SAFE SCHOOLS: EVIDENCE TO INFORM A HOLISTIC PRIMARY PREVENTION INTERVENTION IN KENYA

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SVRI Forum 2015
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

• **LVCT Health** is a Kenyan NGO that incorporates Research, Programming and Policy advocacy in
  - Sexual and Gender based violence
  - HIV
  - Health Systems strengthening
  - Training

• **SOWED Kenya** is a CBO with expertise in
  - Community engagement and advocacy on GBV, gender and human rights
STUDY BACKGROUND

• Child abuse in schools setting has been documented in Kenya.

• The violence against children (VAC) study indicated that:
  o 21.4% females and 20.3% males encountered their first sexual violation in schools
  o 22% girls and 32% boys had their first experience of sexual violence at home (GOK, 2012)

• There is limited evidence on primary prevention of child abuse in schools with parents’ and teacher involvement in Kenya
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK-SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Gender norms
- Male sexual entitlement
- Masculinity and control of females and children
- Low social value and power of female and children

Normative use of violence
- Harsh discipline strategy
- Weak or non-existent laws to deter violence
- Acceptance of violence against females and children correctional measures

Distant relationship between adults and children
- Breakdown in communication on developing nonviolent relationships
- Absence of role modelling on nonviolent behaviour

School environment
- Insufficient knowledge of educational policies
- Poor enforcement of school safety policies

Societal and School Norms

Child Abuse
OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the types and forms of child abuse cases in primary schools.

2. To identify factors that expose children to abuse in primary schools
STUDY METHODOLOGY

• **Primary schools**: 4 public schools in Kajiado County
  - Two urban and two rural schools

Study design: Cross-sectional qualitative study

Data collection: In-depth Interviews

Study participants:
- 76 students (aged 10-14 years – 40 females; 36 males)
- 17 teachers (10 females, 7 males)
- 22 parents (18 females, 4 males)
- 16 Community stakeholders (health providers, County officials, local chiefs, police, religious leaders)
EXPOSURE TO ABUSE IN . . .

At home:

Physical: “My husband, if he decides to beat the child he may beat like he will kill them.” - Female parent

Sexual exploitation: “. . .when I asked her [my daughter] where she got the vegetables from, she told me 'there is a boy who has slept with me and gave me vegetables’ ” - Female parent

“Another girl was forced by the father to sleep with her. She got pregnant and the father ran away.” - Male student

Emotional abuse: “. . .my parents call me buttocks...my parents call me a dog”
Female student
EXPOSURE TO IPV

• Domestic violence was witnessed more in the urban areas compared to the rural.

  ‘My father comes late at night…About 10(pm)…He comes and starts to quarrel, banging things? He quarrels my mother but my mother remains silent.’ (Student)

  ‘…..like now if mum and dad start to quarrel, they(siblings) become stressed up and they don’t study’ (Student)

• Hurling insults at children in schools, neighborhood and family is common

  “I want my father to stop drinking so much. He insults us…” (10 year old student)
NEGATIVE GENDER NORMS

• Women and children not involved in decision making

  “No matter how old a woman is, she is regarded as a child.” (Female parent)

  “children are not consulted on family issues as they are only to seen and not heard” (Male parent)

• Prevalent cultural practices increase vulnerability to sexual abuse and sexual and intimate partner violence

  “I talk to the boys, the mother talk to them {girls}. I tell them it is not allowed to sleep with men. No, the girls are not allowed to sleep with the boys, it is bad. Because it may cause a pregnancy. But our culture permits boys to have sex –” (Male parent)
NORMATIVE USE OF VIOLENCE

• Use of violent disciplinary approaches by teachers and parents
  o Psychological aggression i.e. shouting, yelling, calling child names.
  o Physical Punishment such as caning or burning their children with knives

  ‘…‘If my husband decides to beat our child, he may beat like he will kill them…he will thoroughly beat them like not seen before. That child has to have a goat slaughtered and the fat applied due to the beating he has received that he cannot even get up” (Female parent)

• The teacher student ratio (1: 50) makes it stressful for teachers to guide and monitor the children
• According to students corporal punishment is given when they fail to:
  o “carry firewood for cooking school meals”
  o “carry water for cleaning the toilets”
  o “complete school assignments”

• Reasons using a caning in discipline:
  o Pressure from parents and care givers to cane

“I was informed of a boy who used to stay in the bush.. And not do class work... His parent came to school with a long stick and asked that I beat the child…” Teacher
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY INTERVENTION

• Stakeholder engagement in project design and implementation is KEY

• Need for a holistic intervention targeting children, parents and teachers

• Defined mechanisms of engaging teachers as drivers of change
  o School level
  o Policy

• Large scale research to test feasibility of school based child abuse prevention required in low resource settings
LVCT Health and SOWED-Kenya currently piloting an adaptation of:

- Good schools Tool Kit (Raising voices)
- SKHOKHO (SVRI/MRC)

**COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL BASED PRIMARY PREVENTION MODEL BEING PILOTED**

- 10-14 Year old students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Community

- Gender constructs
- Attitudes towards violence
- Safe learning environment
- Positive relationships
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 4 Participating Schools
- Kajiado County Government
- Study respondents
- SVRI/MRC
THANK YOU

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