. Globally, it is estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact. Yet, it is also estimated that most abuse is underreported either because the victims are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, or the adults who observe or suspect the abuse are unsure of what to do (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014). Therefore, even in this highly studied form of violence against children, the true incidence and prevalence cannot be readily or reliably determined. These measures can only be estimated. This knowledge gap is particularly acute in low and middle income countries where studies related to violence against children with focus on sexual abuse are inconsistent and underrepresented (Veneema T, 2015).

Abuse meted against children has in recent years received high profile attention, as evidenced by the 2006 UN World Report on Violence against Children¹. It is also during this period that a few large scale studies were reported in Kenya. In order to document the degree and extent of abuse against children and general lack of safety, two studies shall be used namely, the 2006 Action Aid study on Violence Against Girls Education (VAGE) and the 2010 UNICEF/CDC Violence against Children in Kenya National Survey. The 2006 study sponsored by Action Aid was undertaken in 11 districts, 70 schools with evidence from 1749 children (of whom 1171 were girls and 578 were boys). In this study, 9 out of 10 children reported to have been both physically and verbally abused. More girls (91%) received verbal lashing. 60% females, as opposed to 58% males had been sexually harassed while slightly more boys (29%) than girls (24%) reported to have been sexually abused. Most of the abuse occurred at home followed by school, and the perpetrators were mainly reported to be peers, followed by family members (when lumped together). Teachers received high mentions in verbal and physical abuse. The details are in Table 1a.

¹UNESCO (2015) School-related gender based violence is preventing achievement of quality education for all. Policy Paper 17. ED/EFA/MRT/2015/PP/17/REV

Table 1a: Summary of the Prevalence of Child Abuse and the perpetrators 2006 VAGE Study

		Verbal Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual harassment	Sexual Abuse
Prevalence		89%	91%	59%	26%
Perpetrators	Peers	50%	32%	43% + 17% (boy/girlfriend). Total 60%	59%
	Family members	34%	43%	3%	14%
	Teachers	4.8%	19%	5%	1%
	Strangers	4%	6%	16%	18%
	Neighbours	4.8%	0	6%	
Others		4%	0	10%	8%

The UNICEF 2010 household national survey covered 1306 females and 1622 males aged between 13 and 24 years. The findings indicate that 32% females and 18% males have been sexually violated, 66% females and 73% males have been physically violated while 13% females and 9% males experienced all three forms of violence during their childhood. The main perpetrators of sexual violence were boy/girlfriends (47 and 43% respectively) while for physical violence, the main perpetrators were reported to be mothers/fathers, followed by teachers and then the police.

It is notable that the margins of difference from these national studies are very wide. This could be explained by the fact that varied methodological approaches are used. One study is school based while the other is household based, they cover different age ranges and phrase their questions in different ways. This notwithstanding, there are certain agreements: first, the prevalence of abuse against children in Kenya remains high; second the high rates of child to child abuse is worrying; and finally the home and the school remain the most unsafe places for children.

In an attempt to address the issue of violence meted against children, efforts at the legal/policy levels have been attempted. As a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC, (1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, ACRWC, (1990), Kenya has committed to respond to and prevent of all forms of violence against children. The Children's Act (2001); the Sexual Offences Act (2006); the National Plan of Action for Children (2008); and the Constitution of Kenya (2010) all stipulate laws and policies safeguarding the rights of the child and protecting children from various forms of abuse and neglect. In 2001, the Kenyan government banned the use of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools. The Sexual Offences Act (2006) provides exhaustive definitions of child sexual abuse in Kenya, including sexual contact with unmarried girls before age 16 and boys before age 12, trafficking, defilement, forced marriage, and incest. It further criminalizes any person including a jurist accused of child trafficking or being involved in child sex tourism, child prostitution, or child pornography (Sexual Offences Act of 2006). The National Plan of Action for Children (2008) contains a wide range of activities aimed at safeguarding children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation (National Council for Children's Services, 2013: v). The National Plan of Action for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (2006) aims at ensuring that all children in Kenya, who are orphaned or vulnerable, are protected and supported in order to achieve their full potential (2006). The Employment Act (2007) criminalizes the employment of children. It states that notwithstanding any

provision of any written law, no person shall employ a child in any activity, which constitutes worst form of child labour, no person shall employ a child who has not attained the age of thirteen years whether gainfully or otherwise in any undertaking.

These Acts spell out the heavy penalties for the various offences of violence against children (Lalore, 2004: 841). There has further been an attempt to domesticate these laws and integrate them within the educational practice. This is evidenced by the articulation of the School Safety Standards Manual (2008) and the Child Friendly Schools Manual (2008) by the Ministry of Education.

Despite these commitments to safeguard children against abuse and neglect, many are in agreement that 'it has been difficult to translate this national imperative to the actual protection of children from sexual, physical and emotional violence' (UNICEF, 2010: 1). The National Council for Children's Services (2013: v) concurs that Kenya has experienced a number of challenges in upholding their commitment to child protection, which has been partially the result of inadequate legal measures. Indeed, the discourse still remains one of being reactive by redressing abuse rather than proactive by promoting safety.

Both State and non-state actors continue to concert efforts to address abuse of children. Non state actors have often invested in interventions, one such being the Child Safety and Protection Program (CSPP) hosted by the Kenya Catholic Secretariat Commission for Religious Education (KCS). It is in an effort to further understand the extent of the problem, and the underlying causes, that KCS facilitated this study.

1.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

This study was commissioned by the Kenya Catholic Secretariat Commission for Religious Education (KSC) which has since 2012 been implementing the Child Safety Protection Program (CSPP) in its sponsored schools. The study had three main three objectives, to

- i. Establish the prevalence of child abuse and neglect amongst school going children
- ii. Establish the perpetrators of child abuse and neglect
- iii. Present an analysis of the causes (immediate and underlying)

1.3 STUDY CONCEPTUALIZATION

This study examines the phenomenon of child abuse based on the following premises; that it is a child's fundamental and constitutional right to be safe and secure; and that as a victim of abuse, the child stands the risk of physical, emotional and mental impairment both in the short and long term and that this can adversely affect their opportunities to learn and thrive. Veneema (2015, Action Aid (2014) and UNICEF (2011) are among the authors who examine the negative, lasting impacts abuse has on children in terms of their health be it physical or mental, their education and their social behavior. Violence can lead to negative social behavior, low self-esteem, which can affect school participation.

Context analysis affirms that the Kenyan child is increasingly vulnerable to social threats and pressures. The continued reports of incidences of child sexual abuse, verbal abuse, school fires amongst others, affirm there is threatened safety for school children. Given the diminishing social safety nets for children that existed within communities, the long term solutions are increasingly being sought from institutions, such as the school. Yet, there is also growing concern that school based violence is getting institutionalized, that its gendered dimensions do not receive adequate scrutiny and that analysis of the causes, effects and solutions are often done in isolation from the community underpinnings. These conflicting observations formed an important pivot for the study.

The primary respondents for the study were the children themselves, who not only formed the largest sample, but were involved using a variety of methods and research tools. The reason for the bottom up approach was to ensure that their perspectives formed the starting point of evidence generation. Literature also points to peer to peer abuse as being the most prevalent, meaning that any evidence generation must include the group that is most affected.

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Child abuse: Can be physical, sexual, psychological or mental².

Sexual Violence: “Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality; using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and home”³

Child Sexual Abuse: “The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, as in unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, that activity is intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person” (WHO)

Female circumcision: “means the cutting and removal of part or all of the female genitalia through cliteridectomy, excision, infibulation and other such practices”⁴

Incest: The physical and/or psychological exploitation of the sexual integrity of children and adolescents perpetrated by someone with whom the child has a relationship of trust.

Physical Violence: Physical act of violence such as being caned, slapped, battered, being violently shaken, pushed, hit with a fist, kicked, whipped, threatened with a knife, burning, scalding.

² The Children Act Cap 586, Laws of Kenya

³ WHO definition as quoted in Plowmann, P 2004 Scoping Violence against girls and education. A global picture. Submitted to Action Aid.

⁴ The Children Act Cap 586, Laws of Kenya

Verbal/Psychological/Emotional Violence: Refers to any actions that disturb the feelings and emotional well bearing of children. Includes insults, use of hurtful words.

Neglect: Failure of a parent, caregiver, guardian or institution charged with responsibility of the child to provide basic necessities of shelter, clothing, nutrition, medical attention and education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN: THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE

This literature review will discuss the following attributes of violence against children, drawing from global literature but with a focus on Kenya:

- i. The legal and regulatory environment
- ii. Forms and prevalence of Violence
- iii. Place and Perpetrators of violence against children
- iv. Causal effects of abuse
- v. Consequences on children
- vi. Recommendations from the Literature review

2.1 THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

As a member of the global community, Kenya is a signatory to a number of internationally legally binding documents and protocols. The laws have further been domesticated and a series of policies and manuals developed. This section presents a summary of the key salient laws and policies and thereafter reflects on the challenges of translating policies to action.

2.1.1 The Key Laws and Policies

Year	Document	Emphasis
1989	UN Convention on the Rights of the child	Articles 19 and 28(2) requires states to protect children from “all forms of physical or mental violence” while in the care of adults or others and for the children to be treated with the dignity befitting all humans. It calls for protection of children from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including protection against kidnapping(11), against abuse and neglect,(19) refugee children(22) disabled children (23), child labour (32), sexual exploitation (34), drug abuse(33), sale, trafficking and abduction (35), torture and cruel treatment (37) and armed conflict (38) among others.
1990	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	Articles 11 and 16 requires that member states ensure children are treated with respect and dignity while being disciplined at home and at school; the rights and welfare of children should be safeguarded; they should be protected from any form of abuse or neglect while under the care of parent, guardian or school authority, Protection from child labour (15), against child abuse and torture (16), protection against Harmful Social and Cultural Practices (21), armed conflicts (22), protection of Refugee Children (23), protection from sexual exploitation (27), against sale, trafficking and Abduction (29)
2001	The Children’s Act	Defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, and entitles children to protection from all forms of violence and abuse It stipulates protection of children with disabilities (12), as well as the general protection of children from physical and psychological abuse, neglect and any other form of exploitation including sale, trafficking or abduction by any

		person (13(1). Children are also protected from harmful cultural rites, customs or traditional practices (14), sexual exploitation (15), drugs (16) torture and deprivation of liberty 18(i). The Act further stipulates that children have a right to know and be cared for by their parents, and gives parents the responsibility of providing their children with education, guidance, medical care, adequate diet, shelter, clothing (23:2:a). The Act also states that, notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, no child shall be subjected to capital punishment or life imprisonment. The parents have the duty to protect the child from neglect, discrimination and abuse (23 (2b).
2001	Corporal Punishment Ban	Prohibits all forms of physical abuse, such as caning, on children.
2003	The persons with Disabilities Act	This Act provides a comprehensive legal framework, which outlaws all forms of discriminative treatment of persons with special needs and disabilities. The Act protects persons (including children) with disabilities from being concealed by their parents, guardian or next of kin in a manner as to deny them opportunities and services (25).
2006	The Sexual Offences Act, No 3 of 2006	Agrees with the definition of a child as stated in the Children's Act, and spells out varied punishments to be meted against perpetrators of child defilement or other indecent acts. It prohibits any person of child trafficking (13) or being involved in child sex tourism (14), child prostitution (15), or child pornography (16).
2006	The National Plan of Action for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs)	It states that children in Kenya, who are orphaned or vulnerable, should be protected and supported in order to achieve their full potential (1.2.2). it further states that programs for the care, support, protection and development of OVC shall respect cultural belief systems and ethical values – except where these are determined to cause harm to the child(1.4(b), it prohibits discrimination against children in regard to access and provision of care, support and protection(1.4(c), it also provides for the protection of the needs of children who are marginalized or who have special needs(1.4(e), it states that the best interests of the child shall guide all decision making and child participation will be upheld at all levels (1.4(h), birth registration and other necessities(CAP 2, PSA 3).
2007	The Employment Act	It states that notwithstanding any provision of any written law, no person shall employ a child in any activity, which constitutes worst form of child labour (53:1), no person shall employ a child who has not attained the age of thirteen years whether gainfully or otherwise in any undertaking (56:1
2008	The School Safety Standards Manual	It categorises 12 core areas from physical attributes of the school (such as fencing) to issues of sexual safety that need to be observed within a school setting.
2008	The Child Friendly Schools Manual	Stipulates the warning signs of abused children (2.5.1). It further stipulates that boys and girls do not and will not report that they are victims of violence and are in a crisis. It also gives a list of external characteristics of an abused child, which may include physical symptoms, habit clues, Educational concerns and emotional indicators (2.5.2).
2008	The National	Contains a range of activities aimed at safeguarding children's rights to survival,

	Plan of Action for Children	development, protection and participation
2009	The Penal code Amendment Act	states that any person accused of child stealing, i.e. a child under the age of 14 years, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for seven years (174)
2010	The Constitution of Kenya	Article 53 (1) states that every child has the right be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour
2019	The Kenya Counter trafficking in Persons Law	Defines child trafficking as fostering and offering guardianship to a child for human trafficking purposes. It stipulates that this offence is punishable by a fine of not less than fifteen years or a fine KES. 10 million or both. Subsequent conviction could lead to life imprisonment (ii)
2013	The Basic Education Act	Stipulates that every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education (26:1).It shall be the responsibility of parents to admit his or her child in school (29). It also stipulates that no person shall employ a child of compulsory school age in any labour or occupation that prevents such child from attending school (35). It prohibits against physical punishment and mental harassment of the child (43:1).

2.1.2 Challenges of Translating Policy to Practice

Despite commitments to safeguard children from abuse and against neglect, many are in agreement that ‘it has been difficult to translate this national imperative to the actual protection of children from sexual, physical and emotional violence’ (UNICEF, 2010: 1). According to the National Council for Children’s Services (2013: v), Kenya has experienced a number of challenges in upholding their commitment to child protection, which has been partially the result of inadequate legal measures. Mildred & Plummer (2009:605) and Plummer and Njuguna (2009) are among the authors who observe that despite laws created to protect children dating back to 1964 (Children and Young Persons Act 1964), and a major legislative victory with the enactment of the sexual offence Act in 2006, Kenya still faces implementation impediments. Responses to child sexual abuse are hampered by ‘a lack of minimum sentences and a failure to acknowledge the sexual abuse of male children’ (Plummer and Njuguna, 2009: 525; UNICEF, 2010). While the ‘the Sexual Offences Act has led to a push for reporting, convictions still remain low’. Few judges or juries in Kenya view the sexual abuse of a child as an act serious enough to warrant mandatory life imprisonment, the penalty for assaulting a child under 12’ (Mildred & Plummer, 2009: 605).

Most of the analyses of child abuse and neglect, focuses on sexual abuse. Globally, It is estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact .Yet, it is also estimated that most abuse is underreported either because the victims are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, or the adults who observe or suspect the abuse are unsure of what to do (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014). Therefore, even in this highly studied form of violence against children, the true incidence and prevalence cannot be readily or reliably determined. These measures can only be estimated. This

knowledge gap is particularly acute in low and middle income countries where studies related to violence against children with focus on sexual abuse are inconsistent and underrepresented (Veneema T, 2015).

Partially, as a result of inadequate legal measures, Kenya has experienced a number of challenges in relation to child protection, including physical violation, economic exploitation, emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment, child trafficking, sexual exploitation and other untold sufferings (National Council for Children’s Services, 2013). Mugo (2013), points out that while the Education Act prohibits the use of corporal punishment in schools, a report by Human Rights Watch indicates that, the infliction of corporal punishment is routine, arbitrary and often brutal. On the other hand, the Children Act does not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment by parents, which implies that this kind of punishment is lawful in Kenyan homes. So far, the measures taken to address corporal punishment have been focused on schools and other institutions. He further points out that the Children Act prohibits female circumcision, however considering that the ritual of female circumcision is a deeply rooted cultural tradition in some Kenyan communities, it is, however, obvious that the legal provision is only a first step. There is a real challenge to create changes in attitudes and develop new forms of initiation rites that do not lead to physical harms (Mugo, J. 2013:25).

Many cases of violence against children are addressed through informal channels such as arbitration by elders and parents who impose fines on the perpetrators and disregard or ignore the wishes and feelings of the child (Parkes, 2013). The cases that reach the formal systems are very few, almost negligible (see table 1).

Table 2a: **Violence against girls reaching formal systems.**

	Moz (%)	Ghana (%)	Kenya (%)
<i>Cases that reached formal channels</i>	0	5.1	3.4
<i>Cases that received formal help</i>	0.04	0.05	1.05

2.2 FORMS AND PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The ability to estimate the continental and national magnitude of violence against children is limited. This is due to the fact that most of the studies done previously have focused on either adults or special groups and not specifically on children or adolescents thus preventing independent estimates of the magnitude of the problem facing children. Moreover, these studies are done in different countries or different regions of Kenya using different definitions, for example, sexual violence, making it difficult to generalize the findings of a single study to Kenya as a whole or combining the findings of different studies to get an overall national picture. The studies have also ignored the issue of sexual violence against the boy child, or have underrepresented it due to the cultural influences that reduce reporting by males. The studies have therefore only raised awareness of the existence of the problem of violence against children so far (UNICEF, 2010).

2.2.1 Physical violence

This is violence against a child whereby the child is directly assaulted. Physical violence may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, whip/cane scars, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child. This form of violence is meted on children mainly by adults both in the home and school environment in the guise of instilling discipline. Corporal punishment within the family remains socially accepted and legal in many states in all regions. Globally, less than 20 states have prohibited all forms of corporal punishment, including in the family. This means that just 53 million of the world's 2,187 million children live in countries where the law grants them the same protection as adults from being assaulted. Studies on the prevalence of corporal punishment are relatively low worldwide. This is an indicator of the low priority given towards the elimination of this form of violence against children. Prevalence figures vary widely between and within states. They vary from less than 10% to almost 100%, although the majority lies towards the upper end of the range and very few give a figure below 40%. Boys are said to be more severely abused physically than girls both at home and at school. For methodological reasons however these figures are not directly comparable, but they nevertheless bring to light the huge numbers of children suffering physical violence at the hands of parents and teachers (UN secretary General's study on violence against children, 2006).

Corporal punishment and deliberate humiliation of children in their families and schools has become more visible with time, and it has begun to be recognized as a clear violation of their human rights. (UN secretary General's study on violence against children, 2006).

2.2.2 Sexual violence

This is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse encompasses a wide variety of abusive acts or experiences involving children's private body parts. It is associated with a broad spectrum of emotional responses, with some children exhibiting great resilience, while others displaying varying levels of distress. The Kenyan Government has cited sexual violence as an issue of concern in its various policy and strategic documents; however identification of cases of sexual violence against children has been limited due to lack of data. The number of reported cases of children who are victims remains low due to ignorance, lack of reporting and the secretive nature of the crime. (National Council for Children's Services, 2013).

The different forms include:

1. Unwanted Sexual touching

This entails the child being touched against his/her will in a sexual way but not being forced to have sexual intercourse. This includes acts such as being fondled, pinched, grabbed or touched inappropriately.

2. Attempted Unwanted sex

Is a situation whereby attempt is made to have a child to have sex unwillingly, but without success. In this case sexual intercourse does not happen.

3. Physically forced sex

Whereby a child is physically forced to have sex and sexual intercourse happens to completion.

4. Pressured sex

Is a situation whereby a child is prevailed upon to have sex and sexual intercourse happens, but not through physical force.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 36-62% of all sexual assault victims are aged below 15 years (Ruto S, 2009). 1 in 3 girls worldwide are married before the age of 18, and 1 in 9 before the age of 15. Areas with the highest rates of child marriage are Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Health consequences faced by child brides include a 1.8 fold increase after experiencing physical/sexual violence. These child brides are exposed to higher chances of pregnancy-related morbidity and mortality (Veneema T, 2015).

A study done in Africa and Asia by ActionAid also indicates that much violence against girls goes unreported and the scale of the problem has been underestimated. Sexual violence against girls is not limited to a specific age-group; each girl is at risk of being violated. However, in all countries the problem peaks in the adolescent years of between 12-19 years of age (ActionAid, 2014). In a study done on sexual violence against primary school girls in three African countries, i.e. Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique, Kenya had the highest cases reported in all types of sexual violence (see table 2b). In another study done in Kenya on sexual abuse in school age children, 58% (60% girls and 55% boys) reported having been sexually harassed while 29% boys and 24% girls reported to have been forced into unwanted sex.

This finding shows that boys as much as girls are victims of sexual harassment and sexual abuse (Ruto S, 2009). Of the literature reviewed, this is the only study giving data on sexual violence against boys alongside that of girls.

Table 2b: Proportion of primary school-going girls aged 8–17 who admitted experiencing sexual violence, by type and country.

	<i>Peeping</i>	<i>Touching</i>	<i>comments</i>	<i>Forced sex</i>	<i>Sex for goods</i>
Kenya (%)	21.7	24.7	19.9	9.8	9.5
Ghana (%)	14.1	13.8	14.6	1.8	4.2
Mozambique (%)	11.6	19.3	8.5	2.8	5.4

2.2.3 Emotional/psychological violence

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children

frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014). Insults, name-calling, isolation, rejection, threats, emotional indifference, and belittling are some forms of violence that can be detrimental to a child's psychological development and well-being. This is made even worse if it comes from a respected adult such as a parent or a teacher (UN secretary General's study on violence against children, 2006).

Data on this form of violence is hard to come by as few in-depth studies into children's experiences have been conducted. However, some insight can be drawn from studies on prevalence of corporal punishment. The most common effect of physical punishment on children was emotional distress, upset and hurt. Children developed low self-worth and suicidal thoughts. They also report feeling sad, bad, ashamed, upset, hurt inside, useless and embarrassed (UN secretary General's study on violence against children, 2006).

Corporal punishment carries an emotional/psychological component which may be even worse than the physical pain. Children feel there are better and more effective ways of instilling discipline other than through corporal punishment. It is therefore important to seek the views of children during the formulation of policies regarding methods of disciplining them.

2.2.4 Mixed violence (two or all three types)

In most cases, physical or sexual violence is accompanied by psychological violence. In some cases all three types are meted on a child at the same time.

2.3 PLACE AND PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

2.3.1 At Home (Parents, Neighbors)

Contrary to the common perception, in a study on sexual violence against children done in Kenya, the home was cited as the most unsafe place. 27% of the respondents mentioned the home as an unsafe venue, while 12% indicated other people's homes were unsafe. In this study, 6% of sexual harassment cases against the children were by the neighbors. (Ruto S, 2009)

Physical and psychological violence in the homes may be high making children feel unsafe in the home environment. Parents hold the 'right' to discipline/punish their children as they please. Corporal punishment against children by parents is perceived as normal in many cultures and regions the world over (UN secretary General's study on violence against children, 2006)

Children citing the home as the most unsafe place is consistent with research findings that 90% of abuse is from domestic causes and is committed by individuals known to the child (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014).

2.3.2 At School (Teachers, Fellow children)

Studies show that the school is a social arena marked by asymmetrical power relations that are enacted not only through gender but also through age and authority, as well as through additional social distinctions around socio-economics, ethnicity, disability and language (Dunne, 2006).

At school, violence is mainly gendered regardless of the perpetrator. Girls suffer more in terms of sexual violence from both teachers and fellow students than their male counterparts. For instance, in Mozambique, Ghana and Kenya sexual violence against girls by male pupils and teachers has been documented (Parkes, 2013). Boys tend to colonize areas within the school where they act out more violent play and this keeps girls out of such areas for their own safety. There is also the case of boys teasing girls, which everyone takes lightly because it is not physical, but which is degrading and a violation to girls. Male teachers on the other hand use their positions to exploit female students sexually; an example is given in a study done in Uganda where one male teacher made female students wash his feet. He would also make them take water to him in the bathroom where he would be naked sometimes and ask the student to help him as a man (ActionAid, 2014). 60% of sexual harassment cases are perpetrated by children themselves while teachers account for about 5% of the cases (Ruto S, 2009). Boys receive more severe forms of corporal punishment from teachers than their female counterparts (UN secretary General's study on violence against children, 2006).

2.3.3 To and From School (Fellow children, strangers)

Long distances to and from school expose the children to dangers of violent acts which may be from fellow children or from strangers (16% of sexual harassment cases on children). In the countryside children are forced to travel long distances through bushy stretches to and from school. They are also forced to travel early in the morning and late in the evening as they are required to be present for preps. This places them in danger of being violated by both the older pupils and strangers. In urban areas where pupils use buses and matatus, sexual harassment was mainly from strangers whom children met during these rides. 15% of pupils in a study done in Kenya cited the way to and from school as being unsafe (Ruto S, 2009).

2.4 CAUSES OF ABUSE

The causes of violence witnessed against children can be classified into two categories:

a) Immediate causes

These are the day to day interactions between the child, other people and the immediate environment which exposes him/her to violence. Some of these include:

1. Unsafe journey to and from school: Due to the long distances to and from school through bushy stretches in the countryside and mixing with strangers in buses and matatus in urban areas. Children are also forced to travel very early in the morning and late in the evening and this exposes them to possible violence along the way.

2. Gendered identities: In many societies children are brought up to believe that the male gender is dominant and aggressive while the female gender is docile and submissive. To maintain the status quo, boys use violence and harassment to intimidate and dominate their female counterparts. The girls on the other part condone the boys' behavior and this encourages more violence. This is seen in how boys and girls interact at school and outside.
3. Coercive school discipline system: A safe school may be seen as one that is free of danger and where there is an absence of possible harm; a place in which all learners may learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence. Coercive discipline breeds fear, either psychological or physical, which subordinates. The higher incidence of sexual harassment and victimization among female learners than among boys is a good example of coercive power, which may be attributed to the patriarchal attitudes of most societies (Prinsloo, 2006).
4. Sexual and physical abuse in the home and community: Children act out what they see the adults do. If children are exposed to violence and abuse in the homes or in the community they end up becoming violent and abusive. This becomes a vicious cycle transmitted across generations. This may be what spills over to schools and we hear stories of mass rapes.
5. Diminishing parenting roles: Parents have been faulted with abdicating or ignoring their parenting duties. Parents do not restrict or control where their children go. Children are free to go to cinema halls, bars and night functions all of which are potential breeding grounds for sexual violence.
6. Low access to welfare and police services: When cases are not reported and resolved through formal systems, the perpetrators get off easily and are prone to repeat the violent acts. Low access to the formal systems leads to resolution of cases through informal systems which mostly impose fines which are easily affordable. They also ignore the impact on the child who may become mentally deranged as a result of the episode and become violent in turn.
7. Hidden curriculum: Girls have been brought up to believe that they should expect and accept some degree of violence from their male counterparts. This leads to silence on reporting violence incidences because they perceive them as 'normal'. They learn that they should be submissive and should not speak out or stand up against boys. This encourages more violence as perpetrators go unpunished.

b) Secondary causes

Violence has its root cause in other social settings and is only a manifest of deeper problems in the social interactions surrounding the child. Some of the underlying causes are:

1. Socio-cultural: What for some may be seen as violent and destructive, for others may be viewed as legitimate and sanctioned. In these instances, inequalities are perceived or recognized as normal through socialization. For example, sexual exchange has been used by girls as a form of self-protection in some cities in Africa. Another example is that of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early marriage of girls among some Kenyan communities (Parkes, 2013).

In many cultures the world over, children are brought up to believe that the male gender is superior. From the right to education and freedom to social interactions, the female gender is banished to second place after the male. Much of the violence we see directed against girls is used as a tool to perpetuate and maintain this status quo. While aggressive pursuit of girls was not condoned, girls who fall prey to male sexual desire may be disbelieved or blamed for not taking action themselves. Boys and men are excused, while girls are made responsible for boys' sexual manoeuvres. Gender stereotypes perpetuate ideas and beliefs about the position and worth of girls in the society. Parents are reluctant to educate girls, while girls accept some degree of sexual violence such as being forced to have sex by their partners (ActionAid, 2014).

2. **Political and Economic status:** In areas where levels of poverty are high and in times of war and conflict which leads to scarcity of basic commodities, girls are forced to turn into sexual activities in exchange for food and/or money. This at times happens with coercion from parents who tell them that they are the ones to feed the family. Many girls become pregnant as a result, which leads them to drop out of schools (ActionAid, 2014).
In a study done in Kenya, one girl who finally dropped out of school due to pregnancy explained; *“ Most of the girls are from a rich family. They come with good things and yet some of us do not have. So one is forced to look for a boyfriend to supplement. When I got a boyfriend I never lacked even one thing”*(Girl, 15 years). The parent may not be financially able to provide all the child wants and this forces the child to accept proposals from those they think are capable of taking care of their needs. This does not affect girls alone but boys as well (Ruto S, 2009).
3. **Policy frame-work:** Child safety and protection policies exist both at the national and school levels. However, these are poorly implemented creating the gap that leads to violence against children. Therefore, proper mechanisms of reporting cases of violence which are both accessible and child-friendly should be put in place.
4. **Progressive Societies:** A progressive society, which can judge and stand against retrogressive cultural beliefs and practices, can stem child abuse and neglect. In communities where formal education is of low standards, abuse and violence levels are high since their understanding and practices are rooted in their culture and most traditional cultures propagate inequality. Children who have received formal education are also able to use their level of awareness to advocate for their rights, a good example being Maasai girls fighting against FGM.

2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

All forms of abuse have the potential for long-term impact on the victims, and can affect the victim's ability to function as a human being. Violence/abuse challenges the self-value, self-esteem, and sense of worth of its victims, rendering them hopeless, helpless and unable to live a complete life (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014).

The violence meted on children can impact at two different levels depending on the type of violence, the severity and the perpetrator.

2.5.1 Health impact: physical& mental

Violence against a child can impact on multiple facets of health and life. For example, health-related consequences of sexual abuse span the whole spectrum from physical injuries to sexually transmitted infections and HIV and unwanted pregnancies to mental derangements such as depression and suicidal attempts (Veneema T, 2015). Physical injuries result since the child's body is not fully developed. These may have long term effects such as painful intercourse or barrenness if not properly treated by professional medics.

2.5.2 Social impact

Violence can also lead to negative social behaviors such as out-casting oneself, low self-esteem, substance abuse and having multiple sexual partners (Veneema T, 2015). These manifestations of violence against children more often than not lead to low enrolment in schools and high rates of dropout. The prevalence of violence against girls affects both their rights to education and their rights in education (ActionAid, 2014).

The victims are also unable to lead normal lives in their adult life. They have poor peer relations, are unable to lead a family life are unable to work with others or complete responsibilities and so on (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014). In summary, violence may completely destroy the rest of a child's life without necessarily harming them physically.

2.6 DISCUSSION

The main emerging issue from this literature review is that the prevalence of violence against children the world over is high; however its true scale is hard to measure. This gap in information is thought to be brought about by a number of varied reasons:

1. The societal perceptions and understanding of what constitutes violence and violations. The social context surrounding acts of violence against children makes it possible and even acceptable. It is embraced as a normal social practice rather than a form of social injustice (Parkes, 2013). This leads to underreporting of acts of violence against children, especially the girl child as some of the violent incidences are perceived as the "norm" for the girl child.

A good example is one whereby an older man is allowed to get away with sexual violation of a child with the excuse that he wanted to marry her. Another is where a boyfriend beats up a girl and the girl excuses him in the name of love saying he loves her so much that he does not like seeing her talking to anyone else (ActionAid, 2014).

FGM in some cultures is perceived to be a valuable rite of passage rather than a form of violence against the child or a violation of her rights.

Boys have been brought up to perceive themselves as men and that men are expected to withstand any form of physical assault. Boys therefore fail to report most cases of physical violence against them especially in school settings for fear of being branded as cowards.

2. Non-standardized Research methodologies and Definitions

In the studies done on violence within Kenya, many are mainly on sexual violence against girls and employ different methodologies and definitions of terms. This makes it hard to standardize the research findings across regions and derive national figures for the prevalence and incidence of violence against children.

3. Most of the studies are Girl-Focused

Most of the studies done on violence against children are mainly on sexual violence against girls ignoring boys. Both boys and girls can be victims and perpetrators of violence. Evidence suggests that girls stand a higher risk of sexual violence, harassment and exploitation while boys are more liable to receive severe physical abuse. All these forms of abuse need to be investigated.

2.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LITERATURE ANALYSIS

1. Monitoring and data gathering systems

The government should establish a national data system to collect data on violence against children which will inform policy revision and development on the subject. This will help bridge the data gap and information deficiency on child violence. These systems will also ensure comprehensive and regular monitoring of the problem at a national level and also inform on prevalence and incidence patterns.

More research is also needed in the field of child protection to provide a strong rationale for implementation of Child Protection programs at the school level and within the larger community.

The research methodologies and definitions of variables should be standardized to allow comparison across regions. The studies should be inclusive and not gender-based.

2. Legislation and Law enforcement

Since the laws are in place, there should be more vigorous prosecution of offenders. Cases of violence against children should be dealt with in the formal systems as opposed to the informal settings where only fines are imposed on the offenders and the feelings and wishes of the child ignored. This can be achieved through collaboration of schools administration with local authorities and agencies to ensure all cases of abuse are channeled to the right authorities and followed up to ensure justice is done.

Policies that abolish discrimination and exclusion in schools on the basis of gender should be enforced. Teachers and other staff working with children should be screened to weed out known offenders and other criminals.

3. Change in teacher training and school curriculum

Systematically address gender equality issues in pre-service and in-service training of teachers, ensuring they see it as part of their core role to challenge stereotypes, oppose discrimination and guarantee equal treatment of boys and girls. This will in turn change the societal perceptions and practices that lead to stereotype beliefs and behavior. Teachers should also be made aware of the Child Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct so that they can actively support and participate in child protection and safety efforts within and outside the school environment. The school curriculum should also be engineered to remove the perception of gender differences and inequalities.

Research indicates that developmentally appropriate education makes children more confident and able to react to dangerous situations. Teaching using a specific population context enhances protective behavior and this should not be perceived as teaching children sex matters. Research-based programs prepare students to develop the skills and attitudes to keep themselves safe from perpetrators and behaviors that include bullying, harassment and other forms of exploitation (Association of International Schools in Africa, 2014).

4. Confidential complaints system

Establishing confidential complaints systems for the children which are not tied to any figure of authority in the school administration. Many cases of violence go unreported due to fear of victimization. Children often report cases of violence to parents or relatives who most of the time blame them for the occurrence and take no action. Many children therefore suffer in silence because they do not see the need to report.

Police stations should have Child Protection Units to make them more accessible and child friendly so as to motivate children to report cases of violence directly and easily. Children should also be made aware of the presence of Child Welfare/Protection Offices and these officers should be encouraged to visit the communities and schools more often in order to be in touch with what is happening to children in their areas of jurisdiction. The Health sector should also be brought on board as children may trust nurses and not other adults from other sectors.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this literature review reveals that violence against children is widespread nationally and globally. It also reveals that there is limited data on violence against this group and much of the work that has been done concentrated on sexual violence against girls, ignoring boys and other forms of violence.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to gather more data on all forms of violence using standardized research methodologies and definitions so that data collected across different regions can be compared and combined to derive a national picture on violence against children.

Measures should also be put in place through stake-holder partnerships to minimize or eliminate violence against children both at school and within the community. More importantly there is need to

review the referral and coordination systems for the provision of comprehensive services to children who have been abused or neglected.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the study design and approach. The study sites, institutions and informant range, justification for their selection, data collection methods and analysis techniques are discussed.

3.1 THE STUDY DESIGN

Three distinctive elements shaped the study design. First, a multi and mixed method approach was deemed best to answer the study objectives. At the core was the need to elicit data that could explain the magnitude of the problem. For this, a guided questionnaire, administered to children was used, and the majority of the respondents (slightly above 1500 learners) participated. To get more descriptive and explanatory data, methods associated with the qualitative research paradigm were used, and once again a majority of the tools (word showers, group discussions, drawing, mapping) were used with children. The adult population participated via interviews and discussions.

Second, this was multi informant study. It was deemed important to reach a variety of informants to enable multi perspectives that could enable corroboration of the findings. The multi methods and multi informants therefore formed an important strategy for triangulation of the data.

Finally, children were considered to be the primary respondents, and more weight was given to them in the following ways. First they formed almost two thirds of the study informants. Second a variety of methods were used that allowed broader age range to participate. Third a bottom up approach was used where the research process started with children and thereafter branched out to the other informants. In this way the experiences of children shaped the tempo and directions of the discussion.

3.2 STUDY SITES

This study was situated in the school, and specifically in catholic sponsored schools. The Catholic Secretariat manages over 8,000 schools across the country, and does so administratively through the 4 metropolis and 24 diocese as follows:

Metropolis	Diocese
Mombasa	Malindi, Garissa
Nairobi	Machakos, Kitui, Ngong, Nakuru, Kericho
Nyeri	Nyahururu, Muranga, Embu, Meru, Marallal, Marsabit, Isiolo
Kisumu	Homabay, Kisii, Kakamega, Bungoma, Eldoret, Kitale, Lodwar

A total of 11 of the 24 diocese participated in the study. The diocese were selected on the basis of (a) geographic spread and had to represent the four metropolis and (b) prevalence of a specific type of violence. A two stage sampling methodology was thereafter used. School that had participated in CSPP where initially allocated 60% of the sample, while the remaining 40% were expected to be other catholic sponsored schools in the diocese. However, fewer schools than expected had participated in the CSPP

program, and the result was that only 34% of the actual sample comprised CSPP schools. More details on the school spread are captured in Table 3.

Table 3 Total number of schools reached by diocese

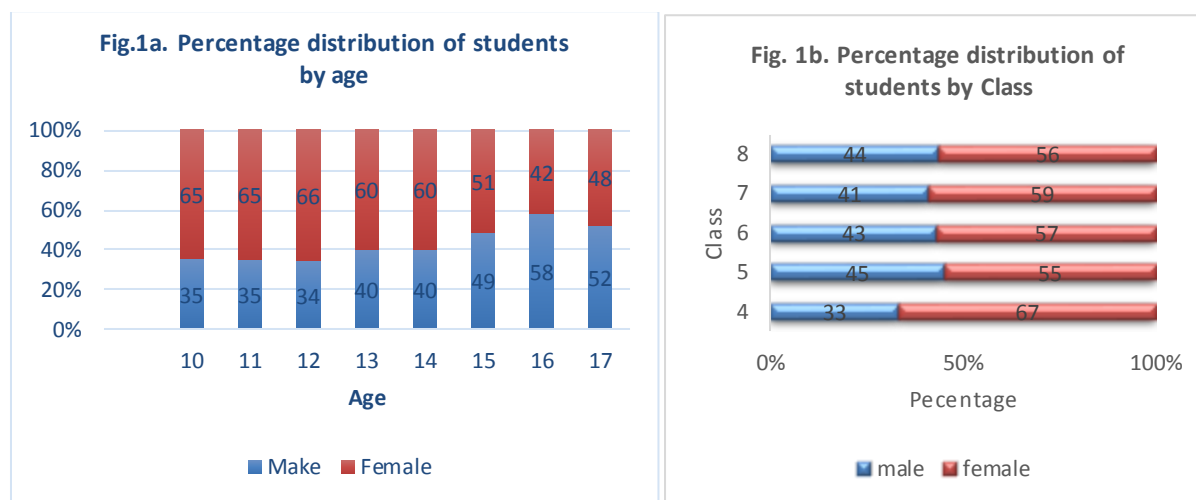
Diocese	School Type		Total
	CSPP	Non CSPP	
Isiolo	2	2	4
Meru	3	5	8
Homa Bay	2	5	7
Lodwar	0	7	7
Mombasa	4	11	15
Malindi	2	2	4
Kitui	2	6	8
Bungoma	1	2	3
Kericho	3	8	11
Nyeri	4	2	6
Maralal	4	2	6
Total	27	52	79
%	34	66	100

3.3 INFORMANT RANGE

The study population was largely defined by the fact that it was a school based study, hence the majority of the informants comprised school going children and their teachers and parents. Outside the school, the education secretaries/religious advisor/child protection officer were reached.

3.3.1 The Learners

The primary respondents were children. The older children between classes 6-8 mainly participated through filling out a guided questionnaire and through group discussions. The youngest children who participated were in class four and this was mainly through the mapping exercise, drawing and the 'word shower' discussions. Though the intention was to achieve equal gender representation, more girls than boys ended up participating in the study.



A total of 1507 children filled out the guided questionnaire, 822 (58%) of them being girls. This data has been analyzed to provide more demographic information, and Table 5 reveals the following:

- Most of the children (77%) belong to varied protestant faiths. Catholics account for 14% of the total. The biggest proportion of children identifying to belong to the traditional faith was in Isiolo. This notwithstanding, the schools draw children from different faiths.
- About half of the children live with their parents (53%), followed by their mothers (30%) and father (7%). This means that 90% of the learners live with either or both parents.
- Most of the children (85%) walk to school. This may imply that the schools are generally within reach of the children, and their parents.

In addition to this, another 503 children participated in the group discussions. Once again, more girls (55%) participated. Cumulatively therefore 2,010 children were involved via questionnaires and discussion, of whom 1,097 were girls. Table 4 has the details

Diocese	Number Of Transcripts	Male	Female	Total
Bungoma	11	30	36	66
Homabay	12	32	43	75
Isiolo	8	24	24	48
Kitui	2	Mixed*	Mixed	11
Kericho	7	0	42	42
Lodwar	12	30	42	72
Malindi	3	8	8	16
Maralal	9	20	27	47
Mombasa	0			0
Meru	12	28	29	57
Nyeri	8	24	24	48
Taveta	4	Mixed	Mixed	21
Total	88	196	275	503

*Researcher note: A few FGD transcripts did not describe the gender of the participants, hence the word 'mixed'

Table 5. Demographics Characteristics of Students

Percentage distribution of students by age, class, religion, dependency and means of transportation to school.

	Frequency	% on Frequency	Isiolo	Meru	Homa bay	Lodwar	Mombasa	Malindi	Kitui	Bungoma	Kericho	Nyeri	Maralal
Mean class	1487	7	7.5	7.5	7.0	7.1	6.7	7.0	6.7	7.1	7.1	7.5	7.5
Mean Age	1438	13.5	14.7	13.7	13.1	14.3	13.1	14.0	12.8	13.4	13.6	13.8	14.0
Gender													
Male	602	42%	50.0	45.8	36.3	39.2	33.7	50.7	41.5	42.0	45.5	50.0	45.4
Female	822	58%	50.0	54.2	63.7	60.8	66.3	49.3	58.5	58.0	54.5	50.0	54.6
Religion													
Catholic	196	14%	6.8	1.4	25.7	11.3	4.8	0.0	18.5	44.0	34.9	4.3	0.9
Protestant	1075	77%	36.5	80.0	74.3	87.9	78.6	81.2	79.8	54.1	65.1	94.0	99.1
Muslim	68	5%	2.7	5.5	0.0	0.0	16.7	18.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0
Hindu	1	0%	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Traditional	62	4%	54.1	12.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stay With													
Both Parents	767	54%	44.3	51.0	48.6	36.4	61.5	60.3	46.6	59.8	63.0	44.5	52.7
Father	99	7%	12.7	5.8	8.0	12.4	5.6	15.1	2.3	9.4	3.9	4.2	2.7
Mother	431	30%	39.2	30.3	29.0	38.0	24.2	17.8	41.4	18.8	26.6	34.5	28.2
Guardian	47	3%	1.3	1.9	3.6	2.3	0.4	0.0	3.8	4.3	1.9	10.9	7.3
Other	38	3%	2.5	2.6	5.8	2.3	1.6	2.7	3.8	0.0	1.3	1.7	5.5
Grandparents	37	3%	0.0	4.5	1.4	4.7	4.8	1.4	0.8	5.1	1.3	0.0	0.0
Uncle/aunt	40	3%	0.0	3.9	3.6	3.9	2.0	2.7	1.5	2.6	1.9	4.2	3.6
Transport to School													
On Foot	1091	85%	92.1	80.4	77.9	93.7	72.5	90.1	77.8	85.4	94.3	91.7	92.1
By Bicycle	31	2%	2.6	5.9	2.9	1.8	2.5	4.2	4.0	1.0	0.6	0.0	2.6
By Car	127	10%	1.3	10.8	16.2	1.8	23.3	1.4	16.2	4.9	2.5	7.4	1.3
By Motorcycle	37	3%	3.9	2.9	2.9	2.7	1.7	4.2	2.0	8.7	2.5	0.9	3.9

3.3.2 The Teachers

A total of 51 head teachers (12 female) participated via key informant interviews. Another 9 teachers (4 female) were interviewed while the rest participated in group discussions. All the teachers were further requested to fill a bio data form, and the evidence, contained in Table 6, from 338 teachers across the 11 diocese shows that:

- i) Slightly more female teachers (54%) participated in the study
- ii) Teachers over 46 years accounted for 42% of the total and had generally served as teachers for more than 16 years. This implies that a sizeable number of teacher can be deemed to be 'experienced teachers'

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Percentage distribution of teachers by gender, age ,years of experience and qualifications

	% on		Isiolo	Meru	Homa Bay	Lodwar	Mombasa	Malindi	Kitui	Bungoma	Kericho	Nyeri	Maralal
	Frequency	frequency											
Page 28													
Gender													
Male	156	46%	72.7	31.0	60.7	48.4	44.1	53.8	66.7	48.3	38.8	28.6	53.6
Female	182	54%	27.3	69.0	39.3	51.6	55.9	46.2	33.3	51.7	61.2	71.4	46.4
Age													
below 25	7	2%	9.5	2.6	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0
26-35	76	25%	28.6	26.3	19.2	48.4	19.6	7.7	11.1	20.7	31.9	0.0	30.0
36-45	96	31%	38.1	28.9	46.2	25.8	30.4	23.1	44.4	27.6	27.7	25.0	35.0
46-55	102	33%	23.8	36.8	15.4	22.6	42.9	38.5	33.3	37.9	27.7	55.0	25.0
above 55	29	9%	0.0	5.3	7.7	3.2	7.1	30.8	11.1	13.8	10.6	20.0	10.0
Years of experience													
1 – 5	61	18%	27.3	24.4	25.0	29.0	8.8	0.0	22.2	17.2	24.5	3.6	16.0
6 – 10	76	23%	31.8	17.1	25.0	29.0	24.6	15.4	11.1	13.8	28.6	7.1	36.0
11 – 15	46	14%	13.6	17.1	10.7	12.9	15.8	7.7	11.1	10.3	8.2	25.0	16.0
16 – 20	37	11%	9.1	14.6	7.1	3.2	10.5	30.8	11.1	27.6	12.2	0.0	4.0
> 20	112	34%	18.2	26.8	32.1	25.8	40.4	46.2	44.4	31.0	26.5	64.3	28.0
Academic Qualification													
university	55	17%	36.4	17.9	33.3	6.7	17.5	16.7	11.1	14.3	14.6	12.5	8.7
College	120	38%	40.9	66.7	18.5	50.0	36.8	8.3	55.6	25.0	16.7	50.0	47.8
secondary	129	40%	22.7	12.8	48.1	30.0	42.1	66.7	33.3	50.0	68.8	25.0	39.1
Primary	1	0%	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
a level	14	4%	0.0	2.6	0.0	10.0	3.5	8.3	0.0	10.7	0.0	12.5	4.3
Professional Qualification													
Phd	3	1%	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0
Masters	7	2%	4.8	8.1	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0
Bachelors	47	16%	19.0	10.8	25.0	29.6	13.2	8.3	11.1	13.8	13.0	17.4	9.1
P1	111	37%	57.1	48.6	45.8	51.9	26.4	33.3	44.4	31.0	28.3	26.1	27.3
ATS	45	15%	14.3	21.6	8.3	3.7	15.1	16.7	0.0	17.2	8.7	30.4	22.7
Senior approved Teacher	11	4%	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.4	7.5	8.3	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0	9.1
Diploma O Level	63	21%	4.8	8.1	12.5	7.4	18.9	33.3	44.4	34.5	30.4	26.1	27.3
Cert	16	5%	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	13.2	0.0	0.0	3.4	10.9	0.0	4.5

- iii) While the majority (37%) had P1 certificates, a sizable proportion (17%) were degree holders. Three teachers in the sample were PhD holders.

3.3.3 Education Secretaries/Religious advisors

The CSPP program is implemented through the existing administrative structures of the KCCB – Commission for Education & Religious Education and the responsibility holder is the Education Secretary at the Diocese level. Some diocese also have Religious advisors, and both were targeted for interviews. In total 9 education secretaries, one religious advisor and one child protection officer participated in the study.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Characteristic of a multi and mixed method study, there were some pre-determined questions, while others were allowed to emerge and be dictated by the informants. The methods complemented each other and the range included:

- i) Children: **Guided questionnaires** were used to elicit quantitative information that could offer an understanding on the nature and extent of abuse meted against children. This formed the majority of the respondents. The more descriptive and explanatory data was received via **group discussions**. Some of the discussions were preceded by **mapping or drawing**, while in other cases, these were conducted independently. These two interactive methods were good for rapport creation as well. Another method that drew heavy participation was **'word shower'**. This method allowed children to identify and talk about those words that they deemed abusive and hurtful.
- ii) Teachers: Due to the positions of authority and responsibility held by head teachers, it was deemed important to target them via **key informant interviews**. Other teachers in the school participated via **group discussions**. In few instances, teachers who held certain positions, like being head of guidance and counselling were included via interviews. All the teacher filled in a **fact sheet** that recorded standard quantitative data.
- iii) Education secretaries/Religious Advisors/Children's Officer: This group was mainly **interviewed**.

Table 8 provides a summary of the different methods, and number of times this method was used with a specific informant group. Where more than one person participated, this is counted as one session (e.g. in FGD discussions or word showers that had multiple people participating in one session).

	Diocese	Pupil	Teacher	Parent	Head Teacher	Teacher	Educ. Sec./CO/RO	Pupils	Pupil	Pupils
	Instrument Type	FGD	FGD	FGD	Interview	Interview	Interview	Word Shower	Mapping	Drawing
1	Homabay	12	6	1	7	1	1	7	0	24
2	Bungoma	11	6	2	4	2	1	5	0	12
3	Isiolo	8	3	3	1	0	1	8	4	0
4	Kericho	7	6	0	4	0	1	8	0	29
5	Kitui	2	0	3	2	0	0	20	0	0
6	Lodwar	12	5	3	7	0	2	5	0	18
7	Malindi	3	2	2	4	2	1	4	5	0
8	Maralal	9	3	0	4	0	1	9	4	0
9	Meru	12	4	2	6	0	1	15	6	0
10	Mombasa	0	0	2	3	2	0	10	0	0
11	Nyeri	8	2	5	4	0	1	8	3	1
12	Taveta	4	1	2	5	2	0	18	31	33
TOTAL		88	38	25	51	9	10	117	53	117

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative and qualitative data demanded different analysis procedures. Qualitative data was captured via note taking that was later developed into transcripts. These transcripts were then read to decipher emerging themes. Descriptions that illustrated specific points have been presented in verbatim form as ‘voices’

Quantitative data processing followed three steps. First, a data entry program using CsPro was developed to capture all data. After all data had been entered, the files were exported to Excel to allow better reading and analysis. Finally Stata was used to clean the data, and there after perform the analysis.

The report is presented using a mix of data from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. For the qualitative, interview excerpts have been pulled out to expound on issues and the following key is used. This means that FGD-G 36 Ker means Girls FGD, transcript number 36 from Kericho.

Diocese		Informants		Gender	
Bungoma	Bun	HT	Head Teacher	G	Girl/s
Homa Bay	HB	CO	Child Officer	B	Boy/s
Isiolo	Isio	ES	Education Secretary	F	Female
Kericho	Ker	FGD	Focused Group Discussion	M	Male
Kitui	Kit	Mix	Mixed (FGD)		
Lodwar	Lod	T	Teachers		
Marallal	Mal	P	Parents		
Marsabit	Mar				
Mombasa	Mbs				
Meru	Meru				
Nyeri	Nye				
Taveta	Tav				

3. NATURE AND EXTENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

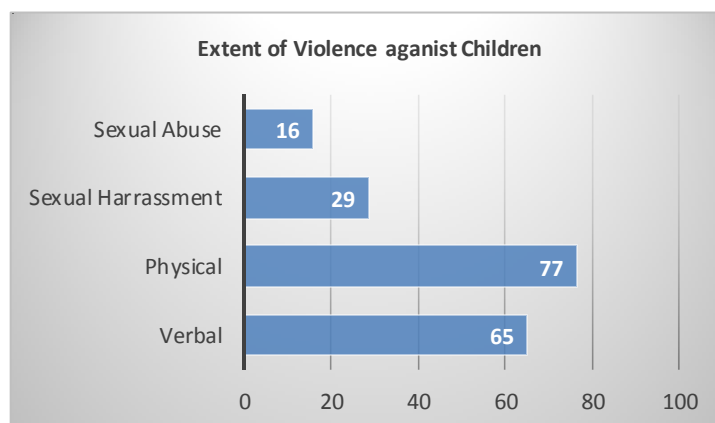
“Like a week ago, a child came here very swollen. The father had beaten her the previous night because she did not sell simsim. Apparently the girl did not get buyers because she had actually not come to school, and this resulted to a thorough beating” HT5 M HB.

In this chapter, the nature and magnitude of violence meted against children is discussed where the children’s experience are presented, and expounded with perspectives from others who participated in the study. To ease the discussion, the analysis is presented according to the broad forms of violence namely physical, verbal/psychological, sexual and cultural. The broad overview is first presented before looking at each violence type in detail.

4.1 SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

The guided questionnaire was used to document children’s experiences. Information was sought on four main abuse types. The worst form of violence reported by children is physical abuse where 8 of every 10 children stated that they had been physically abused. This was followed by verbal abuse faced by 7 of every 10 children. Three out of 10 children have been sexually harassed and 2 out of every 10 children have been sexually abused. In all instances, more girls than boys reported having been victims of abuse. A higher number of girls reported facing sexual related abuse. For instance, of every three children who have been sexually violated, 2 of them are girls and one is a boy. Details are in Table 9.

Table 9. Type and Extent of violence against Children				
Percentage distribution by type of violence and gender				
Type of Violence				
Experienced Violence	Verbal	Physical	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Abuse
Yes	65.3	76.7	28.9	16.1
No	34.7	23.3	71.1	83.9
Gender				
Male	41.8	41.9	41.1	36.9
Female	58.2	58.1	58.9	63.1
Total	920	1080	404	214



Only 5 (or 10%) head teachers of the 55 who were interviewed denied any presence of violence against children in school, claiming that that “no cases have been reported to the school “ (HT50 M Tav); “we have not had any such cases since I came. I have also gone through the files and we don’t have any records of such cases” (HT17 M Kit) and “here security is tight. We have day and night watchmen “(HT25 F Eld)”. These denials were mostly reported in Taveta. This notwithstanding, the children’s experience is corroborated by all the other head teachers who participated in the study, and who affirmed violence was meted against children. Based on the sequencing of their responses, head teachers felt that the

most prevalence violence they observed was neglect. Sexual abuse was often the next mentioned, and this is because of the adverse consequences it has on the victim. Secondly, all the teachers affirmed that and that girls were the most affected:

“Girls of course, are most vulnerable, girls here are really suffering I don’t know what can be done. It is really a challenge. You see even this school, it was established by the missionaries to help the girls who were victims of abuse. You see girls are very delicate, girls have soft hearts, and can easily be abused or won by men who want to misuse them. They also emotionally affected easily because of their soft hearts. Even sometimes you find girls coming to school and on their way they can be raped, they can be lured by touts or even the boda bodas who are on the increase. These boys have really messed girls around here. Girls at home are subjected to so much violence, talk of child labour these girls at home do much of the donkey work. They are ones who take care of their siblings in cases of parents who just give birth and leave children at the care of their girls” (HT10 F HB).

The perpetrators on all forms of violence, including sexual abuse, who received the highest mentions were the children themselves. The other groups that were adversely mentioned are family members and teachers. Teachers particularly feature as perpetrators of physical violence, mainly via caning. The key finding to note is that the perpetrators of violence against children are not people who are far removed from the children’s lives. They are their peers, or the direct authority figures at home and in school. Table 10 has more details.

Perpetrator	Type of Violence			
	Verbal	Physical	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Abuse
Relative	15.0	37.5	3.2	2.0
Friend/peer	56.5	38.5	28.5	10.3
Neighbour	15.3	6.1	2.5	2.4
Teacher	4.2	28.3	1.4	0.9
Stranger	8.3	5.5	7.3	3.0
Other	0.8	0.8	0.1	2.8
Total Freq.	903	1055	389	193

The adult community corroborated these findings, and analysed that these peers were often school drop outs. Bodaboda riders received highest mention as one category of perpetrators, especially of sexual related violence.

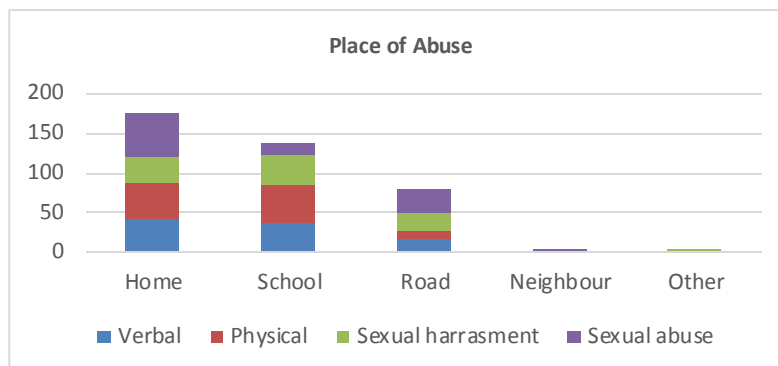
“The people who do this (silence), are mainly the school drop outs, the boys, both the drop outs and those who are still going to school, There are many cases of boda boda riders, who cheat girls with 20, 50, or 100 shillings, or even with lifts” (HT23 F Lod).

The violence mostly occurred at home, followed by in school. Physical violence and sexual harassment recorded a higher frequency in school. The way to and from school also had some notoriety as the venue for sexual related offences. Cumulatively though, the home is the most unsafe place, and this is corroborated by observations, for example this head teacher who states:

In my opinion, violence against these children almost happens everywhere, when I say everywhere, it could be at home, sometimes in school or anywhere else, But for me a lot of violence against these children happen at home. The home is where they stay. We hear many reports from other children. Look here, I have not stayed here for long but I know there is a lot of violence. Many children here are victims of domestic violence, when parents fight, the children get traumatized, and they get emotionally and psychologically disturbed (HT6 Male, HB).

This implies that any interventions must pay attention to the home, the school and on the way to school. Table 11 has the details.

Place	Verbal	Physical	Sexual harassment	Sexual abuse
Home	42.9	44.1	33.2	54.4
School	38.2	45.6	39.3	15.5
Way to school/road	17.8	9.9	23.1	29.1
Neighbours	1.1	0.4	1.2	1.0
Other	0.1	0.0	3.2	0.0
Total Freq.	940	1106	407	206



About one third of the abuse cases remained unreported mainly because of fear on the part of the victims. The next mentioned reason was 'I did not feel like', a statement that confirms a level of resignation from the children. Children were also more likely to forgive verbal abuse, and more likely to accept physical abuse as perhaps 'rightful' punishment. The variety of these reasons are captured in Table 12a. When children opted to report, they mainly went to family members, and then teachers. These are the two authority groups that children sought redress from as shown in Table 12b.

Reason	Verbal	Physical	Sexual Harassment
Was a afraid	40	35	52
Was threatened	5	3	4
Did not feel like	23	10	9
Was not hurt	1	1	0
Forgave the perpetrator	29	13	0
No one would have believed me	1	0	0
Not aware where to report	2	0	0
I had made a mistake	0	18	0
Other***	0	20	36
Total	346	430	157

Action Taker	Verbal	Physical	Sexual Harassment
Relative	48	49	41
Friend/peer	1	3	1
Neighbour	1	1	0
Teacher	41	30	35
Stranger	1	0	0
Other	8	17	24
Total	446	491	194

*** Others: Was the teacher/parent/friend, I persevered, did not know the person, person ran away
Was ashamed, it is normal, was asked not to report, I forgot.

The culture of silence on issues of violence was thought to be dominant, and contributory reasons were given as the casual response these reports received. Violence, especially on children, was an alien concept for parents to visualise. Children's rights were treated casually, and often the solution for one abuse was another form of abuse. The education secretary and a head teacher explain:

"It is very difficult, the children never report. Getting information is quite difficult, in cases of pregnancies the offenders agree with parents and they solve the cases underground, so nothing can be done. It is not easy to get hold of them, they are hidden, money usually changes hands and everyone keeps quiet. In any case parents also abuse children, they can marry them off. So it is not easy for them to be dealt with. So in short negotiations are made, there is a lot of cover up. During meetings or church Bishop has always encouraged parents to speak up and let the office know so that we can help children but nothing is happening" (2 ES)

"You know issues of culture are not seen as violence, it is seen to be right, so it is difficult to address such issues in this community. In most cases these things happen are hidden in the community, by the time you as a teacher know they have happened and everything is covered. So parents hide things even those that should not be hidden. In school the girls know that if they report the boys will beat them so they keep quiet" HT22 M Lod

In conclusion, the key headline is that Kenyan children are not safe. The most frequent form of abuse children face is physical abuse, followed by verbal and the sexual related abuses. The perpetrators of the violence are not people far removed from the lives of the children: they are their peers or direct authority figures at home and in school. This violence first and foremost occurs at home, followed by the school. Only a third of the abuse cases are reported, mostly because of resignation that no action will be undertaken. Violence, as a concept, seems to be an alien one for parents to visualize. It is therefore worthwhile to have conversations to talk the concept of abuse of children for without a shared understanding that there is a problem, no real progress will be achieved.

4.2 PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

“Heehh! Being beaten. I am beaten by teachers, parents especially mummy. They beat me till I think the world has ended. They have beaten me till am now used to it but I don’t like it. Yesterday, I received 5 strokes from another teacher just because I did not finish homework. I tried telling him that I did not do the assignment because there was a blackout but he just gave me 5 good ones. [The other pupils laugh]” (Girl 12 in FGD-M 38 Kitui)

A total of 77% children reported to have been physically abused. This abuse for the majority (63%) had occurred within the year and slightly more girls (58%) had been victims. This section explores the forms of physical violence, analyzes the perpetrators, reasons for the abuse, its effect and concludes with discussing its gendered expression.

4.2.1 Forms of Physical Abuse

The most common type of physical abuse is caning. Caning, via use of a stick, rod, belt or plastic flip was most commonly referenced. Other forms of physical abuse included kicking, slapping, pinching and punching. The narratives from the informants, across the board, confirmed the existence of inhuman forms of physical abuse, like burning by pouring hot liquid or using a hot rod and cutting. This brutal form of physical abuse normally occurred at home, meted by parents/guardians and was mainly narrated by the adult community.

Box 1: Brutality of Violence meted on Children by Parents

“For example, I had a case of a boy who had gone herding instead of going to school. The boy lost a goat, just one out of almost a hundred. Why couldn’t his parents be considerate that 90 or 99 came back? The child was thoroughly beaten by the father. There were also two cases of burns reported to me. It was a child almost 5 years who had been sent to the shop. The money I hear had been tied in a handkerchief, and it got lost....Mary the child was beaten! She did not wake up so the child’s father burned her fingers so that they top working completely because her mother was not happy. The other case was that, it was a case of an aunt; this child had been forced to cook tea. She was 9. She was like a maid in the auntie’s house. Then she prepared teas as young as that and gave the aunt. The aunt took the tea and poured on the girl’s stomach because the cup was dirty”. CO 1

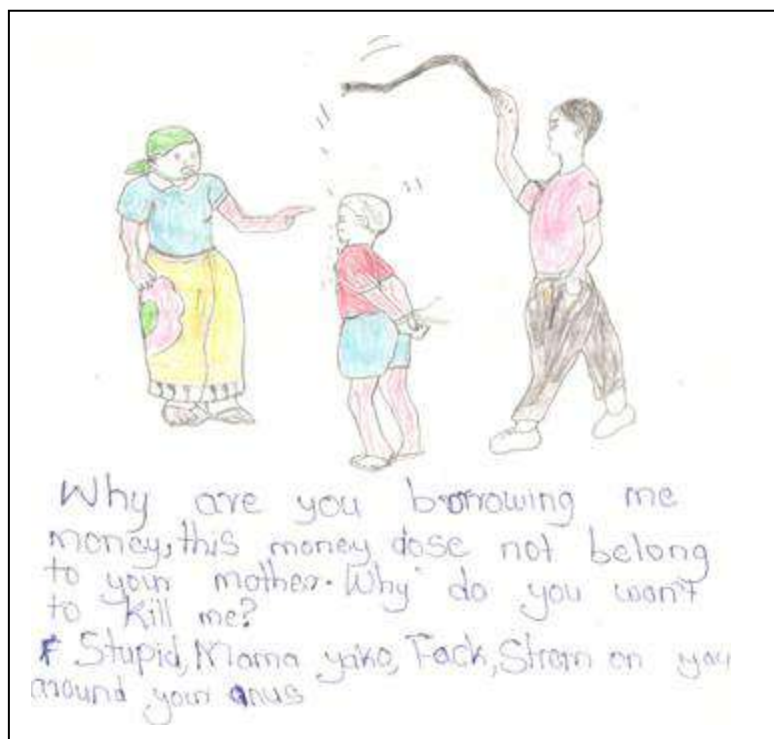
“There are also violent parents.... There was a case of a girl whose mother died. The father brought in another woman. I tell you the girl would work. She was actually the maid in the house. The girl once left the child alone as she was sleeping, and she did other chores, then I think the child woke up, she crawled to the kitchen, the child got burnt and the girl paid it for life. I say this because the child’s legs are no longer walking well. They were burnt because the step mother accused the girl of walking around instead of taking care of the child” HT10 F HB

“There is a boy who was being misused by the father. He would always go to the posho mill for the whole day, so at some point he accused the child of not doing good business. He beat the kid badly, the child never woke up for two weeks. He is 10 years, just an immediate neighbor here. I had to pay money for him to be treated in the hospital. I also got him to get uniform and I have now brought him to school here. So such cases are not new to us”. HT10 F HB

“Parents in this area are violent. Last week another man caned his child until she could not even stand to come to school. So they overdo it. I think they have a high level of anger”. HT19 M Lod.

“The one that I have handled was a standard four child being burnt at the back with a panga. The class teacher noticed the boy could not sit properly in class and on enquiry the child said what happened. We called the parent who is a lady. She accepted the mistake and asked for forgiveness. We then told her to take him to the hospital”. HT33 M Mar

“Cases of physical violence are also here in one of the schools there was a case of a parent who stripped her child naked, tied her to a tree and beat her thoroughly just because the child did not go to her and apparently she was sick”. ES 6

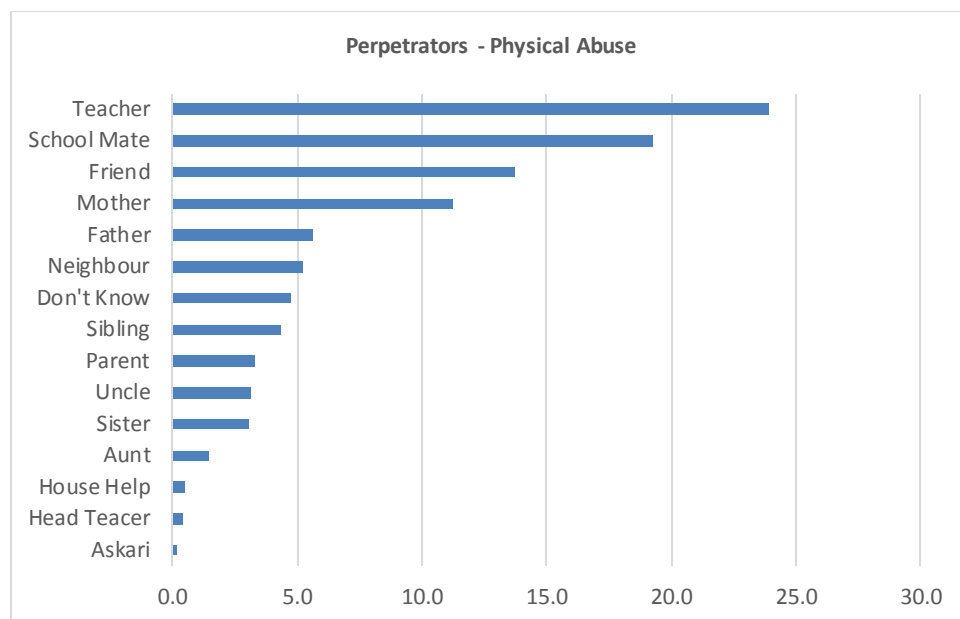


That the caning could be brutal is perhaps best illustration in the following drawing by a pupil showing a child, whose hands are tied, being caned, and while at the same time receiving verbal thrashing. Multiple violence is meted simultaneously.

4.2.2 Perpetrators of Violence

Children (from the questionnaire analysis) identified the perpetrators of physical violence as first and foremost teachers (24%), followed by school mates (19%)

and lastly friends (14%). When lumped together, parents accounted for 20% of the mentions with mothers (at 11%) prevailing. These categories – teachers, school mates, friends and parents – were the most mentioned perpetrators of physical abuse. That teacher's rank so highly is indeed worrying. Not only are they flouting the corporal punishment ban, but it also indicates that the general environment children learn in is one of fear and pain, rather than safety and creativity. That peers and friends rank very highly is equally worrying. It may be the 'hen pecking syndrome' where the weak turn on the weaker to avenge themselves. More details are in the following diagram



The interview transcripts revealed an interesting pattern of naming the perpetrators. A few head teachers (7%) acknowledged that teachers were perpetrators of especially corporal punishment. However, the vast majority simply did not mention despite probing. One head teacher was quite emphatic that “There has not been any case of physical violence that has been reported since I came to the school. I have tried my best not apply corporal punishment to the children” (HT30 M Mal), and later, in full view of the researcher proceeded to cane a child. His office was also full of canes. The pupils, in various group discussions agreed with the trend painted from the quantitative analysis and frequently identified teachers, and sometimes named the deputy and head teacher as people who meted corporal punishment on them. Box 2 provides narratives from the few head teachers who acknowledged that corporal punishment existed in their schools. These teachers predominantly came from Marsabit, Meru and Isiolo. Pupils in these areas also affirmed the existence of severe corporal punishment.

Box 2: Teachers acknowledgement of Caning in Schools

“Another case is of a male teacher punishing children severely. He had no gender preference and canded indiscriminately even doing it all over the body on girls. I suspect he was a drug addict as at times I could observe him laughing alone in the school compound. He stayed for a year and I sought a transfer for him which was effected”. HT33 M Mar

“Corporal punishment; sometimes I get pupils being punished unjustly by the teachers who may have their own stressful conditions or who have quarrelled with the child’s parent at home and take it on the child. Most of the time the cases are resolved at the head teacher’s office. The teacher and the child are called at different times and when necessary we call the parents also to establish the route cause. no case has ever gone beyond the office and teacher has ever been dismissed”. HT34 M Mar

“I have dealt once with a case of corporal punishment whereby a male teacher beat and badly hurt a boy within the school. The teacher took the child to the hospital and the parent intervened saying the teacher should be left alone and no official steps should be taken. She said, ‘sitaki uhusiano mbaya na mwalimu (I do not want to spoil relations with the teacher)’” HT12 M Isiolo

“Teachers at times punish the students excessively through caning and I have dealt with two or three cases. It is the parent who comes to complain to me about his or her child having been badly beaten at school. I usually call

the teacher and remind them of the government policy and also of their duty to the children as their second parents". HT40 Meru

The other category of perpetrators that was highly mentioned are parents. According to one boy's perspective, parents beat children indiscriminately. *"Being beaten unnecessarily by parents when you make a small mistake. It is as though you are an adult. No action is taken by children because nothing will be done to them. Parents use their hands to beat us. (FGD-B 54 Mar).* That parents display misplaced aggression and vent their anger on children is best illustrated by this example of a child thoroughly beaten for requesting school uniform: "Yesterday a girl had no uniform so she went home and asked for one only to be thoroughly beaten "ati mama alimwuliza, unatakanitoe wapi pesa ni chakula nata futa ama ninguo (where do you want me to get the money from? Is it food I am looking for or clothes?)" (HT2 M Bun).

A particularly disturbing finding related to other adults, within the school like watchmen, injuring children. This did not account for a big proportion of the mentions (less than 1%), but that it arose quite independently in group discussions pointed for a need to be vigilant. It was explained: "And even the school gatekeeper is seriously violating pupil's rights by caning them. He canes us, he also likes taking pupils packed food from home, and also calling others stupid like fish and the same gatekeeper is drunk every time at the gate. We have reported the matter to the head teacher but nothing have been done" (Boy Std 6 in FGD-B 2 Bun). Such incidences should never be allowed to occur in schools and can easily be stamped out, if the will exists.

Finally, peers feature as perpetrators of violence, with the bigger children being identified as the offenders. While boys were more predominantly mentioned, big girls were also identified as 'bullies'. There were a few mentions of the school leaders (prefects) beating the children with authority from the teachers. The most prominent venue for peer to peer abuse was on the way to and from school.

Box 3: Peer to Peer Physical Violence

"G3: Yes in this school there is bullying, big boys bully young ones, they can even step on you or slap without any reason. Boys also here they fight over girlfriends, they really fight. G4: Yes, and madam not only the boys even girls, like yesterday some girls were fighting our class because of another teacher in another school. What I overheard is that, first those girls have been friends, then they decided to visit that teacher another weekend, then the teacher started loving this other girl. Now the other girl was saying, telling the other girl 'stop enjoying my man's penis' look for your own, you dog..." FGD-G 17 HB

"B2. We are beaten by the bigger boys when we are playing on the road to school or returning home. Nothing is done to them as we do not report lest we are beaten even more". FGD-B 24 Isio

"There are some girls who also abuse boys but not this class. It happens elsewhere, even on the road. There are girls who gang up in a group of 4 and beat boys. They are called 'Al Shabaab' They have beaten so many boys and we fear reporting them because they will come for the person who reports them. They are in class 8". FGD-B-79 Tav

"I am not saying this in a bad way but student leaders are bad. They are very unfair. First the head boy, the teachers give him permission to do anything especially to the young boys. He beats them very much sometimes they tell you to clean the latrine just because they do not like you. Sometimes they write you as a noise maker even if you say one word. They report others and leave the rest, some can also beat you" FGD-G 36 Ker.

4.2.3 Reasons for Physical Abuse

The reasons provided to explain why physical violence happened included not completing their homework, not paying examination fees, failing in examinations, arriving in school late, for minor errors or simply 'for nothing'. The vast majority of the pupils (41%) attributed the physical violence to that fact that they had 'erred'. This response suggests acceptance on the part of the victim that they deserved the caning. However, there seems to be a boundary of 'acceptance'. The pupils took fault with being caned "because of very minor reasons, like not having a pencil".

Percent of Responses		
Reason	Freq.	%
I erred	401	41
We disagreed	50	5
I was unfairly accused	30	3
I do not know	115	12
other*	388	39
Total	984	

*** Other was drunk, was angry, considered me to be weak, contempt, did not like me, bad luck, mistakenly hit them

Some pupils read pure malice in the teachers' intent as these two voices, from a girl's and boy's perspective in two different locations reveal where teachers tried to scar the children or used very invasive means of punishment: "Sometimes they also beat your legs, another teacher said he beat us the legs then we will not wear miniskirts" (Girl 13 Std 6 in FGD-G 20 HB). "Deputy H/teacher who is a woman is the one who pinches boys in their private parts. We do not report because she is the teacher and no action can be undertaken. But, if you are pinched, it is very painful" (Boy in FGD-B 75 Nye). The intent of these teachers is clearly to harm, in the most painful way. Caning a child till you tear their clothes, or till a child cannot sit down, or punching and kicking a child cannot be described as 'discipline'.

Even if caning was to be justified as 'discipline', one would agree with the pupils that the intensity of the caning is unwarranted, the forms of physical abuse inhuman and the reasons illogical. No amount of caning will make a child 'pass an exam'! The children's voices in Box 4 affirm that caning is not acceptable.

Box 4: Reasons for and Forms of Caning: Children's Voices

"G1. Here, they beat us very much. The deputy principal is very bad and he beats you with a lot of energy he could break your hand. Especially at the computer lab. G4. Also, I feel bad when they beat me because you don't know a song. I am an SDA, how am I supposed to know a catholic song? The sister will beat you for not knowing a prayer or a song, as well and tells you uko na 'Majini (you have evil spirits)', so you wonder, they are unfair to us" FGD-G 2 Bun

"G5. Here in school, they like beating us, the teachers and especially head mistress in the assembly she can abuse you or she can beat you in front of everyone. She beat another boy until his short got torn. G1. The teachers should change, they should stop beating children, they should be friendly so that children do not leave school. Some children have left school because they have been beaten by the deputy, now they are riding boda boda". FGD-G 32 Ker

“Teachers like Mrs M...cane us because of very minor reasons, like not having a pencil. Teachers cane us so much on the buttocks that sitting down is a problem!” (Girl in FGD-G 76 Nye)

“Being beaten by teachers because we have made a mistake or failed in exams. We are called for a Kamukunji, or ordered to remove our sweaters and to lie down then we are beaten by all the teacher, both boys and girls”. (Boy FGD Mar)

“The teachers oppress us very much... sometimes the mistake is so minor and you have pleaded for forgiveness, but they ignore. They make me to be disinterested in school” (FGD-B 15 HB).

“There is a teacher here, when you standing to seek permission, even before your explain, starts to beat both boys and girls. He punches and even kicks us”. FGD-G 70 Meru

Pupils are caned because of not paying examination funds yet it is not their responsibility to look for funds. This is a responsibility for parents (Boy 15 in FGD-M 15 HB)

“When we make a mistake in school, we are beaten by the teachers using a plastic cane. They normally beat us on our hands or our behind for various reasons like making noise or not completing the teacher’s homework” FGD-B 24 Isio

4.2.4 Gendered Expressions of Physical Violence

While more girls reported being victims of physical violence (58%), there were a few instances where boys felt that the more intense and severe forms of caning were reserved for them. Indeed some girls felt that ‘caning on the buttocks’ was a punishment befitting boys and not girls. These expressions therefore suggest that even forms of physical abuse are gendered. The type and intensity of physical violence differs according to the gender of a child and age of the child. Critically though is the socialization effect. Rather than complain, this boy stoically accepts his fate ‘like a man’. If boys later grow up to condone ‘beating’, then it is probably that the seeds are laid early on in life, when they learn, as a support mechanism, to endure it. Big boys, such as morans or those who can overpower the teacher are not touched. A few incidence have been narrated of them over powering teachers, and this is discussed in more depth in section 4.6

Box 5: Girls ‘are Favoured’ say the Boys

“We are caned on the buttocks instead of being beaten on our hands. It does not matter whether it is a male of female teacher. They all tell us to lie on our stomachs, even if it is on soil, and then they beat us on our behinds like the boys” (Girls FGD Mar)

“B1: Girls are favoured in school much more than boys. Even in terms of caning, girls are not caned like us boys. To be honest it is very painful but we do not take any action other than to keep quiet ‘kimwanaume’ like a man.

B2. When ever anything happens in school, at whatever time, whether during school days or the weekend it is us boys who are blamed by the teachers”. FGD-B 23 Isio

“Discrimination of children by teachers...if you are small, you are beaten, but the big ones are left alone. Big boys are fears because they are morans, and big girls are left alone because they have relationships with the teachers. I know of four girls who are friends with a male teacher”. FGD-G 58 Mar

“Teachers beat us as if we are adults. Boys are the ones who are beaten most. There are some teachers, especially the male ones who favour girls. They should just beat us lightly like they do the girls!” FGD-B 63 Meru

B3. “When boys make a small mistake in school, they are beaten more than girls are when they err. To be they think that we can just withstand anything. B5. Girls are favoured more than boys because boys are viewed to be e

adults who can withstand pain. B6. Boys are given hard chores to do like cutting grass, digging the shamba and fetching firewood from a far distance away yet all of us have paid funds for firewood. B4. Boys are not given any assistance yet girls receive a lot of assistance and parents do not take any action to rectify the situation B2. Teachers cane boys with threats and no mercy at all!" FGD-B 26 Isio

Boys need to be viewed as children too. Teachers have been accused by the boys, either knowingly or not, of expending greater energy when caning them; of treating the boy child as though he was a 'man'.

4.2.5 Caning: Good or Evil?

So rampant is caning that it has acquired some form of normalcy, with some pupils accepting it as the best form of correcting behavior. One girl asserted: "*Caning should go on because there are pupils who are so naughty and it is only caning that can be used. Such children will be worse if only spoken to. They should be beaten (girl 13 years Std 7 Mombasa)*". Parents too seem to have given teachers the *carte blanche* to cane children. That a parent, can refuse to take action on a teacher, who has caned her child so badly that the child needs to be taken to hospital, and simply remarks that "I do not want bad relations with the teacher" (HT12 M Isiolo), confirms an 'adult's conspiracy' against children who emerge as powerless victims.

Box 6: Parents for caning after all "hii haiwezi ua" (It will not kill)

"Here in school teachers must use corporal punishment because if they don't children will look down on them. We have allowed teachers to punish by caning because if the children are difficult at home they must be worse in school. They may even tell the teachers don't cane me because my parent has never caned me. We say they should be caned. In fact I am close by. If the child defeats a teacher I should be summoned to help the teacher cane the child. We cane children here" (Parents FGD Kitui).

Physical violence is also prevalent and sometimes we get cases of children being beaten badly and even burned with hot objects by parents. Children are also beaten by teachers at school but no one seems bothered by this even though it is against government policy. Samburu elders give teachers canes and tell them to use it on the pupils saying, "hii haiwezi ua; ndio tunatumia kwa mama zao na hawajakufa (it will not kill. We use it on their mothers and they are not dead yet!". (RA 1)

"Parents condone it because many are unable to discipline their children. In fact I have been approached by some parents of the boys you see here beseeching me to discipline their sons for them. They claim to have been defeated in the war on discipline and as the head of the school I should step in and assist. They tell me to cane the boys in their presence saying they may fear me because am also a priest. I tell them they have to look for alternative ways of dealing with their sons other than through the cane". (EO 8)

Teachers generally see caning as the best option for inculcating 'discipline'. The example of this teacher perhaps is illustrative of the others. He claims to be observing the corporal punishment ban, but rues that caning is the only way to curb indiscipline.

"Here in school since corporal punishment was banned we stopped caning because ours is to protect our jobs, but the ban on corporal punishment is going to affect the discipline in these schools. Here children are indisciplined, you find cases of boys and girls eloping have sexual relationships and there is nothing you can do". HT19 M Lod.

The single and indeed lone voice from the adult community not in favour of caning was an Education secretary who boldly stated that "**Teachers are blamed for lacking ideas: corporal punishments...these ones**

are still there because teachers think this is the only way of dealing with pupils who make mistakes” ES1.

Several children as well voiced their displeasure with caning:

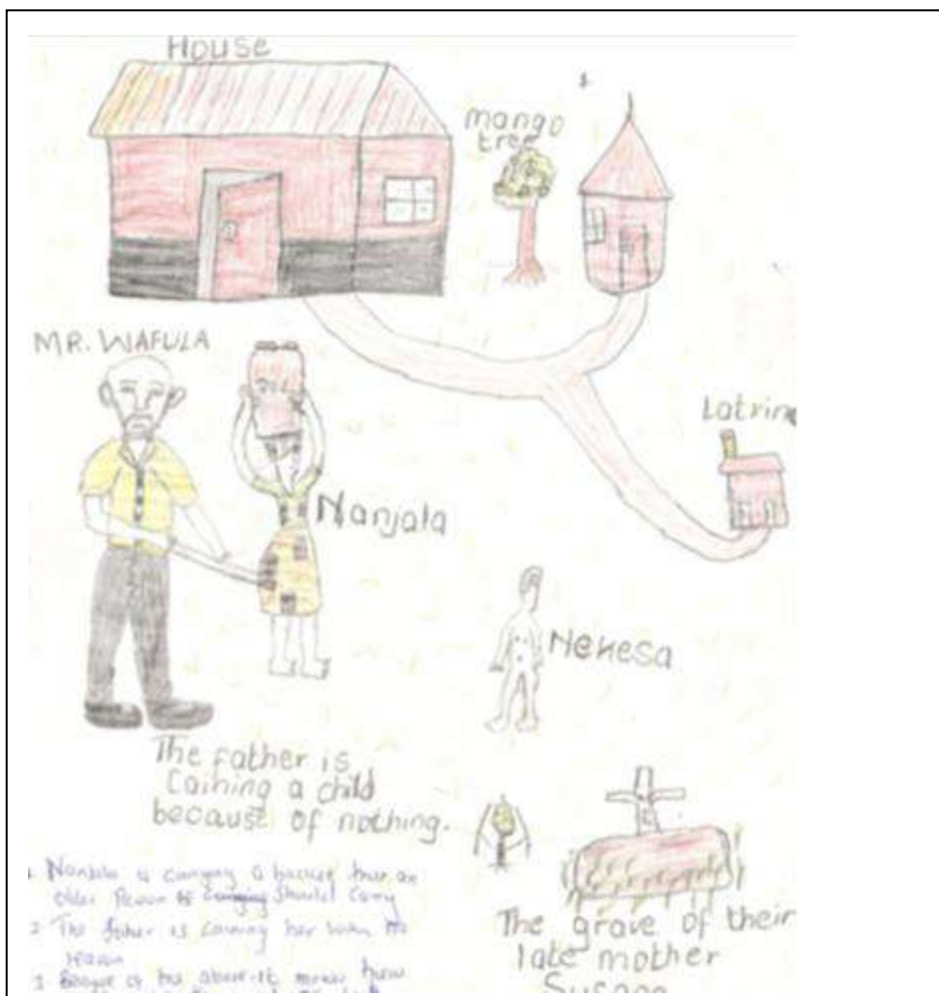
“The pupils being caned without good reasons. If there is a reason it is not bad. Like for me, today I was told that I made noise and was given 5 strokes of cane and today I was very silent. I felt like going home and not to come back”. FGD-B 79 Tav

“Okay, I do not support beating of pupils. Even my own parents do not beat us. My parents talk to me when I make a mistake. Why should teachers beat us? Beating is inhuman and some teachers overdo it. It is not a good way of disciplining pupils”. [The rest concur by nodding] FGD-M 53 Mal

On the general, caning is viewed as a public good and occasionally warranted. It is only two people in the study, a girls and an education secretary who are vehemently opposed to it. As long as there is a level of ‘social acceptance’ this is a practice that will continue to happen. The corporal punishment ban will continue to be flouted.

4.2.6 Effects of Physical Abuse

The effects of physical abuse are varied and can be quite compound. Many children felt a sense of injustice, developed a negative association with schooling, or simply dropped out. Physical abuse often resulted in the child being injured as illustrated here “What I don’t like here in school is that they beat us very much. Like last week another boy was beaten until he nosebleed, they tell you to pull your dress up next to the thighs then they beat you until you have marks” FGD-G 20 HB.



There are invisible effects, those emotional related that are perhaps best illustrated in the drawing by children. In this illustration, an overworked girl is being beaten. She is an orphan, and perhaps unloved as her mother is dead. These effects are especially worse for children who have nowhere to report, or if they do, an adult conspiracy takes effect, and no action is taken against the perpetrator, despite the adversity and injurious nature of the violence meted against the children

4.2.6 Concluding Remarks: Physical Abuse

8 out of 10 children in the study sample have been victims of physical abuse. This abuse, for 6 of every 10 children occurred within the previous 12 months. The most common type of physical abuse is caning, via use of a stick, rod, belt or plastic flip. Other forms include kicking, slapping, pinching and punching. More severe forms of physical abuse, like burning by pouring hot liquid or using a hot rod and cutting also existed. Parents were also the perpetrators of the most severe and inhuman forms of physical abuse. Teachers were also reported to favour hurtful forms. Hence while parents were reported to cut and burn; teachers on the other hand overly cane, or adopt extreme forms like 'pinching boys on their balls and pinching girls on their thighs' in the name of discipline. Such extremities confirm a high degree of malice and inhumanity, which cannot be attributed to 'discipline'. The intention is simply to hurt, harm and injure the children.

Physical abuse is gendered. The type and intensity of physical violence differs according to the gender of a child. Critically though is the socialization effect. Rather than complain, boys stoically accept physical abuse 'like a man'. If boys later grow up to condone 'beating', then it is probably that the seeds are laid early on in life, when they learn, as a support mechanism, to endure it.

The perpetrator, as a single identity, most named for physical violation is the teacher, followed by school mates. This paints the school as a particular 'violent' site. Not only are teachers flouting the corporal punishment ban, but it also indicates that the general environment children learn in is one of fear and pain, rather than safety and creativity. In some schools student leaders have authority to cane their fellow pupils. This is a disturbing phenomenon that affirms the institutionalization of caning.

Majority of the teachers maintain 'public' denial that caning exists. The standard response to any outsider is that 'we do not cane' yet there is evidence across the school and from the children that this is not the case. On the other hand, parents viewed it as a social necessity, and indeed a 'good'. Caning is so rampant that it has acquired a level of normalcy. There is equally acceptance, even among a majority of the pupils, that it is 'OK' to cane, as long as certain boundaries are not crossed. Caning is expected to instill discipline, and is resorted to for a variety of reasons, including failing examinations. The children observed the intensity of the caning as unwarranted, the forms of physical abuse inhuman and the reasons illogical. No amount of caning will make a child 'pass' an exam.

The effect of physical abuse are compound; can result in body injury and affect school participation. There are emotional scars, whose depth remains unearthed in this current study.

4.3 VERBAL ABUSE

“There are also cases of verbal abuse from adults to children. There are abusive teachers like one I over-heard in a certain school telling a child, ‘wewe ni mjinga kama mamako’ (you are stupid like your mother)” ES3

Of every 10 children, almost 7 reported to being verbally abused. These words are said with an intention to hurt a child’s feelings. This section analyses the forms of verbal violence, presents the perpetrators and venue of abuse.

4.3.1 Abusive Words Used

Words and phrases used with an intent to insult, disturb the feelings and emotional wellbeing of children were wide and varying. They ranged from use of words like ‘big head’ or ‘mother’ whose hurtful nature could only be drawn from the context and intonation used; to actual abusive words like ‘fool, stupid’. In one study site (Homa Bay), comparisons with HIV/AIDS were used to inflict pain on the children. The referencing of girls sexuality, and allusions to their having boyfriends were phrases used to taunt the girls. In this context, teachers would label the children according to their boy/girlfriend status and derisively call them ‘baba na mama zero’. The abuse of both a child and their parents was also prominent with terms like ‘you are as stupid as your mother’. It depicts the disrespect that exists. More examples are contained in the Box 7.

Box 7: The way teachers abuse us: Pupils Voices

“B2. The teachers, they use many abusing words to us even before other pupils either in class, parade, field and even before other teachers like Kumbafu, Mjinga kama Ng’ombe, sungura, matigolo in Bukusu meaning a person eating a lot, Mzee wa kazi and Majeusi. They always say this to us. B3 pupils boy and girl were found to be friends in the school and were caned, guided and were named other names like bibi na bwana na Baba na mama zero in 2014, so those pupils felt very bad and they did not come to school again”. (FGD-B 2 Bun)

“B6. Teachers here abuse you, they tell you, you a stupid like your father and you have grown a ‘BIG’ head with no brain in it, and you just waste your time and money for your father or mother”. (FGD-B 2 Bun)

“Teachers here abuse you, they tell you things you have never heard, like, ati ‘you look like an AIDS victim, do you have AIDS? Fool, you are very stupid’ things you just wonder about. Private schools are good”. (Girl 14 Std 6 in FGD-G 17 HB)

“Some teachers’ especially female teachers enjoy embarrassing the girls in class. One time I told the teacher to pardon me when she was dictating notes and she turned and answered me with a lot of disgust ‘who to pardon you, I can pardon everyone else but not you, you were busy meditating about the boys you slept with last night and instead of concentrating’”. (FGD-G 19 HB)

“Like another day, madam Beatrice found me outside the class during class hours, then you know I am thin, then she shouted, Auma, look at you walking like you have Hiv Aids, are you suffering from the disease? G4. Or they say, you have big buttocks like a pig, to swing around for boys to see you”. (FGD-G 20 HB)

“Also the girls in this school do not find support. There are girls who are very big or those girls who have given birth when they come here; they are called “mama” by the teachers. When they ask questions they are told “you are just thinking about your boyfriend and children and disturbing us”. The girl who was told left school because others laughed at her”. (FGD-G 31 Ker)

By far however, most of the abusive words used on children have sexual connotation. Many example abound, similar to: “Or they say, you have big buttocks like a pig, to swing around for boys to see you” (Girl 11 yrs Std 6). The following illustration, that tally’s all the abusive words mentioned by children in the word shower and in the questionnaires, confirms the abundance of sexually charged abusive words, mentioned in the following order:

- i) ‘Kumamako’ or fuck your mother and ‘Kuma’ (fuck) was the most prevalent word. There was also some referencing of private parts, such as the anus, buttocks, balls (mkundu, matakona makende respectively).
- ii) ‘Malaya’ or prostitute followed as the second most uttered abuse. The recipient of this word were girls/females in the study. Shoga (or gay) received some mention, and was mainly targeted at boys.
- iii) ‘Mjinga’ or ‘foolish’, ‘stupid, idiot, mad’ were the third most mentioned set of words. Other variations of this word that were mentioned included ‘takataka’ or rubbish
- iv) ‘Mbwa’ or dog was the fourth most mentioned word that children deemed abusive. Other words in this category include pundamilia, kondoo and nguruwe (zebra, sheep and pig).

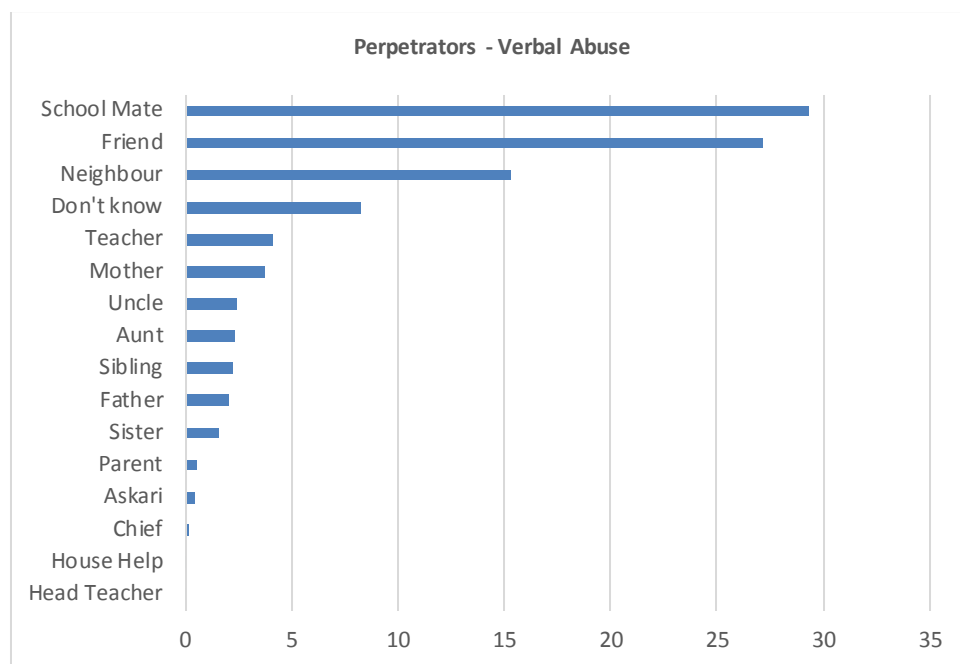


This analysis confirms that by far, sex or sexuality was used to deride or cause discomfort and hurt. That ‘fuck your mother’ and prostitute’, both terms associated with the female gender were so prominent confirms the need to always retain a gendered approach and analysis.

4.3.2 The Perpetrators of Verbal Abuse

The perpetrators of verbal violence are predominantly the children themselves. Indeed the learners themselves, and friends accounted for 56.5% of all mentions. The next mentioned category were neighbors (15.5%), followed by various family members (15%) (Father, mother, uncle, aunt, sibling etc). Neighbors and the family in total account for 30% of the mentions. These groups are found in the home or neighborhood and implies that any successful intervention needs to target outside the school, if it is

to be successful. The existence of a huge proportion of neighbours, as perpetrators of verbal abuse affirms that it is an occurrence not only in the home, but also in the community.



4.3.3 Venue of Abuse

The different people interviewed were in agreement and affirmed the trend already painted of the shaky social environment children lived in both at home and in the school. Children seemed to be getting socialized into abusive terms and ways way early, as explained in one discussion: “There is a nursery school child here in school whom if you touch just a little, will spit out bad abuse like ‘prostitute’, ‘ass’ and so on. She even abuses her own mother. We do not do anything to her, because even if you beat her and leave, she will still abuse you again” (FGD-G 70 Meru). This experience first and foremost indicts the home as the place that is failing to inculcate the correct norms and values to the children. Children who suffered the brunt of abuse most were the orphaned, those born out of wedlock or those whose parents brew alcohol.

According to head teacher’s observation, children meted a lot of abuse to each other, and once again as in the case of caning, seemed to have acquired a level of normalcy. Not much action was done, even if verbal abuse was reported, and this encourages it to continue. Boxes 7-10 provide more examples of verbal abuse in different spaces.

Box 8: Verbal Abuse at home

“There are cases of many children who get withdrawn and are very fearful just because the parents shout at them, they use harsh words on them and they get emotionally disturbed, so when they use harsh words, many words that one would fear to let them come out of the mouth, they use them here in school. When you ask them where they get these words, they say, they heard the father or mother call each other when they were fighting, it is really bad here” HT5 M HB

"I receive many reports from the children and especially those who are living with guardians, step parents or the orphans with guardians, step parents or the orphans. There is a girl in class 6 who lives with a guardian, the girl does not do homework, so their class teacher noted this for a long time and brought her to me, she told me how she is being abused, sometimes being called Malaya, mwanaharamu, because of being born out of wedlock, she's scolded, beaten and because of being overworked she cannot do homework, she has no time to read, so these children are neglected, they do not have proper uniforms, they are in school on and off, they sometimes come to school hungry" HT16 F Ker

"Also if your mother brews busaa or chang'aa (wirgilk") they tell you not to go to school so that you help, take care of the baby as she prepares or she tells you to brew or to sell to drunkards who have bad manners...They tell you things like 'Chemalel (light skinned girl). I want to marry you, then your mother will bring cows> I feel very bad. But it is better when your parents is brewing. If she is the only one who drinks you will be in more problems because they do not buy anything for you at home. You must work on your own. Like here many people do not come to school their parents do not bring them". FGD-G 33 Ker

"G4: Some of the children, like me, my mother used to abuse me, she would ask me to stop going to school or look for someone to educate me, when I go to visit a friend she says, I am a prostitute, I still wonder if I am her daughter. Some parents are really bad they do not support their children

G5: Also some young children are employed, for example I know some girls who are now house girls, they do a lot of work and they are mistreated, some boys and girls are employed to sell "kaada" alcohol, some parents brew alcohol and they force their children to sell to men and those men are bad, they can even rape you. Some abuse you very bad abuses, they tell you they want to marry you and they are very old

G6: In the abuses, like me, when I ask my mother for anything she chases me away or she says go to your husband and I don't have a husband, she does not understand. Let us say when you do not have parents for example, so you stay with your aunty or grandmother, if you ask for anything they tell you to go to grave and ask for those things...'yaani madharau sana'" FGD-G 44 Lod

Box 9: Verbal Abuse in the School: Head Teachers Explain

"What is rampant here is verbal abuse, especially among the pupils, but girls mostly use it even to the boys, making fun of themselves". HT 9 HB

"It was a matron who had told a child that she has a face like a chapatti. She reported it because she was really hurt I guess. She was crying looking at her face in the mirror and asked me, "Teacher, do I have a face like a chapatti?" So I talked to the matron and I told her not to repeat and assure the child that her face did not look like a chapatti". HT1 M Bun

"Nearly all children in the school at one time or another get involved in ridicules or abuses... Among the children, the bad habit of abusing one another is picked from the home environment and brought to school...Sometimes teacher's also utter nasty words to children that demean them... Even last night I dealt with such a case of a teacher using foul language on a pupil". HT 38 F Meru

Box 10: Peer to Peer Verbal Abuse

"Some boys abuse the girls that 'ngony meru' and they are not beaten. Also even if you report you are targeted and dealt with (unaundiwa deal) and beaten or the way by the boys. This has happened twice. That girl is in Class 7, but she is also double dealing her boyfriend". Boy 14 FGD-B 16 HB

"Just finish your class 8 and then come I marry you because your poor grandmother will not have money to take you to school and by that time you will be begging; Come I buy you clere (body oil) look at how your legs have scales. I'm even doing you a favor by talking to you" FGD-G 18 HB

"I am really abused on the way to school by my friends. They say I am a coward. I have reported to the teacher and even my mother because I really feel bad. When they abuse me, I do not abuse back. The teacher called one of them and caned him but my mother asked me not to remain in their company". FGD-B 24 Isio

"Another issue is abuse from my siblings. We do not get along, and when I try to talk, I am abused, "kwenda huko Malaya what are you saying in front of me". Even if I report to my mother, he is not beaten. Whether mother leaves to go to the market he continues to abuse and even beat me. I just keep quiet because I do not have the strength". FGD-G 28 Isio

4.3.4 Concluding Remarks: Verbal Abuse

Of every 10 children, almost 7 reported to have been verbally abused. Words and phrases used with an intent to insult, disturb the feelings and emotional wellbeing of children were wide and varying. . They ranged from use of normal words like 'big head' or 'mother' whose hurtful nature could only be drawn from the context and intonation of use to abusive words like 'fool, stupid'. By far however, most of the abusive words used on and by the children have sexual connotation. Analysis confirms that by far, sex or sexuality was used to deride or cause discomfort and hurt. That 'fuck your mother' and prostitute', both terms associated with the female gender were so prominent confirms the need to always retain a gendered approach and analysis.

The perpetrators of verbal violence are predominantly the children themselves. Indeed the learners themselves, and friends accounted for 56.5% of all mentions. The next mentioned category were neighbours (15.5%), followed by various family members (15%). The existence of a huge proportion of neighbours, as perpetrators of verbal abuse affirms that verbal abuse is an occurrence not only in the home, but also in the community.

Children seemed to be getting socialized into abusive terms early in life. This evidence first and foremost indicts the home as the place that is failing to inculcate the correct norms and values to the children. Children who suffered most were the orphaned, those born out of wedlock or those whose parents brew alcohol. It confirms the diminished social safety nets for children especially those who live outside the nuclear family.

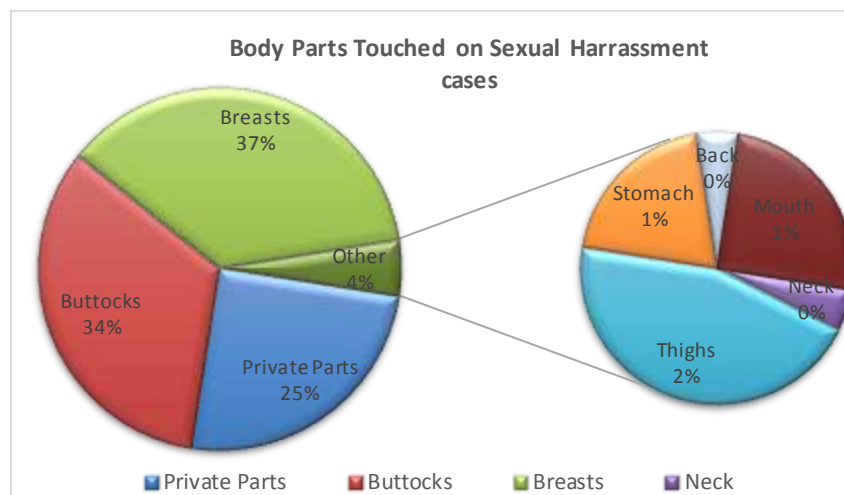
4.4 SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual violence covers a wide spectrum that include sexual harassment where symbols, touches, words, innuendos of a sexual nature are made, to actual physical actions of sexual violations. Sometimes, harassment precedes the unwanted sexual action. In this section, sexual harassment is discussed before proceeding to other forms of sexual violations such as rape, sodomy and incest. The discussion focusses on the nature of abuse, where it occurs and the perpetrators.

4.4.1 Sexual Harassment

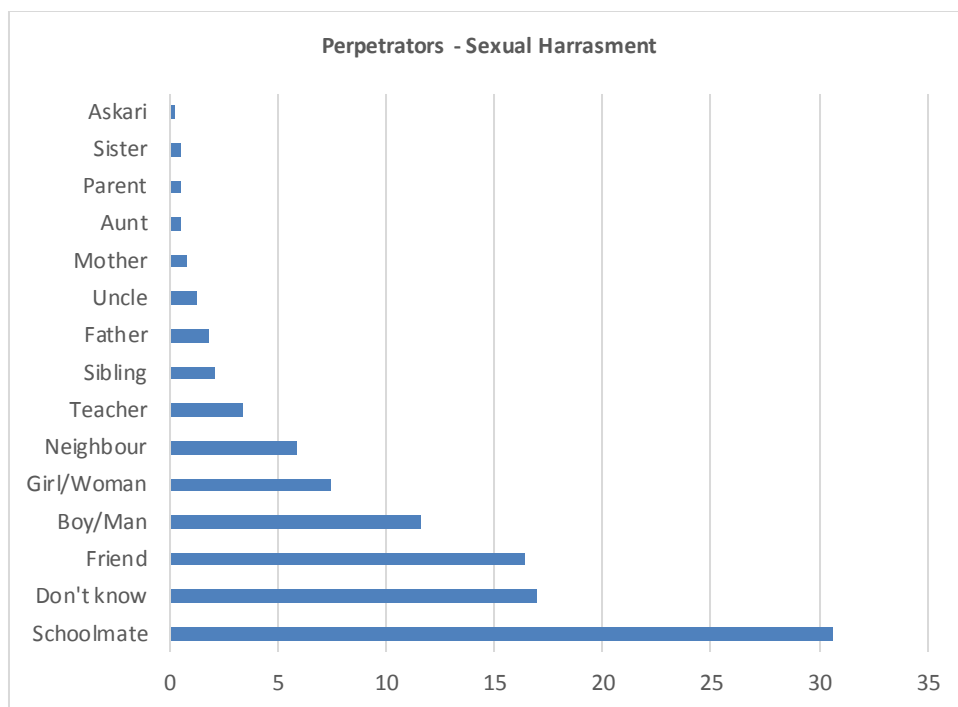
“During class time, you can be passing around the classroom, some boys can touch you, then they say ‘umeiva, You are ripe’. They squeeze your breasts and even say ‘today your buttocks are big, they are enough for me to sleep on them’. They say this and others laugh. You feel so bad” (FGD-G 17 HB)

Three of every 10 children reported to have been sexually harassed. While girls were the majority of the harassed (59%), a considerable number of boys admitted to being sexually harassed as well. Sexual harassment was depicted by acts of fondling, holding or squeezing breasts (37%), buttocks (34%), private parts (25%) as well as touching other body parts (thigh, stomach and so on). For 34% of the children, the abuse was still going on. The following graph gives the details.



4.4.2 Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment

The perpetrators of sexual harassment are first and foremost the school mates (31%), followed by strangers (17%) and friends, at 12%. If one lumps schoolmates and friends together, assuming that the latter are their peers, then this accounts for 43% of all mentions. Persons who are unknown to the children, strangers, account for a sizable proportion. Various family members account for a total of 8% of all mentions, implying that children are sexually harassed within the supposed safety of homes.



In order to understand who ‘school mates’ are, we turn to the descriptive data gathered as depicted in Box 11. Schoolmates who sexually harassed others were first and foremost identified as the ‘big boys’ who targeted girls. For some girls, it remained at harassment level, but for other, it proceeded on to a ‘relationship’ status where girls began to receive ‘gifts’ from boys in the form of body lotion, mandazi and so on.

Box 11: Sexual Harassment from the ‘Big Boys’

“Boys, those big boys! They touch everywhere, even your breasts (they laugh), you can be standing then you just hear someone passing and touching you”. FGD-G 1 Bun

“G4: Some teachers also beat you, badly, like a nother one you know what he does? (No) he always beat us the back he will pretend he is holding your sweater tight then in the process he will be touching your breasts, later he will call you to the staffroom, then he will tell you he like touching your breasts (a ti haki ziko soft.....) (laughs)

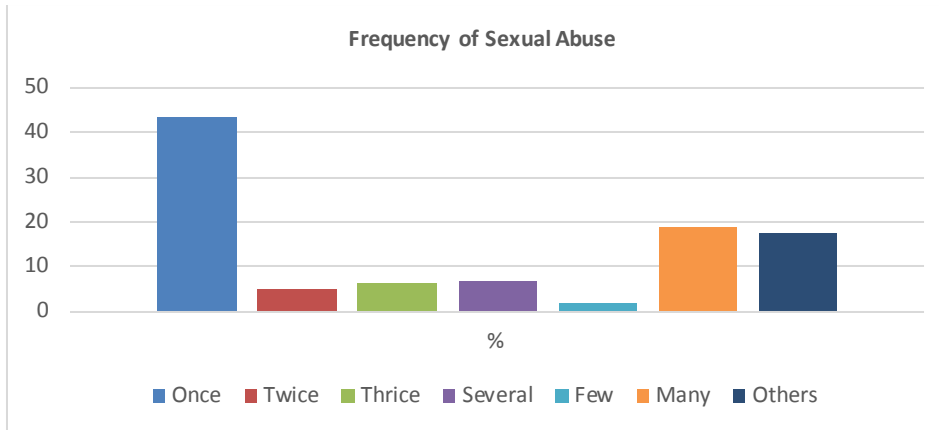
G3: Even some boys in our class they like catching the breasts and buttocks, to check the size. Some say nice words like I love you, so if you are not serious, you become their girlfriend, sometimes he will buy ‘Kangumu’ for you because they do casual jobs over the weekend”. FGD-G 32 Ker

Once a relationship had been established, then there was gradual progression to request or demand for sex. This led to the discussion on sexual abuse, whether it can be consensual, and how to read the cases of underage sex.

4.4.3 Sexual Abuse

Any involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully understand, and cannot give an informed consent to, is deemed as sexual abuse. 16% of the children, 63% of whom were girls, who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they had been sexually violated. Just like in the case of sexual harassment, of every three children violated, two of them are girls, and one is a boy. For the

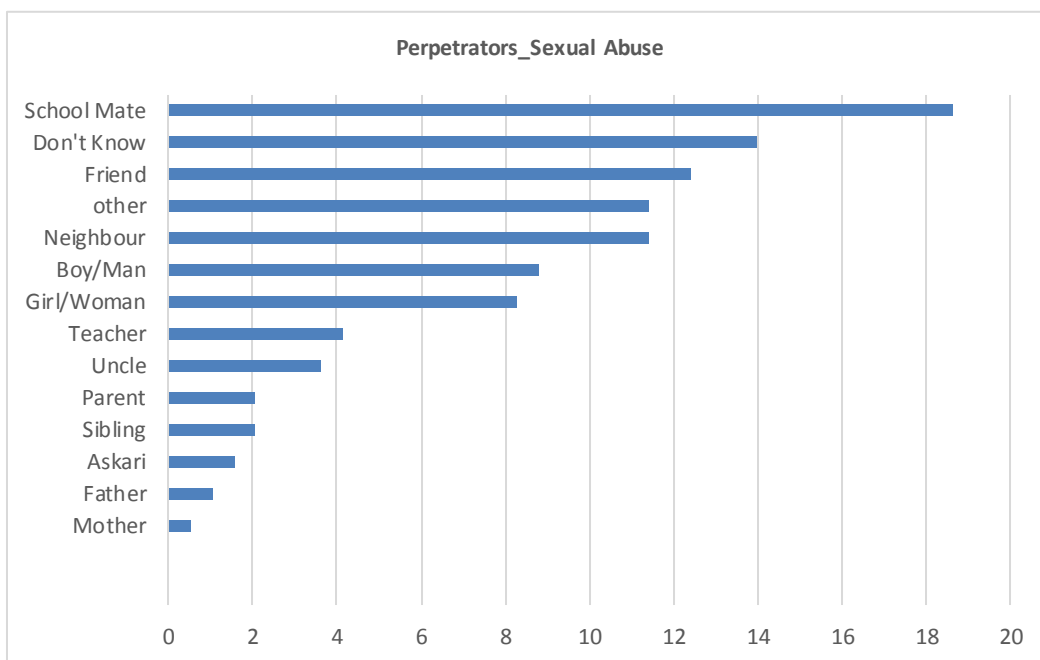
majority of the children (43%), this was a one off occurrence. However 19% of the children indicated it happens many times. The abuse was still on going for 41% of the children.



4.4.4 Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse

“In most cases they are the being abused even by their own fathers or uncles. One girl dropped out recently because the uncle defiled her, she is now 7 months pregnant, but who cares?” HT7 F HB

School mates at 19% accounted for the majority of the perpetrators, followed by persons unknown to the children (14%) and friends (12%). School mates and friends therefore account for 31% of the mentions. Various family members accounted for 11% of the mentions as did neighbors, while teachers as perpetrators of sexual abuse was at 4%. The rather high proportion on ‘unknown’ accosters is proof that the community is not a safe space for children.



The following section discusses each perpetrator in more detail, starting with Peer to Peer sex. There after sexual abuse in the home, in the school, and on the way to school is discussed with various family members, the teacher and bodaboda riders respectively discussed as the key perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

4.4.5 Underage Sex amongst Minors

Cases of Peer to peer sexual actions were pointed out to be a normal occurrence in all study sites, and in most cases seemed to be ‘consensual’, though not informed as this was a case of two minors. The narratives from the informants shall be used to draw out the characteristics of underage sex. In one extreme case, a headteacher, who admitted to having a ‘serious problem of sexual relations’ narrated several incidents that related to ‘group sex’ occurring in the school.

“I have a serious problem of sexual abuse among the pupils themselves though this is declining after various interventions. In one case last year, a teacher walking behind the classes early in the morning discovered class 4 pupils having sex in class. This was the whole class having sex at the same time; only one was acting as a sentry at the door. In another similar case, the 2014 class 8 were also involved in a sexual orgy in the classroom one evening after school. Each boy was to give 50 shillings to the girl he was paired with and then they would find a spot in the classroom and get down to business. This only came to light when I noticed pupils still in the class as we were leaving the school. I sent one teacher to go tell them to go home and he found them in the act. It also ended tragically for one boy who was refused by the girl he was paired with. He had no 50 shillings to offer her and so she refused to play sex with him. When he got home he took poison because of the rejection and died. We attended the burial and it was very sad”. HT47 F Nye

A frequent feature of the child to child sex was the commodification of the process. The trend painted was one where, girls were lured, or demanded small amounts of money, in the range of 20 to 50 shillings, or were given gifts in the form of food (mandazi, sweets, cakes) or other products (such as body lotion). The boys did various chores to earn the money to sponsor their ‘relations’ with the girls. The image of the girls that emerged was not always one of being a victim as they seemed to expect money or gifts in return for sexual favours with the peers. This view is supported by the following statements:

Box 12: Sex for Mandazi

“Here in school, there is sexual violence especially to the girls by the boys especially from class 4 girls upwards. Most of the boys here tune them around. And you know because of extreme poverty here, even for ten, bob, twenty bob, a boy can have a girl. So I think girls fall for the boys out of desperation...let me tell you, these boys do not have so much to do at home, so they go for small casual jobs especially of the weekend. But the girls do not have the time because now over the weekend the parents feel it is their time to relax, so they leave everything to the girl...So boys go cutting sugarcane, the bodaboda boys get money every day, small small jobs, ata za mijengo”. HT6 M HB

“Girls are also easily cheated because they are young. You find nowadays boys are learning in school and they cheat them, like for the one who was impregnated, it was a fellow boy in class 8. The others I hear are boda bodas and youths who drop out of school”. HT14 F Ker

“R1: There are also boys in class 8, who like touching girls and asking them to be their girl friend and also for sex. Sometimes they can buy you mandazi and you will agree because, no one else is buying for you, so you can’t leave

(laugh). R6: but madam, not only boys, when a girl loves a boy, you will see here, doing things, she goes to that boys' desk, 'anajipodoa', putting on makeup, she tells the boy 'nakufee' yaani I love you (laughs). Others also write letters to the boys and that is not good". FGD-G 49 Lod

"G5. Also if you are going home at night after preps, eehh the boys want to be next to you, they touch you the breasts,, even in your private parts the boys insert their fingers, they convince you, they buy mandazi for you, then another day they will ask you, Do you love me? Then if you are a girl and he has been buying mandazi for you, you say yes, then he will say, this way is how you show, come I show you then when you follow him, he will sleep with you. So at night many things happen. Even we go, then suddenly people disappear, they go and do bad things". Girl 14 Std 6 FGD-G 17 HB

"Many children have sex with each other in the boy's dormitory. Those who participate are from class 6 onwards. They do these things at 10 p.m. at night by forcing others. This year, I have heard of about four cases...B1: Boys and girls in this school have so much sex until they do not read. They agree amongst themselves, normally they belong to class 6,7 & 8. They are known by the teachers who write them down in the black book. The teachers normally call their parents but they find it difficult to stop it despite the warnings". FGD-B 55 Mar

"G6: Boys make advances to us, at they like us. They bring for us sweets and cakes here in school as proof of their love. Some even give us money, we do not know where they get it from though some do casual jobs on Saturdays. There are some boys who do not come to school for several days because of the casual jobs. We do not inform our parents because they will beat us claiming we are the ones who desire them. G2: Boys in this school give us dates for the weekend so that we can talk about love, accept to be their girlfriend, how he will marry you and the number of children we shall get. Some accept and some have become pregnant and left school. No boy has been reported as the girls also want and they are afraid that their 'lovers' will be jailed. The girls just get children and continue living with their parents. No girl has ever returned back to school after getting a baby". FGD-G 76 Nye

Not all underage sex was consensual. There were reports of rape of girls, or sodomy of boys. Age was a factor for boys, and in all instance it was the younger boys who were sodomised by the older ones. The interesting finding is that while sodomy attracted firm attention and action from the duty bearers, the rape of girls did not always attract a similar reaction. Several instances were described of female victims being victimized again, including being caned for being raped.

Box 13: 'Caned for Being Raped': The Rape of Boys and Girls

"I have also dealt with cases of sodomy. A class 4 and a class 5 boy were sodomised on different occasions outside the school. The cases were reported to me by the respective parents of the children. One was sodomised by a known drunkard who has since been taken into custody by the police. We are counselling the boys and they are responding well". HT12 M Isio

"There was a boy last term who sodomised young children in the toilets, he could wait for them in the boys' toilets, but what we did, we took the boy for guidance and counseling but that did not help. We reported the case to the SMC, no one helped, we involved the D.E.O but later the boy disappeared, I hear he was jailed, but I have also heard that he is in another school, I don't know which is the true story now, but all I know is that parents are not supporting us in eliminating violence but actually supporting violence against children". HT16 F Ker

"At school here, forced sexual acts are many, boys rape girls after night preps. last week one of our boys did this for a standard 8 girl, no action was taken and the teachers know". (Boy 16 years in FGD-B 43 Lod)

"There is also another case of a class 6 girl who was raped by a known person. The mother forces the girl to shut up in an attempt to cover up. I couldn't do much to help this girl. She has been beaten by the mother too much such that she starts shaking uncontrollably when she sees a cane". HT 41 Meru

Underage sex, whether forced or ‘consensual’, constitutes the biggest proportions of sexual abuse. If this category is addressed and determined, then almost half of the cases of sexual abuse will have been resolved.

4.4.6 Family Members as Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse

Girls left in the care of their male relatives, be they fathers or uncles were more susceptible to be victims of abuse as these case narratives show. The role of excessive alcohol also emerges; in some cases, the persons who ought to care for the children are drunk, or the perpetrators are drunk. Sexual abuse in the home either remained unreported, or when it was reported there was no recourse other than cover-up. In the extreme case, the victim was blamed. For a number of girls, there was also pregnancy to contend with. The consequence of pregnancy is explored in more detail in section 4.4.10. Box 14 provides examples of the various contexts in which rape or incest occurs in the home.

Box 14: Sexual Abuse at Home

“The girl who was sexually harassed by the uncle was being housed by the uncle after the mother left her. You see the mother is a drunkard and practices prostitution. She has no time for the girl. So the uncle accepted to stay with the girl. They stayed for some time and one time when he was drunk he forcefully entered the girl’s room. This continued for sometime till a teacher’s daughter was also sexually assaulted. When the story of the teacher’s girl was reported and the culprit who was a tuktuk driver taken to court, the girl decided to open up to that teacher. That is when I got information. That was a difficult case. I decided to involve the Chief. The chief called miji kumi [Community Policing Members] who summoned the uncle and the mother of the child. The mother was warned and asked to take care of the child. She is currently looking after the girl. The girl is close to the teacher whose daughter was raped and I keep enquiring on how she is doing from the teacher. So far I have not gotten any bad information”. HT 30 M Malin

“I had a case of a girl impregnated by the lawyer father she used to stay with. The mother works in western Kenya and so the girl lived alone with the father. When we realised the girl was pregnant, we sought a counsellor who talked to her and she revealed that the father was responsible. I called the mother so that we could follow up the case but when she came she played it cool and took her daughter home with her. As the girl was in class 8, they home-schooled her and she only came back to do her KCPE exam. The mother told me the case had been dealt with and resolved at the family level and so I let go”. HT 38 F Meru

“One girl said the father raped and impregnated her. I called the mother to shed light on these allegations but she said it was a lie. She said the girl’s bad behavior with the boys had led her to that problem and that she was hiding the real culprit. She instructed me to drop the case and let the girl carry her own cross. I had to drop the case as I had no witness to build the case around and I also did not want to cause the girl more problems at home”. HT 47 F Nye

“An example is of one boy who was orphaned and was taken up by a good Samaritan woman who came in as the guardian. What we did not know is this woman used to take advantage of the boy and molest him which hurt that boy psychologically. When it was too much for the boy, he ran away from home and went to live with a friend at their home. We came to learn of this from the friend and the boy was taken in by the school and is supported from the schools boarding section. The woman was reported to the police but we have never followed up to know what transpired afterwards.” HT11 M HB

Several examples were also narrated where girls were expected to offer sexual favours to ‘paying’ men in order to benefit family. Girls were expected, mostly by their mothers, to have sex for ‘family gain’; so that the money received would be used for family budget. This phenomenon was mostly reported in Kericho diocese.

In my school here, I have had cases of child prostitutes, sometimes even mothers send girls to go out there and bring money, especially when their girls are teenagers, or sometimes a mother brings home a man, and orders the girl to sleep with him, so that she is paid... HT16 F Ker

And then also, you find many parents they send their daughters to Kericho town to be beggars or prostitutes, if you say you don't have always, your mother tells you "si you know where to get", so many children are prostitutes and it is their parents or their aunts who tell them to go and look for money, and when you don't bring money you will be beaten or chased away FGD-G 35 Ker

So in most cases, when a girl is big, the mother uses her to be a source of money, a parent gives out her daughter to have sex with someone in exchange for money, so it is really bad for the girls around here (T-FGD 15 Ker).

In a sense therefore a victim could equally be raped by her father and mother; a father who actually does it and a mother who expects her to have sex with another man for family gain.

4.4.7 Teachers involvement in Sexual Abuse of Children

"Some teachers admire girls and mostly demand sexual favors from them, this leads to school pregnancies in our school (They laugh). Even now, we know some of them, and they do not care that we know. They show life life" (They laugh again) (Boy15 Std 8 in FGD-B 41 Lod

The children were asked if they had ever received any love proposals from teachers and other adults in the school. A total of 271 (about 19%) children in the study sample affirmed; and of these 7% of the children accepted the love proposals. A vast majority declined for various reasons listed in Table 14b.

	Seduced By:					
	Teacher		Other Adult		Both	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	77	5.3	197	13.7	53	4.2
No	1365	94.7	1241	86.3	1,214	95.8
Total	1442		1438		1267	

Response	No.	%
I agreed	14	7
I refused	105	53
Friendship days are yet to come	18	9
Studies First	36	18
I am a pupil	32	16
I am young	7	4
I abused him	4	2
Total	216	

The children were further asked if they knew of other children, in their school, who were engaged in sexual relations, and Table 15 provides the details. The highest proportion of relations of a sexual nature, known to the children, was male female sex among the children (19%), followed by male teacher to female students (8%). Incidents of same sex relations (e.g. male teacher to male students) and female teacher to male students stood at 4% apiece. This table further indicts teachers, especially male teachers as perpetrators of sexual abuse on children.

	Total	% Yes
Percentage of students and teachers are engaging in sexual relationships		
Male Teachers with		
Female Students	1446	8.0

Male Students	1426	4.1
Female Teachers with		
Female Students	1441	4.2
Male Students	1424	4.1
Student To Student		
Male To Female	1423	19.3
Male To Male	1420	6.6
Female To Female	1445	7.3

The informants including the children, in all study sites affirmed that teacher pupil sexual abuse was present. The children targeted for the 'sexual relations' by the teachers were predominantly in upper classes (Class 7 and 8), though incidence of children in middle upper classes (from class 4) were reported. These children, most of whom were girls, would receive an 'elevated status' for being in a relationship with a teacher exemplified by never being caned, receiving underserved higher test scores, or receiving gifts from the teacher. In some cases, it is the girls who engineered these relations by writing 'love letters' to the teacher. Where a teacher decided to enter into these relations, they targeted multiple girls within the same school, and this occasionally resulted in some friction among the girls. Teacher girl child sex seemed to attract action at the school level, and the consequence for the teacher would be transfer or interdiction.

Box 15: Sexual Abuse by Teachers in the School

"We have also had **sexual violence** that were very rampant when I just joined the school. Teachers having relationships with the pupils and the teachers involved had to be interdicted". HT11 M HB

"I know of four girls who are friends with a male teacher. One is in class 5 and two in class 7 and one in class 8. They go to the teachers on Saturday and Sundays and also during games and music festival. They do not know about each other as the teacher calls them one by one". FGD-G 58 Mar

"G1. Yes. Like last term, there was a teacher who was having an affair with a girl in class eight, which happens to be my class as well. The teacher would never beat her and she was allowed to have long hair, lip balm and a pouch, unlike the rest of us. The teacher would call her to the staffroom during preps especially when he is on duty and they would stay together for some time, when they are found they would say they were doing maths. We don't know what went on in there but it was said that they were sleeping together. That is why that teacher left this school. G2. Sometimes, some girls write letters to teachers and the teachers either agree or beat you up. But they usually meet or talk stories with the teacher. The girls usually meet either in the staffroom, or the offices or in the teacher's toilets". FGD-G 2 Bun

"What I feel bad about here in school when Mr. F.W a teacher dating two girls in class 7 and 8 and awarding them free marks to top us". FGD-B 4 Bun

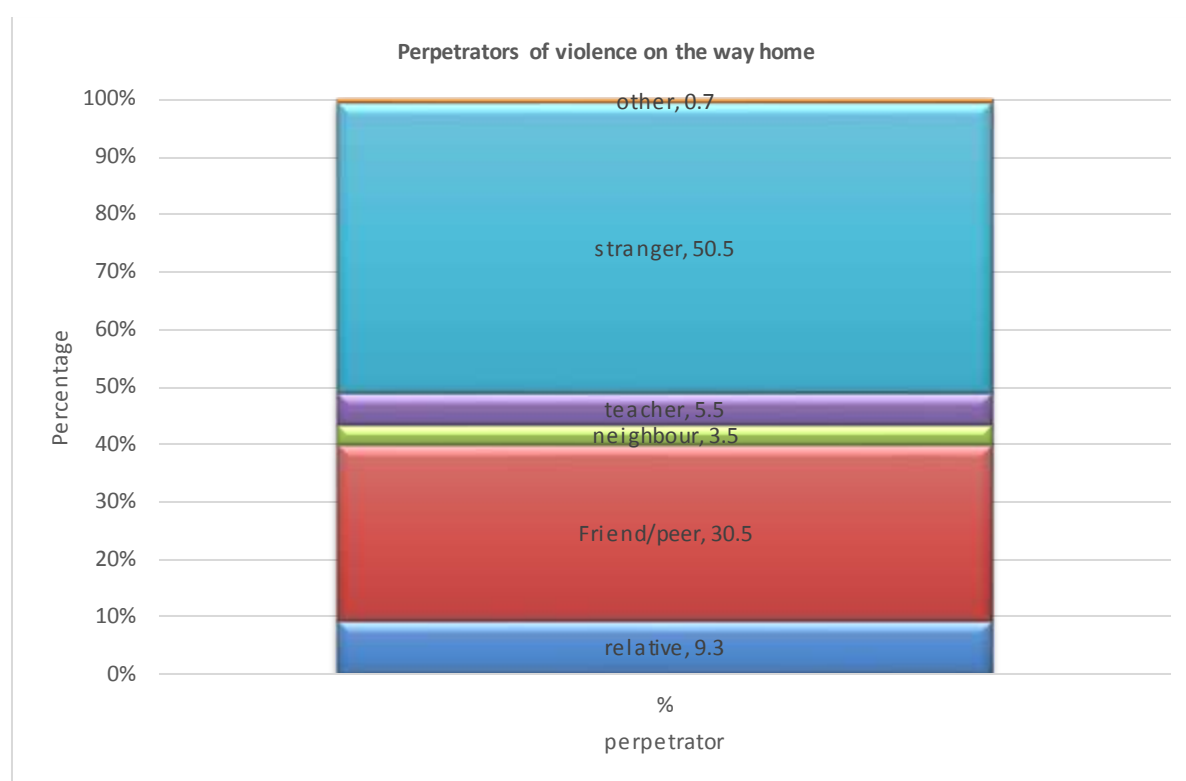
"2015 class 8 pupils demonstrated against a teacher who has two girls both girl friends are in class 7. And they used to sleep together, that teacher would buy them lotions and fair and lovely, but the teacher has been transferred" FGD-B 5 Bun

"There was a girl who was cheated one night by the teacher who did 'bad manners' to her during night prep. This girl did not report to anyone. Her parents were notified but they did not take any action at all! FGD-G 27 Isio

4.4.8 Sexual Violence on the way between school and Home: The BodaBoda Riders

“Also if your home is far, some children come from far, they pass through bushes and forests. It is very dangerous. If a boda boda person comes, you will agree to be given a free lift, like he will take you home the first day, the second but the third day, you will be taken where you don’t know. He will ask you to pay. You will say you don’t have money. He will tell you he does not want money he wants you” (Girl Std 8 in FGD-G 46 Lod)

There was uniformity in the description of the form and nature of sexual abuse of especially school girls, by boda boda riders. The similarity of the description, from Nyeri to Lodwa, Taveta to Kericho, was unnerving and confirmed a magnitude of a problem that was not yet receiving adequate attention. The way between home and school was a particularly dangerous spot for children and it is strangers who accounted for 51% of the assaults. The identity of these strangers, were the bodaboda rider.



The typical scenario started with a rider, often unknown to the girl offering a ‘free’ ride. Shortly thereafter, the rider started wooing the girl with gifts or money and this would later be followed with demand payment in the form of sex. Irrespective of the town or school, the riders emerged as deceptive and used trickery to trap the girl at a time when she was vulnerable and could not seek help. These riders also seem to be close to the girls age, are former school dropouts and recently completed school.

Box 16: Sexual Abuse by ‘Boda Boda’ Riders

“Some children are coming from far, sometime you are given money to board a boda boda. When you board the boda boda starts reducing you “anaanza ngeli”, he can say let us pass this road, it is nearer, at that time he knows it is far, but he wants to have more time with you. He will have known where you come from. The following day,

he will wait for you, then he will tell you, today, I want to give you a lift. The fourth time, he will carry you, then he will tell, I forgot something at home, let us go, I pick and you can also know my home. Since you are friends you will just go with him. Then he will tell you welcome to my house", which soda do you take? Then he will drop you at school. The following day he will ask you to meet him at home, he can say he is sick. He is your friend. You will go, when you arrive, he will ask you, now that you have eaten my money what will you give me; you have eaten almost one thousand. Then he will force you to sleep with him." (Girl 15, Std 7 in FDG-G 47 Lod)

"I had a friend who used to come from far...I think some boda boda man had seen her walking every day. One day, one boda boda fellow offered her a lift and since it was raining, she accepted the offer. The fellow took her to the bush and raped her. Since it was raining, no one heard her screaming. Right now, she cannot walk properly and she cannot come to school" (Girl 14 yrs, Std 8 in FDG-G 2 Bun)

"In the recent past many girls here have been victims of bodaboda riders, especially along the stadium road, they cheat them and their aim is to have sex with them, I even remember a case of a girl who used to be dropped and picked by a bodaboda man and I reported the case, after a short while, I hear the mother withdrew the case, saying "what does she expect us to eat" now referring to me, I felt so bad, but many here things are bad, I don't know what can be done because it seems none really cares about children." HT16 F Ker

"G3: Then also some bodaboda boys disturb girls when they are going home from school. Then they cheat girls with 50 bob, to sleep with them and leave you (Tell me how they do it) Like now, when it wants to rain and you are going home, they come and say, let's go I drop you next to your home. Then he will say, I am not charging you, then you will board the boda boda, he will take you then tell you even tomorrow I will come to your school gate, then that way and on the third time he will say, I want you to sleep with me, if you refuse he will say pay me back the lifts or give me back my money, if you give money, he will say I want the exact money I gave you, so you will just have to give in and he will use you; G4: Even the matatu makangas also, they say to you not to pay, you are a student, you just don't pay, so you will think this makanga is polite, so you will be waiting for that car every day, but you will pay by having sex with the man; G5: Also like me another day in the matatu, I was sitting with the conductor, they smile and close one eye, then if the matatu is full, he will keep touching touching you, like the breast, they like playing with you, those people are bad." FGD-G 20 HB

"There is a man who rides a motorbike named "Mkitang" "bodaboda rider- during games / sports he offers free lift to girls and other men uses him to transport girls ... for sex and he has impregnated a girl in Std 8." FGD-B 4 Bun

"There are those who ride boda boda. The first day asks you if you like a lift if you refuse they persuade you and tell you, you will not pay. The second day will say I love you and give you shs 100. After a week they tell you lets go to town and take a stroll then they take you to a hotel or bush and say I want to sleep with you so that I know if you love me. If refuse he will rape you or asks for his money back." (Girl, 15 Std 7 in FGD-G 10 Bun)

"Also at home there are children who are raped also, like if the boda boda amekuwa akikubeba, na wanapenda kubeba wasichana and the day he wants to sleep with you he will rape you, because he will come to your home and cheat you, then he can take you, the girl to the bush and rape you. Even those walevi rape girls." (Boy 15 Std 8 FGD-B 14 HB)

"For example there are pupils who use the matatus, some can have relationships with those men, then they are told not to pay, then one day they tell you, I have been helping you, why don't you be mine, I want to taste that thing or let us sleep together, you cannot refuse, because you have eaten the money". (14 Std 7 in FGD-G 17 HB)

"Madam there is one thing I would like to tell you that is very bad, there is a bus from a certain hotel that comes in the evening and lure girls to ride on them till rodi, then the girls are taken into the disco and bar to fetch money for them. There is my friend of mine who I was with in class 6 last year and she was lured and disappeared. I saw her recently putting on a tight trouser and she said she works at that hotel". FGD-G 19 HB

"Another girl was given a [life lift](#) by a boda boda man. She was driven past her home into a bush and raped until she fainted. Her parents had to look for her, and found her in a serious condition. They took her to hospital. FGD-G 30 Isio

"Many of those boys, who have left school, cheat us; they have boda boda, so they can tell you they want to give you a lift. They give you the lift many times even when you are at home or coming to school. Some will buy a

phone for you, then it is easy to communicate so you know many parents do not give us money to buy food or even for other things like panties or always. So when girls get someone to give you money you are cheated by the boys. R2 Also those who cheat girls so much are also the house boys or s hamba boys; because they get salary. Some cheat you and tell you they want to marry you. Then you leave school and when you get pregnant they will leave you". FGD-G 31 Ker

While bodaboda riders were the most mentioned, they were not the only older men mentioned. There were other men who used similar treachery to demand sex, or rape the girls as illustrated below:

"In the market place if you have been sent to buy fish, somebody will come and tell you, how much is fish, you say 250, then... then, he will give you three hundred and says you keep change, if you don't know, you will be happy, when you keep and he meets you another day in the market, he will follow you when you are leaving the market, then he will ask you 'you remember that my money, did the money help you? Now even me I want you, then if you refuse, he will rape you"

These situations affirm the need to tool the girls with 'life skills' that will allow them to better judge situations and avoid getting into undue traps.

4.4.9 Consensual Sex?

In the description of underage sex (Section 4.4.3), the term 'consensual sex' has been used to describe a situation where two minors agree to sexual intercourse. The question that begs to be answered is, 'can child sex be consensual? The straightforward response, especially for adult and child sex is NO, and the explanation that perhaps best illustrates this position was provided in a group discussion amongst girls. Girl 3 raises the fact the minors cannot bear the same responsibility level as adults because they are young and do not fully comprehend the situation. Her view agrees with other definitions of child sexual abuse that (a) if a child is not developmentally prepared; or (b) if it violates the law, or (c) if the child is in a relationship of trust....then consent, is a term that does not apply. Sex with a child is a violation of her human right.

Box 17: Consensual Sex?

"G2: Also sometime, let me say like this, some girls wait for that opportunity, for example now, if your parents do not give you money, if you do not have parents who can take care of you, if they do not provide, what do you do, You welcome men who can buy you something.

G4: I do not agree, there are ways we can get money but not men who will give you sickness and pregnancy. Madam I think, girls are just indisciplined, wako na tamaa. They love nice things like lotions, bikers. This makes them to be friends with boys who will give them more problems. They don't know. They say will you buy me slippers? If someone know what he wants from you si he will buy slippers?

G3: No madam, the problem is not the girl, look at it this way, I am a girl, I am very young, why should a man who is very old cheat me, when someone knows, like now a neighbor? He knows that I am an orphan or I am poor and he will just rape me or want to sleep with me? He is someone who should help me! I am not happy with some people, ati with 50 bob? I really wonder! (FGD-G 17 HM)"

'Consent' in the case of underage sex cannot exist due to the same reasons listed above. It is therefore a misnomer to talk of consensual sex amongst children. The same observations of the developmental stage of a child and what the law states come into play.

4.4.10 Prevalence of Sex and its Effects

Head teachers who participated in the study observed sexual abuse to be disturbingly high, and the main gauge they used was the number of girls who became pregnant. The prevalence differed from one area to another, hence in Nyeri, a teacher lamented 'losing 6 girls in 4 years to pregnancy', yet her counterpart in Marallal loses 4 to 6 girls every year. Undoubtedly, the problem of girl child pregnancy is more pronounced in the arid North, and where cultural practices are still strongly adhered to. The link between circumcision and pregnancy will further be discussed in section 4.5.

Box 18: Pregnancy of Girls

"Cases of sexual abuse among girls is also rampant, you find very young girls, getting pregnant at very early ages, girls at the ages of 12, 13 are already very active in sex to get money for their needs. HT10 F HB

"There are also many cases of sexual abuse, many girls by the age of 14,15,16 are getting pregnant, early and unwanted pregnancies are very many and no man wants to take responsibility, so by class 5 upwards many girls drop out of school. Like last term, two girls dropped out and this term there is one in class 7 who is pregnant" HT22 M Lod

"In the last year we have had 10 cases of pregnancy reported but in the previous years they were more". HT29 M Mal

"This term alone we have lost 4 girls due to pregnancies. These are class 7 pupils who are impregnated by the warriors. The head teacher is following up the case with TSC to see how they would address the case at the community level. It is becoming like a routine. We have to lose two or three girls due to pregnancies, but to date I don't know of any person who has ever been convicted for this offences". HT 34 Mar

"Girls leave school due to pregnancies; the pregnancies are mainly from the high school students; every year I lose about 4-6 girls due to this in class 8". HT 35 M Mar

Many girls are leaving school due to pregnancies. I have lost 6 girls in 4 years due to this. Unfortunately these girls hide the perpetrators and it becomes hard to follow up the cases when they are not ready to talk, I just sadly let go. HT 47 F Nye

But generally speaking in this area there are many cases of early pregnancy, children of 12 to 15 years are already engaging actively in premarital and unprotected sex. In Ndihiwa, the place you went there are high cases of pregnancies. 2ES

"Girls get pregnant instead of completing their studies. Many drop out in Class 7. It has become like a routine. No one seems bothered". FGD-G 27 Isio

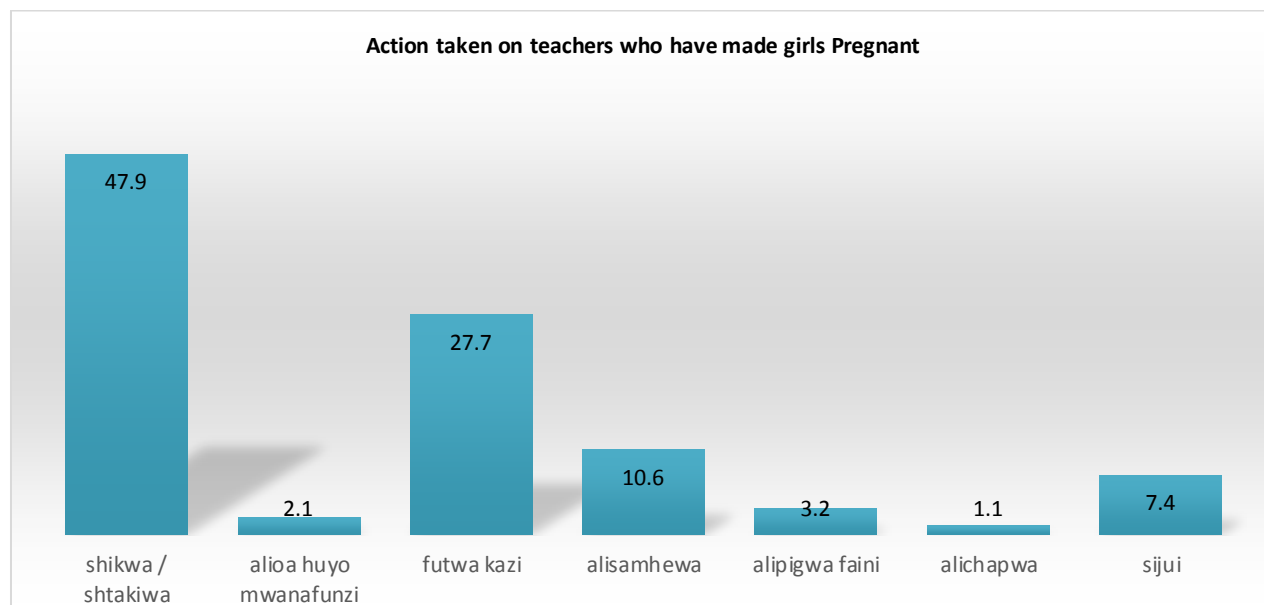
"G6: Girls become pregnant when they are in school, especially in class 8. G2: It is caused by boys from the day school, and some from boarding especially during holidays. The girls are given permission to remain in school until they are seven months pregnant when they go to deliver before coming back to school. The child is left at home or taken to the children center if the girl has no parents". FGD-G 61 Mar

"About sexual abuse like last year, we had a case of a class 8 and class 5 girls who dropped out as a result of sexual abuse, or rather they were pregnant, but we counseled them, we talked to them to give birth and come back but they have never come back. But there are many more cases of pregnancies many girls drop out and nothing more happens you find that when you follow up these cases parents decide to talk about it alone the family of the boys says we will marry the child, then that is the end of it so if the church did something like here what I see is that girls are suffering, these sides people still practice FGM, although silently, but once a child is circumcised she is married off, so this violates the right of the girl. If the girl is pregnant today she will suffer". HT14 F Ker

The fate of the vast majority of girls who became pregnant was cessation of formal education. They simply left school. A few instances were narrated of girls who rejoined school. Some left shortly after

because of emotional torment, where teachers would call them 'mother'. Pregnant girls can only really rejoin school if the support system, both at school and at home is provided.

Action on the perpetrators were mostly taken if it was a teacher. The vast majority of the teachers (48%) were apprehended while another 28% were interdicted. That some were made to marry the girl, or were 'forgiven's is disturbing. None the less, the picture emerging is one of zero tolerance of teachers as perpetrators of sexual abuse. This is a good development.



4.4.11 Concluding Remarks: Sexual Abuse

Sexual violence covers a wide spectrum that include sexual harassment where symbols, touches, words, innuendos of a sexual nature are made, to actual physical actions of sexual violations. The key findings of this study are that:

- Three of every 10 children have been sexually harassed. While girls account for the majority of those harassed (59%), a considerable number of boys are victims as well. Sexual harassment mainly consisted of acts of fondling, holding or squeezing breasts (37%), buttocks (34%) and private parts (25%). For 34% of the children, the abuse was still going on
- The perpetrators of sexual harassment are first and foremost the school mates (31%), followed by strangers (17%) and friends, at 12%. If one lumps schoolmates and friends together, assuming that the latter are their peers, then this accounts for 43% of all mentions. Various family members account for a total of 8% of all mentions, implying that children are sexually harassed within the supposed safety of homes.
- 16% of the children, 63% of whom were girls, have been sexually violated. Just like in the case of sexual harassment, of every three children violated, two of them are girls, and one is a boy. For

the majority of the children (43%), this was a one off occurrence. However 19% of the children indicated it happens many times. The abuse was still on going for 41% of the children.

- School mate at 19% accounted for the majority of the perpetrators of sexual abuse, followed by persons unknown to the children (14%) and friends (12%). School mates and friends therefore account for 31% of the mentions. Various family members accounted for 11% of the mentions as did neighbors, while teachers as perpetrators of sexual abuse was at 4%.
- Peer to peer sexual actions were observed to be a 'normal occurrence'. A frequent feature of the child to child sex was the commodification of the process. The trend painted was one where, girls were lured, or demanded small amounts of money, or were given gifts in the form of food. The boys did various chores to earn the money to sponsor their 'relations' with the girls.
- Child rape of girls, or sodomy of boys exists. In most cases it was the younger boys who were sodomised by the older boys. Sodomy attracted firm attention and action from the duty bearers. The rape of girls did not always attract a similar reaction. Several instances were described of female victims being victimized again for being raped.
- Several scenarios within the home made child vulnerable. First, girls left in the care of their male relatives, be they fathers or uncles were more susceptible to be victims of abuse in the home. Second, girls were expected to offer sexual favours to 'paying' men in order to benefit family. These demands were mostly made by mothers who used their daughters sexuality to augment the family budget.
- Within the school, a total of 271 (about 19%) children in the study sample affirmed they had ever received a 'love proposal' from teachers and other adults in the school; and of these 7% of the children accepted the love proposals. Children targeted for the 'sexual relations' by the teachers were predominantly in upper classes (Class 7 and 8). These children, most of whom were girls, received an 'elevated status' for being in a relationship with a teacher exemplified by never being caned, receiving underserved higher test scores, or receiving gifts from the teacher.
- The way between home and school was a particularly dangerous spot for children and it is strangers who accounted for 51% of the assaults. The identity of these strangers, were mainly bodaboda riders. There was uniformity in the description of the form and nature of sexual abuse of school girls by boda boda riders. The typical scenario started with a rider, often unknown to the girl offering a 'free' ride. Shortly thereafter, the rider would demand payment in the form of sex. Irrespective of the town or school, the riders emerged as deceptive and used trickery to trap the girl at a time when she was vulnerable and could not seek help. These riders also seem to be close to the girls age, are former school dropouts and recently completed school.
- The fate of the vast majority of girls who became pregnant was cessation of formal education. They simply left school. A few girls rejoined school but left shortly after because of emotional torment. Pregnant girls can only really rejoin school if the support system, both at school and at home is provided.
- Action on the perpetrators were mostly taken if it was a teacher. The vast majority of the teachers (48%) were apprehended while another 28% were interdicted. That some were made to marry the girl, or were 'forgiven' is disturbing. None the less, the picture emerging is one of zero tolerance of teachers as perpetrators of sexual abuse. This is a good development.

4.5 CULTURAL VIOLENCE

“If you are married off and you try to refuse that will result in a very thorough beating or you are chased away from home. None will condone a child who refuses to be married off. They say, it is like an abomination, a curse. So that child is beaten thoroughly and forced again or will be chased away”. CO

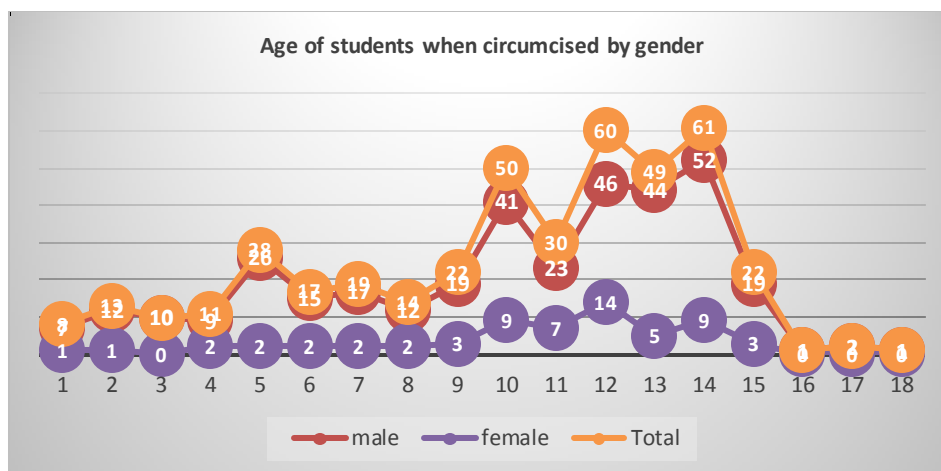
Certain practices, grounded in traditions and custom, and which negate basic human rights as observed in the constitution are today viewed as retrogressive cultural practices. Two such practices, forced circumcision/female genital mutilation and early marriages are addressed.

4.5.1 Forced Circumcision/ Female Genital Mutilation

The study findings revealed that 34% of the 1355 children who responded to this item had been circumcised. The vast majority were boys accounting for 86% of the mentions. However some 14% were girls. A total of 37% of the children had their operations at home. Comparatively more girls than boys were circumcised at home. However slightly less than half of all the girls who had been circumcised were operated in hospitals, yet female circumcision is outlawed. The social acceptance of circumcision stands out for boys and 75% of those who had been circumcised would recommend it.

		Male	Female
Mean Age		10	11
Minimum age		1	1
Maximum age		18	15
Circumcised?	Total Freq.	%	%
Yes	454	86	14
No	901	22	78
Total			
Place			
Home	164	83	17
Hospital	279	88	12
Recommend Circumcision?			
Yes	404	74	26
No	527	35	65

The age upon which the circumcision happens varies from one year to 15 years for girls and 18 years for boys. The peak, as the diagram below shows is between 12 to 14 years. This is the onset of puberty that heralds readiness for ‘initiation’.



Circumcision of girls was viewed to be an abuse of girl's rights. Indeed, in several FGDs, the children recounted that girls would be forcefully circumcised, in crude and hurtful ways, and in circumstances that did not respect basic hygiene principals. Once circumcised, the path to early marriage was cemented. Female circumcision was mainly reported to occur in Isiolo and Maralal.

Circumcision has a generally bad impact on behaviour, attitude and value system of children as students. For some children circumcision brings with it expressions of shame and low esteem. For other however, like for boys, it resulted in them feeling macho to the extent that they felt it in order to defy (female) teacher authority. For girls, it also communicated a certain readiness for marriage. Circumcision therefore as an initiation rite, promotes children from a state of 'childhood' to adulthood'. Unfortunately the values this transition comes along with conflict with the expectations of being pupils. It is therefore important that the values system imbibed, especially for boys as male circumcision has a certain cultural acceptance, is investigated.

The circumstances surrounding female circumcision once again confirms that girls feeling and wants are peripheral. As the voices in Box 19 depict, many seemed to be resigned to their fate, were helpless and could not stop what they clearly did not want to participate in. The main perpetrators of forced circumcision are parents.

Box 19: Circumcision

"G3.I was forcefully circumcised when I was at home. I did not want. This is because at home you can be inflicted with many diseases because you share one knife. I could not do anything. I just persevered but it was very painful and I could not report anywhere because my parents would have caned me. G2. When many girls go on holiday and they are circumcised, it is not easy for them to return to school. They get married off because their parents value wealth more than their daughters". FGD-G 29 Isiolo

"Many girls are circumcised by force and many get injured. They are forced by their parents so that they can get married. Such things are not reported when they happen because even the Chief perform these traditions". FGD-B 55 Mar

"The culture of our people here demeans the girl. If you look at circumcision rites... Like the Bukusus, do a lot of traditional circumcision which is very dangerous because it can spread diseases, and also it is very shameful. It lowers the self esteem because boys are forced to walk around naked, everyone seeing them naked, even young girls see them, they are teased... most communities in Busia now take their children to the hospitals. But what I do not like again about circumcision is the fact that when these children go for circumcision they are taught various

things like, they are now men and they start behaving badly, you find most of them become sexually active hence in most cases abuse young girls sexually". Bungoma, Ed Sec

4.5.2 Early/Child Marriages

"There is disrespect, because why would a 70 year man marry a 12 year old girl? There is disrespect of children" (T-FGD 16 Lod)

Early marriage is a violation that was mostly reported in Homa Bay, Lodwar, Isiolo, and Marallal. In these sites, it is girls who were mostly affected. The circumstances surrounding early marriage in Homa Bay, are quite different from the other diocese that are united in similar cultural practices and a strong patriarchal system. In Lodwar, Isiolo and Marallal, early marriage was justified primarily because of the bride price it fetched. A married girl was viewed as more valuable, than her counterpart in school, due to the 'wealth' she attracted. Forced marriage was therefore a source of income to parents.

As the voices below in Box 20 portray, girls tended to be married off to 'very old men' who according to one informant 'could pass off as the suiters' grandchild'. The process would start very early, at a girls birth, where they would be booked through 'beading' by a man of wealth.

"When a child is born, an old man identifies her as his partner, maybe a 6th wife, so "ushanga" or beads will be put on her neck. If you are dressed with ushanga you never set foot in a school. It is normally done at birth or still at an early age to show that you are booked. Here, it is believed that a girl who has gone to school does not fetch as much wealth as one who has not gone. Here, one who has been to school is believed to be stubborn and rebellious and manner less". CO

The extent of objectification and voicelessness of children is further illustrated by the fact that they would not even be informed of the impending 'marriage'. For those who could save themselves they ran to a neighbor, or the mission centre or the school. In several instances it is teachers who saved children from the imminent marriage.

Box 20: Early and Forced Marriage

"There are also many cases of early marriages. Very old men are marrying very young girls who pass for their great grandchildren. Early marriages are here and not just early but forced. A child is forced by apparent to marry so that they can get some money and some animals". ES6

"At home there are also cases of girls who are married off by their parents because they want money or the dowry, those girls are married while they are very young, even by very old people because may be their parents do not love them. In most cases these parents are not educated so they do not see the need to take children to school". FGD-G 22 HB

"A class 5 child was married by a 28 year old moran, after the girl's grandmother made the connections. This child was living with her grandmother. When the teachers learnt of this, they took action through the Chief's office to return the girl to school. The chief got policemen who rescued the girl who is now in class 5". FGD-G 27 Isio

"G1: There are cases of girls be married early. Parents just discuss and you do not know about the plans. You just get surprised with people carrying you aloft and you do not want.

G2: No one would like to be married off early. Even if you do not want, the morans take you by force even to an old man. If you refuse, they beat you up on the way until you agree

G3: Sometimes they wait for you by the roadside and those morans force you to go with them instead of you going home to your parents. Parents do not come to look for you because most of the time, it is they who made the plans.

G6: There are cases where parents let you go because of poverty – they want wealth. They even plead with you to accept to be married” FGD-G 28 Isio

“G1. I was beaten by my father at home when I refused to get married to an old man. I moved to my neighbours to avoid more caning. My neighbour told my father ‘education is important, so let this child go to school’. My father accepted and allowed me to return to school. G6. When I went home, I found my ‘marriage celebration’ had been organised without my being informed anything. I decided to run away and came to the mission Sister who put me in the boarding section”. FGD-G 29 Isio

“In our community girls are suffering because our culture does not allow some of them especially those in the interior to go to school. When they see girls they see wealth. A girl will not be left to go, because she might get pregnant or she may disappear. So you find most parents do not even want to let their girls to go away to school, they are married off when they are very young” (Boy 16 years in FGD-B 41 Lod)

One instance was recorded of children being encouraged and facilitated to marry each other. As one head teacher narrated:

“There was a case of a class 6 boy marrying another girl in class 6. And the father to the boy constructed a house for him. So as school when we heard they had settled down we just let them marry. But they are very young... teachers have very little to do because parents discuss among themselves and they solve cases of early marriages”. HT19 M Lod.

As in the case of the circumcision, the main perpetrators are the parents. The people who participated in the early marriage schemes were not always the illiterate and unschooled. In a few instances, men with reasonably good formal education ‘married’ underage children. Box 21 has more details.

Box 21: Early marriage perpetrated by the ‘Educated’

“Early marriages are still rampant here. Unfortunately it is not only among the illiterate but even the literate are practicing it. There is an on-going case of a professor who has taken a thirteen year old as a wife. The girl was rescued and taken to a home but was later repossessed by the man. This is due to corruption in our institutions. Unless corruption is eradicated from our institutions, this war can never be won easily. There was a case of a current class 4 girl who was being taken away from school by the father with the aim of marrying her off. We rescued the girl and accommodated her in the boarding section. We bought all necessities and even today allow her to stay without paying. When she goes home during the holiday the father closes her out with the mother”. HT34 M Mar

“There is also cultural violence such as early marriages. These are also in the high, for example there is an on-going case of a retired police officer who eloped with a primary school girl and is living with her in Nyahururu as his wife. 11 girls from one nearby primary school were married off last term alone. The cases are being followed up but no one has been arrested so far. In a different case, one parent is in custody for marrying off his under-age daughter”. ES 3

4.5.3 Concluding Remarks: Cultural Violence

Circumcision/female genital mutilation and early marriages are two practices, grounded in traditions and custom, and which negate basic human rights as observed in the constitution. The study findings revealed that 34% of the children had been circumcised, of whom 86% were boys and 14% girls. These operations occurred at home for 37% of the children. Comparatively more girls than boys were circumcised at home. A sizeable number of girls were however circumcised in hospitals, yet female circumcision is outlawed.

The age upon which the circumcision happens varies from one year to 15 years for girls and 18 years for boys. The peak is between 12 to 14 years. This is the onset of puberty that heralds readiness for 'initiation'. Some girls were forcefully circumcised, in crude and hurtful ways, and in circumstances that did not respect basic hygiene principals. Once circumcised, the path to early marriage was cemented.

Circumcision has a generally bad impact on behaviour, attitude and value system of children as students. Circumcision as an initiation rite, promotes children from a state of 'childhood' to adulthood'. Unfortunately the values this transition comes along with conflict with the expectations of being pupils.

Early marriage was justified primarily because of the bride price it fetched. A married girl was viewed as more valuable, than her counterpart in school, due to the 'wealth' she attracted. Forced marriage was therefore a source of income to parents. The practice of early forced marriage confirms the objectification and voicelessness of children. Their opinion did not matter. For those who could save themselves it is a neighbour, the church or the school that saved them. The role of teachers is helping children is commended.

The main perpetrators of early marriage are parents especially those found in locations that are still steeped in customs.

4.6 CHILD NEGLECT AND CHILD LABOUR

“These girls get overworked by the parents, but it is worse when they stay with guardians or people who are not their real parents. It is bad. It is bad. I tell you, kuwa na mzazi ni kitu ya maana sana (Having a parent is a very important thing)” HT6 M HB

Two attributes of child abuse frequently emerged in the head teacher interviews; that of child labour and child neglect.

4.6.1 Child Labour

Child labour is defined as work that impedes the growth and development of a child. It is quite different from child work, which as part of the socialization process trains a child to undertake tasks that are developmentally and socially acceptable. Child labour on the other hand obstructs on child’s basic rights, including the right to participate in formal education.

The circumstances surrounding children in child labour, as illustrated in Box 22, seem to have remained constant. While girls are expected to undertake household chores, like child care, fetching firewood boys are sent out to work, in sugarcane and tea farms, stone quarries and so on. All these tasks are undertaken at the expense of their schools, and for this reason therefore qualify as child labour.

Other than parents who are the main perpetrators, the working adult community, who employ these children, and use them as their slave labour, need to be apprehended and accordingly charged.

Box 22: Child Labour

“There are many cases of child labour, you find girls reporting these when they are late or don’t finish their homework or when they miss school. Boys will say they were forced to go to school or to do a “kibarua” because there was no food at home. Girls are told to sell firewood or hired to carry them for sale, others go and get employed as maids, others are forced to stay at home to take care of their sibling”. (HT3 F Bun)

“There are cases of child labour. There is boy who is made work hard like a donkey and always absent from school... Girls care for their siblings instead of coming to school and others are maids. The major violence I see is neglect parent don’t care for their children. Like yesterday I was forced to take the children to the dispensary they had some wounds and grandparents couldn’t take them because they are old”. (HT4 F Bun)

“Also there are many cases of child labour, children come to school on and off, they are forced by parents to go to sugarcane farms especially the boys so as to earn a living, girls are exposed to too much household chores, so by the time they come to school they are quite tired, and really we feel saddened”. (HT5 M HB)

“Child labor is also common for girls who work as house-helpers. People like me Eunice here employ children from 10 years and above. I expect the worker to wake up by 5.00am and retire to bed at 11pm or later when she has cooked for me, mopped the house, cleaned the utensils”. (CO)

4.6.2 Child Neglect

“Children are not given security at home. They are not protected by their parents. They are not loved. You will find that a parent does not even bother to provide food. You get home and there

is no lunch yet you are supposed to return to school. Sometimes it's a small rental house and you live with your parents and five children, so life is difficult. Parents should family plan. I say this because children find life at home very difficult until they leave to fend for themselves. There is another girl near our home who is now a maid in Awendo, a small girl" (FDG-B 14 HB)

Irrespective of the school or diocese, the descriptions of child neglect were very similar. Head teachers, as people who are in daily contact with the children, were concerned with the abdication of personal responsibility of the parents to their children. Literally all the head teachers lamented on the degree and extent of child neglect and it features as their first example of child abuse. The children too, as the voice above confirms, were in agreement. In their opinion, the evidence of neglect, which is detailed in Box 23, was:

- i) Lack of provision of basic needs like food, clothing, shoes
- ii) Lack of medical attention
- iii) Abandonment of children, especially to boarding schools
- iv) Lack of basic care and love

Box 23: Child Neglect

"There are many cases of neglect especially in the homes - parents do not provide food, pupils come here when they are very weak, torn clothes, no shoes. Like there was this boy whose mother is crippled, the husband left her, and she cannot do much. This boy has to live without food, but of course now we as teachers could not just watch so we contributed something small towards the boy". (HT 6 M HB)

"Many children are vulnerable, they do not have food, no uniform and as such they just drop out of school, cases of neglect are very many, like last year there was a case of a girl who had to live with a teacher because the father was violent, and would drink and chase away the mother and the children, he was not helping the children in any way, so the mother would struggle single handedly and yet this man has a salary but just decided to neglect his children". (HT 8 M HB).

"Others are that children have been victims of neglect, parents of nowadays seem not to know what they are doing, they neglect their children the parents do not provide even the basic of the basic things to their children, this is a major challenge too, including food, they leave children suffering, children come to school in very bad states. Very dirty, tired and hungry". (HT9 M HB)

"But here in school the major form of violence is that of neglect. You see boarding schools seems to be a dumping ground for some parents who are tired of their children they bring their children here and forget about these children students, so you find pupils coming here at the beginning of the term and you do not see them again, they leave children, do not come even come here". (HT10 F HB)

"So there have been many cases of emotional abuse because parents here neglect children you find children being very emotional, not wanting to speak sometimes and also crying all the time they come to school in torn dresses and shorts sometimes with no sweaters even when it is cold, over lunch you see them playing in school because even if they go home they will not get food". (HT13 F Ker)

"Here the main cases I have dealt with is neglect. Parents are not responsible; they do not care about their children. Children like borrowing from others, parents leave children alone; they go and do their own things. They do not care about what they eat, what they wear, how they come to school. It is none of their business. If you look at the children, you ask yourself "did this child really wake up from someone's house", did they see this child as she left home? There was a case of a child whose mother was working in a bar; the child always came to school late. Last week the head mistress decided to sit the boy closely, so the boy said the mother doesn't wake up early, she went to meet the child's mother, on arrival for sure the mother was asleep. She works at night as a bar maid

and she gets home when the child should be going to school. She does not care about the child and the child is only about 8 years old imagine. No PTA money no responsibility, when you send some children away they say please don't send me away, my parents will beat or they will not give me money". (HT14 F Ker)

"To begin with neglect, we have many children who are neglected, no school uniform, some come on empty stomachs to school and some are very dirty. So in the homes, a parents are no longer responsible. They ignore their children but also here we have children living with their aunts or grandparents. These children are most neglected. They are never cared for. In fact there is one in class 5 who lives with the aunt, when you see the child you just feel the child lacks care, no parental love, always alone and withdrawn". (HT21M Lod)

"Parents neglecting children is very common here. In fact some of the children in this school are from the neighbouring children's home run by the sisters. These are children who are orphaned or neglected by the parents and rescued by sister. Some children also have parents and yet they report to school without personal items and they have to keep borrowing from other pupils or we step in and provide. Other children report back to school while sick. When asked they say they had told the parents that they were sick but still forced to come to school. At times we call these parents to come collect the child and take them for treatment but some do not come and we end up taking care of the child until they get well". (HT37 Meru)

The situation is worse for orphaned children who suffer the worst forms of neglect and abandonment. Perhaps it is for this reason that one head teacher observed that "kuwa na mzazi ni kitu ya maana sana" (Having a parent is a very important thing)" (HT6 M HB). While one can enforce and ensure that biological parents care for their children, it is important to ponder on the fate of orphaned and abandoned children. It is no longer enough to call on the spirit of 'brotherhood' that existed in African societies when the feelings of 'we' were strong and a relative could care for children. Indeed it is such children who are misused within the homes and work in very slave like situations. Individuality is fast growing, and mechanisms have to be put in place to ensure that children are well cared for, whether in institutions or otherwise.

Saving children from neglect is not difficult. It requires common sense and resolve. Parents and guardians need to take responsibility for pushing children away due to their irresponsibility. A primary obligation of a parent, and indeed the adult community is to protect the child.

4.7 PUPIL TO TEACHER VIOLENCE

“My question is, even as we continue, you come here to talk about violence and abuse against children. How about children who abuse teachers? They abuse them verbally, some threaten teachers or pick up fights with them...what do we call that?” HT9 M HB

This statement summarises an experience not often explored when the tables turn and it is the students who perpetrate violence on their teachers. Recounted in three different diocese (Meru, Lodwar and Isiolo) the varied informants were in agreement that big boys were sometime violent to teachers. While most of it was verbal abuse, there were instances when the students turned physical on the teachers, including using a knife. The following informants explain:

Box 24: When Pupils are Violent to Teachers

“There is also violence of pupils against teachers. This is mostly through verbal abuse but sometimes becomes physical. I still have a knife in my office which I confiscated from a boy who had tried to attack a teacher with it here at school”. (HT 41 Meru)

“Some even answer back to teachers rudely especially the big boys. I think there is negative influence where they come from and circumcision makes them feel all grown-up. They think they should be dealt with in a different way from other children, but a school cannot be run that way”. (HT 41 Meru)

“Students themselves are not good people as they have bad behaviors and do not respect the teachers. Many of them are rude and give teachers hard times to teach and protect them from the evil world. Others do not want to be punished they fight the teachers”. (Boy 16 Std 6 in FGD-B 42 Lod)

“B2: There are students who abuse the teachers and some even fight with them. These are the Class 8 boys, the big ones. B6: The big boys really look down upon us small ones. We just keep quiet because if you tell the teacher, they will beat you on the way home”. (FGD-B 64 Meru)

Special mention has to be made of female teachers, who are still more vulnerable than their male colleagues mostly because of the rules of patriarchy that people are socialised into. Children in one school had a fresh example of a teacher sexually assaulted by morans as the following example shows:

There are incidents of morans raping school girls, and even female teachers. Recently a female teacher from ...primary school was raped by morans who then ran away. The village elders tried to look for them the following morning but they did not find them. The teacher’s husband took her to hospital and as usual, that was the end of the story (FGD-B 25 Isio).

Morans are a group that seem to operate within some ‘cultural exceptions’ especially on matters of sexuality. There needs to be continued discussion on retrogressive cultural practices. Indeed feelings of bravado and disrespect of adult (teacher) authority seem to increase after male circumcision. If this is the effect that circumcision has on children, then it is time that the relevant institutions had a reality check. Learning can never happen without respect, and male students, circumcised or not, must respect the authority bestowed on the teacher.

The rare occurrence of pupil to teacher abuse has begun to be documented and as an emerging phenomenon, it would be good if it was captured in subsequent research studies.

4. CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

“Nowadays the challenge is lack of morality, I don’t know how much we sold our morals for!”

(HT9 M, HB)

One of the objectives of the current study was to document the opinions of the study community to explain why violence against children occurred. These explanations have been classified under two sections; the immediate causes defined as triggers and opportunistic circumstances that encourage violence to occur, and the underlying causes which result from deeper societal processes which shape the value system. Many individual and communal stereotypes and expectations emerge from these socialization processes and the cultural set ups in which people live.

5.1 IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Some circumstances exacerbate violence of children because they provide a conducive environment for abuse to occur. In such environments, safety nets for children are very few, and/or easily penetrated. The following section provides examples that emerged in various discussions.

5.1.1 Fluid Family Set-ups and Orphanhood

A traditional family set up is one which there is a father, and mother often in a legally recognized union, who care for and raise their children. Study informants were of the view that when this union was destabilized, due to death, separation, divorce or simply the phenomenon of single parenthood, then children are at more risk of abuse. These children are more prone to child labour, as they undertake chores reserved for adults. They are more prone to actual acts of abuse, as they are easily taken advantage of because they are vulnerable and without or with limited parental protection. Children living with other relatives, like aunts, step fathers are also more vulnerable due to lessened care and security; and in the case of grandmothers’ lessened ability to provide the necessary care.

The reasons that cause family unions to disentangle are varied as seen in Box 25. One reason that repeatedly emerged was the role played by alcohol, and this is explored further in 5.1.3. In many cases parents can make the choice that would be in the best interest of the child. This does not seem to always be the case. There is a difference between leaving a child under care of relatives, and abandoning a child to the care of relatives. In the former, a bond exists with the child. In the latter, the child operates in an almost loveless state and relatives do not feel compelled to support a child whose blood mother or father has simply decided to walk away. It therefore seems that external and state level mechanisms need to be put in place to enforce parents to care for their children.

Box 25: When Families Disintegrate...

“...The children suffer in their families because of separation of parents. Some mothers leave their children with fathers who abuse their children, even their own daughters... when mothers go away, the mothers leave children to be responsible for the homes, so the children suffer”. (HT1 M Bun)

“Alcohol abuse leads to the fighting of the parents; this may lead to separation and single parenthood and it also affects the children psychologically. Children from such families tend to be rough with the other children and generally post poor performance academically. Divorce or single parenthood leads to many children being raised by step-fathers who do not care for them and who may even hurt them intentionally pretending to discipline them”. (HT 46 M Nye)

“...about 80% of the children live with their grandmothers. The mothers go to the towns and rent rooms for “work”. They only come to visit once in a while and when they go with the children to the towns, they expose them to bad things because of the nature of their ‘work’” (HT47 F Nye)

“I had a case of a class 3 boy who his mother abandoned and went to Uganda. He has very torn uniform. In many homes there are cases of single mothers so children don’t get the parental love they deserve”. (HT3 M Bung).

“...There are also cases, many cases of single parents. There was a girl last week who was dosing in class, when I asked her, she said that her mother had a visitor, ‘mamangu alikuwa na mgeni (my mother had a visitor), so I slept outside in the veranda, so I did not sleep well’”. (T-FGD 15 Ker).

“...differences among the both parents cause the child abuse there at home, for example when a mother and father part ways, children will be neglected, they are not provided for their basic needs. They lack that parental love, they feel abandoned, in some cases a woman breaks with the husband and gets married to another man, this new man does not recognize these children, they are not treated well and in most cases neglected” (20.T.FGD.LOD)

“Most violence happen at home because parents neglect their children. You find children are not happy, they isolate themselves, they are withdrawn and they have very distant looks most stay with grandmothers and yet their parents are alive, they do not support them sometimes a child is just crying, and they do not speak out. Most violence is caused by irresponsible and ignorant parents”. (T-FGD 16 Lod).

Many children in fluid family set ups are orphans. An orphan is defined as one who does not have either or both parents. It was the assessment of most of the study informants that orphaned children were the most vulnerable, and most susceptible to abuse. They were neglected because as one informant summed it ‘*no one wants to bear the burden of another person*’. They lacked adult authority that would guide, protect and support them. The result is that the children would make poor choices that made an already bad situation worse. This case, as narrated by one head teacher provides an example:

“...Let me especially talk about the girls, and this does not mean boys do not have challenges... eeh there was this girl who left school a week ago, remember I was new here, but when I came to this school I noticed this girl, she was always restless in class, she was always walking up and down, even to the staffroom with nothing much to do. At first I thought it was those attention seekers, so I just looked at her, however, I kept watching this girl, during break she would sit alone, during lunch she would hover around here, not going for lunch, so on this day, I had a social studies class in their class, class 7, she was sleeping and on top of that she had no book to write, I was not amused, to be sincere, after the class I called her to my office. I talked to her and she could not open up, I tried all my best and she could not say anything, for almost an hour, all she did was to cry, so I let her go to class. The following day, surprisingly, she came to my office, she asked if she could talk to me, and I told to come in, I offered her a chair, and I remember we were having tea, so I gave her my cup of tea. (shakes his head). She told me: ‘My name is FF. My both parents are dead, they died when I was a toddler, forcing me to stay with my uncle and his wife who have 7 children. It has not been easy for me, my uncle already has too many children, getting even food is a problem. In class five I married, my sweetheart, VO who lives in Kanyada, who again is now dead. I have dedicated myself to learn despite constant embarrassment and abuse from my uncle and my fellow pupils. My uncle wants me to go back to my deceased husband’s home, but now he is the only one who loved me. I will not be welcomed, I feel a lot of pain because my daughter wants her father and always cries we go home, but I cannot explain. In my class last term I was number 20 out 35 and I had 203 marks. The wife of my uncle is bad, but

my uncle is the worst, life is hard, I feel a lot of pain, I have suffered as the maid in my uncles home, sometimes my uncle beats my very badly and he forces me to go to my deceased husband...." (HT6 M HB)

It is evident from the interviews that various acts of child abuse are committed extensively on children who have lost either one or both parents. It is even worse when a child is a double orphan. These children are left under the care of step parents or relatives and guardians who treat them like lesser children. They live with inappropriate care and face higher risks of abuse. Violence against children in the families is high where the child does not live with the biological mother. The children are mistreated through being overworked and underfed and many flee from home. If one examines cases of street children, underage marriage and so on, one will find that a number are orphaned children who opt for life outside home. The following voices in Box 26 provide more examples:

Box 26: Orphanhood and Child Abuse

"Another cause of violence is the death of the child's parents. When a child's parents dies, they suffer a lot, they have to fend for their siblings, people take advantage of them, they are neglected generally, no one wants to bear the burden of another person, the children suffer, if there is any property relatives take off with them, in cases where the mother dies and another woman is brought, the step mother overworks the children, really mistreats the children". (T-FGD7 HB)

"...many parents have succumbed to HIV/AIDS, they leave children unattended or uncared for, this exposes children to all forms of abuses and child labour. HIV/Aids is prevalent here so children are now total orphans and are the mercy of relatives who exploit them badly". (T-FGD10 HB)

"We also have many orphan children here staying with relatives, they lack basics, they are mistreated, they cannot concentrate in class, these children narrate stories and you feel bad. there is a case of a child, whose aunt used to beat her, she could sleep on a chair and was doing everything in the house, but now I hear there is a Samaritan staying with her, but again can you trust Samaritans?" (T-FGD 15 Ker)

"Children who orphans stay with relatives who sometimes subject them to a lot of work, by the time the child is in school he/she can hardly concentrate. Children who are usually 13 years and above are usually left alone to fend for themselves and end up dropping in school and take the role of the parents" (HT2 M Bun)

5.1.2 Domestic Violence

The study indicted the home as a place violence thrived. Many observed (Box 27) that children were getting socialized into, and adopted bad behaviour they observed from their parents. The foul language used, physical beating mostly of women by the men, are some of the negative behaviours present in the home which children picked up and used on their peers. In other situations, children could not participate in school because of the effects of domestic violence. Other than the emotion trauma, there were also practical effects of domestic violence leading to family break up. Where a mother opted to move on with her children, there was direct disruption of schooling, and a higher likelihood of children suffering from the effects discussed in section 5.1.1.

Box 27: Domestic Violence

"Frequent domestic quarrels amongst parents, this is passed to the children, the children copy what their parents say or do and come to do it at school, like cases of physical violence or cases of abuse" (10.T.FGD.HB)

“Children naturally become bullies because of how they have been with their parents who don’t care about them. The home environment is very important in shaping a child’s behavior” (HT40 Meru)

“Some relationships are just full of abuses like fathers beating mothers, abusing them and not providing which again affects the children especially in cases where parents take alcohol. They abuse their mothers or themselves mother and father hulling insults or parents against children”. (1ES)

“Also, there are many cases of domestic violence that leave many children traumatized such as cases of men who beat their wives”. (HT1 M Bun)

“Children are neglected because of domestic violence. Children are in and out of school, if you ask you are told ‘baba alifukuza mama, naye mama akaenda na watoto’ (father chased mother away, and mother left with the children) so children can miss school for months” (HT2 M Bun).

5.1.3 Alcohol Abuse

The perception created throughout the study sites is that alcohol abuse resulted in violence against children. Homes that served as brewing and drinking dens put children at higher risk. The adults who abused alcohol also put their children at risk. Affected children were neglected, and because of the unprotected environments where they interacted with people in impaired states, they were more prone to sexual abuse. Children in these circumstances had little redress as their parents would be compromised by the perpetrators, who are their customers and financial source, at the expense of their children. The rights of the children come second to the economic power of the perpetrators.

The picture that emerged is that parents who entertained alcohol did not care about their children, used their children to support the alcohol business and were not concerned at all with their children’s schooling prospects. On the general, it is men who partook alcohol to the detriment of their families, while women hosted brewing dens, again causing harm to their children. Different scenarios are described in Box 28

Box 28: Alcohol and Child Abuse

“Also, there are cases of chan’gaa brewers who brew and ask their own children to sell, and the drunkards take advantage of the children. Also, some parents are drunks and do not care about the welfare of the children ...there was a case of a child who was being beaten by the father everyday so she came to school and refused to go home because the father was always beating her. He is always a drunk so he becomes violent and beats her up every day. Currently, she lives with the maternal grandmother” (HT1 M Bun).

“...There is a lot of drunkenness, no peace at home no time to read children become full time workers and are not provided” (HT3 M Bun).

“Alcoholism leads to many rape cases of children of homes that sell alcohol. Parents take money from perpetrators to keep quiet. The parents don’t value education and so do not care what their children do at school”. (HT 41 Meru).

“... the local brews expose children to drunkards and the people take advantage of the young girls especially at Mugunda area. We are using the county commissioner’s office but some officers are not cooperating and this presents challenges since it becomes hard to eradicate this menace. This is mainly due to corruption as these people take bribes from the brewers and protect them” (EO9).

“Drunkenness which affects the men mainly hence they leave the women with no money and go to drinking dens only to come back late at night with nothing for the family. The women in turn go to bars to look for men who can give them money to feed their families. The children are left alone in the house at night. And when children are left alone they are prone to abuses and other dangers”. (Par FGD 18 Nye)

“There are irresponsible parents who leave their children alone to go for prostitution. The men are also alcoholics and children are left to cook and care for themselves. These children are never in a good state of mind to learn. They also copy their parents’ behaviour and drop out of school early to make a living” (Par FGD 17 Nye).

“...pupils remain at home to support during sale of alcohol to assist in collecting firewood or sit with other young children at home in order for their parents to sell alcohol to the drinkers” (Par FGD 3 Bun)

“alcohol makes a lot of parents to neglect their children, you find parents wake up early to go and drink, they do not plant anything, they do not cook or buy uniform for their children. This exposes children to a lot of suffering” (T-FGD 2 Bun).

“...I think it is because of alcoholism, parents here drink very much. So when they come back home, they beat everyone, even the dogs, in some cases the children are beaten very much or even abused verbally by their parents, this causes a lot of torture to the children, they injure the children and also rights such as the right to education is not looked at because these parents do not even want to know what education is all about” (T-FGD 7 HB)

“...Alcoholism is another cause, parents are immersed in the drink and they forget their responsibilities, they do not provide for their children, these parents are shameless when they drink, like another day I was passing by a home just here and a father who has teenage daughters was walking naked in the home...there was this boy who used to be found stealing, we later realized he was stealing because the mother had been jailed after she was arrested brewing alcohol, then the father disappeared and the child was left all alone and now he was forced to steal (T-FGD 14 Ker)

“...and when a parent is drunk, they can do anything> First they do not care to provide the basic needs of the children. They do not see any value for education, because they do not even have time to attend the school meetings. The parents force children to look for ways of sustaining themselves because these drunkard parents will not provide. These parents are also very violent and abusive, they beat and abuse their children” (T-FGD 20 Lod)

5.1.4 Weak Social Protection and Law Enforcement

The diminished safety nets visible in the current society have resulted in weak social systems in which the most vulnerable lack protection and lack recourse from law enforcement. These two factors, of weak social systems and weak law enforcement strategies sustain abuse of children. It seems that perpetrators enjoy impunity as evidenced by the fact that teachers who have assaulted children continue to teach; while perpetrators within the homes are hardly reached. Because the mechanisms to report violence do not assure protection, the victims are reluctant to speak, for fear of being punished or fear their voices may not be heard. Additionally, even when reports are made or exposed, perpetrators are rarely investigated or prosecuted.

Several examples in Box 29 further confirm the occurrence, where children serve as the ‘punching bags’ for adults to release their stress on them, or are encouraged by parents to fend for themselves. These examples again affirm that one cannot depend on sanity of the adult community to protect the young.

Box 29: No Social Protection

“I think children are abused because there are no stern actions taken against the perpetrators. There is laxity in the community and even by the leaders in the community, no one makes an effort to help children. So people see children being impregnated and no action is taken so they take advantage. So for as long as no punishment is made, children will always be abused”. (HT10 F HB)

“Lack of proper systems/channels of reporting, children being threatened against reporting. Now the problem is on the one who takes the action of reporting even to the police yet you know these are shameful things that you do not feel like mentioning. The biggest problem is the children because they are the ones oppressed against but they do not say”. (P-FGD 5 HB)

“...Or sometimes bad and uncaring relatives, I remember last term there was a case of a child who used to stay with the sister, now the sister's husband was a drunkard and would come home very late, so the sister would make her wake up even in the middle of the night to cook for the man, another day the man took hot vegetables and poured on the girl, some other day again the man beat up the young girl, so when she came to school the following day, she could not hold a pen, her hand was swollen, so I decided to summon the man, after about a week he came to school, so I decided to sit him down and warn him, I told him I would take him to the children's court, he was apologetic and I think now, all is well, but these are a few cases we hear, I know there are many, very many out there that may not be reported”. (HT8 M HB)

“there is a lot of corruption in the community which make it difficult to get justice, because there are many cases of neglected children and the help is limited, children are abused because parents do not give them their basic needs especially for the girls, the parents assume the needs of this girls, like now, if a child has not money for sanitary towels she will look for ways of getting. Some parents even encourage their daughters to go and fend for themselves” (T-FGD2 Bun)

“ some teachers bring over the anger and stress from their homes or social life to school. This makes them over-react and hurt the children due to small mistakes committed. A good example is the case I spoke of; the one of the teacher who hurt the boy. I knew he had financial problems because he had taken a loan and a big chunk of his salary was being deducted to service the loan. He is also a drunkard and chews miraa, in fact, prior to that incident he had been absent from the school for 3 consecutive days” (HT 12 M Isi).

5.1.5 Unfriendly School Practices

Schools, as social institutions, operate within specific sub-cultures as shaped by the persons within the school, and the community surrounding it. A school may therefore have specific characteristics, individual to the school that are supportive or abusive of children. It was the opinion of the study informants that schools with excessive corporal punishment, verbal abuse from teachers to pupils, disrespect from teachers undermined children's opportunities to learn, caused school dropout and even physical injury. These schools, rather than assure children schooling, in general infringed on the child's right to education.

Box 30 School Practice and Violence

“Its teachers who disturb the children very much. Some cane them like donkeys. They forget that they too are like parents of this child. Some make the children their wives for a few months, and later abandon them and leave the child suffering” (P-FGD6 Isiolo).

“Here some teachers are not from here they do not understand our children they beat our children, it is better for children to be at home, some children will not like school if they are always being beaten at school by teachers” (P-FGD10 Lod)

“...sometimes a teacher has stress from home and they let it out on the child. For example there is a female teacher who would disrespect the children during parade, abusing them that “you are proud because you have breasts like me, or because you receive periods? Do you know your parents are prostitutes? We reported to the area education officer and she was warned. She changed and later she was transferred. Girls had stopped coming to school because of her”. (P-FGD 15 Mer)

In other cases, policy implementation flaws also resulted in abuse of children. There are specific norms on distance of schools from homes. This is not always adhered to making children more vulnerable to

perpetrators such as 'bodaboda' riders. Another example related to school entry age. Unfortunately, this is not implemented resulting in late school entry, and this impacts both girls and boys differently. For girls, maturity sets in, which emboldened by community perception, school girls would feel that they are now 'big' girls, and easily be swayed away from schooling. The study had many examples of big boys being the perpetrators of violence both on their peers and teachers. Therefore one key aspect, that can help curtail violence of children, is to enroll them in school at the right age, in a school that the child can easily reach.

"I think sometimes it is because children go for very long distances which gives room for men especially to identify them and also hook them by giving them lifts and rides. Even the long distances make children vulnerable because they may meet drunkards or bad people along the way. On the same note some children have to cross highways to get home, so accidents may happen and a child is hit, and even some cases, children go through bushy places and rivers, this is also dangerous for children" (T-FGD6 HB).

"And then another thing I have seen in this area is that that children here go to school a bit late, so girls get over aged while still in primary, so you know with adolescents, it is a very critical period and with absentee parents who are never there to advise their children it is very difficult to contain them, they come to school as they wish and when their minds direct them" (HT7 F HB)

"Also what I would like you to note is that our children here start school late, by the time pupils are in class 6,7 or 8 they are very old, so they easily drop out of school, they find school work a challenge" (HT14 F Ker)

5.1.6 Illiteracy and Parental Negligence

"...experience is the best teacher. How can we expect parents who have never set foot in class to like education? They do not see this as important" (T-FGD 17 Lod)

"Sisi kama waturkana hatupendi watoto wetu waende shuleni kwani shule inapoteza watoto wetu na mifugo yetu itachungwa na nani. Hii shuleni kazi ya wazungu, tuko na masomo ya kuzaliwa (8.par.FGD.Isiolo)" (We the Turkana do not like children going to school because school wastes their time. Who will herd our animals? This school business is for the while people. We have our own education that we were born into)

One of the key advantages of formal education is exposure to knowledge, attitudes and practices which on the whole are beneficial to the self, community and country. The national value expectations are often communicated through the school curriculum, and as a result, most people who have been through formal education acquire a particular attitude and way of life, that is in tandem with the national expectation of growth and future wellbeing of the country.

The study informants felt that communities that had low literacy levels, also tended to associate themselves with practices that yielded to child abuse. The case of early marriage and FGM are classical cases in point. Other examples include the fact that parents with formal school experience cared and provided more for their children than their unschooled counterparts who went to the extent of barring their children from attending school. As association was therefore drawn between parents who had received some sort of formal education, being more inclined to support their children in school than their unschooled counterparts. Those who had never been schooled tended to be more suspicious of the schools intentions. Ultimately though, there was an inert awareness that schooling shifted the power dynamics, and provided information to people who were vulnerable, thus offering a possibility of

personal empowerment. It is for these reasons that parents and communities resisted education as it offered a sustainable and assertive measure that would allow more protection of children. Addressing the gap in adult education could therefore be beneficial to children's safety.

Box 31: Parents: Unschooled and Suspicious.

"...violence also comes as a result of illiterate parents, you see if a parent never went to school, they do not see the need of taking a child to school, and this is so much tied to the culture of people around here, I think there is something about not taking children to school, they do not like taking children to school, they do not find it interesting to take children especially girls they feel girls should be taking care of the home and young children, so you will find that in cases where choices have to be made, a girl will always remain at home and the boys may proceed, you know the thinking is a girl might be taken to school, and will take off, so they see it like a waste of time, resources like money". (HT10 F HB).

"Here what is cultural is what I have told you that parents do not value education. There are many cases of early marriages even girls being booked and the community agrees. Parents deliberately refuse to send the girls to school because they want them to be married to very old men. They do not see children are young. I remember a boy in class 7 who impregnated a girl in class 5 and what I came to realize later that the parents had agreed and allowed the children to marry. I remember a case of a child who was impregnated by the chairman of BOM, the people in the community did not say anything, so it is difficult to stop violence while the people who should stop are the ones who are perpetrating the violence". (HT22 M Lod)

"...you see a typical Turkana who has not gone to school him/she will not understand how a child can go and benefit in school. There is a lot of disregard for education, so cases of violence or rather children not going to school, is because people here have not grown up knowing education, so the illiteracy of parents is a major cause of violence and as long as our people stick to this barbaric culture, we will always have violence of children" (6ES).

"...people from around here do not value education because they are uneducated themselves. This makes them not care what happens to their children in terms of education. Ignorance: it is not only the illiterate and the uneducated who do not care about their children. There is a working class woman whose son was out of school the whole term. Sometimes he even slept hungry while the mum was out enjoying life. She never cared what happened to him". (P-FGD 18 Nye)

"illiteracy is a major problem in this area. Since the parent is not educated, they place little value on education and use their children for herding and as a source of wealth" (13.T.FGD.Isiolo)

5.2 UNDERLYING CAUSES

This section looks at the root causes of violence, based on the assumption that the factors listed above are manifestations of deeper societal processes and belief system that is shaped by the traditions and culture.

5.2.1 Interrogating our Values

"Parents in the community have neglected their parental role entirely to teachers. The parents think that we are paid to take care of their children and address all the issues that are affecting the children. This is difficult for us because with our numbers you cannot be able to address all the issues that affect the children". (HT 31 M MLD)

Values provide a sense of right and wrong. They identify what ought to be judged as good, or bad. The various norms, standards, rule that we have therefore emerge from the values we hold. It is good to

interrogate our value system. Do we have a 'value system?' How is this system arbitrated today? Who safeguards it?

There are universal concepts, like 'truth' and 'good' which cut across nationalities and peoples and exist irrespective of religion and creed. It seems that basic values are being flouted to the detriment of children's basic rights to life and protection. A few examples shall be examined based on the narratives in Box 32:

- i) **Respect:** This is a worldwide value that has seen many norms elaborated in order to assure it. One norm that exists regards sleeping arrangements within a family set up. In many cultures children beyond breastfeeding age should not to sleep in the same space as their parents. This norm allows respect to be nurtured. Due to various reasons, this norm is not always observed, and as a result children are exposed behaviors they are not developmentally ready for, such as sex.
- ii) **Care:** Whose responsibility is the child? Though a straightforward matter, it seems that this question ought to be deliberated upon. If we assume parents to have the primary responsibility for their children, then teachers were of opinion that many parents had abdicated their primary responsibility. Some parents even asserted that 'mtoto ni wa serikari'. This attitude implies that one cannot assume that parents will take their primary roles seriously, including assuring the safety and security of their children.
- iii) **Good Vs Bad:** Varied examples have been provided where girl children are expected to have sex in exchange of money for the family; where the economic ability supersedes the moral correctness of a situation. The people who are expected to provide guidance to the children, are the same ones who encourage them on a wrong route. It is such examples that affirm a moral deterioration, and a concern that the value system is under threat.

Box 32: Where are our Values?

"I would blame all the cases to the community, and the family, the community around here is very ignorant about values, that is why young children engage in sex, even in class five, they already know many things even at young ages and this is really disturbing, because children are indiscipline and we cannot manage a lone as teachers, we need the community, we need a lot of support from the community, and that is why it is even hard when these people like a boy who impregnated a girl here, when we tried following up, it became as if we were the bad ones, the parents said we want to spoil for the girl by punishing the boyfriend, in some cases children are raped and no one asks or talks about it. Sometimes you hear the chief did something, but such cases are dealt with very slowly such that they drag and people forget, so I think if we had specific people who deal with such cases it would really be good". (HT15 M Ker)

"Peer pressure from girls who dropped out in pursuit of foreigners. You see every person here knows if you get a Mzungu [white person] you will be wealthy. So most of the girls will tend to visit beaches with the hope of meeting a Mzungu so that he can change their lives. It is a big business here". (HT30 M MLD)

"There is also a believe that the mother should be the one to take care of the children, Also, there is a lot of unhealthy exposure and here you find a class one child reporting what the parents were doing, and so children learn those things very early because parents are not careful. Another time, a class one was telling her teacher " I want my dad to make me cry the way he makes my mother cry." We were surprised, we did not know what to do". (T-FGD 6 Bun)

"I think also some parents are just very irresponsible, I remember this girl who was impregnated by a fellow pupil and the mother was asking her "why did you accept to be impregnated by a boy, you should have looked for a

teacher”, the problem with parent was ‘who’ had impregnated the girl, but the job/position of the person who had impregnated the girl”. (T-FGD14 Ker)

“First I could say the homes are nowadays failing to inculcate morals and even in child protection, I think parents forgot their roles as parents, in the homes or families, I could say it’s because of lack of morals in the society, because how do you explain a case where a father has raped a child?” (HT 3 Bun)

“Parents rejected guidance and counseling because, they feel we are enlightening the girls on how to go against their parents way. There is a time the parents stone the school, and they were asking what do these children come here to be taught. I remember the protest was because of just telling girls about their rights, you know, just empowering them and the parents even withdrew their children so here violence against children is there and I blame the parents very much”. (HT20 F Lod)

5.2.2 Poverty

The current society we live in is increasingly more monetary driven with wealth and class determining life’s chances. Structured and deep seated changes have resulted in new manifestations of socio-economic status and widening of gaps between the ‘haves’ and ‘have not’. The society is increasingly more structured and stratified according to socio-economic status. Abject poverty is on the increase. Study informants opined that the poor, those with economic needs, were more likely to engage in practices that yielded themselves to child abuse. In these circumstances, a child is not viewed as a child, but as a source of income; who can be married off, sent to labour, beg or sell own body for family gain.

It was viewed that parents in dire need also needed cushions to allow them be better parents. Indeed there is need for a broader discussion, on what should be considered the bare minimum for any citizen. Some parents are victims of unfairly implemented labour laws that cannot assure them a minimum wage despite the fact that they work. Poverty is a structural societal malfunction. It provides the environment for neglect and in turn children health, development and schooling is affected. Examples are provided in Box 34

Box 34: Poverty and Child Abuse

“...poverty contributes a lot to violence in the community, this is because, parents are poor and they do not have what to eat, so instead they see the children as a source of labour, in most cases during the planting, weeding or harvesting seasons children do not come to school, ...parents sent their children to go and labour on people’s farms, they do not understand that theses are children who need to be taken to school, who need protection and who need to be cared for, they just neglect their children”. (T-FGD 1 Bun)

“...the level of poverty is high and the parent cannot support the family therefore the parent allows the girl to be married off in order to be able to support the family (P-FGD 16 MLD).

“...Kiwango cha umaskini ikiwa juu na unapata mzazi hawezi kujikimu vizuri inabidi akubali msichana wake aolewe ili aweze kuhudumia watoto wake...” (if the level of poverty is high and the parent cannot support the family, it forces the parent to let the girl to be married off in order to be able to support the family.) Once a child is married off, she definitely drops out of school (P-FGD 9 Kit)

“...Poverty contributes to child abuse e.g. parents giving their children goods to go and sell on the markets and not taking them to school, a child will be beaten if she or he does not sell...” (T-FGD 2.T Bun)

“...Yes, a major cause of abuse is poverty; children here come from homes where poverty is real. Their parents cannot afford even a meal, so children have to find ways of surviving, even stealing selling themselves, like here

being also a town school, girls are in the streets at night, fending for food and other needs. Many drop or work part time as maids, may be in the evening after school and over the weekends"(T-FGD 15 Ker)

"Poverty is a major factor. When there is no food it forces parents to take children to go and look for food. Sometimes, they do not have to be told, children desired to go and look for food. Poverty also makes parents sell off their girls for dowry". (T-FGD 18 Lod).

"Poverty also is a major cause where you find bodaboda people cheat girls that I will marry you and high school students where the recent one was a case of a high school student who impregnated a girl. Still on poverty you find a child has stolen something and the parents over punishes them by beating them or burning the child". (HT 3 Bun)

"...Poverty is also a contributing factor to the violations of the girl child. Many are taken out of school to assist the parents with the business of burning charcoal or are left with the younger siblings at home. Those left alone at home are preyed on and raped by relatives or neighbours. Some parents also take their girls off school and hire them out as house helps to the rich families. Some of these children come to complain to me and I can only forward the complaints to the relevant authorities since I cannot confront the parents directly. However not much is happening in terms of the children being helped (HT12 M Isi).

"The common forms are neglect because of poverty. People here are very poor, both by choice and by fate (laughs). Parents are very lazy here, they do not work for their children, and hence neglect their children. Children are really suffering you find some come to school without food or good clothes, this is due to ignorant parents". (HT2 M Bun).

5.2.2 Culture

Culture is often described as 'customs, traditions and values'. They influence or shape the way of life of a people and the social behaviour. Culture evolves and its interpretation differs from one community to another. A number of traditions, such as polygamy and divorce, early marriage, circumcision, result in the direct or indirect abuse of children. Polygamy was cited as resulting in the abandonment of children and promoting child neglect. Polygamous unions of underage girls is child abuse. Forced circumcision was also undertaken within the umbrella of 'tradition'.

Box 35a" Polygamy and Early Marriage

"...There is also the polygamy tradition here which has become the order of the day. Here, men leave the old broom and marry new wives. They leave their older wives and they even withdraw financial support from the children. This is heavy and unfriendly to the children. Also, I can say, the whole idea of circumcision is very torturing. The boys are beaten and sometimes they are cut and not given any drugs to soothe the pain. It is really torturing and I just think that some traditions should be done away with. It also heavily affects the children's education. For example, by July 2016, you will not find the children in school because they will have gone up and down summoning relatives to come celebrate with them. So as I say, it is really cruel. Boys are slapped, smeared with cow dung. They are really tortured in the name of being a man". (HT1 M Bun BGM).

"...Another cause is polygamy. Polygamy is one thing the church has been fighting against for a long time. In cases of polygamy children are the victims. You see these men keep marrying even without the ability to take care of these children. They keep moving from house to house and do not have time for their children" (1ES.).

"There are also cases of polygamy, and the man leaves his family completely so he abandons his other family. And you know traditionally if a bull is not speared you are not a recognized wife. So your children are also not recognized, so the man neglects the children (T-FGD18 Lod).

The community around majorly are the pastoralist (Turkana) and they are a dowry centred community. The girl child is regarded as wealth because of the wealth they are getting from young girls; and this has contributed a lot to

early marriages. Also moranism is a problem whereby you find young boys refuse to go to school in class 5 after circumcision because in their culture a moran is not supposed to eat in front of ladies or be in school. He is also supposed to go and raid (T-FGD 12 Isio).

“In my community there is what we call “beading”. This is a case whereby a girl is taken to be a girlfriend of a boy and they are allowed even to have sex even though they are not married. The boy/man is not under obligation to marry the girl. This happens to girls as young as 10 years. There is also the lifestyle in manyattas whereby children are left to sleep where they want and the parent doesn’t ask the child as long as the child reports home in the morning ready to go herding. (HT 33 M Mar)”

“There is the culture of beading whereby a girl is bought beads by a boy or a man who becomes her official boyfriend and they are allowed to live as couples even though some of the girls are very young. A beaded girl is also taken as being ready for marriage. These girls once beaded are withdrawn from school and prepared for marriage”. (T-FGD13 Isio)

“Again another cause is culture. The culture in our community violates children. There are many cases of forced marriage. This is major because also of poverty, just because a parent wants wealth, they marry off a child. You find a person has come from town, and has come to the village, sometimes a sick man, but they just marry off the girl. Also with our culture, we value our livestock, a child will be withdrawn from school to go and herd” (T-FGD16 Lod).

Circumcision is viewed as the gateway to ‘sex’. Indeed a group with notoriety for sexual abuse were the morans who seem to have been ‘bestowed’ the freedom to sleep with young girls as they wished. Boys in other communities also seem to become sexually active after circumcision.

Box 35b: Circumcision

“Samburu morans can have sex with a young girl and no one intervenes. Girls always have a separate room from their mums. And you will find a mother at that moment telling a screaming child who is being raped by a moran to keep quiet because it is just a passing episode. But morans cannot use married women for sexual gratification, they are only allowed the girls” (HT12 M Isiolo).

“...Culturally, the girls houses are built separately from their parents houses. This exposes them to attacks by morans and strangers who rape them. If the parents are drunkards, the girls have no one to protect them and many have been raped and even impregnated due to this” (3ES).

“The culture of our people here demeans the girl also if you look at circumcision rites; ok here we have in various communities, those that circumcise and those who don’t. Like the Bukusus, do a lot of traditional circumcision which is very dangerous because it can spread diseases, and also very shameful, it lowers the self esteem because boys are forced to walk around naked, everyone seeing them naked, even young girls see them, they are teased. The Teso’s do not circumcise, while most communities in Busia now take their children to the hospitals. But what I do not like again about circumcision is the fact that when these children go for circumcision they are taught various things like, they are now men and they start behaving badly, you find most of them become sexually active hence in most cases abuse young girls sexually” (1ES).

“In areas like Bungoma “...cultural violence has reduced... but although it has reduced there are cases of FGM which often result in bleeding to death, when they go through FGM, the girls feel they are no longer fit to be school children and in most cases when the Sabaots circumcise they feel it is a gateway to marriage, girls start becoming reluctant to come to school, they drop out of school or get married off at an early age, also when you look at the bukusus, bukusus circumcise at a very young age, when this happens the boys feels he is too mature to adhere to the school rules, in addition, Personally I feel this circumcision is not child friendly because boys are paraded naked and everyone can see them and this also tampers with the school days. Also on culture, here in our community if someone dies there is a whole night celebration. Many girls and boys engage in immoral activities”. (HT3 F Bun)

“Female Genital Mutilation is still prevalent within this community. Despite efforts to eradicate it from various groups, it is done secretly and still rampant. #5. There are also festivals that take place at night and everyone is allowed to participate; children are unsupervised and due to the free interaction of boys and girls, many engage in sexual activities under the cover of darkness” (T-FGD 13 Isio).

“Many Children are out of school during circumcision seasons i.e during these holidays, August and December, statistics shows that many girls get pregnant during this time. During burial or funeral days (matangas) girls engage on disco matanga thus led pregnancies (1.par.Fgd.Bgm). And after circumcision there are changes in character e.g. the discipline goes down, they no longer respect female teachers, they start chasing girls around” (T-FGD1 Bun)

“...nowadays the people are embracing circumcision for the boys, when these boys are circumcised they feel they are men, they start abusing girls, they disrespect the lady teachers, they are also built for houses, so these houses also act like lodgings where girls are sexually harassed” (HT8 M HB).

“...What violates the rights of children especially by the boys is that us we are luos, we do not circumcise boys, but with all the campaigns that if you circumcise you reduce the chances of AIDS our boys go for it in hospitals, after that they sleep with girls everywhere thinking that the cut has made them safe, many children get infected”. (HT9 M HB)

In some communities, culture was used as the pretext to ‘prohibit’ talk about sex. Hence, a child can be abused but will suffer recurrent or constant abuse since the perpetrator takes advantage of the “culture of silence”. It goes without saying that child abuse thrives amidst various cultural rules. Consequently, many children suffer sexual abuse in the hands of their parents, but are not supposed to talk about it.

“...In our community... what I can say is that it is a taboo to speak about sex openly. Parents therefore do not even guide their children on these issues. So sometimes it is difficult for us, because we teach at the school level, but no one is reinforcing at home. So you find a child is also not free with the parent, like to tell him/her I want always (Sanitary Towels), is a big issue (HT13 F Ker).

In addition it is evident that in some instances the economic activities of various communities also violates the rights of the children. Some communities regard their livestock more than education while some also give preference to the education of boys over girls.

5.2.4 Gender Bias

Gender bias is still alive in the Kenyan society. Several instances were provided where girls were unfairly treated simply because they are girls. Statements made by various male respondents suggested that girls have ‘untamed’ sexual desires hence needed shedding off by way of exercising. The same reference was not made of boys. Likewise, rather than be viewed as children, and as victims, girls who had babies were viewed as potential bad influences.

“Bukusu’s value boys more than girls and neglect education of girls in the case of a girl getting pregnant while she’s still at school after birth the girl cannot be taken back to school. In case a mother gives birth to only girls they’ll not be valued as children and the husband will be advised by the community to marry another wife who can give birth to boys” (T-FGD3 Bun).

“We have recreational activities to enable the girls shed off excessive energies that may tempt them to use elsewhere. We also talk to the girls, especially the lady teachers always assemble them and talk to them to be more responsible and more careful, especially, the teenage girls”. (HT3 M Bun)

“You see there are policies that somehow encourage children especially the girls to get pregnant like the girls who go back to school after being pregnant it is encouraging girls to play premarital sex, such policies should be done away with”. (T-FGD3 HB)

5.2.5 Religious Practices

While for a long time now, religious institutions has often been perceived as a liberating agent from abuse and violence, the baseline brings out instances where practices associated with religious institutions violate the rights of children. Religious activities that seems to attract more people at night especially the young children, are reported to expose children to various acts of violence.

Box 36 Religious Practices

“The mushrooming churches that hold crusades or keshas, even in the middle of the week. Children are exposed (and) do not come to school the next day” (HT2 M Bun).

“These churches have crusades and keshas at night and expose children to many dangers. Children and especially the girls sneak out at night, while some tell the parents, at night no one is guarding these children, they meet boys, men and they sleep with them, the Girls are misused, there was a case of a pastor, who come up and say that last night I dreamt about you, and God has designed you to be my wife and parents also belief, so the girl gets married off quite early” (HT3 F Bun)

“the muslims around do not seem to like educating their girls. There are so many school age girls of the Somali origin who are in the slums and not enrolled in any school. It is like they just wait for them to grow up so that they can marry them off” (P-FGD 15 Meru).

“... although now there are night keshas and crusades that are common especially in the small small upcoming churches, the pastors cheat girls, that they will pray for their problems, that they will sponsor them, but then they just use the girls and they disappear afterwards, leaving the girls even more desperate, In addition, the girls go meeting men in the name of going for night fellowships, girls are raped during the crusades, or even after the crusades, the children may have no one to take them home, so they are cheated to sleep in one of the “faithful” homes and thereafter they can be raped. We hear cases of even the holy ones raping girls around here which is also really disappointing, these girls trust the religious people but they usually turn against them (T-FGD10 HB).

5. SOLUTIONS

“As a school I feel we have not done much. We need to put in place structures to enable us to empower these children and especially the girls. But again if anything is to succeed I have to bring the parents on board, which is still a challenge” (HT7 F HB)

“Sincerely speaking, if I was to be sincere, my own effort cannot bear any fruit. The church should come in, the local administration and the parents of the school, so there should be more support all round. One person cannot do this. It is a big problem here (HT22 M Lod)

Such is the admission of the enormity of the problem as observed by the teachers. These teachers confessed not to have done much, and further felt that as individuals there was not much they could do either. Indeed, from Homa Bay to Lodwar, these teachers felt powerless to offer any real solutions, other than guidance and counselling. They explain:

Box 37: We have not done much, teachers admit

“In matters of safety... to be sincere, we have not had anything in place so far, but we are taking this up positively to ensure that we at least improve the safety of these children”. (HT5 M HB)

Ok I think in that component we have not done much as a school, to be sincere, we only offer guidance and counseling to the pupils, we advise them, we talk to them but nothing much has been done by the school. I think this is something we need to talk about as a school (HT6 M HB)

“It is difficult, especially if you have no other support, you know lack of support from other stakeholders. It becomes very difficult, most children also in our school stay with guardians, aunts and uncles. So these are children who have never been cared for. They have never received any kind of tender care, so it becomes difficult. To help these children we need support all round, from leaders, from parents from various stakeholders. So I do not get this support. There is nothing much I can do. Currently, nothing is taking place”. (HT7 F HB)

“So far, we have not done much but we have guidance and counseling that usually talks to children, guides them, and advises them especially when a child is violated or abused by others. But again it is not easy because there are many cases of people not being cooperative like the parents and also we cannot even ask them to come to school and they show up, they do not”. (HT19M Lod).

“Nothing so far, because it is difficult, as we said there lack of cooperation, we cannot collaborate with anyone to help us in stopping this violence because no one is cooperating” (T-FGD 8 HB)

That the school community was ready for any support is perhaps best illustrated by this teacher who observed “Issues of child safety are important and it is good to know that our sponsors are thinking of expanding the programme. May I ask a quick one; ‘when will the programme be rolled out to cover schools like ours?’” (HT31 M Mal)

The following section provides opinions from the school community of the solutions they see that can help curb the problem of child abuse.

6.1 GUIDANCE AND COUNCELLING

“There is not much we can do apart from guidance and counseling. I think in my opinion it works, although most of the time there is not enough time for it. We also use peer counseling and it has been working, but it is challenging because of time and space to carry it out privately”. (HT 41 Meru)

The one singular strategy that the majority of schools claimed to have in place to address child abuse was guidance and counselling. It was also the first mentioned suggestion of a solution that may work as the statements in Box 38 confirm.

Box 38 Guidance and Counselling

“As at now, we only offer guidance and counselling and in cases of neglected children, we accommodate them for free in the boarding section. Then also recommend them to orphanages, if they have no responsible parents or relatives”. (HT3 M Bun)

“We also offer guidance and counseling to the pupils now and then, we ask them to always be free with us”. (HT 2 M Bun)

“We should have a strong guidance and Counseling department. Teachers should be trained on guidance and counseling, not just being told you are guidance and counseling teacher. Teachers should be the role models to the children, should be part of stopping violence not promoting violence, they should know so that they can respect the children and appreciate them”. (HT9 M HB)

“Guidance and counseling... we do talk a lot with the children and tell them that they should not keep quiet when they have problems. In fact one of the priests who helps us in counseling the children keeps his phone line open 24 hours for children who have problems to call and talk to him. Pupils come to us and request to call him and we provide them with a phone to call”. (HT 37 Mer).

Schools should also strengthen guidance and counseling and even the life skills, this will help children in many ways, they will understand themselves and they will know how to take care of themselves (T-FGD 9 HB)

“Here at school there is need for teachers who are trained and who are possessing the skills on guidance and counseling so that they can help these children, especially when teenagers start engaging in sex it is not good” (T-FGD 8HB).

“According to me, as teachers we should learn not to use abusive languages since we should be role models and we are grownups so that these children can learn from us now that their parents may not be helping them much, so I talk to my teachers and I really encourage them to look at the pupils as their own. I need to create a child friendly school where pupils see us as their mothers and fathers, We need to strengthen guidance and counseling even teachers should be trained on the same”. (HT3 F Bun)

Guidance and counselling is an art that cannot be assumed that teachers can perform, simply by virtue of being teachers. The role that teachers are judged on is often the academic one, and ultimately this is where their attention will go. Teachers can be very good at identification for they interact with the child daily and can be a first point of communication. They can also be involved in early assessment. To do this well, they need to be trained. Thereafter, proper mechanisms are needed to provide constant follow up and support to the child and assure that the abuse that not recur again. For such support to be offered in a sustained manner, a functional guidance and counselling office is needed. This office needs to have professionally trained persons, preferable not the teacher, who will offer the full range of solutions needed, and which will intersect between the school and the family. This is also a resource that can be shared among several schools. The teacher is not well position to address the enormity of the problem that comes with child abuse, and neither is it fair to expect them to.

A support mechanism is needed to make the so called guidance and counselling offices truly functional. At the core will be how well the human resource is prepared. Several institutions, including teacher training colleges offer courses in guidance and counselling. These courses have however been critiqued as being overly theoretical and presented in a contextual vacuum. It would therefore be opportune that

any proposed program set up invests in a proper guidance and counselling training whose aim is to tool the teachers to observe and address child abuse within the realities of the local contexts.

6.2 SKILLING AND EMPOWERING THE CHILDREN

Emphasis was put on investing in the child as an individual, and tooling them with the right skills and knowledge so that they could protect themselves. The role of clubs, or programs run by various religious on non-governmental agencies were cited as being effective. Some of those mentioned in Box 39 include: Girls' Forum, Children's Government, MLRC and ABY which is a component of MLRC. These programmes offer children a variety of opportunities, to know their rights, to know their bodies, to defend themselves and so on.

Box 39: Skilling Children through Clubs and Programs

"...There are programs, for example there is a program by action aid called 'the girls forum', it majorly focuses on the girls, teach them their rights, to avoid drug and substance abuse and how to enhance their safety. There is also the Catholic church program ABY, that targets both boys and girls, they talk about behavior change in the youth, self awareness, sex, HIV and Aids, these way children know how to behave and how to report violence against them". (HT5 M HB)

"We should make the children aware about their rights and they should also be made aware of what violence or abuse is, We should also create easily accessible points or stations to report violence, and also children should be encouraged to report cases of violence against them". (HT8 M HB).

"The children's government has also helped a big deal, children are now empowered, I usually tell them not to fear anything, I tell them girls are delicate, they should not be touched, they are delicate, so being friendly with the girls has really helped deal with various problems. The clubs in school, are also helping a great deal, the children know their rights, they are helping children to be enlightened and more responsible". (HT10 F HB).

Like, I think the schools should take up programs like the one you talked of the CSPP. These programs will help boost child safety and protection...Currently the MLRC program has brought a positive impact; it has helped especially in terms of abstinence. I can also do mentorship, pick girls I think are role models to empower others to speak out and to know their rights". (HT 14 F KER)

"We also need children clubs because it plays a very important role in nurturing the children. Through these clubs, the children are involved in team work. This assists in encouraging children to speak up about the challenges they face and through it we are able to come up with ways of addressing the challenges that they face". (HT31 M Mal)

"...educating the girls about their rights. We need the programs like what you mentioned, CSPP, also talk to parents and tell them to be responsible for their children. If parents do not care for their children right from the home, it will be difficult to be satisfied only at school". (T-FGD 2 Bun)

"I normally tell them, "why take money you haven't worked for?" If you have not worked for it, please don't take it, they should learn to work for what is theirs. I think talking to them in a friendly way can help a lot". (T-Int 6.Bun)

"Children need to be empowered to speak out, children should be taught their rights, children should not fear speaking out, you know these children are taken advantage of because they do not speak". (T-FGD 8HB)

"I think if programs such as CSPP, were implemented it would go a long way, there is need to bring programs related to child safety and protection, by the sponsor, by the schools and other stakeholders to help school help children because now it is becoming a menace" (T-FGD 9HB)

"There is need to bring in everybody on board, the parents, the teachers, local administration, the FBOs, to make everyone aware and responsible. Strict measures should be put in place to violators of children's rights. The program on CSPP was also a good one, but it seemed to have died a natural death, there was no motivation, the children liked, but it should also be spread to many classes, don't just target one class. Programs should be put in

place to help children more confident and more free to talk about violence, there should be effective child protection offices and vibrant child protection officers, who have the interests of the children at heart. Schools can establish active child rights clubs, the teachers can come in to be role models, guide the students well and talk to them in a fatherly or motherly way (T-FGD 9 HB)

“Children ought to be sensitized, they should know what child abuse is, they should know their rights, what amounts to child violence, their duties to their parents and what parents should also do for them so that they become more knowledgeable. A child right from class one should know his/her rights, in schools nowadays we only focus on mean scores and not the many drop outs. We should create avenues for children to report any cases of violence. I am sorry to say some teachers are not friendly, so the children even fear them, so there should be centers, active centers where children can report cases of violence”. (T-FGD 10 HB)

“There is a program by the church/Diocese on MLRC, Making Lives Responsible Choices, it has topics on Lifeskills, HIV/AIDS, education, self-esteem, coping with emotions, so we use this to at-least try and teach the pupils not to engage in irresponsible behavior”. (T-FGD 18 Lod)

This suggestion to invest in the children themselves is a valuable one. Clubs have been found to be very effective because of their participatory and democratic nature, where peers run the show. They revolve around a specific thematic area, and have been known to instill skills and values that last a lifetime. It would be most desirable if each child in each school belonged to a specific club that matches their interest and aptitude. This approach would provide the incidental education they need in order to learn and thrive. The main disadvantage with club activities being sponsored by external entities is that they are not sustained, and cease once sponsorship expires. It would therefore be desirable for such structures to be ingrained within the school practices.

Making Life’s Responsible Choices (MLRC) is a program currently being executed by Kenya Catholic Secretariat, and targets youth aged 11 to 14 years. Other program components include Abstinence and Behaviour Change for Youth (ABY) and Family Matters (FMP) that targets parents. While the latter was not cited by the study informants, they first two were mentioned in favourable terms. MLRC/ABY is successfully tooling children with the right skills and competences in difficult topics like sexuality. There is therefore a big opportunity for synergies to be created between CSPP and MLRC. The fact that MLRC is allocated a class period and offered in practice formats based on real life situations makes it very appealing. The study findings have shown that children are often taken advantage of because of their more trusting nature and naivety, and therefore tooling them with skills to navigate such difficult situations are vital.

6.3 PARENTAL EDUCATION

“Hakuna vilesisi tunaweza zuia. Mtoto kama nimeleta shule, huyo ana kuwa wa serikali. Serikali inafaa kutafuta mahali pa kuwaweka. Sina uwezo wakumzuia. Nitamwacha ajifunze (There is no way we can avoid the violence. If I have brought the child to school, then this child belongs to the government. The government should look for a place to take them. I do not have the ability. I will leave the child to teach him/herself)” (P-FGD 6 Isio).

The general view was that school efforts that did not receive complementary backing from the home would remain fruitless. Indeed, teachers opined that parental and community support was the pivot to curbing child abuse. A parallel was drawn with health workers who visit and talk with parents in their

homes. Schools often expect parents to come to the school, and as a result the dynamics of engagement change. While some felt helpless to do anything, and absolved this responsibility to the government, other parents were in agreement that the onus started with them taking up their responsibilities as parents, to protect, teach and nurture their children. For parents to do this well, the study informants urged for ‘sensitisation’ program.

Box 40 Parents need ‘sensitisation’

“By myself there could be little I can do because I have tried but what I feel is that there is need for community Sensitization, for parents to embrace education and for them to stop these cultures that promote abuse of children. I tell you, protecting these children is not easy, unless we are first able to convince the community so generally there is need to sensitize the people around here and to take measures on parents who marry off their young girls or those who do not allow them to come to school”. (HT31 M Mal)

“If we can work hand-in-hand with the community health workers to promote advocacy within the community. Then we shall go a long way. You see it is the community health workers who visit the homes and through such visits we can partner to sensitize the community on the rights of children”. (HT19 M Lod).

“Parents should also promote safe housing for their children, some parents do not know, that children should stay in safe houses, that it is their right, some parents don’t care where their children sleep, that’s why they are raped or they are free to work around with men. Teach everyone about child rights, the parents, the teachers and the pupils themselves, let them know their rights. So in short all I am saying is, revive the olden day parents, let parents be parents, they should be taught what parenting involves, not just a bout bearing children and leaving to be taught by the world”. HT9 M HB

“Sisi kama wazazi tunachukua hatua ya kuacha ulevi na mambo mabaya yanayo fanya watoto wetu wapotoke na pia sisi kama wazazi tuko tayari kuwa mifano miema kwa watoto wetu (We as parent have taken the decision to stop alcoholism and doing other bad things that are destructive for children. We as parents are ready to be good examples for our children)” (P-FGD 7 Isio)

“Wazazi kuwapa watoto wao mawaidha na kuhakikisha watoto wao ni mfano mwema katika jamii yao (Parents should advise their children and ensure that their children are good examples for the community)” (P-FGD8 Isi)

“We should also teach or inform the child on where and what life leads to, that is, the best ways to follow in life. We should also tell them to avoid cults. The fight should start with the parent at home. Teach the child what is right according to spirituality”. (P-FGD18 Nye)

“I feel there is need first for sensitization, the parents should first of all be sensitized and then there should be action against parents who neglect their children and parental duties, who violate the rights of the children. I think very severe penalties. We should aim as teachers to provide a child friendly environment, and schools. You see the schools and homes should be child friendly. Little attention as madam said is given to the children, there is need for more focus on children, to bring up all rounded children”. (T-FGD10 HB)

“We should look for programs to sensitize parents, teachers and pupils to teach them on child safety, also we should look for programs to entice parents” (T-FGD13 Isio)

It would be good to consider moving beyond sensitization, which aligns more to awareness creation, to actual parenting education. Being a good parent cannot be assumed. Parents need to be tooled, with skills and behaviours that will inform them on the best parenting methods. Any program developed must therefore go beyond ‘talk shop’ to actual education. The education program need to be structured and have specific thematic focus that align to the learning needs of the parents. These programs need professionalizing.

6.4 STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS

While some informants echoed the need to have child protection desks in each diocese, others saw the solution to rest in institutionalization, through the formation of rescue centres, orphanages or boarding schools. Child desks as proposed, would sit in the borderline of being proactive and reactive, in that they would not only receive reports of violence, but would also proactively reach out to stem child abuse. The assumption was that the Child desks would be designed to reach out to children needs, and would therefore serve them better. The call for orphanages stems from the fact that the most vulnerable children who faced extreme forms of abuse were those without biological parents. As such children cannot be entrusted to their relatives, the only help they could receive was via an orphanage. Boarding schools were also yearned for because they would be 'safer'. This attitude can however be viewed as abdication of ones responsibilities to the school.

Box 41 Child Protection Desks and Institutions

"There should be a child protection desk at the diocese and the people to man the desk should be a neutral person one who has the interest of the child at heart. Also the diocese should be at the fore front in ensuring that children are protected by implementing policies that will protect the rights of the children and in partnership with the schools". (1ES)

"The Diocese should put in place a children's desk in every diocese, and should employ people to work with children, they should ensure that they go to school by school, sensitizing children and teaching them about their rights. This should be made mandatory in each diocese". (2ES)

"Except the training of the teachers. We haven't done much else. We dream of building a rescue centre. We dream of putting up a rescue centre and we have already acquired the ground. This will be housing children who are at risk of early marriages, child labour and sexual violence". (3ES)

"The diocese should also put in place child protection structures. In remote areas, there are no structures. Like where I was almost 400 kms away from here, which child can walk all that way, with bandits and animals all over? In remote areas there should be legal structures to help children. The diocese should also build a rescue home especially for the girls in early and forced marriages. There is no rescue home in the entire county. Sometimes I find very needy cases of children who hold my clothes and do not want to let me go. I pity them, sometimes I house some of them, but I am also human. I am not an angel. I can misuse them, so the Diocese should consider putting up a home. Right now we only have one under the church but is under the Catholic brothers and solely deals with rescuing street children" (CO Lod)

"There should be something like an office? Where children can report cases of violence or someone to report to such cases because they can fear reporting to us...I think also having a children's desk will help, so that children can have a place they feel comfortable sharing their issues with anyone". (T-FGD 14 Ker)

"There should be a children's desk or office and officers in charge of children. Currently in the Lodwar Diocese we have a lady, who is in charge, but she has not been able to look at everything as regards to child abuse, so such officers should be employed to look at the welfare of the children. In short children are our future and it is upon all of us to work for the good all children". (16.T.Fgd.LOD).

"The County should built good boarding schools for children, when they come from far these men of bodaboda cheat girls to give them lifts, and they are impregnated. They should also help children who cannot be able to pay school fees so that they can be like other children". (10.par.Fgd.Lod)

"There is also a boarding facility available for girls at the parish centre next to the school. This is helping girls avoid the bad influences out there and is also minimising the cases of pregnancy among the girl pupils". (13.T.Fgd.Isiolo).

"I think the church or the government should build orphanages especially for the orphans or for children who are victims of neglect" (T-FGD 10 HB).

“... to build a children’s home. There is a child here who I think is HIV positive, he has boils all over his body and he stays alone with a sister who I think is also overwhelmed. This boy never misses school, I think school is his source of solace, such children should be taken to children’s homes”. (T-FGD 14 Ker).

“There are orphans also who are victims and I think the best way to help them is to have homes for these children to stay so that they can also enjoy their rights and freedoms as children, or attach them to church for support or to guardians who will help them as children”. (HT7 F HB).

6.5 LEGAL ACTION

Law enforcement was another strategy proposed to curb child abuse. It was observed that there was no real deterrent as persons who abused children were never prosecuted. Parents who were compromised at the expense of their children also faced no legal action. If the law was enforced, it was proposed that this would act as a restraint, and fewer children might face abuse.

Box 42: Enforcing the Law

“If children are to be protected from violence, then there is need for them, the people enforcing the law to ensure that children are protected. The law should attack everyone, no one should be above the law, and everyone should be punished severely, regardless of one’s position”. (HT 21 M Lod)

“Legal action should be taken against parents. Because these parents especially mothers encourage their daughters to behave badly, imagine a mother just receiving money from the daughter and she knows that the daughter does not work anywhere, some girls here, we get them with very expensive phones and when we demand to know the source, the parents cover them, the mother refused us to deal with the child, parents are exposing their children to so much risks”. HT8 M HB

“Offenders need to be dealt with thoroughly and severely, so that the others can learn from them, as long as men abuse girls and they are left, we shall always have cases of violence”. HT10 F HB

“They should start with parents who are not caring for their children because if your parent does not care for you no one else will care for you, parents should be punished for what they do to children”. FGD-G 35 Ker

“G2: By teachers, teachers should be taught to respect children, to treat pupils like their own children, teachers should be good. G3: Also parents should ensure they provide for their children. G1: Also teacher, if possible parents should be jailed when they do not provide for their children, why did they give birth to us then we suffer? They just over work us, and yet they do not even see we are working”. (FGD-G 17 HB)

6.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS: SOLUTIONS

The enormity of the problem of lack of safety for school aged children is big, and though there is some ongoing effort to curb abuse of children, many informants felt that existing efforts are still inadequate. Solutions were seen to lie in the following:

- i) Guidance and counselling
- ii) Skilling and empowering the children
- iii) Parental education
- iv) Having better structures and more institutions (like orphanages) and
- v) Enforcement of the law.

In order for these proposals to be impactful however, a different approach is required as follows:

- i) Guidance and counselling needs to be professionalised. There is need to rethink and delimit the roles teachers play. Teachers can retain the early identification role, but there after steps need to be put in place to allow teachers to refer needy students to a fully functional guidance and counselling office; an office that support a number of schools. Any future CSPP program needs to institute a practical and hands on training for teachers to allow them offer better services to the children.
- ii) The study findings have shown that children are often taken advantage of because of their more trusting nature and naivety, and therefore tooling them with skills to navigate such difficult situations are vital. A number of existing programs, including Making Life's Responsible Choices were favourably mentioned as being impactful in addressing sensitive topics like sexuality in a pragmatic and practical manner. More integration ought to be sought with such existing programs to tool and empower the children.
- iii) Though parental and community support was deemed important is promoting child safety, some parents were viewed as irresponsibly. Many requested to be 'sensitised'. It is recommended that parenting programs be introduced that once again move beyond information sharing to tooling parents with the right skills and behaviour that will inform their parenting methods. Once again there is opportunity for further integration with the Family Matters program currently being implemented.
- iv) Child protection desks, rescue centres, orphanages and more boarding schools were also proposed as solutions. Generally speaking institutionalisation should only be resorted to as a last option such as in the case of abandoned or orphaned children who are not receiving the due care within their relatives' homes. The move to increase boarding sections especially of primary children in examination classes should be avoided as this move is purely fuelled by academic performance related pressure rather than the wholesome development of the child. Children require parental attention especially at this critical point of transition in their lives, and heaping all responsibility to the teacher is incorrect.

- v) Law enforcement can act as a deterrent to child abuse. Many perpetrators were never prosecuted and this allows the problem to grow. Law enforcement could therefore act as a restraint.

There are however a number of gaps in the proposed solutions. How does one deal with the diminished value system? Institutions, such as the church, that would have supported positive value acquisition, in themselves condone practices, such as 'kesha' that yield to abuse of children. Instead of the home being a haven, it is the place where violence against children happen, and so children get socialised early and perpetrate the abuse on one another. Abuse seems to be entrenched into the ethos of doing things. Certain forms of abuse, such as caning have acquired some social acceptance, therefore how does one persuade the school community that there are convincing and sound alternative methods of discipline that have better results. How does one attain a 'Kiboko Free' school? A few suggestions are proposed:

1. There is need to challenge the existing stereotypes, and community dialogues could be a possibility. Community dialogues are a structured and open conversational forums, open to all within a community that challenges wrong, but aims at achieving justice. They work best when people who can take up actions are also involved. Abuse at home, on the way to school would benefit from decisions taken at a community level given that the perpetrators are from the same community.
2. People may be of different creed and faiths, but often embrace the same values of honesty, respect and so on. It would be good to have a discussion that embraces varied actors on the value system that each and every person ought to subscribe to. In this way, perhaps some consensus can be reached. The fact that a few schools are 'kiboko free' provides a good start and confirms that such a school has opted to respect both the child and the educational policies of the land. Additionally, there is need to embrace practical means of value acquisition. For instance, it would be desirable if each child in every school belonged to at least one club, and one team sport, as these are good at teaching values and may counter the peer to peer abuse.
3. On a broader level, the formal school curriculum has failed in educating on the right values due to its theoretical approach as well as shunning of subjects that are good at value setting. The creative subjects, music, art really ought to be a fundamental part of any curriculum. These subjects have over centuries proven that they shape the 'heart' and perspective of a child in ways that physics or chemistry subjects can never. The current curriculum reform opportunity should be exploited to institute a better value based education.
4. To curb the open gender bias, continuous gender training that promotes better understanding and fair treatment of all is needed. Some age old stereotypes still exist, and girl victims are doubly victimised because of bias. It should not be assumed that the people who are tasked with protective children are gender sensitive. They need continuous education.

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