Research in schools

Rachel Jewkes

Secretary, SVRI
• Theoretical considerations when working in schools
Setting a school ecologically

Broader community

Parents & families of learners

School - learners & teachers
Stakeholders in the school environment

• Education authorities – district, province, national
• School Board or Governors
• Principal
• Teachers and other staff
• Students
• Parents
• ?? other community members
Multiple levels of influence within a school environment: all impact on learning

- *Interventions*: curriculum & necessary and appropriate services
- *Institutions*: policies e.g. on corporal punishment, sexual harassment etc
- *Interactions*: gender climate and interpersonal aspects of the institution

- The 3 ‘I’s
Experiences of work in schools on sexual health curriculum

• Many examples of school sexuality curriculum
• Where they have been evaluated, there is precious little evidence of sustained behaviour change and no impact has been shown on a biological marker
• Two studies of GBV prevention in schools:
  – Safe Dates – which was not shown to be effective at 1 year, 4 year results were collected and not properly presented (we assume ineffective)
  – 4th R programme – David Wolfe, Canada, reduced GBV perpetration by boys at 2 years post intervention
Research on impact in schools shows this is limited by:

• Failure to engage multiple levels of school environment in the intervention
• Curriculum may be too short or insufficiently gendered
• Teaching methods – how effective are didactic ones?
• But: schools are critical and enable very wide access to learners before dating starts
Theoretical model of causes of IPV (Jewkes, 2002)

- **Ideology of Male Superiority**
  - Distinct gender roles & hierarchy
  - Male sexual entitlement
  - Low social value and power of women
  - Male control of women

- **Culture of Violence**
  - Violent past
  - Violence common in communities, homes, schools
  - Normalisation of the use of violence to gain and wield power

**IPV**
Conceptualising whole school change

Classroom - curriculum + interactions

School environment – policies, culture, discipline

Home and community – engagement, attitudes, discipline
Developing curriculum

• Do you need to develop a curriculum or develop lessons for a curriculum or teach teachers how to teach established lessons?
• What are the objectives?
• Developing lessons
• What do you know about your target group?
• How diverse are they? What do they enjoy? Are they already exposed? What proportion?
• What do they already know and learn?
Talking about sex and relationships: key challenge is diversity

- **Grade 8**: About 75% of girls and over 80% of boys had ‘dated’
- 10% girls and 30% of boys had ever had vaginal sex, but this is often not with a GF/BF
- Dating is extremely nebulous
- Dating violence: among those dating 40% of girls experienced physical IPV in last 3m and 10% of boys had forced sex
Key challenges:

• To make the curriculum relevant to everyone
• To ensure you don’t block off those who are not dating and experiencing violence
• To emphasise the generic skills and ideas that are needed for violence prevention: communication, openness, self-respect etc
• To develop a curriculum that teachers are equipped to teach
What about teachers

• Often experience GBV themselves, are conservative or may perpetrate violence/sexually exploitation
• May use harsh physical punishment
• Equipping teachers to teach and interact respectfully is crucial
• Part of this is empowering teachers to be professional
Access to schools

- Provincial or district permissions
- School level access – principal? Governors?
- Access through parents and support for the project

- Ethics approval
Ethics issues

• GBV research: how much support do you need to give research participants? Do you need to offer a separate counselling service or can you strengthen systems?

• Is it better to strengthen systems as its more sustainable?

• Is asking boys and girls in class about violence a concern?

• What about responses to disclosed abuse?