

Young members of School Action Groups in Papua New Guinea. *Equal Playing Field.*



## EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Education is central to efforts to prevent gender-based violence (GBV). However, while education can be used to prevent GBV, school-related GBV affects millions of children, families and communities. It involves acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated because of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics.

Several research interventions funded by the [Development Marketplace: Innovations to Address GBV](#) explore the links between education and GBV, and trial approaches to reducing school-related gender-based violence.

### UNIVERSITY INTERVENTIONS

#### RESULTS

#### WORK IN PROGRESS

There is a significant gap in knowledge about the prevalence of campus sexual harassment and assault in universities in low- and middle-income countries.

In Eswatini, the [University of California, San Diego](#) and [University of Eswatini](#) studied the prevalence and correlates of sexual abuse victimization of female university students at the University of Eswatini, through quantitative study and survivor in-depth interviews. The soon-to-be published findings reveals high levels of sexual violence experienced in student lifetimes (over 50%), and a significant association between symptoms consistent with depression, and experience of lifetime sexual assault, food insecurity, and street-based sexual harassment. They are using their learnings to adapt the EAAA intervention for the Eswatini context. EAAA was found to reduce sexual assault

by 50% among university women in Canada. It is designed to help young women collectively recognize gendered social norms that put all women at risk of experiencing sexual assault, and to build their confidence resisting men who mean them harm. The adapted program is named #GameChangers or Bagugculi Betintfo in siSwati. The team trained facilitators to implement the program, and ran a pilot test. They are undertaking a study examining the intervention.

The [King Hussein Foundation](#) and [Emory University](#) have undertaken a research study to identify the prevalence and perceptions of sexual harassment at Jordanian universities. Researching this topic

has allowed the researchers to begin conversations within the university on seldom-addressed issues. The research has served as a catalyst to bring university stakeholders together around better understanding and prevention of campus sexual harassment. The researchers plan to publish their findings, and to adapt and enhance a promising intervention to the university's framework.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

### RESULTS

**La Strada Moldova** studied the effects of the "Harmonious family relationships" course, delivered to Moldovan teenagers from 10th–12th grades to teach assertive communication along with increased ability to manage family conflicts and develop sustainable relationships. The course increased teenagers' ability to recognize signs of manipulation and abuse, as well as knowledge of risky behaviors. Stereotypes and outdated perceptions about gender norms and sexual violence were also reduced. As a result of a successful pilot, the Moldovan Ministry of Education is considering rolling out the course to additional schools.

### WORK IN PROGRESS

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) which addresses violence and gender equality as well as sexual and reproductive health has been

shown in some contexts to prevent intimate partner violence among young people. More than 45% of the Mexican population is under 25 years of age and the country has relatively high school attendance so school-based comprehensive sexuality education can reach large numbers of youth. **International Planned Parenthood Federation** and **Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar (MexFam)** are studying the MexFam CSE curriculum, which focuses on gender, power and violence prevention, to establish how the school-based sexuality education program can reduce intimate partner violence and translate these findings into practice.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

### WORK IN PROGRESS

**Equal Playing Field (EPF)** implements an eight-week curriculum to primary school children in Port Moresby and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, that focuses on healthy relationships, respectful behaviors, and gender equality. The project is slated to expand into the Solomon Islands. Since an eight-week curriculum is unlikely to make lasting change for students, EPF is now implementing a "School Action Group" program to support young people to continue activities related to gender equality and ending violence against women after the eight-week program ends. The School Action Groups hope to

build on the enthusiasm of a cohort of boys and girls who benefited from the eight-week program and experienced significant change and motivation as a result.

### WORK IN PROGRESS

In KwaZulu-Natal, a largely rural province of South Africa, young learners walk long distances to school. This school journey is potentially dangerous since learners must navigate treacherous terrain and inclement weather as well as risk being kidnapped, physically attacked, mugged, and/or sexually abused. This long journey means children also arrive late at their classrooms and are unable to focus, potentially impacting their academic outcomes. The **Human Sciences Research Council** is evaluating a mixed methods study with early adolescents in grades 5-7 (approximately 10-14 years old) across three public primary schools in in Kwa-Zulu Natal to explore what impact a walking school bus can have on reducing the risks of violence. ■

**Development Marketplace: Innovations to Address Gender-Based Violence** funds groundbreaking GBV research in low- and middle-income countries across the globe. It is a partnership between the **World Bank Group** and the **Sexual Violence Research Initiative**. Over four years, the partnership has funded research projects in 28 countries.