Uganda Diagnostic Exercise

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THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Contents

List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
BRMS	Basic Requirements Minimum Standards
C4D	Communication for Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDRM	Conflict and Disaster Risk Management Guidelines
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ECCA	Empower Children and Communities against Abuse
EDP	Education Development Partner
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSP	Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GEM	Girls Education Movement
GSHS	Global Schools-Based Student Health Survey
GoU	Government of Uganda
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MUCOBADI	Multi-Community Based Development Initiative
MDD	Music, Dance and Drama
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGOs	Non-Government Organisation
NSP VACiS	National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools
NTP	National Teacher Policy
PEAS	Promoting Equality in African Schools
QEI	Quality Enhancement Initiative
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
RTRR	Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response
SMCs	School Management Committees
SQD	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

SSD	Safe Schools Declaration	
STL	Safe to Learn	
UCHL	Uganda Child Helpline	
UCRNN	Uganda Child Rights NGO Network	
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council	
UK-DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development	
UN	United Nations	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation	
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative	
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	
USAID-LARA/RTI	United States Agency for International Development - Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity / Research Triangle Institute	
VAC	Violence Against Children	
VCCMCs	Village Child Case Management Committees	

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Executive Summary

"Safe to Learn" is a global initiative dedicated to ending violence against children in and around schools. It was launched in 2019 by a core group of members of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children: UNESCO, UNICEF, UK Department for International Development (DFID) and UNGEI. With a vision of ending all violence against children in schools by 2024, the programmatic and advocacy objectives of Safe to Learn are set out in a five-point Call to Action: (1) implement policy and legislation; (2) strengthen prevention and response at the school level; (3) shift social norms and behaviour change; (4) invest resources effectively; and (5) generate and use evidence.

The Call to Action was subsequently translated into a set of benchmarks which were developed based on international child rights frameworks, UN tools and minimum standards, and best practice from the field of child safeguarding. For each benchmark, there are national, state and school-level 'checkpoints' or requirements that governments and the education sector should meet in order to ensure that schools are safe and protective. These benchmarks have formed the basis for a Diagnostic Tool which aims to measure the degree to which governments are meeting these standards.

This Diagnostic Tool has been used to conduct diagnostic exercises in five focal countries to gauge governments' compliance, identify best practices, gaps and priorities, and establish a baseline for tracking countries' progress. This report presents results from the diagnostic exercise conducted in Uganda from 26th November to 20th December 2019. Key informant interviews were conducted with officials at the national and district levels, as well as with headteachers, teachers and students in 30 schools across all 7 regions of Uganda: West Nile, North, Karamoja, Eastern, Central, Southwest and Western sub-region. It should be noted that although the sample aimed to provide wide geographic coverage, it is not nationally representative of Uganda.

That said, the following findings present best practices that were found, challenges and gaps that remain, and recommendations to support the government and education sector to meet Safe to Learn (STL) benchmarks in order to ensure that schools are safe environments that enhance learning for all children.

Overview of salient best practices

Uganda has a number of legal and policy documents that, to varying degrees of explicitness, prohibit corporal punishment in schools. These include:

- **The National Objectives (XVIII) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda** declares education a constitutional right and Article 24 protects every person, including children, from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment.

- In August 2006, a **third circular prohibiting corporal punishments** in schools was issued by the Director of Education and copied to primary schools, post-primary, tertiary institutions, colleges and polytechnics forbidding corporal punishment in schools. This circular requires each school's Management Committee or Board of Governors to approve a school disciplinary policy.

- In August 2007, **the Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8 (2007)** was passed with the aim of abolishing corporal punishment and outlawing defilement. However, this Act does not explicitly state any punishment for the perpetrators of corporal punishment.

- In March 2016, the Ugandan Parliament passed **the Children (Amendment) Act 2016**, with a goal to amend the children Act Cap. 59; enhance protection of children; strengthen the provision for guardianship of children; strengthen the conditions for inter-country adoption; prohibit corporal punishment; and provide for National Children Authority, amongst other related matters.

- There are also a number of salient policies relating to child protection, which include: **Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines, the National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS), the Gender in Education Policy and the National Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Policy.**

- Most notably, the **NSP VACiS** outlines the country's strategic direction and priorities towards the elimination of violence against children as well as response to cases of violence in schools; and the **RTRR Guidelines**, developed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), provides schools specific guidance for establishing reporting, tracking, referral and response mechanisms for violence. These national guidelines are a laudable achievement as they provide detailed processes by which schools should respond to child protection concerns, including referral to services.

In addition to Uganda's robust policy landscape, other good practices include:

- The national **Teacher Code of Conduct** clearly outlines norms and zero-tolerance standards regarding violence, as well as stipulates disciplinary action if standards surrounding violence are not adhered to.

- The existence of '**Sauti', a national child helpline** to report and respond to cases of child violence

- Both the **primary and secondary education curriculum** have, to varying degrees, Life Skills components regarding violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion and gender equitable relationships.

- The Government of Uganda has established **strong collaborations with local and international non-government organisations (NGOs), development partners and Community Based Organisations (CBOs)** to support in the implementation of various interventions to fight violence against children in schools. Many of these interventions are showing some impact.
- The **MoES 'EduTrac' system** aims to collect real-time data regarding areas such as pupil attendance, monthly for reports on child abuse and termly for capitation grants made to the schools. By January 2020, EduTrac was operational in 37 districts throughout Uganda.

Overview of significant challenges and gaps

- Despite Uganda's strong policy framework, the **MoES Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2017-2020 does not explicitly include an objective to prevent or reduce violence in schools**. It does include a strategic intervention to develop a School Health and Safety Policy, which could support the prevention and reduction of violence; however, an explicit objective aiming to reduce violence (along with strategic activities, budgets and key performance indicators) would be much more targeted and effective.

- Although the **RTRR Guidelines** represent a laudable achievement in providing guidance on setting up reporting/response mechanisms, **the implementation of these in schools/districts are partial at best**. A large proportion of district officers and school administrators discussed awareness of these guidelines, and 26 out of 28 District Officers said they connect with other sectors to report violence, most commonly cited was reporting to police. However, none could provide documentation or evidence of their processes for reporting/response (or the RTRR guidelines themselves) and only 47% of learners interviewed in the study reported that their schools have mechanisms for responding to violence.
- The **National Child Helpline called 'Sauti'** is a great achievement, however **only 31% of students interviewed in the study were aware that it existed** and could be used for reporting cases of violence. This indicates that in order to be helpful, more children need to be made aware of its existence, how to use it and what service it provides.
- Although both the primary and secondary education curriculum have Life Skills components regarding violence, inclusion and gender equitable relationships, the **teaching of these curricula is not universal** as less than half of students reported having lessons on these topics. This could be due to the fact that life skills topics are considered cross cutting and are not directly examinable, which may lead to teachers and schools not giving

them the attention they deserve. The **pre- or in-service teacher training curriculum** does not have content on practical and effective positive discipline and non-violent classroom management, teacher obligations on child safeguarding, violence reporting and response pathways, or course content for school counsellors on children's mental health and wellbeing. That said, in 2006 and 2017, the MoES developed handbooks to provide guidance on positive discipline, which could be revised and used for these purposes. Similarly, The Journeys Activity Handbook for Teachers and School Staff (developed in 2017 by the MoES, with support from the United States Agency for International Development) provides activities that headteachers can lead in their schools as part of their administrative responsibility on preventing and protecting children from violence. These could be distributed to more schools.

- National Teacher Policy (NTP) aims to professionalise teachers, develop standards and improve the development, management of utilization of teachers in Uganda. However, in its current form, **the NTP does not provide explicit guidance on conducting background checks on teachers** before recruitment or transfer to assess their suitability for working with children.

- **Data collection on the prevalence and forms of violence in schools** through a national or international school-based survey programme has not occurred, either through the MoES or Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). Monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention initiatives is still lacking at both the district and school levels

Key priorities and recommendations based on gaps and best practice

The following summarises key priorities and recommendations for governments in order to meet the benchmarks for the five STL Calls to Action:

Call to Action 1: Implement laws and policies

- **Benchmark 1.1 - Prevention of violence in and around schools is identified as a specific strategy in the national education sector policy or plan.** Although the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence in schools via a health and safety policy and inspections, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools (with accompanying strategies, budgets and key performance indicators) would be much more powerful and effective. Such an objective should include specific strategies for developing a clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version of the RTRR guidelines to be printed/disseminated nationally for orientation and training for district and school actors. Government, donor and private sector funding could be consolidated through support of or alignment with this strategy.

- **Benchmark 1.2 - There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and classroom management.** There are laws clearly in place that prohibit corporal punishment in schools; however, better enforcement of these laws is needed. Efforts are needed to strengthen the national child protection system and functionality of child protection committees at district level, at which education is also represented for more systemic reporting, tracking and follow up of cases. Relatedly, the Village Child Case Management Committee should also be supported to ensure cases of corporal punishment in schools are reported and acted upon. Since an overstretched police and legal system may not be able to support enforcement, communities, schools and districts should have intermediate processes/protocols to hold teachers to account. With regard to supporting positive discipline, the Teacher Training Curriculum should be reviewed and revised to include positive discipline and classroom management. The 2006 and 2017 MoES handbooks on alternatives to corporal punishment provide a good start and could be reviewed against a new curriculum and revised to provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation. A clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version should then be more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes (for which a school-based training modality should be established).

- **Benchmark 1.3 - The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.** The National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS) (2015 – 2020) is a laudable step

towards having a multi-sectoral child protection policy framework. However, implementation of it at the district and school level has not been well established. The RTRR guidelines could be unpacked and a simple document developed for each sector (e.g. education, health, police, social work etc.) at district level to clearly define the contribution of each sector and how they need to work with other sectors in the prevention and response to cases.. Again, a clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version of these guidelines should be printed/disseminated nationally for training of all relevant actors. It would also be worth further exploring the degree to which 'District Child Protection Committees' and Village Child Case Management Committees are active or should be re-activated, as these could provide a structure in which multi-sectoral actors could meet, be trained and coordinate action.

- **Benchmark 1.4** - **The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.** The government can build on the good work that it has already done on the Conflict and Disaster Risk Management Guidelines (CDRM) guidelines by explicitly endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration and robustly translating/disseminating/training on its accompanying guidelines.

Call to Action 2: Strengthen prevention and response at school level

- **Benchmark 2.1 - Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.** The primary and secondary curriculum to certain degrees, touch on issues of violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships. However, the delivery of these curricula in the classroom is not universal, most likely because teachers and schools experience pressure to focus on topics that will feature on national exams. Ironically though, learning and performance on exams would likely improve with the reduction of violence in schools. These linkages should be made explicit in teacher training materials (see below). And in order to support and supplement current curriculum-based activities, targeted activities for students (regarding violence, promoting inclusion and gender equitable relationships) could be provided in a revision of the RTRR guidelines. In addition to this, activities targeting students should also include raising awareness of the national child helpline, how to use it and what service it provides.

- **Benchmark 2.2 - Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.** This benchmark consisted of four components and recommendations aligned to these include:

    1) National guidelines to establish safe and confidential reporting mechanisms. The RTRR Guidelines represent a great achievement in providing guidance on setting up reporting/response mechanisms. Schools reported using suggestion boxes for confidential reporting. However, the implementation of these in all schools/districts needs to be strengthened. As discussed with regard to Benchmark 1.1, one way to do this is to review/revise the RTRR guidelines so that they are clear, concise (currently, they are 82 pages), user-centred, multi-lingual and can be delivered via a school-based training modality so that all teachers can participate. As discussed above, this revision could also entail activities to be implemented to support students' learning of key violence prevention strategies.

    2) Norms and standards of ethical behaviour in Teacher Codes of Conduct. As discussed, the national Code of Conduct is very thorough regarding violence; however, enforcement/compliance could be strengthened. This could be done by working with the Education Service Commission to revise the Code so that it explicitly requires all teachers to sign it on an annual basis, thus requiring all headteachers and District Officers to have master copies of the ode for teachers to sign. In addition to this, relevant sections of the Code could also be reprinted within the revised RTRR guidelines so that all teachers have a copy to refer to.

    3) Policies that regulate hiring of new teachers and staff and their transfer to ensure suitability for working with children. It is unclear whether there is still opportunity to revise the NTP at this point. However, if so, it would be very helpful to provide explicit guidance regarding background checks on teachers before recruitment or transfer to assess their suitability for working with children. That said, this will require collaboration and thinking through with police, justice and social welfare sectors on how such checks could/should work. In the

meantime, guidance on conducting 'informal checks' on new teachers by HT and District Officers, could be provided through revised RTRR guidelines.

4) Pre- and in-service training on obligations for child safeguarding and reporting/response. As discussed in Benchmark 1.2, the Teacher Instruction and Education Department of MoES should review the Teacher Training Curriculum and integrate safeguarding, positive discipline and reporting/response content to prevent violence in schools. MoES have already developed handbooks on alternatives to corporal punishment (as part of programmes in 2006 and 2017). These materials should be reviewed alongside a new curriculum and revised to provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation. A clear, concise (again, both documents are very long), user-centred and multi-lingual version should then be more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes (for which a school-based training modality should be established).

Benchmark 2.3 - Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence. Most schools and districts have identified one person who was a focal point for cases of violence. However, it was clear that these focal points were not capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence, either through pre- or in-service training. Thus, in the potential revision of training materials for teachers on violence prevention in schools (as discussed in the previous section), content on children's mental health and well-being should be added. In addition, development partners could work with the Guidance and Counselling department at MoES to better understand how they prepare and quality assure focal persons and identify ways for partners to support and strengthen this.

Benchmark 2.4 - The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the well-being of children in mind. National **Basic Requirements Minimum Standards (BRMS)** indicators should be revised to more directly address safety and violence, such as requiring schools to map unsafe areas to identify solutions, providing clear criteria for ensuring sanitary facilities are safe and secure, providing clear criteria for ensuring that classroom architecture and design is gender-responsive, and providing guidance on how to ensure students can move freely to and from school. Such standards should also feature in the revision of RTRR guidelines.

Call to Action 3: Shift social norms and behaviour change

- **Benchmark 3.1 - There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence**. Although reference is made to broad strategies for dissemination activities in the NSP VACiS, it would be helpful to provide concrete guidance and specific strategies that schools and district actors could implement. Such strategies could be included in a revision of the RTRR guidelines.
- **Benchmark 3.2 - Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.** There is no reference or guidance on social norm interventions that could be implemented – again, specific strategies and evidence-informed interventions should be provided to districts/schools through RTRR guidelines.
- **Benchmark 3.3 - Young people, parents, teachers and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on the topic of school violence.** Although there are some specific strategies in the NSP VACiS based on UNICEF's Communication for Development (C4D) approach, it would be helpful to create an action plan for this with clear roles and responsibilities as well as budgets. Concrete guidance and specific strategies that schools and district actors could implement could also be included in a revision of the RTRR guidelines.

Call to Action 4: Invest resources effectively

- **Benchmark 4.1 - Domestic resources that have been allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.** As discussed in relation to benchmark 1.1, although the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence in schools via a health and safety policy, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools would be much more powerful, targeted and effective. Government, donor and private sector funding could then be consolidated through support of or alignment with this strategy.
- **Benchmark 4.2 - Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.** The MoES should also aim to coordinate all donor/NGO activities to ensure a joined-up approach and sharing of lessons learnt. This could be done via the Gender Mainstreaming Unit. If an explicit ESSP objective can be developed for reducing violence in schools, the MoES should ensure that all donor/NGO activities and funds are aligned and coordinated to support it.
- **Benchmark 4.3 - There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.** As discussed, if an explicit ESSP objective can be developed for reducing violence in schools, the MoES should ensure that all private sector activities and funds are aligned and coordinated to support it. Further work may need to be done to elicit such funds.

Call to Action 5: Generate and use evidence

- **Benchmark 5.1 - Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.** Although the MoES 'EduTrac' system has the potential to collect real-time data on violence in schools, it is currently only operational in 37 districts. It would be good to build on this work to explore to what degree this system can be used to record incidents of violence and monitors trends, fed by districts and schools. Such a strategy could/should be part of the potential ESSP objective to reduce violence in schools.

- **Benchmark 5.2 - There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.** The National Statistics Office and MoES should consider regular participation in international or national school-based surveys. For example, Uganda took part in the Global Schools-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) in 2003 and this could be updated.

- **Benchmark 5.3 - Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trailed models and approaches.** Although there have been examples of rigorous evaluations of trailed models and approaches, such as the Good Schools Toolkit, the study shows these are limited in their reach. Scaling up such interventions would be difficult given the financial, material and human resource needed for implementation of that particular intervention. This indicates a need for an analysis of 'scalability by the education system' when evaluations of violence prevention initiatives are done. In this instance, work with Raising Voices and MoES could be done to determine how intensive resources could be pared down while still retaining the components that facilitate intended outcomes/effects.

Summary table of Benchmark Indicator Status based on the Diagnostic Exercise

A = In place	B = Partially in place	C = Not in place

Please note: The below assessments were based on the findings from the study. Discussion and rationale are provided in the report.

Call to Action	Benchmark Indicator	Sub-Indicator	National	State	School
1. Implement laws and policies	1.1 Prevention of violence in and around schools is identified as a specific strategy in the national education sector policy or plan.		B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	1.2 There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and classroom management.	Laws that prohibit corporal punishment are implemented and enforced.	A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
		Teacher training covers positive discipline and classroom management.	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	1.3 The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in a multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.	A national and multi-sectoral policy framework outlines the role of key formal actors.	A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
		The Ministry of Education has established a national child protection/safeguarding policy which is enforced.	A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	1.4 The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.		C = Not in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place
2. Strengthen prevention and response at school level	2.1 Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.		A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	2.2 Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.	National guidelines to establish safe and confidential reporting mechanisms.	A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
		Norms and standards of ethical behaviour in Teachers' Code of Conduct.	A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
		Pre- and in-service training on obligations for child safeguarding and reporting/response.	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
		Policies that regulate hiring of new teachers and staff and their transfer to ensure suitability for working with children.	C = Not in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place
	2.3 Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.		C = Not in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	2.4 The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the well-being of children in mind.		B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
3. Shift social norms and behaviour change	3.1 There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence.		B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	3.2 Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.		C = Not in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	3.3 Young people, parents, teachers and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on the topic of school violence.		A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	4.1 Domestic resources have been allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.		C = Not in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place

4. Invest resources effectively	4.2 Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.	A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	4.3 There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.	C = Not in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place
5. Generate and use evidence	5.1 Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	5.2 There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.	B = Partially in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place
	5.3 Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trialed models and approaches.	C = Not in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place

1. Introduction

"Safe to Learn" is a global initiative dedicated to ending violence against children in and around schools. It was launched in 2019 by a core group of members of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children: UNESCO, UNICEF, UK Department for International Development (DFID) and UNGEI. With a vision of ending all violence against children in schools by 2024, the programmatic and advocacy objectives of Safe to Learn are set out in a five-point Call to Action:

1. **Implement policy and legislation:** National, regional and local governments develop, fund and enforce laws and policies that protect children from all forms of violence in and around schools, including online violence.

2. **Strengthen prevention and response at the school level**: School staff, students, and management committees provide safe and gender-sensitive learning environments for all children that promote positive discipline, child-centred teaching and protect and improve children's physical and mental wellbeing.

3. **Shift social norms and behaviour change**: Parents, teachers, children, local government and community leaders recognise the devastating impact of violence in schools and take action to promote positive social norms and gender equality to ensure schools are safe spaces for learning.

4. **Invest resources effectively**: Increased and better use of investments targeted at ending violence in schools.

5. **Generate and use evidence**: Countries and the international community generate and use evidence on how to effectively end violence in schools.

This Call to Action was translated into a set of benchmarks, which were developed in relation to international child rights frameworks, UN tools and minimum standards, and best practice from the field of child safeguarding. For each benchmark, there are national, sub-national/district and school-level 'checkpoints' or requirements that governments and the education sector should meet in order to achieve their accountabilities in ensuring that schools are safe and protective. These benchmarks and checkpoints formed the basis for a Diagnostic Tool to gauge the degree to which governments were meeting these standards. This Diagnostic Tool was then used to conduct diagnostic exercises in five focal countries, including Uganda, South Sudan, Jordan, Pakistan and Nepal. The aims of these diagnostic exercises were to:

1. Gauge the degree to which governments were meeting the requirements set out by the STL benchmarks/checkpoints

2. Identify best practices, gaps and priority actions with governments in order to meet the STL benchmarks/checkpoints

3. Establish a baseline that will then demonstrate focal country progress from 2019-2024

This report presents the results of the diagnostic exercise conducted in Uganda from 26th November to 20th December 2019. It provides an overview of the context and policy landscape regarding violence in schools, the methodology and salient findings from the diagnostic exercise, and a set of actions that can support the government to meet the STL benchmarks and ensure that schools are safe, protective and enhance learning for all children.

2. Background Information on Violence against Children

According to the Uganda Children (Amendment) Act 2016, 'violence' means 'any form of physical, emotional or mental injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse, intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against an individual which may result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation'[1]. This is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) definition of violence as 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse'. Violence against children takes different forms, and it is common that a child may be victim to more than one category at the same time. The National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS) (2015-2020) defines forms of violence inflicted on children of school-going age (three to 18 years) in four broad categories: physical violence, psychological or emotional violence, sexual violence, neglect and negligent treatment[2].

2.1   Overview of levels of Violence in Schools in Uganda

Violence against children is costly to society and destructive to individuals and families, and it is alarmingly common in Uganda. The 2015 National Violence Against Children (VAC) Survey conducted among 5,804 individuals aged 13-24 (3,159 females and 2,645 males) highlighted that three-in-four children in Uganda have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence at some point during their childhood[3]. Children are exposed to different forms of violence. Unfortunately, most forms of violence against children in schools are perpetrated by teaching and non-teaching staff who have an obligation to protect and ensure the safety and security of the children under their care[4].

According to the NSP VACiS (2015-2020), the rate of violence in Ugandan schools is higher and increasing at a faster rate compared to schools in neighboring countries like Kenya and Tanzania. For instance, sexual harassment among pupils in Uganda was 41% in 2001 and this increased to 58% in 2007. The 2015 VAC Survey further indicated that violence against children more commonly occurs on the road and in the afternoon and early evening, as many children commute to and from school alone and in the dark.

2.1.1   Physical Violence against children

Physical violence against school children is very common in Uganda, even though corporal punishment was banned in 1997. According to the School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda study conducted in 2012 among 3706 students and 577 school staff members, 93.3% of boys and 94.2% of girls attending primary school reported experiences of physical violence from a school staff member and more than 50% reported an experience in the past week. Past week physical violence was associated with increased odds of poor mental health and, for girls, double the odds of poor educational performance (adjusted odds ratio = 1.78, 95% confidence interval = 1.19–2.66)[5].

Another study, conducted in primary (n=760) and secondary (n=115) schools in 2012 by MoES and UNICEF, found that 71% of the primary learners and 68% of the secondary school learners reported to have experienced physical abuse at school. The study further indicated that 74.3% of the learners both in primary and secondary schools experienced different forms of corporal punishments that included[6]:

- **Caning**: 75% of the learners surveyed in Government Schools and 73% in private schools; 74% in Primary schools and 75% in Secondary schools reported to have been caned.

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[1] MoGLSD: Uganda Violence Against Children Survey, 2018
[2] MoES: *National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools*
[3] Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Violence against Children in Uganda: Findings from a National Survey, 2015. Kampala, Uganda: UNICEF, 2015.
[4] MoES: National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS) (2015-2020)
[5] Karen M. Devries, PhD; Jennifer C. Child, MSc; Elizabeth Allen, PhD; Eddy Walakira, PhD; Jenny Parkes, PhD and Dipak Naker, MA: *School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda, 2012*
[6] MoES: *Assessing Child Protection /Safety and Security Issues for Children in Ugandan Primary and Secondary Schools, November 2012*

- **Kicking**: 45% of leaners in primary schools and 31% in secondary schools reported to have been kicked.
- **Hitting**: 45% in primary schools and 27% in secondary schools reported to have been hit.
- **Beating**: 70.9% in primary schools and 57.7% in secondary schools reported to have been beaten.

The 2015 VAC Survey highlighted that physical violence against children was perpetrated by adults who were neither parents nor caregivers, indicating that more than 90.0% of cases involved teachers as perpetrators. The survey reported that about two in five boys (41.0%) and 31.0% of girls experienced physical violence by a community member in childhood. Boys were significantly more likely than girls to have experienced physical violence in childhood by a member of the community. Nearly half (45.7%) of girls and 60.4% of boys who experienced physical violence by an adult in the community experienced the first incident by a male teacher. 48.7% of girls and 25.7% of boys experienced the first incident by a female teacher. The same survey reported that over a period of 12 months, 25% of girls and 21% of boys had missed school because of physical violence perpetrated against them. Furthermore, among 13-17 year olds, about one in five girls (18.2%) and one in four boys (25.1%) experienced physical violence by a peer in the past 12 months preceding to the survey.

2.1.2 Sexual Violence against children

Sexual violence in schools, especially against girls is widespread. According to the 'Assessing Child Protection / Safety and Security Issues for Children in Ugandan Primary and Secondary Schools' 2012 study, which surveyed 3615 learners, 77.7% of the primary and 82% of secondary school learners experienced sexual abuse at school. The study further revealed that 67% of the learners in both primary and secondary schools indicated that the perpetrators were male teachers, 22% were fellow students, 5% were female teachers and 6% were non-teaching staff. 60.2% of the learners indicated that they never reported the cases mainly because they were afraid of being victimised, afraid of being laughed at and were afraid of being shamed[7].

According to the 2015 VAC Survey, among the 18-24 year olds (Females, n=1839; Males, n=1283), the survey revealed that 35.3% of girls and 16.5% of boys in Uganda experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18 years. The survey also revealed that nationally, the most common type of sexual abuse was abusive sexual touching (girls, 24.7%; boys, 10.9%), followed by attempted forced or pressured sex (girls, 17.3%; boys, 8.1%), forced sex (girls, 10.0%; boys, 2.0%), and pressured sex (girls, 3.9%; boys, 2.0%). Girls were significantly more likely than boys to experience any type of sexual abuse. One in five girls (20.4%) and 4.9% of boys in Uganda were pressured or forced to have sex the first time they had sexual intercourse, a statistically significant difference between girls and boys[8].

2.1.3 Psychological or emotional violence against children

Emotional violence is rarely addressed as an issue within Ugandan society. Ugandan children are often expected to be completely submissive to the demands of people older than themselves, a dynamic that can sometimes lead to harsh emotional abuse if children are deemed to have spoken out of turn[9].

Psychological or emotional violence manifests in different ways. Bullying is very common in schools in Uganda. According to a study conducted by MoES amongst 3615 learners in primary and secondary school, 43% of children interviewed had experienced bullying. The prevalence of bullying was higher in primary schools (46%) compared to secondary schools (31%)[10]. According to 2015 VAC Survey, amongst 13-17 year olds (Females, n=1320; Males, n=1862), more than one in five girls (22.2%) and boys (22.8%) experienced emotional violence by a parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative in the year preceding the survey. Amongst girls who experienced emotional violence in the past 12 months, 78.5% of girls and 85.2% of boys experienced multiple incidents of emotional violence. For nearly two out of three girls (64.3%) and half of boys (50.3%) who experienced emotional violence,

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[7] MoES: *Assessing Child Protection /Safety and Security Issues for Children in Ugandan Primary and Secondary Schools , November 2012*
[8] MoGLSD: *Uganda Violence Against Children, 2015*
[9] Ibid.
[10] MoES: *Assessing Child Protection /Safety and Security Issues for Children in Ugandan Primary and Secondary Schools , November 2012*

the first incident occurred between ages 12 and 17. About one third of girls (33.1%) and nearly half of boys (46.0%) experienced the first incident between the ages of 6 and 11[11].

2.1.4   The effects of violence against children

It should be noted that the studies referenced in these sections have been relatively small-scale; however, they do demonstrate the extent to which violence does exist in certain parts of Uganda. These studies also demonstrate how exposure to violence in childhood has profound health and social consequences, including increased risk of depression, suicide, conduct disorder, disruptive behaviour, and risky sexual behaviour[12]. In addition to this, violence against children is associated with several psychological and emotional negative effects; it undermines the child's self-esteem which damages her or his potential to take advantage of the existing opportunities including learning. Findings from the VAC 2015 survey amongst the 13-17year olds (n=2682) highlighted that about one in four missed school as a result of physical violence in childhood/in the past year[13].

There is urgent need for appropriate support services to enable children recover from the impact of violence as well as work on long term strategies to prevent violence against children in schools. Preventing violence in childhood and providing services for its victims can make gains in the health and wellbeing of the world's children and, in so doing, provide the foundation for improved growth of communities in which they live and grow. In efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children, the Uganda Government in collaboration with developing partners have aimed to prevent and respond to violence against children in and around schools through the implementation of policies and interventions. However, gaps remain and this STL diagnostic exercise will help to highlight these and provide concrete strategies moving forward.

[11] MoGLSD: *Uganda Violence Against Children, 2015*
[12] Karen M. Devries, PhD; Jennifer C. Child, MSc; Elizabeth Allen, PhD; Eddy Walakira, PhD; Jenny Parkes, PhD and Dipak Naker, MA: *School Violence, Mental Health, and Educational Performance in Uganda, 2012*
[13] MoGLSD: Uganda Violence Against Children Survey 2015

3. Methodology

As discussed, this diagnostic exercise has had three main aims: 1) to identify good practices and gaps in government efforts to address violence in schools, 2) to identify priority actions with Ministries moving forward, and 3) to establish a baseline with which to measure progress from 2019-2024. The sampling strategy, research tools and information collection process were designed to meet these aims.

3.1 Sampling strategy

The sampling approach for the study drew respondents from across Uganda but without comprising a nationally representative sample. Such a sample would have been beyond the aims of the diagnostic exercise (discussed in section 1), which entailed establishment of a baseline, the identification of gaps and good practices, and the agreement of priority actions with the relevant ministries. To create a baseline and ensure inclusiveness and coverage, all 7 regions of Uganda were included: West Nile, North, Karamoja, Eastern, Central, Southwest and Western sub-region. The UNICEF Uganda country office worked with MoES partners to select one district in each of the 7 regions. The selected districts were: Adjumani, Gulu, Napak, Namayingo, Bundibugyo, Mubende, Kisoro and Kampala (Central). UNICEF and MoES randomly selected 2 secondary schools (urban/rural) and 2 primary schools (urban/rural) in each district. Pre-primary and tertiary were not included as they do not contain as high a proportion of students in comparison to primary/secondary; and private/community schools were only included when they constituted a high proportion of students. Overall, a total of 30 schools were selected with 15 primary schools and 15 secondary schools both in urban and rural contexts (table 1 and table 2 below)

In each school, interviews were conducted with the Head Teacher (HT), Deputy Head Teacher (DHT), four (4) teachers and four (4) learners; two (2) girls and two (2) boys. Two female and two male teachers were randomly selected by the researcher from a list of all full-time teachers working in the school, stratified by gender. In schools with two or fewer female teachers, all female teachers were surveyed. Where there were no female teachers, four male teachers were selected instead. The researcher selected one female and one male student from the upper primary class list. In addition, key sector stakeholders were interviewed, including seven (7) stakeholders at both the national and districts level who were deemed to have a role that includes preventing violence against children. These officers worked within the MoES, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) and at the district education offices. Table 3 below provides a summary of the respondents who participated in the study

Table 1: Summary Table of Primary Schools

Region	District	Urbn	Peri-Urban	Rural	Total No. of Secondary Schools
Central	Kampala	2	0	0	2
	Mubende	1	0	1	2
Eastern	Namayingo	0	0	2	2
Karamoja Sub-Region	Napak	0	0	2	2
Northern	Gulu	2	0	0	2
South Western	Kisoro	1	0	0	1
Western	Bundibugyo	0	0	2	2
West Nile	Adjumani	0	1	1	2
Total		**6**	**1**	**8**	**15**

Table 2: Summary Table of Secondary Schools

Region	District	Urban	Peri-Urban	Rural	Total No. of Primary Schools
Central	Kampala	1	0	1	2
	Mubende	0	0	2	2
Eastern	Namayingo	0	1	1	2
Karamoja Sub-Region	Napak	0	1	1	2
Northern	Gulu	1	0	1	2
South Western	Kisoro	0	0	1	1
Western	Bundibugyo	0	1	1	2
West Nile	Adjumani	1	0	1	2
Total		**3**	**3**	**9**	**15**

Table 3: Summary Table of Respondents

Level	Category	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
National	Ministry	3	4	7
District	DEO	15	13	28
	District Inspector of Schools			
	District Gender Officer			
	District Focal Person for Violence			
School level	Headteachers	23	5	28
	Deputy Teachers	18	8	26
	Teachers	56	53	109
	Learners	54	62	116
Total		**169**	**145**	**314**

3.2   Information collection process

This diagnostic exercise entailed a review of relevant laws, policies, guidelines and reports, as well as interviews conducted with key stakeholders at the national, district and school levels. By combining a document review with key informant interviews, this diagnostic exercise sought to ascertain not just which legislation, policies and guidance exist on paper, but also the extent to which they have been disseminated and implemented in practice.

The document review was conducted by reading and documenting information from available policy and strategic plan documents, analysing existing literature and studies related to violence against children in and around schools in Uganda. The findings were discussed under the STL five-point policy agenda: (1) Implementing policy and legislation; (2) Strengthening prevention and response at the school level; (3) Shifting social norms and behaviour change (4) Investing resources effectively; and (5) Generating and using evidence. These have been embedded in the main findings report and analysed for the purposes of giving context to the primary research conducted in schools and among stakeholders.

For the key informant interviews, participants were interviewed face-to-face using bespoke instruments to elicit their responses. Answers were captured using tablets and electronically using the ifield software. Adult participants were briefed on the purpose of the exercise and how their responses would be used, before being asked to provide voluntary consent in writing. Headteachers gave consent in loco parentis for the pupils, who in turn were briefed on the purpose of the exercise and thereafter gave their oral consent.

3.3   Customisation of interview guides

Since the Diagnostic Tool was developed at a global level (as discussed in section 1), customisation was necessary before it could be used with respondents in Uganda. As part of this process, the research team attended a workshop in Kampala hosted by UNICEF and facilitated by Cambridge Education, which also included representatives from MoES. During the workshop, participants came together to customise the interview guides for the context of Uganda. Specific changes included age and context-appropriate language, particularly for students. Statements, words or phrases that invoked misinterpretation were reviewed, reworded or otherwise changed to minimise misunderstanding or confusion.

3.4   Limitations of the study

The target sample for this exercise was 337 respondents, but due to several reasons the overall achievement was 313.One additional national level interview was held because it was provided by UNICEF. Four fewer district respondents were interviewed because in some districts (specifically, Napak, Namayingo, and Mukono), the district probation officer had multiple roles, including district gender officer and violence district focal person. There were also challenges in achieving the school respondent sample, as the study was implemented near the beginning of the third-term holidays and most teachers and pupils were not at school. Interviews were not achieved at one of the schools because the it was already closed for holidays by the time of fieldwork. Yet,despite these challenges, 93% of the intended interviews were completed.

4. Findings and Analysis

As discussed, the Safe to Learn Call to Action sets out a five-point agenda and this Diagnostic Exercise has aimed to gauge the degree to which the government has been able to meet the Benchmarks that have been set out for each of the five areas. For each benchmark there are national, district and school-level 'checkpoints' or requirements that governments and the education sector need to meet in order to achieve their accountabilities in ensuring that schools are safe and protective.

The following tables outline each of the STL benchmarks and checkpoints/standards and based on an analysis of the information collected during this Diagnostic Exercise, each checkpoint/standard has been assessed and allocated the following measures: A: in place, B: partially in place, C: not in place. Discussion of findings will provide rationale for the assessments. A discussion of findings and rationale for the assessment is provided in the following box.

4.1 Findings for Call to Action 1: Implement laws and policies

Table 4: Findings for Call to Action: Benchmark 1 - Implementation of laws and policies

Item	Benchmark	National	Sub-national/District	School
1.1	**The national government includes prevention of violence in and around schools as a specific strategy in education sector policies, plans and budgets**	Prevention of violence in and around schools is identified as a specific strategy in the national education sector policy or plan[14]	The District authorities support the implementation of the national (or sub-national) plan or policy in schools	School implements violence prevention activities in conformity with national or subnational objectives.
		Assessment		
		B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place

- **The Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan** (ESSP) 2017 – 2020 **does not explicitly include an objective to prevent or reduce violence in schools**. However, there are strategic interventions that could, to some extent, support prevention and reduction of violence in schools. Some of these interventions in the ESSP include the following:

- A priority intervention to develop and implement a **School Health and Safety Policy** under strategic objective one, with an aim to ensure that the learning environment in schools and training institutions is safe for the learners and teachers, within the mandates set by MoES. The policy also aims to provide for health and safety promotion and disease prevention programs as well as interventions that safeguard learners and teachers against any forms of abuse by stakeholders in the learning institution. To support its implementation, an estimated budget allocation of Uganda Shillings 450 million was provided in the financial year 2018/19, due for implementation in financial year 2019/20. That said, it is unclear what proportion is for safeguarding against abuse.

- Under strategic objective two, the ESSP includes a **priority intervention of strengthening the current inspection system** and approaches by increasing the frequency of inspection of schools and institutions of higher learning, with the focus on the quality of leadership and management, teaching and learning process and learner achievement. School Inspections role is to monitor the school using an inspection tool and report findings to the district. Their report includes inspection of school environment, school management and head teacher performance, effectiveness of teaching and learning, involvement of parents and community. Within this **they monitor safe sanitary provision, gender-responsive teaching and learning, positive teacher-pupil rapport, disciplinary policy for teachers and pupils, full curriculum coverage**.

- Although there is not an explicit ESSP objective to prevent violence in schools, during discussions with district officials, 97% (n=27) did discuss how they were supporting the implementation of ESSP objectives to prevent violence through monitoring cases of school violence, advocacy for violence-free schools, training of teachers and emphasising no corporal punishment when conducting inspections. Given these are not specified strategies in the ESSP, it is possible that these efforts support the implementation of the national Reporting, Tracking Referral and Response (RTRR) guidelines on violence against children in schools; and officials are attributing them to the ESSP instead.

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[14] See 'Guidelines for education sector plan preparation' (UNESCO, GPE 2015) or 'Guidelines for developing gender-responsive education sector plans', (GPE, UNGEI, UNICEF, 2017)

	• In a similar vein, 91% of school actors (interviewed headteachers and teachers) also indicated that they were implementing some violence prevention activities in conformity with national/sub-national objectives. For example, 22 schools reported that they were advocating for a violence-free school environment and nine schools reported their support through guidance and counselling. It is again possible that although there is not an explicit ESSP objective, some schools are implementing violence prevention activities in accordance with a national policy that they believe might be the ESSP.			
1.2	**There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and classroom management[15]**	Laws that prohibit corporal punishment include clear guidance on implementation, with a process for non-compliance	District oversees implementation of law and details compliance measures.	School implements law or has an independent policy and there are repercussions for non-compliance.
		Assessment		
		A = In place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

There are several legal instruments that, to varying degrees, prohibit corporal punishment in schools. These include:

- The **1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda** in its National Objectives (XVIII) declares education a constitutional right and Article 24 protects every person including children from any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment. In August 2006, a third circular prohibiting corporal punishments in schools was issued by the Director of Education and copied to primary schools, post-primary, tertiary institutions, colleges and polytechnics forbidding corporal punishment in schools. **This circular requires each school's Management Committee or Board of Governors to approve a school disciplinary policy. It further requires that any incident of punishment must be recorded in a specific punishment book maintained by the school. The circular clearly states that anyone ignoring these guidelines would be committing an offence and would be held responsible in the courts of law**. In the same year, the MoES banned corporal punishment in schools. A handbook on "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment' was developed with support from UNICEF and Raising Voices; however, this 82-page document does not appear to be widely disseminated or used amongst schools (which will be discussed further in the next section).
- In August 2007, **the Penal Code (Amendment) Act 8 (2007)** was passed with the aim of abolishing corporal punishment and outlawing defilement. In section 1 under subsection 1 of the Act: "**Corporal punishment is abolished and accordingly, all references to corporal punishment in the Penal Code Act in this Act referred to as the principal Act, are repealed.**" Subsection 2: "**Without prejudice to the general effect of subsection (1) of this section, section 125, subsection (2) of section 129 and section 205 of the Penal Code Act, are amended by the repeal of the words "with or without corporal punishment**". However, this Act does not explicitly state any punishment for the perpetrators of corporal punishment.
- In March 2016, the Ugandan Parliament passed the **Children (Amendment) Act 2016**, with a goal to amend the children Act Cap. 59; to enhance protection of children; strengthen the provision for guardianship of children; strengthen the conditions for inter-country adoption; prohibit corporal punishment; provide for National Children Authority, repeal for National Council Children Act, Cap 60 and to provide for other related matters. On corporal punishment, the Act states that a "**person of authority in institutions of learning shall not subject a child to any form of corporal punishment.**" This includes "**any punishment in which physical force is intentionally used to cause pain or injury to a child, and includes punishment which is intended to belittle, humiliate or ridicule a child**." In addition, it states punishments if the law is broken: "**Violation of this ban is an offense, punishable on conviction by a fine and/or a prison term not exceeding three years.**"

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[15] See *Teaching without violence: prohibiting corporal punishment* (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children 2019)

- When speaking with district officers, 93% indicated that they oversee implementation of the laws on corporal punishment by emphasising zero tolerance to corporal punishment in schools, advocating for guidance and counselling, sensitisation about effective policy implementation, and ensuring perpetrators are reprimanded in court.
- Similarly, 93% of interviewed headteachers and teachers reported to be implementing the law through reporting cases that happen in their schools to relevant authorities such the police. They said that perpetrators face disciplinary action through the school disciplinary committee and taking them to courts of law.
- While these stakeholders at district and school levels said they were upholding the law, very few respondents could provide concrete details of cases they have personally dealt with. This brings to light the possibility of 'respondent bias', in which respondents have a tendency to provide what they believe to be 'the right' or socially-acceptable answer. Given the fact that 46% of interviewed students believed that teachers were *not* following a law that prohibits caning in schools, this was likely the case and thus an assessment of 'partially in place' has been given.

	Teacher training on positive discipline and classroom management is included in pre- and in-service training	District ensures that teachers receive thorough training in techniques of classroom management.	Teachers have received training on positive discipline and classroom management in the last three years
	Assessment		
	B = Partially in place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

- The pre- or in-service teacher training curriculum does not have course content on practical and effective positive discipline and non-violent classroom management strategies; teacher obligations on child safeguarding; or violence reporting and response referral pathways for districts and schools. That said, there is some content from the Teachers' Code of Conduct clearly indicates teacher obligations on child safeguarding. For example, **under the Relationship with Learner Section, (1) a teacher's chief responsibility is towards the learner under his / her care; (2) the teacher shall guide the learner in order to develop the learner in body, mind, soul, character and personality (3) a teacher shall protect the learner from conditions that interfere with learning or are harmful to the learner's health and safety.**

- In 2006 the MoES, with support from UNICEF, developed a handbook on 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment'. Although developed by the MoES, this handbook is not explicitly used in pre- or in-service training and the guidance at the beginning of the book implies use by teachers is of a voluntary nature. In May 2017, the MoES, with support from the SAGE-DREAMS programme, developed the 'Positive discipline manual/alternatives to corporal punishment training manual to end violence in schools', which was adapted from previous MoES, UNICEF and Raising Voices training manuals. Whilst this manual also aims at equipping teachers with skills and information to alternative forms of discipline as opposed to corporal punishment, it was developed 'to be delivered in a two-day workshop by trained facilitators', most likely via the SAGE-DREAMS programme and not at a national scale. **Both of these handbooks should be reviewed and revised (both are long and could provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation) and more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes.**

- The Journeys Activity Handbook for Teachers and School Staff provides activities that headteachers are to lead in their schools as part of their administrative responsibility on preventing and protecting children from violence. It includes activities on positive discipline and behaviour management. It was developed in 2017 by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), with support from the United States Agency for International Development under the Literacy

	Achievement and Retention Activity, which is implemented by RTI International. When speaking with district officers, only 43% said that they ensure teachers receive thorough training in techniques of positive discipline and classroom management. This response indicates that some ad hoc training may be taking place, but not at a consistent level in all schools. • From the school interviews, responses from the headteachers in 8 schools and teachers in 9 schools indicate that teachers have received training on positive discipline and classroom management in the last three years. This suggests some forms of in-service training for teachers on positive discipline exist (most likely via NGO/donor-funded initiatives), but it does not have national coverage.			
1.3	**The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.**	A national policy framework, strategy or other system that outlines the role of the Ministry of Education as part of the national child protection system alongside other formal actors (Health, Social Welfare, Justice, Police)[16]	There is district-level coordination of national policy framework and support for implementation in schools	School follows national and/or district policy and coordinates with local authorities and other duty bearers
		Assessment		
		A = In place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

• **The government policies relating to child protection include: the National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS) (2015 – 2020), the RTRR Guidelines, the Gender in Education Policy and the National Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Policy**. The NSP VACiS stipulates the country's strategic direction and priorities towards the elimination of violence against children in schools. The vision of the NSP VACiS is a safe learning environment that enables children in Uganda to stay, learn and complete school, and be able to unlock their potential for development. The RTRR Guidelines has a primary aim to provide clear reporting, tracking, referral and response mechanisms for schools to follow.

• Responses from district officers indicated that they do support coordination and implementation of a National Child Protection policy (79%). However, they could not give details of the policy or their roles and responsibilities for coordinating and implementing it (which again points to possible respondent bias). That said, some officers spoke about community policing that is being done by the community liaison officer through sensitising the community on laws regarding violence and children rights. Some district officers also reported training teachers on policy and guidelines. Thus, **although there is a general acknowledgement of a national child protection policy framework, coordination and implementation of it at the district level does not appear to be robust.**

• 67% of interviewed headteachers and teachers discussed how their schools follow the available policies and guidelines (likely the RTRR) through advocating for a violence-free school environment, conducting sensitisation on children's rights, reporting cases of violence to relevant authorities, conducting guidance and counselling sessions and reprimanding perpetrators through the school disciplinary committee. **However, there is little evidence of co-ordination between the school and local authorities at district levels.**

		The Ministry of Education has established a national child protection/safeguarding policy with the requirement that all sub-	The district authorities support the establishment of localised and coordinated school child protection	School follows national policy or independently has established

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[16] These set out the mandated roles and responsibilities of state actors in the national child protection system. See section 2.1, UNESCO/UNWOMEN 2016 for a discussion of child protection systems

		national authorities and schools under their purview develop their own localised policies.[17]	policies, and has identified one focal point with overseeing and responding to concerns.	child safeguarding policies and procedures.

Assessment		
A = In place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

- In 2009, **MoES revised the Basic Requirements Minimum Standards (BRMS)** and included the Organisation and Management of Institution Safety and Security as one of its thirteen key indicators, its application is periodically monitored to ensure safe schools throughout the country. In addition, documents such as BRMS indicator 12, Guidelines on Safety and Security of education institutions and a circular issued by the Inspector General of Police have been circulated in schools to guide on matters concerning violence in schools.
- That said, **the more commonly understood child protection policy established by the MoES is the RTRR**. As discussed, these guidelines aim to provide clear reporting, tracking, referral and response mechanisms for schools to follow. As it is fairly directive, the RTRR does not require districts/schools to develop their own localised policies.
- Thus, discussions with district authorities showed that there was not necessarily support for the establishment of localised and coordinated school child protection policies; however, officers did note that Probation Officers generally have the responsibility of handling matters relating to violence. That said, although this officer is identified as a focal point to oversee cases of violence, levels of commitment and activity vary due to the multiple roles they may be responsible for. In addition to this, there is a structure called the 'District Child Protection Committee', which is supposed to meet monthly and is led by the District Community Based Services Department where welfare and probation is housed. However, no district officials discussed this committee during these interviews, which may indicate inactivity in the districts sampled.
- As discussed previously, 67% of interviewed headteachers and teachers discussed how their schools follow the available policies and guidelines (likely the RTRR, although there were no hard copies of these guidelines available for schools to reference) through advocating for a violence-free school environment, conducting sensitisation on children's rights, reporting cases of violence to relevant authorities, conducting guidance and counselling sessions and reprimanding perpetrators through the school disciplinary committee.

1.4	**The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict[18].**	The Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict have been brought into domestic policy and operational frameworks as far as possible and appropriate.	The guidelines are widely disseminated by District authorities so that all parties engaged in conflict are aware of and able to abide by them.	School level plans in place to reduce risk of attacks, to respond quickly to risks, and to have a clear plan for safe school re-opening after attacks happen.
		Assessment		

[17] See UNICEF 2012; Keeping Children Safe 2014.

[18] The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment that provides countries the opportunity to express support for protecting education from attack during times of armed conflict; the importance of the continuation of education during war; and the implementation of concrete measures to deter the military use of schools. See more details: http://www.protectingeducation.org/safeschoolsdeclaration

	C = Not in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place

- As of February 11, 2020, 102 countries had endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) which remains open for additional countries to join (Safe Schools Declaration, 2020) however, Uganda has not yet endorsed it. In 2012 the MoES with support from UNICEF developed **Conflict and Disaster Risk Management Guidelines (CDRM),**later revised to include a conflict component in 2014/15 and was finally endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Sports Top Management Meeting. The CDRM Guidelines were written with a primary purpose of providing knowledge and skills in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery at the national local government and institutional level and it provides action steps for ensuring safety in educational institutions. The guidelines aim to equip the key players at all levels with the necessary information on the specific actions that have to be taken in order to avert disaster or steer away schools or vulnerable learners from getting into trouble.
- One of the focuses of the CDRM Guidelines is under **Section 1.2 Page 2**, the rationale of the CDRM guidelines is to help stakeholders in the education sector to analyse and monitor conflict indicators, including early warning information both within and outside Uganda, anticipate disaster risks, prevent injury, save lives, and minimise property damage in the moments of disaster. The principles and techniques outlined in the guide are meant to ensure safe educational institutions by reducing the underlying factors of risk, and to prepare for and initiate an immediate response and recovery process should disaster occur in any educational institution. The guidelines are also expected to facilitate conflict sensitive planning for education sector and institutions.
- Under **Section 1.5 Page 4**, conflict is referred to as armed or other violent conflict in or between countries or population. This section on **Page 6 - 9**, further highlights pre-disaster, disaster response, and post disaster specific actions to be taken by key actors in case of disaster or conflict occurs in an educational institution. Section **Step V Educational Institution Conflict and Disaster Management Teams Page 29-34** also outline roles and responsibilities of different actors in case of conflict or disaster[19].
- During discussions with district officers, 50% reported that they were **not aware** if the government had endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. However, among the other 50% that reported to be aware, they mentioned that there are guidelines from the MoES that provide safety actions, and these are mainly disseminated through: workshops organised at the districts, refresher trainings attended by headteachers and general meetings involving teachers, student representatives, parents, community leaders, and religious leaders. These efforts seem to be attributed to the CDRM Guidelines not SSD. In addition, 75% of the interviewed district officials indicated that there is a clear plan of action if conflict were to affect the schools although, physical documents of the plans could not be provided to the researchers during the interviews.59% of the interviewed school actors indicated that their schools have a clear plan of action in case of conflict situations, but these were not physically available to the researcher. Thus, it is not convincing that schools have plans in place to reduce risks of attacks, to respond quickly to risks, or to have a clear plan for safe school re-opening after attacks happen.

[19] MoES: A Guide to Conflict and Disaster Risk Management in Educational Institutions in Uganda, February 2015

Summary of findings for Benchmark 1

This section has provided an overview of the findings from the document review and field research surrounding Benchmark 1 of the STL Call to Action.

4.1.1 Summary of best practices and/or positive findings

- Findings demonstrate that there are a number of laws and policies to address violence against children, most notably the RTRR guidelines, which provide guidance on reporting, tracking, referral and response mechanisms for schools to follow. Although a number of district and school-level respondents were aware of these guidelines and had attributed some activities to them, none had hard copies of the guidance or had discussed any training or orientation on them.
- Although the ESSP does not have a specific objective to prevent or reduce violence in schools, it does include a priority intervention to develop and implement a school health and safety policy that includes interventions that safeguard learners and teachers against any forms of abuse in the learning institution.
- Findings from the desk review show that Uganda has not yet endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, however the MoES has Conflict and Disaster Risk Management guidelines which guide educational institutions in case of conflict outbreak.

4.1.2 Summary of gaps for each benchmark indicator

- It is helpful that the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence via strategies for a health and safety policy and inspections; however, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools (with accompanying strategies, budget and key performance indicators) would be much more powerful, targeted and effective.
- In addition to this, although the Uganda Government has provided CDRM guidelines, endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration would also provide more targeted strategies to protect schools during conflict.
- While the district officials and schools reported awareness of policies prohibiting violence in schools, there were no physical copies of these. This may explain why many respondents were unclear or confused about what policy they are following or implementing (i.e., district officers reported that they are familiar with the reducing violence strategies of the ESSP, which do not exist). That said, the most commonly known 'policy' seemed to be the RTRR guidelines, which provides a good starting point in which more robust dissemination, training and orientation.
- District officials and schools also reported implementation of violence prevention activities; however, again, there were no physical documents provided for the researchers to verify their existence. Although it is likely that some activities were completed, this implies that there may be some respondent bias present, whereby respondents gave what they believed to be 'the right' or socially acceptable answer.
- In following on from this, district officers often articulated their experience in engaging schools and sensitising about preventing violence; however, they did not show a robustness in holding schools to account to abide by national policies and guidelines to prevent violence.
- The teachers indicated there has not been adequate training on practical and effective positive discipline and non-violent classroom management or on teachers' obligation in child safeguarding and violence reporting/response referral pathways. That said, in 2006 and 2017 the MoES developed Handbooks to provide guidance on positive discipline, which could be used for these purposes.

4.1.3 Ways the government could/should address gaps

The following recommendations aim to support the government and education sector to achieve the STL benchmarks/checkpoints, based on the best practices and gaps found.

- **Benchmark 1.1 - Prevention of violence in and around schools is identified as a specific strategy in the national education sector policy or plan.** As discussed, although the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence in schools via a health and safety policy and inspections, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools (with accompanying strategies, budgets and key performance indicators) would be much more powerful, targeted and effective. Such an objective should include specific strategies for developing a clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version of the RTRR guidelines to be printed/disseminated for

orientation and training for district and school actors. Government, donor and private sector funding could be consolidated through support of or alignment with this strategy.

- **Benchmark 1.2 - There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and classroom management.** There are clearly laws in place that prohibit corporal punishment in schools; however, better enforcement of these laws is needed. Efforts are needed to strengthen the national child protection system and functionality of child protection committees at district level, at which education is also represented for more systemic reporting, tracking and follow up of cases. Relatedly, the Village Child Case Management Committee should also be supported to ensure cases of corporal punishment in schools are reported and acted upon. Since an overstretched police and legal system may not be able to support enforcement, communities, schools and districts should have intermediate processes/protocols to hold teachers to account. With regards to supporting positive discipline, the teacher training curriculum should be reviewed and revised to include positive discipline and classroom management. The 2006 and 2017 MoES handbooks on alternatives to corporal punishment provide a good start and could be reviewed against a new curriculum and revised to provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation. A clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version should then be more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes (for which a school-based training modality should be established).

- **Benchmark 1.3 - The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.** The National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS) (2015 – 2020) is a laudable step towards having a multi-sectoral child protection policy framework. However, implementation of it at the district and school level has not been well established. The RTRR guidelines could be unpacked and a simple document developed for each sector (e.g. education, health, police, social work etc.) at district level to clearly define the contribution of each sector and how they need to work with other sectors in the prevention and response to cases.. Again, a clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version of these guidelines should be printed/disseminated nationally for training of all relevant actors. It would also be worth further exploring the degree to which 'District Child Protection Committees' and Village Child Case Management Committees are active or should be re-activated, as these could provide a structure in which multi-sectoral actors could meet, be trained and coordinate action.

- **Benchmark 1.4** - **The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.** As discussed, the government can build on the good work that has already been done via the CDRM guidelines by explicitly endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration and robustly translating/disseminating/training on the accompanying guidelines.

4.2 Findings for Call to Action 2: Strengthen prevention and response at school level

Table 5: Findings for Call to Action: Benchmark 2 - Strengthening prevention and response at school level

Item	Benchmark	National	Sub-national/District	School
2.1	Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children[20]	National curriculum includes age appropriate approaches that (i) develop life skills, (ii) teach children about violence and safe behaviour, (iii) challenge social and cultural norms and promote equal relationships.	District supervises and assures information and curriculum is implemented in schools	Schools deliver formal school syllabi that includes life skills, safe behaviour, and equal relationships.
		Assessment		
		A = In Place	**B = Partially in Place**	**B = Partially in Place**

- **Both the primary and secondary education curriculum have components of violence prevention strategies.** The primary school curriculum is divided according to different levels of learners; lower primary(P1-P3), Transition (P4) and Upper Primary (P5-P7). At lower primary the curriculum content extensively covers topics on peace and security, child protection, accident and safety, culture and gender. At transition level and upper primary, the learners are introduced to subject content that includes crosscutting issues such as life skills, violence and equal relationships. Most of these are taught through creative performing arts (music, dance, crafts, art and drama), physical education and religious education. Each strand of the curriculum indicates the competences to be developed and demonstrated by the learner. In 2011, MoES developed a Life Skills Curriculum for Primary School Teachers. Alongside a handbook, this provides teachers with strategies to support learners to develop life skills including relating to others, empathy, managing peer relationships, negotiation, non-violent conflict resolution and effective communication.
- At the secondary level, the NCDC developed the Life Education Learning Syllabus for Lower Secondary to equip learners with a sense of appreciation and responsibility for their lives, the environment they live in and the lives of others. The syllabus is presented in form of Strands and Sub-strands and their intended learning outcomes regarding knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, values, and other guidance. The syllabus cover the four O' Level grades, and although it does not focus specifically on teaching children about violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships, these topics are embedded within the following sections the syllabus:
- **Contribution of Life Education to the Curriculum Core Values – 2.1 Life Education Values**: The learner can develop values from Life Education such as[21];

  - "**Courage:** learning is organised in a way that encourages learners to be brave in fighting for what is right especially regarding discrimination and any form of inequality such as gender-based violence. The learner is offered opportunities to engage friends, parents, and the community in a fight against discrimination."

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[20] Section 3, WHO 2019, Schools-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook. This links to Benchmark 3.2 and 5.3

[21] MoES & NCDC: Life Education Learning Syllabus for Lower Secondary

- "**Courtesy**: the learning environment is organised to allow the learner to explore relationships with peers, parents and the community. In these relationships, the value of consideration of other people's feelings and values is inculcated."
- "**Self-respect**: this is instilled by building the learners' sense of self respect, esteem, confidence and respect for others. Self-respect and confidence are more emphasised with regard to sexuality."

- Under Section 2.2: The learner are taught life skills which include; **Respect for human rights** where they are made aware of their rights and the need to appreciate and protect them. They are also taught **Tolerance of differences, through involvement in physical activities such as** games, music, dance and drama, where the learners get to appreciate relationships and respect differences between people.

- During discussions with district officers (86%) said that the district supervises and ensures that syllabus topics on life skills, violence and safe behaviour, promoting the inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships, are being implemented in schools. Supervision is mainly done through school inspection and in a small number of cases via communications through the School Management Committees (SMCs). That said, respondents could not provide evidence or records of when and where these topics have been observed in schools.
- Responses from headteachers and teachers indicate that **delivering the formal school syllabi on life skills, safe behaviour, and equal relationships is not universal; and when it is delivered, it is done to different degrees.** For example, 55% of interviewed teachers reported teaching on life skills, followed by violence and safe behaviour (39%) and then equal relationships (36%).
- The above findings supported with responses from Learners (n=116) where 50% reported having attended lessons on life skills, 39% on violence and safe behaviour and 43% on equal relationships.
- The findings show that **whilst life skills are covered comprehensively in the curriculum and districts report a mechanism for checking that teaching of life skills takes place in school, this does not currently result in students learning life skills**. This suggests district checks are not thorough or frequent enough and teachers avoid teaching the topics. This could be due to the fact that life skills topics are considered cross cutting issues and are not directly examinable, which may lead to teachers and schools not giving them the attention they deserve.

2.2	Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards[22].	National guidelines detail process by which all schools respond to child protection concerns, including referral to services. The Ministry of Education has a focal point.	District has step-by-step procedures for schools to follow and has identified one focal point with overseeing and responding to concerns.	System for responding to child protection concerns is in place following district or central guidelines, or school if no policy. School has focal point with responsibility for responding to protection incidents.
		Assessment		
		A = In Place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place

- As discussed previously, in 2014, the MoES and MoGLSD with support from UNICEF, developed the **Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines** on VACiS (Violence Against Children in Schools), **whose primary aim is to respond to violence against children in schools through a clear reporting, tracking, referral and response mechanism**. The specific objectives of the guidelines are to[23]:

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[22] See UNICEF 2012; Keeping Children Safe 2014; UNGEI 2108. This links to benchmark 1.3 above.

[23] MoES: Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines

I. Educate children, parents, teaching and non- teaching staff and the community on the importance of reporting, tracking, referring and responding to cases of violence against children in schools.
II. Equip children, teaching and non-teaching staff in schools, parents and community leaders with tools to enable them report and track cases of violence against children to relevant authorities for appropriate action in conformity with the existing laws, administrative procedures and guidelines.
III. Define the key actors and clarify their roles and responsibilities in addressing or handling cases of violence against children in schools.
IV. Provide guidance to institutions that have the mandate to protect children against violence on the appropriate actions and support required when they encounter cases of violence against children in schools.

- According to a UNICEF Annual Report 2016, the GoU started implementing the RTRR guidelines in which a total of 2,521 adolescents (male 1,437; female 1,084) in 24 priority districts enhanced their capacity to prevent and respond to violence against children, following their participation in the RTRR training[24]. In addition, according to the UNICEF Annual Report 2017, the RTRR and Violence Against Children in Schools guidelines were disseminated in 109 schools in three districts, reaching 810 teachers (439 males and 371 females) and 25,133 pupils (12,892 boys and 12,241 girls). A total of 1,071 teachers and deputy headteachers were trained in gender and conflict-sensitive learning methodologies[25]. Although laudable, this does not constitute national coverage.

- Despite these RTRR guidelines being in place, findings from the national level interviews revealed that the **MoES does not have a focal person to oversee the implementation of it.**

- During discussions with district officers, 79% (n=22) stated that a district officer has been identified as a focal point with responsibility for overseeing the district's response to reports of violence in schools. However, none could provide a copy of the RTRR guidelines or any other step-by-step process for schools to follow with regard to cases of violence.
- Among School Actors, 83% (n=44) of the headteachers, 80% (n=87) of the teachers reported that schools have a step-by-step process for responding to students' reports of violence, with the school disciplinary committee and the office of the headteacher being the main reporting channels in the process. That said, when asked for physical documents outlining this process, none were provided to researchers. Interestingly, 47% (n=55) of learners reported that schools have a step-by-step process for responding to violence. **This mismatch between the school administrators and learners suggests that the majority of the learners are not aware of the process and/or respondent bias is occurring, with administrators providing a socially acceptable answer.**
- That said, 69% of interviewed headteachers and teachers indicated that the schools have established a focal point person to address violence related issues in response to the child safeguarding, which is in line with the RTRR on selecting a senior woman teacher for this role.

	National guidelines clearly outline norms and standards of ethical behaviour to be included in Teacher Codes of Conduct.	Codes of conduct required for all staff including District and Schools. District/sub-national authorities ensure compliance of Codes of Conduct in schools	School has Code of Conduct that is publicly posted and requires all teachers to understand and comply; Ramifications for violations are proscribed and enforced; Requires written signatures by all staff; includes Codes of behaviour for students.

[24] UNICEF Annual Report 2016
[25] UNICEF Annual Report 2017

	Assessment		
	A = In place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**
- The **Teachers' professional Code of Conduct** was established in 2012 under the Education Service Act 2002 by the GoU and has since then been implemented in schools as standard operating procedures for teachers. This code of conduct applies to all teaching personnel in the education service. **The code of conduct stipulates zero-tolerance towards all forms of violence; under the Relationship with Learner Section Page 6**, it states that (b) a Teacher shall recognise that a privileged relationship exists between him / her and the learner and shall refrain from exploiting this relationship by misconduct; (c) a Teacher shall not sexually molest, harass or have a sexual relationship with a learner; (d) A teacher shall protect the learner from conditions that interfere with learning or are harmful to the learner's health and safety; (f) Maintain a safe and challenging learning environment; (g) refrain from using a learner's labour for private or personal gain; and (h) not to administer any corporal punishment or inflict physical pain or cause physical pain to learner[26]. **The code of conduct also stipulates disciplinary action if standards surrounding violence are not adhered to, as stated under the Enforcement of the code section Page 14**: (1) It is the duty of every teacher to observe and respect this code and to report any breach of the code to the appropriate authorities. (2) All matters or cases involving breach of the code shall be reported to the commission and shall be dealt with in accordance with the Education Service Act, 2002 and the Education Service Commission Regulations, 2012. (4) Teachers who breach the code shall be liable to sanctions specified in the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders, the disciplinary actions specified in the Education Service Commission Regulations and Administrative instructions issued from time to time. (5) The following sanctions shall apply for breach of the Code:- (a) Warning or reprimand; (b) suspension of increment; (c) withholding increment or deferment of increment; (d) stoppage of increment; (e) surcharge or refund; (g) reduction in rank; (h) removal from service in public interest; and (i) dismissal. **However, whilst the code of conduct is given to each teacher for review, it does not explicitly specify the requirement of every teacher to sign it..** - Discussions with district officers show that they do attempt to monitor teachers through different methods, such as checking up on the school's work summary, conducting general meetings with teachers, student representatives, parents, and community leaders, and having a 'Reward and Sanction committee' which is responsible for checking and monitoring teachers. **Although these methods support monitoring teachers, they do not explicitly entail ensuring compliance with the Teacher Code of Conduct, particularly the sections relating to violence**. **School Actors broadly reported a lack of awareness regarding the development or implementation of a School Code of Conduct, which is understandable as the RTRR guidelines do not explicitly provide guidance on this.** That said, some school actors stated that they have outlined codes of behaviour for all members of the school community regarding all forms of violence (Interviewed Headteacher – 34%, Teachers – 31%); consequences for violations of the code (Interviewed Headteacher – 53%, Teachers – 28%); publicly posted and disseminated so that all members of the school know and understand (Interviewed Headteacher – 53%, Teachers – 45%) and have required all members of the school to comply (Interviewed Headteacher – 57%, Teachers – 50%). It is possible that some of these activities were prompted by external projects or initiatives; however, the concept of a School Code of Conduct as laid out in the STL benchmark is relatively new.			
	The establishment of safe and confidential reporting mechanisms for students is mandated for all	District supports schools in implementation of reporting mechanism and ensure	Students are aware of and use reporting mechanism to report experiences of violence. It is linked to support services and

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[26] The Education Service Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct

schools. There is a working, accessible national reporting mechanism such as a national child helpline.	availability of support mechanisms. It has its own mechanism for response when reports are elevated.	includes a monitoring system for reporting and accountability.
Assessment		
A = In Place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

- One of the objectives of RTRR guidelines is to equip children, teaching and non-teaching staff in schools, parents and community leaders with tools to enable them report and track cases of violence against children to relevant authorities for appropriate action in conformity with the existing laws, administrative procedures and guidelines.
- In 2014 the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MoGLSD) in partnership with the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) and with the support of UNICEF, **set up the Uganda Child Helpline (UCHL) initiative.** This was developed to address existing gaps in reporting and responding to cases of violence against children. **The UCHL, also known by its brand name Sauti, offers a toll-free telephone service on the short code 116 which is accessible on all telecommunication networks in the country**. The telephone service operates 24/7 and is one of the ways of ensuring child protection and collection data on violence against children[27].
- The majority of interviewed district officers (79%) reported that districts support schools in implementation of reporting mechanisms and that they ensure availability of support mechanisms to respond to escalated reports of violence in schools.
- Among the school actors, 74% (n=39) of the interviewed Headteachers and 79% (n=86) of the interviewed teachers and **62% of the interviewed learners reported that at their school there are confidential reporting procedures for students to use if they see or experience violence. The most commonly cited confidential reporting procedures are: Suggestion box, Senior Woman / Man Teacher, reporting to teachers directly.**
- That said, **only 31% of interviewed students were aware that the national child helpline existed and could be used for reporting cases of violence.**

National pre- and in-service training for school staff includes their obligations on child safeguarding, including reporting and response obligations.	District authorities ensure that teachers receive pre- or in-service training on their obligations on child safeguarding, including reporting and response obligations.	All schools staff receive pre- or in-service training on their obligations on child safeguarding, including reporting and response obligations. Staff are adequately trained to prevent revictimisation of children and are knowledgeable about the referral pathway in place in the locality.
Assessment		
B = Partially in Place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

- As discussed previously, the pre- or in-service teacher training curriculum does not have content on practical and effective positive discipline and non-violent classroom management; teacher obligations on child safeguarding; and violence reporting and response referral pathways for districts and schools. However, content on teachers' obligations on child safeguarding is addressed in the teachers code of conduct under the **Relationship with**

[27] Uganda Child Helpline 2016 Annual Report

Learner Section, (1) **a teacher's chief responsibility is towards the learner under his / her care; (2) the teacher shall guide the learner in order to develop the learner in body, mind, soul, character and personality** (d) a **teacher shall protect the learner from conditions that interfere with learning or are harmful to the learner's health and safety**.

- With regard to violence reporting and response referral pathways for districts and schools, there are standalone guidelines i.e. the RTRR guidelines that; (i) Educate the school staff on the importance of reporting, tracking, referring and responding to cases of violence against children in schools and also (ii) Equip them with tools to enable them report and track cases of violence against children to relevant authorities for appropriate action in conformity with the existing laws, administrative procedures and guidelines.

- As discussed regarding benchmark 1.2, The Journeys Activity Handbook for Teachers and School Staff provides activities that headteachers are to lead in their schools as part of their administrative responsibility on preventing and protecting children from violence. More so, in cases where children encounter violence, the book supports headteachers to report such cases and seek appropriate support. It was developed in 2017 by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), with support from the United States Agency for International Development under the Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity, which is implemented by RTI International. The MoES, has also developed two handbooks for teacher training: 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment' (2006) and 'Positive discipline manual/alternatives to corporal punishment training manual to end violence in schools' (2017). **Whilst these materials appeared to have limited coverage with regard to teacher training (both were related to specific development programmes), they could be reviewed, revised and formally used for national scale pre- and in-service training.**

- During discussions with district officers, only 46% (n=13) reported that newly qualified teachers (less than 3 years of service) have received pre-service training on child safeguarding and how to prevent revictimisation. 64% (n=18) of district officers reported that teachers in their districts have regularly received in-service training on practical and effective positive discipline and non-violent classroom management; teacher obligations on child safeguarding; and violence reporting and response referral pathways.

- That said, only 23% (n=12) of the headteachers and 37% (n=40) of the teachers reported adequate pre-service training on these topics. In addition, only 32% of the headteachers and 42% (n=46) of the teachers claimed that the teachers have regularly received in-service training on these issues in the last 3 years. There is clearly a gap between district and teacher opinion on implementation of training, but it is clear that **many teachers do not feel adequately trained to prevent revictimisation of children and are knowledgeable about the referral pathway in place in the locality.**

There are national policies that regulate hiring of new teachers and staff and their transfer to ensure suitability for working with children.	Districts implement the policy requiring background checks when recruiting or transferring teachers.	School follows or has individualised methods to vet staff to ensure their suitability for working with children; it requests new hires or districts to report previous convictions or reasons for transfer.
Assessment		
C = Not in place	**C = Not in place**	**C = Not in place**

- In April 2019, **the Ugandan Cabinet approved the National Teacher Policy (NTP) with the aim to professionalise teachers, develop standards and improve the development, management of utilisation of teachers in Uganda**. However, the policy has not yet been operationalised. Nonetheless, the MoES has prepared the road map for the implementation of the policy at four levels: policy reform, legal reform, administrative and institutional

reform and communication strategy. The policy is also meant to improve issues like teacher absenteeism, ineffective teaching, qualifications and standards, bad institutional leadership and bad behaviour. Additionally, when operationalised, the NTP will put in place the minimum professional standards and qualifications for the teaching profession. That said, in its current form, **the NTP does not provide explicit guidance on conducting background checks on teachers before recruitment or transfer to assess their suitability for working with children.**

- That said, 54% of the district officers reported that their district did have a procedure to ensure that if a teacher was dismissed for bad behaviour, they were not simply transferred to another school (which does not necessarily entail following a national policy on background checks). 31% of these officers said their district had its own policy/procedure, 25% said they refer to the Education Service Commission, 25% said they follow national guidelines, and 13% said that they write to the MoES with recommendations to dismiss.
- Only 15% of the interviewed headteachers and 23% of the interviewed teachers reported that their school follows or has individualised methods to vet staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. This is likely due to the fact that teachers are being posted by the government and the school administration might not be aware of their background, as discussed by 53% of the headteachers and 20% of the teachers.

2.3	Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.	Ministry of Education has a training program or special curriculum for school counselors that includes children's mental health and well-being; and has arrangement or referral procedures when a child or his/her family needs specialised services.	District has support mechanism for school counselors and refers to specialised services to assist schools when necessary.	School counselor is in the school and is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to students; and has identified a referral source for range of specialised services (mental health, medical, family services...)
		Assessment		
		C = Not in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place

- The MoES established a dedicated Department of Guidance and Counselling in 2008 and an accrediting body for the profession in 2010. However, there are still major shortfalls in counselor training and preparation and **the pre- or in-service teacher training curriculum does not have course content for school counsellors on children's mental health and wellbeing and referral procedures for when a child needs specialised services**.

- That said, 46% (n=13) of the district officers reported that the district has a referral system for specialised services for children that schools and school counsellors can use. Additionally, 68% of the interviewed district officers said that the designated School Counsellors had received training for their role. This finding indicates that there may be respondent bias occurring; however, external programmes/projects may have also provided some training.
- Among the school actors, 49% of the interviewed headteachers and 43% of the interviewed teachers reported that the school has a designated School Counsellor who aims to support children experiencing violence. However, very few respondents indicated that the School Counsellor has identified and disseminated contact numbers for mental health, medical or family services, particularly for severe cases of violence (Headteachers – 15% (n=8), Teachers – 22% (n=24)). The school actors do not share evidence of using a referral system for specialised services.

2.4	The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the well-being of children in mind[28].	There are established national standards for school buildings and grounds that address student safety	The District authorities are aware of national standards and monitor improvements to schools' physical environment.	School design reflect national guidelines. The community, students and staff have mapped unsafe areas and have identified solutions for these areas. Sanitary facilities are safe and secure, classroom architecture and design is gender-responsive, and students move freely to and from school.
		Assessment		
		B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place

- **BRMS Indicators for Education Institutions (2010) document sets minimum infrastructure, hygiene, sanitation, and equipment standards for schools, and the Education Standards Agency, through the national, regional, and district inspectorates, is in charge of ensuring schools comply with these standards**.
- The objectives of the BRMS are to: safeguard the quality of education service provision; inform proprietors about the basic facilities of an education institution; and guide on safety measures required in an education institution[29]. The BRMS indicate the conditions that are required as a minimum in order to provide education and training of a certain quality in education agencies, and as minimum standards they indicate basic benchmarks for measuring whether or not the actual performance and level of achievement of education and school management have reached the anticipated level [30].
- Among its standards, the BRMS requires that schools have buildings that have been approved by relevant government authorities and these should also conform to occupational safety and health acts. It is clearly stated that children with special needs too need to be put in consideration as these structures are put in place. Separate pit latrines or toilets for girls and boys, properly hedged or fenced compound, a classroom with adequate sitting space for every group taught. [31]among others. **Although these standards are helpful, they could/should be revised to be more specific, particularly with regard to mapping unsafe areas to identify solutions, ensuring sanitary facilities are safe and secure, that classroom architecture and design is gender-responsive, and that students can move freely to and from school.**
- Most interviewed district officers confirmed awareness of national standards to ensure school buildings and grounds keep students safe and 89% reported that the District Inspectors monitor to see whether these standards are being met by schools.
- Responses from the school actors indicate that most schools ensure school buildings and grounds keep students safe. i.e. 54% (n=63) of the students and 65% (n=71) of the teachers reported that unsafe areas have been mapped and made more safe, 65% (n=75) of the students and 73% (n=80) of the teachers reported that the sanitary facilities are safe and secure, 76% (n=88) of the learners and 82% of the teachers (n=89) reported that classrooms are set up to encourage all students and 61% (n=71) of the learners and 66% (n=72) of the teachers reported that students can move safely and freely to and from school.

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[28] UNGEI 2018 Domain 7; WHO 2019 Section 6.

[29] MoES: Policy Handbook on Teacher / Instructor / Tutor Education and Training Policies: *Acts, Policy Guidelines and Regulations*, September 2010

[30] Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA): *Basic Education Sector Analysis Report Uganda*, August 2012

[31] Saber Country Report: Uganda Teachers Policy 2012

Summary of findings for Benchmark 2

This section has provided an overview of the findings from the document review and field research surrounding Benchmark 2 of the STL Call to Action.

4.2.1 Summary of best practices and/or positive findings

Findings show that the national government has done a laudable job in creating the policies and structures needed to reduce violence in schools, which include:

- Both the primary and secondary education curriculum have life skills components regarding violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships. In primary the curriculum, content extensively covers topics on peace and security, child protection, accident and safety, culture and gender. In the secondary curriculum, topics regarding human rights and tolerance are embedded within 'Life Education' sections of the syllabus.
- The MoES and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) with support from UNICEF, developed the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools, which provides guidance to schools on establishing confidential reporting, tracking, referral and response mechanisms. These national guidelines are a laudable achievement as they provide detailed processes by which schools should respond to child protection concerns, including referral to services.
- The national Teacher Code of Conduct clearly outlines norms and zero-tolerance standards regarding violence, as well as stipulates disciplinary action if standards surrounding violence are not adhered to.
- In 2014 the MoGLSD in partnership with the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) and with the support of UNICEF, set up a national Child Helpline called 'Sauti', which offers a toll free telephone service for children and young people to call regarding cases of violence.
- The 2010 national document for BRMS Indicators for education institutions sets minimum infrastructure, hygiene, sanitation, and equipment standards for schools, and the Education Standards Agency, through the national, regional, and district inspectorates, is in charge of ensuring schools comply with these standards. Example standards entail separate pit latrines or toilets for girls and boys, properly hedged or fenced compound and classrooms with adequate sitting space for every group taught.

4.2.2 Summary of challenges and gaps

Although the national government has done a good job in creating the policies and structures needed to reduce violence in schools, more robust implementation of these is needed. For example:

- Although both the primary and secondary education curriculum have life skills components regarding violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships, the teaching and delivery of these curricula in the classroom is not necessarily universal as less than half of students reported having attended lessons on these topics. This could be due to the fact that life skills topics are considered cross cutting issues and are not directly examinable, which may lead teachers and schools not giving them the attention they deserve.
- Although the RTRR Guidelines represent a laudable achievement in providing guidance on setting up reporting/response mechanisms, the implementation of these in schools/districts are partial at best. While a large proportion of district officers and school administrators discussed following these guidelines, none could provide documentation outlining step-by-step processes for reporting/response (or the RTRR guidelines themselves); and only 47% (n=55) of learners reported that their schools have mechanisms for responding to violence. This mismatch between the school administrators and learners suggests that the majority of the learners are not aware of the process and/or respondent bias is occurring, with administrators providing a socially acceptable answer.

- The national Teacher Code of Conduct sets out clear standards and disciplinary actions regarding violence; however, teacher compliance with the code is not monitored robustly and there is no explicit requirement for every teacher to sign it on an annual basis.
- The national Child Helpline called 'Sauti' is a great achievement, however only 31% of students were aware that it existed and could be used for reporting cases of violence. This indicates that in order to be helpful, more children need to be made aware of its existence, how to use it and what service it provides.
- Although the national BRMS Indicators for education institutions sets minimum infrastructure, hygiene, sanitation, and equipment standards for schools, these could/should be revised to be more specific, particularly with regard to mapping unsafe areas to identify solutions, ensuring sanitary facilities are safe and secure, that classroom architecture and design is gender-responsive, and that students can move freely to and from school. They also need to be costed and adequate budgets allocated within school capitation grants. In addition to this, findings at the school-level indicate that although some progress towards standards have been made, they are not being fully met.
- As discussed previously, the pre- or in-service teacher training curriculum does not have content on practical and effective positive discipline and non-violent classroom management, teacher obligations on child safeguarding, and violence reporting and response referral pathways for districts and schools. That said, in 2006 and 2017 the MoES developed Handbooks to provide guidance on positive discipline, which could be used for these purposes.
- The pre- or in-service teacher training curriculum lacks course content for school counsellors on children's mental health and wellbeing, as well as referral procedures for when a child needs specialised services. That said, around half of school respondents reported that the school has a designated School Counsellor who aims to support children experiencing violence. However, very few respondents indicated that the School Counsellor has identified and disseminated contact numbers for mental health, medical or family services, particularly for severe cases of violence, which is likely due to a lack of training/awareness to do so.
- In April 2019, the Ugandan Cabinet approved the National Teacher Policy (NTP) with the aim to professionalise teachers, develop standards and improve the development, management of utilisation of teachers in Uganda. When operationalised, the NTP will put in place the minimum professional standards and qualifications for the teaching profession. However, in its current form, the NTP does not provide explicit guidance on conducting background checks on teachers before recruitment or transfer to assess their suitability for working with children. At the school and district level, very few respondents discussed implementing these checks, which is likely due to the fact that there is not official guidance on this and since teachers are posted by the government, school administrators likely assume their suitability based on this.

4.2.3   Overview of ways the government could/should address gaps

The following recommendations aim to support the government and education sector to achieve the STL benchmarks/checkpoints, based on the best practices and gaps found.

- **Benchmark 2.1 - Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.** It is clear that the primary and secondary curriculum to certain degrees, touch on issues of violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships. However, the delivery of these curricula in the classroom is not universal, most likely because teachers and schools experience pressure to focus on topics that will feature on national exams. Ironically though, learning and performance on exams would likely improve with the reduction of violence in schools. These linkages should be made explicit in teacher training materials (see below). And in order to support and supplement current curriculum-based activities, targeted activities for students (surrounding violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion and gender equitable relationships) could be provided in a revision of the RTRR guidelines. In addition to this, activities targeting students should also include raising awareness of the national child helpline, how to use it and what service it provides.

- **Benchmark 2.2 - Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.** This benchmark consisted of four components and recommendations aligned to these include:

    1) National guidelines to establish safe and confidential reporting mechanisms – The RTRR Guidelines represent a great achievement in providing guidance on setting up reporting/response mechanisms. Schools reported using suggestion boxes for confidential reporting. However, the implementation of these in all schools/districts needs to be strengthened. As discussed with regard to Benchmark 1.1, one way to do this is to review/revise the RTRR guidelines so that they are clear, concise (currently, they are 82 pages), user-centred, multi-lingual and can be delivered via a school-based training modality so that all teachers can participate. As discussed above, this revision could also entail activities to be implemented to support students' learning of key violence prevention strategies.

    2) Norms and standards of ethical behaviour in Teacher Codes of Conduct – As discussed, the national Code of Conduct is very thorough regarding violence; however, enforcement/compliance could be strengthened. This could be done by working with the Education Service Commission to revise the Code so that it explicitly requires all teachers to sign it on an annual basis, thus requiring all HT and District Officers to have master copies of the Code for teachers to sign. In addition to this, relevant sections of the Code could also be reprinted within the revised RTRR guidelines so that all teachers have a copy to refer to.

    3) Policies that regulate hiring of new teachers and staff and their transfer to ensure suitability for working with children – It is unclear whether there is still opportunity to revise the NTP at this point. However, if so, it would be very helpful to provide explicit guidance regarding background checks on teachers before recruitment or transfer to assess their suitability for working with children. That said, this will require collaboration and thinking through with police, justice and social welfare sectors on how such checks could/should work. In the meantime, guidance on conducting 'informal checks' on new teachers by HT and District Officers, could be provided through revised RTRR guidelines.

    4) Pre- and in-service training on obligations for child safeguarding and reporting/response – As discussed in Benchmark 1.2, the Teacher Instruction and Education Department of MoES should review the Teacher Training Curriculum and integrate safeguarding, positive discipline and reporting/response content to prevent violence in schools. MoES have already developed handbooks on alternatives to corporal punishment (as part of programmes in 2006 and 2017). These materials should be reviewed alongside a new curriculum and revised to provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation. A clear, concise (again, both documents are very long), user-centred and multi-lingual version should then be more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes (for which a school-based training modality should be established).

- **Benchmark 2.3 - Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.** Generally speaking, most schools and districts have identified one person who was a focal point for cases of violence. However, it was clear that these focal points were not capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence, either through pre- or in-service training. Thus, in the potential revision of training materials for teachers on violence prevention in schools (as discussed in the previous section), content on children's mental health and well-being should be added. In addition, development partners could work with the Guidance and Counselling department at MoES to better understand how they prepare and quality assure focal persons and identify ways for partners to support and strengthen this.

- **Benchmark 2.4 - The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the well-being of children in mind.** As discussed previously, national BRMS Indicators should be revised to more directly address safety and violence, such as requiring schools to map unsafe areas to identify solutions, providing

clear criteria for ensuring sanitary facilities are safe and secure, providing clear criteria for ensuring that classroom architecture and design is gender-responsive, and providing guidance on how to ensure students can move freely to and from school. Such standards should also feature in the revision of RTRR guidelines.

4.3 Findings for Call to Action 3: Shift social norms and behaviour change

Table 6: Findings for Call to Action: Benchmark 3 - Shift social norms and behaviour change

Item	Standard	National	Sub-National/District	School
3.1	There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence.	National government and policy supports the implementation of activities to disseminate information and engage stakeholders on child rights and laws prohibiting violence at the national level.	Districts support the implementation of activities to disseminate information and engage schools, community members/leaders on child rights and laws prohibiting violence at the district level.	Schools support the implementation of activities to disseminate information and engage students, teachers, parents and community members on child rights and laws prohibiting violence at the school level.
		Assessment		
		B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place
	The NSP VACiS (2015 - 2020) developed by MoES in 2015 makes reference to disseminating information to school and community on child rights with regard to violence. In particular, the NSP VACiS (2015 -2020) has set out: - to design and implement a national violence free schools campaign for primary, secondary and technical schools to educate the public on children's rights, violence against children in schools and its impact as well as the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in preventing VACiS. - to design and implement a national training programme on violence against children in schools for all the key actors to strengthen their capacity to deliver their roles in the prevention and response to VACiS. - to strengthen the capacity of existing student led school clubs to create awareness on VACiS and provide peer support to children at risk and those who have experienced violence to report and seek care and support services; and facilitate the establishment of peace school clubs in schools where they do not exist. - Although these strategies show support for dissemination, they do not provide clear **guidelines that provide districts/schools with strategies on how to widely disseminate information** to school and community members **on child rights with regard to violence, and laws prohibiting violence against children** - Responses from the district officers indicate that 89% (n=25) have been involved in disseminating information to students, teachers, parents and community members about child rights regarding violence and 86% (n=24) have been engaged in dissemination of information about laws prohibiting violence against children. Sensitisation about childrens' rights, advocacy for a violence free school environment, duties of parents to their children and no corporal punishment in schools were the most popular information reported to have been disseminated by the district officers. - Responses from school actors indicate 53% (n=28) of the headteachers and 72% (n=79) of the teachers reported to have helped their school disseminate information to students, teachers, parents and community members about child rights with regards to violence. 45% (n=24) of the headteachers and 47% (n=51) of the teachers reported to have helped their school disseminate information about laws prohibiting violence against children. That said, the documented details of these activities or reference to specific laws were not shared, therefore, it is difficult to discern how robust such activities were and whether respondent bias was at play.			

3.2	Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks[32].	National policy supports the development and implementation of evidence-informed initiatives[33] that address broad social norms that drive key forms of violence (e.g. bullying, digital safety, sexual abuse and exploitation, youth and gang violence).	Districts support the implementation and monitoring of initiatives in schools/communities that address social norms that drive key forms of violence.	Schools support the implementation and monitoring of initiatives in the school and surrounding community that address social norms that drive key forms of violence.
		Assessment		
		C = Not in place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

- **There are no clear national guidelines or processes that provide guidance on implementing evidence-based interventions to address social norms surrounding violence** (like bullying and online harms, sexual abuse and exploitation, youth and gang violence) or gather and disseminate evidence of what works. That said, the Gender in Education Sector Policy (2016) includes strategies to address social norms that are harmful to girls. In particular: Advocacy for girls' education among communities, sensitise them against negative cultural norms and practices; Invest in creating safer spaces for girls' participation in sport including enforcing anti - sexual harassment laws and policies. The Policy does not explicitly provide guidance on implementation of evidence-based interventions to address social norms surrounding violence in schools.
- Response from district officers indicate that they support the implementation and monitoring of initiatives in schools/communities that address social norms which drive key forms of violence. **A high proportion 86% (n=24) of the district officials reported that they have been involved in interventions that address social norms** surrounding certain types of violence (like bullying, online harms, sexual abuse, gang violence), **however none could provide documented evidence of these activities**.
- In schools, 58% (n=31) of the headteachers and 62% (n=68) of the teachers reported that they have participated in school implement interventions that address social norms surrounding certain types of violence (like bullying, online harms, sexual abuse, gang violence). In addition, **47% (n=54) of the learners reported that their school has implemented activities that address social norms surrounding certain types of violence, which have included advocacy for a violence free school environment**.

3.3	Young people, parents, teachers and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on the topic of school violence.	Ministry of Education supports national, contextualised communication initiatives to raise awareness on violence in schools.	District level strategy for implementation of media, arts, or other awareness raising activities	Extra-curricular or community-based arts, drama, print documents, or other activities that promote awareness at the school and for parents and families
		Assessment		

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[32] WHO 2019 Section 3

[33] INSPIRE (2016) offers strategies to draw from

		A = In place	B = Partially in place	B = Partially in place

- **The MoES has adopted the UNICEF Communication 4 development strategy for program work on issues relating to violence through the strategic objectives of NSP VACiS. These objectives include a focus on communication, arts and media to raise awareness on violence in schools**:
  - To strengthen children's capacity to engage the media to raise issues of concern with regard to VACiS, to advocate for a violence free learning environment and to popularise the existing prevention, reporting, tracking, referral, response mechanisms and services.
  - Promoting child participation and empowerment to prevent and report cases of violence in school and seek appropriate support for recovery and effective reintegration into the school system.
  - To work with the Ministry of Information and National Guidance and other Media professional to produce guidelines for media professionals including journalists in order to encourage positive and progressive media coverage on issues relating to violence against children in schools.
  - To facilitate children's access to the media such as radio, television and social media and others in advocating for positive change on VACiS.
  - To strengthen the capacity of existing student led school clubs to create awareness on VACiS and provide peer support to children at risk and those who have experienced violence to report and seek care and support services; and facilitate the establishment of peace school clubs in schools where they do not exist.
  - Additionally, under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), the Government of Uganda developed the National Child Participation Strategy (2017 – 2022) , with the support of UNICEF and Save the Children. This strategy will set Uganda on a transformative journey to break the silence and amplify the voices of children across all spheres of decision making that have an impact on their lives[34].

- **Although these objectives are helpful, there do not provide a specific policy or guidelines for schools that outline communication initiatives (i.e. media arts, awareness and empowerment raising activities) to engage students, parents and communities in dialogue and action against violence.**

- Responses from the district officers indicate that there are district-level strategies for implementation of media, arts, or other awareness raising activities as 86% (n=24), which include empowerment raising activities that engage students, parents and communities in dialogues and action against violence. The districts officers further reported that they have engaged in advocacy for a violence free school environment and conducted sensitisation on child rights with students, teachers and parents.
- Discussion with school actors indicate that **51% of interviewed headteachers and 46% of interviewed teachers have helped their school to implement awareness and/or empowerment raising activities,** which include creating 'school talking compounds' (making charts and putting posts around the school compound); as well as dialogues with parents during PTA meetings and general meetings with teachers, student representatives, parents and community leaders.
- That said, only 37% (n=43) of interviewed learners reported that their school had implemented awareness and/or empowerment raising activities that engage students, parents and communities in dialogues and action against violence. **This would indicate that activities may not fully involve all students and/or respondent bias from administrators (particularly at the district level) is occurring.**

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[34] National Child Participation Strategy 2017/18 - 2021/22

Summary of findings for Benchmark 3

This section has provided an overview of the findings from the document review and field research surrounding Benchmark 3 of the STL Call to Action.

4.3.1   Summary of best practices

- The NSP VACiS (2015 - 2020) developed by MoES in 2015 makes reference to disseminating information to school and community on child rights with regard to violence**.** In particular, it discusses designing and implementing a national violence free schools campaigns, national training programmes on violence against children in schools for all the key actors and strengthening the capacity of existing student led school clubs to create awareness on VACiS and provide peer support to children at risk and those who have experienced violence.
- The NSP VACiS also includes a focus on communication, media and arts to advocate for a violence free learning environment and to popularise the existing prevention, reporting, tracking, referral, response mechanisms and services. This is reinforced in the adoption of UNICEF's C4D strategies, including sensitisation of communities by the districts and the schools implementing talking compounds.

4.3.2   Summary of challenges and gaps

- Although the NSP VACiS includes strategies and objectives surrounding dissemination of information on child rights/laws prohibiting violence, as well as activities surrounding media, arts and awareness raising activities, these do not constitute concrete guidelines that districts and schools can use to guide implementation. Although there appears to be some awareness raising work being done at the school-level, it does not appear to be tied to any policies or guidelines tied to the NSP VACiS.
- This lack of guidance is particularly evident regarding the implementation of evidence-based interventions addressing social norms surrounding violence against children in schools.

4.3.3   Overview of ways the government could/should address gaps

The following recommendations aim to support the government and education sector to achieve the STL benchmarks/checkpoints, based on the best practices and gaps found.

- **Benchmark 3.1 - There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence**. Although reference is made to broad strategies for dissemination activities in the NSP VACiS, it would be helpful to provide concrete guidance and specific strategies that schools and district actors could implement. Such strategies could be included in a revision of the RTRR guidelines.
- **Benchmark 3.2 - Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.** There is no reference or guidance on social norm interventions that could be implemented – again, specific strategies and evidence-informed interventions should be provided to districts/schools through RTRR guidelines.
- **Benchmark 3.3 - Young people, parents, teachers and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on the topic of school violence.** Although there are some specific strategies in NSP VACiS based on UNICEF's C4D approach, it would be helpful to create an action plan for this, with clear roles and responsibilities as well as budgets. Concrete guidance and specific strategies that schools and district actors could implement could also be included in a revision of the RTRR guidelines.

4.4 Findings for Call to Action 4: Invest resources effectively

Table 7: Findings for Call to Action: Benchmark 4 - Invest resources effectively

Item	Standard	National	Sub-national/District	School
4.1	Domestic resources that have been allocated to *support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond* to violence in schools.	Educational system budget includes costed strategies for violence prevention and response, adequate resourcing and reflections in budgets.	District receives and allocates resources for violence prevention and response	School receives earmarked budget for violence prevention and response
		Assessment		
		C = Not in place	**B = Partially in Place**	**B = Partially in place**

- The **Education Sector budget does not include a specific line for the development and implementation of violence prevention and response interventions**. However, as discussed in benchmark 1.1, there is an ESSP budget allocation worth 450 million Uganda shillings to support the implementation of a School Health and Safety Policy, with the aim of ensuring that the learning environments are safe for the learners and teachers and provide for health and safety promotion and disease prevention programs as well as interventions that safeguard learners and teachers against any forms of abuse by stakeholders in the learning institution. The policy is yet to be implemented this financial year[35].
- That said, there are externally funded strategies being implemented by a MoES sub-section unit known as the Gender Mainstreaming Unit, which offers technical assistance to the MoES in gender mainstreaming efforts, lobbying and mobilisation of resources for gender mainstreaming activities and setting up structures for linking and networking with partners on gender equality. With the support of development partners such as Hope Children foundation, GEM (Girls Education Movement), Empower Children and Communities against Abuse (ECCA), Promoting Equality in African Schools (PEAS), Education Development Partner (EDP), UNICEF Uganda etc., the Gender Mainstreaming Unit supports the operationalisation of violence prevention activities such as[36]:

  - Training of stakeholders on issues of gender-based violence and violence against children.
  - Advocacy for child rights
  - Provision of technical support in formulation and review of Policies
  - Development of materials such as training manuals on gender responsiveness, posters on keeping girl child friendly school environment, brochures and stickers to promote a child friendly environment.
  - Youth Empowerment schemes through which youth groups have been organised to pass on messages of peace and hope. The message includes violence against children
  - School mapping and outreach
  - Capacity building of members in guidance, counselling and mentoring
  - Music, Dance and Drama (MDD) and debating as gender sensitisation tools

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[35] Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

[36] MoES: Gender Mainstreaming Unit Profile

- Establishment of child protection policy with a rich component on gender.
- Advocacy for gender specific pedagogy in school.

- During discussions with district officers, **only 29% (n=8) stated that the district has ever received government funding for violence prevention and response** interventions, and these reported that the funds were mainly used for advocacy activities such as advocating for a violence free learning environment.
- Among the school actors (headteachers and teachers), about **90% reported that their schools have never received government funding for violence prevention and response intervention.**

4.2	Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches	Development partners provide targeted funds, technical assistance, and programmes through implementing partners for prevention and response to violence in schools	District coordinates, monitors and reports on use of targeted resources	School access targeted resources for prevention and response to violence.
		Assessment		
		A = In place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

There are a number of I/NGOs and development partners who have provided targeted funds, technical assistance or programmes for prevention and response to violence in schools. These have included:

- UNICEF has a long history of supporting the Government of Uganda to prevent and reduce violence against children. The MoES with the support of UNICEF has spearheaded a number of interventions aimed at promoting a safe learning environment. These include the development of the Safe School Environment Handbook for Primary School Teachers and Safe School Environment Facilitator's Guide (2010) in order to support the implementation of the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment policy. UNICEF also supported the MoES and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) to established an Inter-Sectoral Committee on Violence Against Children in Schools (ISC VACiS) whose overall goal is to galvanise support and provide a multi-sectoral approach to tackling violence against children in schools in Uganda. The ISC VACiS developed the Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines on VACiS (Violence Against Children in School)[37].
- In 2006, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF published a handbook: 'An Introductory Handbook for Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools for Quality Education: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment.' The handbook was designed for anyone involved in designing or delivering education within Ugandan schools, including headteachers, teachers, school governing committees, students, parents, public officials implementing education policy and anyone who wants to get involved in creating safer schools[38]. According to the UNICEF Annual Report, 700 teachers (357 male, 343 female) completed training on positive discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment.

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[37] MoES: National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children in Schools (2015 - 2020)

[38] MoES: An Introductory Handbook for Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools for Quality Education: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

- In October/November 2018 MUCOBADI (Multi Community Based Development Initiative) through the USAID-LARA/RTI (United States Agency for International Development - Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity / Research Triangle Institute) project established Village Child Case Management Committees (VCCMCs) to strengthen the Reporting Tracking Response and Referral mechanism through operationalisation of the Ministry RTRR guidelines in Luwero District. 89 VCCMCs were identified, formed, oriented and equipped with knowledge in response to violence against children, reporting and tracking of cases in communities[39].
- Since 2017, World Vision in Uganda has been focusing on reducing violence against children in school. World Vision works in Uganda to ensure that violence against children in schools and all other forms of violence against children are eradicated through a more coordinated, comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach[40].. The partnership aims at ensuring that communities, social institutions and structures practice positive social norms, beliefs and behaviours that protect children.
- In 2018, DFID's bilateral education programme entitled, 'Strengthening Education Systems for Improved Learning' (SESIL) commenced, which has a targeted objective to reduce violence in schools. DFID also funds three Girls' Education Challenge projects that all aim to address issues of violence, particularly as they relate to girls.
- In 2008, Raising Voices, a Ugandan NGO, developed the Good School Toolkit that aims to reduce violence perpetrated by school staff against children by building a positive school environment and positive relationships between students, their peers and authority figures. The toolkit was randomly tested in 42 schools in Luwero District, Uganda and was found to be effective in reducing violence against children by school staff[41]. More than 450 schools in Uganda are using the ideas in the Toolkit[42].
- Save the Children in Uganda works closely with teachers and schools to promote alternative positive discipline methods built on mutual respect and participation and set up children's councils to come up with more effective and appropriate disciplinary measures. They also work with schools, officials and the local communities to monitor and address other forms of violence in schools, such as sexual abuse and bullying[43].
- The NGO's observe that violence in schools is one of the biggest barriers to quality learning and the main cause of school dropouts in Uganda. It is on the basis of this that the Joining Forces NGOs – Child Fund, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, Terre des Hommes and World Vision, have committed to work together to improve child protection systems, strengthen the implementation of laws affecting children, and promote ideas and innovative solutions that are developed and led by children[44].
- During discussions with districts officers, 57% reported that their districts had received donor funds for violence prevention and response interventions. Some of the donors reported include: UNFPA, UNICEF, World Vision, Fields of Life, Quality Enhancement Initiative (QEI), UNHCR, USAID, RTI and Save the Children. The funds received from these donors were reported to be used:
  - To coordinate and sensitise the communities and schools on issues related to violence against children.
  - To create awareness among the school staff and learners on reporting violence cases and child rights
  - To sensitise school management committees, headteachers, teachers and the local government leaders at the subcounty level on issues relating to violence against children.

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[39] MUCOBADI: Responding to Violence Against Children, October 2019

[40] World Vision: It Takes Uganda to End Violence Against Children

[41] WHO INSPIRE 2016: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children

[42] Centre for Education Innovation: Good School Tool Kit, September 2, 2014

[43] Save the Children: https://uganda.savethechildren.net/what-we-do/child-protection

[44] Uganda Radio Network: NGO's Launch Force to End Violence against Children in Schools

- To sensitise teachers and students and other stakeholders on reporting procedures concerning violence.
- To train teachers on violence prevention and response as well as documentation of violence cases.
- To provide RTRR guidelines and VACiS handbooks to teachers.
- To sensitise learners on the different forms of violence.
- To conduct refresher trainings and radio talk shows on issues regarding violence against children.

- Among the school actors, on average, 82% (headteachers and teachers) reported that they have **never** received funding from donors for violence prevention and response interventions. For the few (14%) that reported to have received funds from donors these funds were from Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and World Vision specifically for sensitisation on issues relating to violence against children in school and implementation of peace club activities to assist create awareness. This suggests most development partners provide programmes and technical assistance rather than providing funding for schools to implement their own activities.

4.3	There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.	Private philanthropy, foundations, corporate social responsibility (CSR), social impact investors, etc., provide targeted funds, technical assistance and programmes through implementing partners for prevention and response to violence in schools.	District coordinates, monitors and reports on use of targeted resources	Schools access targeted resources for prevention and response to violence.
		Assessment		
		C = Not in place	**C = Not in place**	**C = Not in place**

- At the national level, 6 out of the 7 stakeholders reported that the private sector (i.e., private philanthropy, foundations, CSR, social impact investors, etc.,) have not provided specific earmarked funds or technical assistance for the development and implementation of violence prevention and response interventions.
- 43% (n=12) of the district officers fully acknowledged that the district had ever received resources from private sector funders for violence prevention activities and 57% (n=16) reported the district has never received funds from private sector funders.
- On average, only 13% of the school actors reported to have received funds for violence prevention activities from private sector funders.

Summary of findings for Benchmark 4

This section has provided an overview of the findings from the document review and field research surrounding Benchmark 4 of the STL Call to Action.

4.4.1   Summary of best practices and/or positive findings.

- The MoES has a budget and strategic plan to implement the School Health and Safety Policy, which could entail activities to reduce violence in schools
- The MoES Gender Mainstreaming Unit, which is supported by development partners, implement violence prevention and response interventions / activities
- The Government of Uganda has established strong collaborations with local and international NGOs, development partners and CBOs to support in the implementation of various interventions to fight violence against children in schools. Many of these interventions are showing some impact.

4.4.2   Summary of gaps for each benchmark indicator (e.g. policies that are missing, lack of awareness of policies) Reiterate why you think these gaps exist.

- Although the Ministry's ESSP has allocated a budget worth 450 million Uganda Shillings to support the implementation of a School Health and Safety Policy, this does not constitute a specific budget line for the implementation of violence prevention and response interventions / activities.
- Although there are a number of NGO/development partner programmes, they are not necessarily coordinated to ensure common approaches or breadth of scope
- Findings also show that co-ordination, funding, monitoring and evaluation of the existing interventions / activities by district officers and schools is still lacking. This can limit the district and school ownership of the interventions.

4.4.3   Overview of ways the government could/should address gaps for each benchmark indicator

The following recommendations aim to support the government and education sector to achieve the STL benchmarks/checkpoints, based on the best practices and gaps found.

- **Benchmark 4.1 - Domestic resources that have been allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.** As discussed in relation to benchmark 1.1, although the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence in schools via a health and safety policy and has put a budget towards this, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools (with accompanying strategies, budgets and key performance indicators) would be much more powerful, targeted and effective. Government, donor and private sector funding could then be consolidated through support of or alignment with this strategy.

- **Benchmark 4.2 - Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.** The MoES should also aim to coordinate all donor/NGO activities to ensure a joined-up approach and sharing of lessons learnt. This could be done via the Gender Mainstreaming Unit. If an explicit ESSP objective can be developed for reducing violence in schools, the MoES should ensure that all donor/NGO activities and funds are aligned and coordinated to support it.

- **Benchmark 4.3 - There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.** As discussed, if an explicit ESSP objective can be developed for reducing violence in schools, the MoES should ensure that all private sector activities and funds are aligned and coordinated to support it. Further work may need to be done to elicit such funds.

4.5 Findings for Call to Action Benchmark 5: Generate and use evidence

Table 8: Findings for Call to Action: Benchmark 5 - Generate and use evidence

Item	Standard	Central	Sub-national/District	School
5.1	Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system[45]	Central information system that records incidents and monitors trends, fed by District or local authorities	District has record keeping of incidents occurring in schools	Maintenance of confidential records about protection related incidents in the school
		Assessment		
		B = Partially in place	**B = Partially in place**	**B = Partially in place**

- The MoES has a digital Education Management Information System (EMIS) to collect, capture and process data to generate management information that informs planning and evidence-based decision making at all levels. MoES maintains management data on key performance indicators of the sector including data in institutions, teachers, pupils, infrastructure (i.e. school module), finances and audit (i.e. finance module), and school inspection. It was also designed to be sector wide and decentralised to district level[46]. However, the EMIS is not functioning at the moment and specific indicators related to preventing violence against children in school have not been captured. They should be included when it is revived.
- In 2011, UNICEF and Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sport developed a mobile phone-based data-collection system, '**EduTrac'**, to collect real-time data about schools. School administrators and headteachers send data into the system on a regular basis using mobile phones. Schedules vary according to the information required – for example, weekly for pupil attendance, **monthly for reports on child abuse** and termly for capitation grants made to the schools. The data collected by '**EduTrac**' generates reports for the government's EMIS to help improve education planning and complement existing monitoring and reporting structures. By January 2020, EduTrac was operational in 37 districts throughout Uganda. It has roughly 10,000 registered reporters in more than 3,800 schools.
- During discussions with district officers, 54% (n=15) reported that schools share anonymised data or logbooks with the district and 43% (n=12) reported that there is someone at the district who analyses school level data and shares it with the MoES and with schools.
- 25% of the interviewed headteachers and teachers reported that their schools have a process for confidentially logging reports and responses to violence in the school. 34% of the interviewed school actors reported that headteachers regularly monitor the logbook and share a summary of reports with district, teachers, SMCs or parents.

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[45] UNESCO-UNWOMEN 2019 Global Guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence, Section 2.6

[46] MoES: URL - *https://www.education.go.ug/emis/*

5.2	There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards [47].	National Statistics Office and Ministry of Education monitor data on prevalence and forms of violence through regular participation in international school-based survey programmes (every 3-5 years)	District support implementation of school-based survey programmes	Comprehensive questions on prevalence and forms of violence are included in regular school-based survey programmes.
		Assessment		
		B = Partially in place	**C = Not in place**	**C = Not in place**

- The National Statistics Office and MoES do not regularly collect or monitor data on prevalence and forms of violence through regular participation in international or national school-based surveys. That said, there have been a number of one-off research studies that aim to measure prevalence and forms of violence. These included the following:
  - In 2003, Uganda participated in the Global School-Based Student Health Survey.
  - In November 2012, MoES with support from UNICEF conducted a study on Assessing Child Protection, Safety & Security Issues for Children in Uganda Primary and Secondary Schools. The study covered 40 primary schools and 10 secondary schools selected from the four regions of Uganda in 8 districts. Findings from the study revealed that 46.7% of the children interviewed experienced emotional violence perpetrated by teachers, 43% of the children reported to have experienced bullying and the prevalence rate of bullying was higher in primary schools (46%) compared to secondary schools (31%). Furthermore, the same study revealed that 77.7% of the primary school children and 82% of the secondary school students surveyed experienced sexual abuse at school. 67% indicated that their perpetrators of sexual abuse were male teachers, 22% fellow students, 5% female teachers and 6% non-teaching staff. The survey further indicated that majority (60.2%) of the survivors of sexual abuse never reported the cases. The main reasons for not reporting were shame, fear to be laughed at and fear of being victimised. It was through this study that in 2014 the MoES with the support of UNICEF developed and operationalised the RTRR guidelines.
  - The 2015 MoGLSD VAC survey highlighted that physical violence against children was perpetrated by adults who were neither parents nor caregivers, more than 90% of cases involved teachers as perpetrators. The same survey reported that over a period of 12 months, 25% of girls and 21% of boys had missed school because of physical violence perpetrated against them. In August 2018, the full Uganda VAC report was launched. Data was disseminated to all 127 districts in Uganda with specific regional data being shared at the regional level. The MoGLSD started to offer technical support to districts on integrating preventing and reducing violence against children into district action plans [48].
- Despite these research studies, 75% of the interviewed district officers and 90% of the interviewed school actors (headteachers and teachers) stated that their districts have not participated in an international data collection activities on the prevalence and forms of violence in schools.

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[47] Such as through the relevant modules of the Global Schools-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS)

[48] End Violence Against Children - The Global Initiative: Country Progress Fact Sheet 2019; URL - *https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Country%20Progress%20Fact%20Sheet%20Uganda.pdf*

5.3	Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trailed models and approaches [49].	National Governments conduct robust monitoring and evaluations of violence prevention initiatives in order to inform replication and scale-up.	Districts support implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities for violence prevention initiatives to inform replication and scale-up.	School support implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities for violence prevention initiatives to inform replication and scale-up.
		Assessment		
		C = Not in place	C = Not in place	C = Not in place
	- The MoES has not conducted robust monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention initiatives in order to inform replication and scale-up. However, with the support of other external researchers, some evaluations of violence prevention initiatives have been conducted. These have included the following: - In 2013 a two-arm cluster randomised controlled trial study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the Good School Toolkit that was developed by Raising Voices to prevent violence against children in Ugandan primary schools. A total of 42 schools participated and either received the Toolkit plus implementation support or were allocated to a wait-list control condition. Findings showed that treatment schools were able to violence against students in 18 months[50]. The Toolkit is currently being used at more than 750 schools in Uganda[51]. Although this was a laudable study, the small sample and intensive resource needed for implementation of the Toolkit shed light on difficulty of implementing at scale. - During discussions with district officers, 25% reported that districts support implementation, monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention initiatives. Noticeably, only 14% of the district officers were fully aware of evaluations of interventions that have informed decisions for replication or scale-up by the district or MoES. 15% of interviewed school actors indicate that they have supported monitoring and evaluation activities for violence prevention initiatives to inform replication and scale-up by the district / MoES.			

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[49] See WHO 2019 Section 9

[50] Devries, Karen; Allen, Elizabeth; Child, Jennifer; Walakira, Eddy; Parkes, Jenny; Elbourne, Diana; Watts, Charlotte; Naker, Dipak; *The Good Schools Toolkit to prevent violence against children in Ugandan primary schools: Study protocol for a cluster randomised controlled trial, 2013*

[51] Raising Voice: Is Violence Against Children Preventable?, 2017

Summary of findings for Benchmark 5

This section has provided an overview of the findings from the document review and field research surrounding Benchmark 5 of the STL Call to Action.

4.5.1 Summary of best practices and/or positive findings.

- The MoES 'EduTrac' system aims to collect real-time data regarding areas such as pupil attendance, monthly for reports on child abuse and termly for capitation grants made to the schools. By January 2020, 'EduTrac' was operational in 37 districts throughout Uganda
- The RTRR national guidelines do provide guidance to school actors on how to confidentially log reports of violence against children in schools.

4.5.2 Summary of gaps for each benchmark indicator

- Even though the desk review shows that Uganda has organised national surveys on VAC and acquires statistical data on violence against children from initiatives like UCHL, findings from the respondents at the national level revealed that it has not been in the objectives for MoES and the national statistics office to collect data on prevalence and forms of violence through a national or international school based survey
- Monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention initiatives is still lacking at both the district and school levels.
- Monitoring of logbooks and sharing of reports on incidences of violence is still lacking at all levels.
- Although the Government of Uganda has conducted a Violence Against Children Survey (VAC 2015), this is now 5 years old and findings from the desk review indicate that not much effort and focus has been put on gathering evidence through conducting school-based survey programmes.

4.5.3 Overview of ways the government (with the support of development partners) could/should address gaps

The following recommendations aim to support the government and education sector to achieve the STL benchmarks/checkpoints, based on the best practices and gaps found.

- **Benchmark 5.1 - Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.** Although the MoES 'EduTrac' system has the potential to collect real-time data on violence in schools, it is currently only operational in 37 districts. It would be good to build on this work to explore to what degree this system can be used to record incidents of violence and monitors trends, fed by Districts and schools. Such a strategy could/should be part of the potential ESSP objective to reduce violence in schools.

- **Benchmark 5.2 - There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.** The National Statistics Office and MoES should consider regular participation in international or national school-based surveys. For example, Uganda took part in the Global Schools-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) in 2003 and this could be updated.

Benchmark 5.3 - Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trailed models and approaches. Although there have been examples of rigorous evaluations of trailed models and approaches, such as the Good Schools Toolkit, the study shows these are limited in their reach. Scaling up such interventions would be difficult given the financial, material and human resource needed for implementation of that particular intervention. This indicates a need for an analysis of 'scalability by the education system' when evaluations of violence prevention initiatives are done. In this instance, work with

Raising Voices and MoES could be done to determine how intensive resources could be pared down while still retaining the components that facilitate intended outcomes/effects.

5. Recommendations

The following summarises key priorities and recommendations for governments in order to meet the benchmarks for the five STL Calls to Action:

Call to Action 1: Implement laws and policies

- **Benchmark 1.1 - Prevention of violence in and around schools is identified as a specific strategy in the national education sector policy or plan.** Although the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence in schools via a health and safety policy and inspections, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools (with accompanying strategies, budgets and key performance indicators) would be much more powerful and effective. Such an objective should include specific strategies for developing a clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version of the RTRR guidelines to be printed/disseminated nationally for orientation and training for district and school actors. Government, donor and private sector funding could be consolidated through support of or alignment with this strategy.

- **Benchmark 1.2 - There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and classroom management.** There are clearly laws in place that prohibit corporal punishment in schools; however, better enforcement of these laws is needed. Efforts are needed to strengthen the national child protection system and functionality of child protection committees at district level, at which education is also represented for more systemic reporting, tracking and follow up of cases. Relatedly, the Village Child Case Management Committee should also be supported to ensure cases of corporal punishment in schools are reported and acted upon. Since an overstretched police and legal system may not be able to support enforcement, communities, schools and districts should have intermediate processes/protocols to hold teachers to account. With regards to supporting positive discipline, the teacher training curriculum should be reviewed and revised to include positive discipline and classroom management. The 2006 and 2017 MoES handbooks on alternatives to corporal punishment provide a good start and could be reviewed against a new curriculum and revised to provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation. A clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version should then be more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes (for which a school-based training modality should be established).

- **Benchmark 1.3 - The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.** The National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children in Schools (NSP VACiS) (2015 – 2020) is a laudable step towards having a multi-sectoral child protection policy framework. However, implementation of it at the district and school level has not been well established. The RTRR guidelines could be unpacked and a simple document developed for each sector (e.g. education, health, police, social work etc.) at district level to clearly define the contribution of each sector and how they need to work with other sectors in the prevention and response to cases.. Again, a clear, concise, user-centred and multi-lingual version of these guidelines should be printed/disseminated nationally for training of all relevant actors. It would also be worth further exploring the degree to which 'District Child Protection Committees' and Village Child Case Management Committees are active or should be re-activated, as these could provide a structure in which multi-sectoral actors could meet, be trained and coordinate action.

- **Benchmark 1.4** - **The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.** The government can build on the good work that it has already done on the Conflict and Disaster Risk Management Guidelines (CDRM) guidelines by explicitly endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration and robustly translating/disseminating/training on its accompanying guidelines.

Call to Action 2: Strengthen prevention and response at school level

- **Benchmark 2.1 - Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.** It is clear that the primary and secondary curriculum to certain degrees, touch on issues of violence and safe behaviour, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups and gender equitable relationships. However, the delivery of these curricula in the classroom is not universal, most likely because teachers and schools experience pressure to focus on topics that will feature on national exams. Ironically though, learning and performance on exams would likely improve with the reduction of violence in schools. These linkages should be made explicit in teacher training materials (see below). And in order to support and supplement current curriculum-based activities, targeted activities for students (regarding violence, promoting inclusion and gender equitable relationships) could be provided in a revision of the RTRR guidelines. In addition to this, activities targeting students should also include raising awareness of the national child helpline, how to use it and what service it provides.

- **Benchmark 2.2 - Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.** This benchmark consisted of four components and recommendations aligned to these include:

  1) National guidelines to establish safe and confidential reporting mechanisms - The RTRR Guidelines represent a great achievement in providing guidance on setting up reporting/response mechanisms. Schools reported using suggestion boxes for confidential reporting. However, the implementation of these in all schools/districts needs to be strengthened. As discussed with regard to Benchmark 1.1, one way to do this is to review/revise the RTRR guidelines so that they are clear, concise (currently, they are 82 pages), user-centred, multi-lingual and can be delivered via a school-based training modality so that all teachers can participate. As discussed above, this revision could also entail activities to be implemented to support students' learning of key violence prevention strategies.

  2) Norms and standards of ethical behaviour in Teacher Codes of Conduct – As discussed, the national Code of Conduct is very thorough regarding violence; however, enforcement/compliance could be strengthened. This could be done by working with the Education Service Commission to revise the Code so that it explicitly requires all teachers to sign it on an annual basis, thus requiring all HT and District Officers to have master copies of the Code for teachers to sign. In addition to this, relevant sections of the Code could also be reprinted within the revised RTRR guidelines so that all teachers have a copy to refer to.

  3) Policies that regulate hiring of new teachers and staff and their transfer to ensure suitability for working with children – It is unclear whether there is still opportunity to revise the NTP at this point. However, if so, it would be very helpful to provide explicit guidance regarding background checks on teachers before recruitment or transfer to assess their suitability for working with children. That said, this will require collaboration and thinking through with police, justice and social welfare sectors on how such checks could/should work. In the meantime, guidance on conducting 'informal checks' on new teachers by HT and District Officers, could be provided through revised RTRR guidelines.

  4) Pre- and in-service training on obligations for child safeguarding and reporting/response – As discussed in Benchmark 1.2, the Teacher Instruction and Education Department of MoES should review the teacher training curriculum and integrate safeguarding, positive discipline and reporting/response content to prevent violence in schools. MoES have already developed handbooks on alternatives to corporal punishment (as part of programmes in 2006 and 2017). These materials should be reviewed alongside a new curriculum and revised to provide more practical/effective strategies for positive discipline and classroom management, as well as content on violence reporting/response pathways, teacher obligations on child safeguarding and preventing revictimisation. A clear, concise (again, both documents are very long), user-centred and multi-lingual version should then be more formally used for pre- and in-service training purposes (for which a school-based training modality should be established).

- **Benchmark 2.3 - Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.** Generally speaking, most schools and districts

have identified one person who was a focal point for cases of violence. However, it was clear that these focal points were not capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence, either through pre- or in-service training. Thus, in the potential revision of training materials for teachers on violence prevention in schools (as discussed in the previous section), content on childrens' mental health and well-being should be added. In addition, development partners could work with the Guidance and Counselling department at MoES to better understand how they prepare and quality assure focal persons and identify ways for partners to support and strengthen this.

- **Benchmark 2.4 - The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the well-being of children in mind.** National BRMS Indicators should be revised to more directly address safety and violence, such as requiring schools to map unsafe areas to identify solutions, providing clear criteria for ensuring sanitary facilities are safe and secure, providing clear criteria for ensuring that classroom architecture and design is gender-responsive, and providing guidance on how to ensure students can move freely to and from school. Such standards should also feature in the revision of RTRR guidelines.

Call to Action 3: Shift social norms and behaviour change

- **Benchmark 3.1 - There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence**. Although reference is made to broad strategies for dissemination activities in the NSP VACiS, it would be helpful to provide concrete guidance and specific strategies that schools and district actors could implement. Such strategies could be included in a revision of the RTRR guidelines.
- **Benchmark 3.2 - Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.** There is no reference or guidance on social norm interventions that could be implemented – again, specific strategies and evidence-informed interventions should be provided to districts/schools through RTRR guidelines.
- **Benchmark 3.3 - Young people, parents, teachers and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on the topic of school violence.** Although there are some specific strategies in the NSP VACiS based on UNICEF's C4D approach, it would be helpful to create an action plan for this, with clear roles and responsibilities as well as budgets. Concrete guidance and specific strategies that schools and district actors could implement could also be included in a revision of the RTRR guidelines.

Call to Action 4: Invest resources effectively

- **Benchmark 4.1 - Domestic resources that have been allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.** As discussed in relation to benchmark 1.1, although the ESSP acknowledges the need to reduce violence in schools via a health and safety policy, an explicit objective to prevent and reduce violence in schools would be much more powerful, targeted and effective. Government, donor and private sector funding could then be consolidated through support of or alignment with this strategy.
- **Benchmark 4.2 - Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.** The MoES should also aim to coordinate all donor/NGO activities to ensure a joined-up approach and sharing of lessons learnt. This could be done via the Gender Mainstreaming Unit. If an explicit ESSP objective can be developed for reducing violence in schools, the MoES should ensure that all donor/NGO activities and funds are aligned and coordinated to support it.
- **Benchmark 4.3 - There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.** As discussed, if an explicit ESSP objective can be developed for reducing violence in schools, the MoES should ensure that all private sector activities and funds are aligned and coordinated to support it. Further work may need to be done to elicit such funds.

Call to Action 5: Generate and use evidence

- **Benchmark 5.1 - Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.** Although the MoES 'EduTrac' system has the potential to collect real-time data on violence in schools, it is currently only operational in 37 districts. It would be good to build on this work to explore to what degree this system can be used to record incidents of violence and monitors trends, fed by Districts and schools. Such a strategy could/should be part of the potential ESSP objective to reduce violence in schools.

- **Benchmark 5.2 - There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.** The National Statistics Office and MoES should consider regular participation in international or national school-based surveys. For example, Uganda took part in the Global Schools-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) in 2003 and this could be updated.

- **Benchmark 5.3 - Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trailed models and approaches.** Although there have been examples of rigorous evaluations of trailed models and approaches, such as the Good Schools Toolkit, the study shows these are limited in their reach. Scaling up such interventions would be difficult given the financial, material and human resource needed for implementation of that particular intervention. This indicates a need for an analysis of 'scalability by the education system' when evaluations of violence prevention initiatives are done. In this instance, work with Raising Voices and MoES could be done to determine how intensive resources could be pared down while still retaining the components that facilitate intended outcomes/effects.

6. Conclusion

The study set out to assess national efforts to prevent and respond to violence in schools. The assessment found several positive aspects at all levels and among these: the existence of national laws and policies that proscribe violence against children in schools; existence of strong collaborations between the GoU and developments partners, which through technical and financial support to the government of Uganda have interventions to reduce violence in schools; existence of the national child helpline to report and respond to cases of child violence; presence of RTRR guidelines at the school and district level to help guide school actors and district officers in reporting and responding to cases of violence; presence of the teachers professional code of conduct which clearly streamlines how teachers are supposed to support learners; existence of supportive structure such as district and school focal persons that oversee response to reports of violence in schools; and, engagement of district officers and school actors in violence prevention activities such as advocacy for a violence free school environment.

Some of the shortcomings identified by the assessment are geared towards strategic policies, interventions and guidelines, while others are related to technical and financial support, training, and monitoring and evaluation. There is lack of national policies /guidelines specifically geared towards addressing social norms surrounding violence against children in schools and to support dissemination of information and awareness creation on child rights and laws prohibiting violence against children. The Education Sector Plan does not explicitly indicate specific strategies and key performance indicators directed towards violence prevention against school children and therefore, the MoES needs to clearly include a direct target strategy. The school actors, especially teachers, lack adequate training on violence response and prevention and equally the learners lack knowledge on child rights and reporting process. In addition, the schools and districts lack physical documents such as RTRR guidelines and policy documents on violence against children that could be used as referrals to act on and respond to violence cases. Finding from the assessment further indicated limited funds and technical support to facilitate the implementation of interventions / activities that aim to prevent and respond to violence against children in school. Monitoring and evaluation of the existing interventions / activities, logbooks and sharing of reports is not effectively done. Finally, it has not been in the objectives for MoES and the National statistics office to collect data on prevalence and forms of violence in schools through a national or international school based survey program every 3-5 Years.

Nonetheless, future directions may include development and implementation of national policies or guidelines that; provide guidance on implementing interventions addressing social norms related to violence and those that outline communication for development initiatives to engage students, parents, and communities in dialogue and action against violence. In addition, awareness of these policies and guidelines should be made at the national, district, and school level. The GoU should consider availing a specific adequate budget line for development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of violence prevention and response activities in schools as well as adequate technical support at all levels. In addition, the GoU should consider further utilisation of research to generate more practical evidence on issues surrounding violence against children in school and these should actively engage national, district and school stakeholders. This will help give way to new policies and strategies, support the evaluation of the existing policies, interventions, strategies and activities on violence response and prevention, and check for areas of improvement.