
Reproductive Health

Social and Behavioral Science Research (SBSR)

2016

The Africa Regional SGBV Network Learning Brief Series: Learning updates from South Africa (Brief #1)

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Recommended Citation

"The Africa Regional SGBV Network Learning Brief Series: Learning updates from South Africa (Brief #1)."
Nairobi: Population Council, 2016.

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The Africa Regional SGBV Network Learning Brief Series

Fostering a Multisectoral Response to Violence against Children
in East and Southern Africa

Learning Updates from South Africa (Brief #1)

From 2011-2012, 40% of all sexual offences in South Africa involved children as victims, according to crime statistics. Over half of the rape cases reported to TVEP in rural Vhembe are children below the age of 18. The Africa Regional Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Network, set up in 2006, is addressing violence against children (VAC) in four countries. This *Learning Brief* is one in a series of five that share critical, initial understandings of VAC that will help us respond more effectively to the problem.

TVEP

The Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP) is one of the largest community-based organizations in Southern Africa with projects that focus on preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence and HIV. It is based in Limpopo Province in South Africa. TVEP has



worked with community members and leaders to develop a 'Zero Tolerance Village Alliance' model to change social norms around SGBV.

**ALMOST 40% OF
CHILDREN ARE
SCARED OF
WALKING TO
SCHOOL**

The community-based model has had positive results around SGBV reporting, service-seeking, and prevention. TVEP is adapting this effective model to meet the needs of school children. TVEP's recent baseline survey in 2 Thulamela District public secondary schools paints a picture of children's experiences with school-related violence.

What We're Already Learning

Here's *what we're learning* about school children (Grades 8-10, aged 12-18), through TVEP's work:

- The vast majority of children aged 12-18 (about 70% to over 80% of girls and boys) walk to school each day, either alone or with other people.
- Of those that walk to school, well over a third (35% of to 39% of girls and boys) are scared of doing so - mainly out of fear of being attacked, kidnapped or bullied.
- Of those that walk to school, over a third had been bullied on their way to school in the last year and a considerable proportion had been attacked.
- Sixty percent of girls and boys had witnessed someone else experiencing violence while walking to school in the last year.
- More than half of children interviewed (55% to 62%) reported being scared of certain spaces within school, particularly, school toilets. They were also scared of areas right outside the school gate and the school staff room.
- Over 60% of children reported being bullied in school in the last year, with the most common types of bullying including slapping, teasing, and being shouted at. Nearly 60% of those that experienced bullying in the last one year did not report the incident(s) to anyone, mainly due to not knowing who they should report it to.
- About a third of school-going children also admitted to bullying others in their school in the last year.
- Over a third (36% to 39%) of girls and boys reported experiencing unwanted touching (of a private part of their body) in school in the last year. The perpetrators were mainly their fellow classmates (67% to 72%).

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What We're Doing about It

TVEP is adapting its 'Zero Tolerance Village Alliance' (ZTVA) model for children and schools. The ZTVA model is designed to inspire men and women in communities to commit themselves to taking a public stand against SGBV. Each community must go through a series of steps to be able to join the alliance. The process includes training-of-trainer sessions on SGBV, community education workshops, dialogues, and campaigns. These activities culminate in a public award and pledge-taking ceremony by community members. The ZTVA has had promising results among adults in rural communities in South Africa and in humanitarian settings in Uganda. The adapted version of this model - 'the Zero Tolerance **Schools** Alliance' - is being developed, implemented and tested by TVEP from 2016-2017.

Since 2006, the Africa Regional SGBV Network has worked to build effective responses to SGBV in low-resource settings, focusing on those who have experienced violence, as well as on violence prevention. From 2014-2017, the network is addressing the needs of two vulnerable populations – children and refugees.

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We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Regional Team for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Embassy of Sweden, Lusaka, Zambia.

