

Violence against children in and around schools in Cambodia

Violence against children is preventable, and the education sector can play a critical role in driving change through schools and school systems. This note summarizes the state of school related violence in Cambodia, and highlights key data gaps.

Bullying

Physical bullying refers to a pattern of repetitive aggressive behaviours involving hitting, kicking, pushing, and stealing or destroying personal belongings. 24% of 15 year olds reported experiencing **physical bullying in the last 12 months**.¹

Emotional bullying includes any form of isolating, rejecting, excluding from a group, or any other non-physical form of hostile treatment. 25% of 15 year olds reported experiencing **emotional bullying in the last 12 months**.¹



Sexual Violence

Sexual violence takes different forms, and includes non-consensual completed or attempted sexual contact or acts of a sexual nature that do not involve physical contact, and any form of coercion into sexual situations. Available data indicate 7% of children experienced sexual violence before the age of 18.²



Among those exposed to any form of sexual violence in their lives, 13% occurred at school.



Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment refers to any form of punishment involving physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort. 77% of children reported experiencing corporal punishment from teachers.



Is corporal punishment banned in these settings...³



Data Gaps

PISA 2022 provides information about physical and emotional bullying from peers. **VACS 2013** covers child prevalence of physical and sexual violence by peers, parents, partners, and teachers, and emotional violence from parents. **GSHS 2013** has data on student bullying. PISA-D 2017 includes sexual violence data. Data cannot be broken down by disability or LGBTQ+ status. ⁴ The table below denotes where data is available.

Type of Violence	Aged 6 to 12	Aged 13 to 22	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2018	2019 or after
Physical (Peers)		✓		VACS, GSHS	PISA
Emotional (Peers)		✓		GSHS	PISA
Sexual (Peers)		✓		VACS, PISA-D	
Sexual (Teachers)		✓		VACS, PISA-D	
Corporal Punishment (Teachers)		✓		VACS	
Corporal Punishment (Caretakers)					

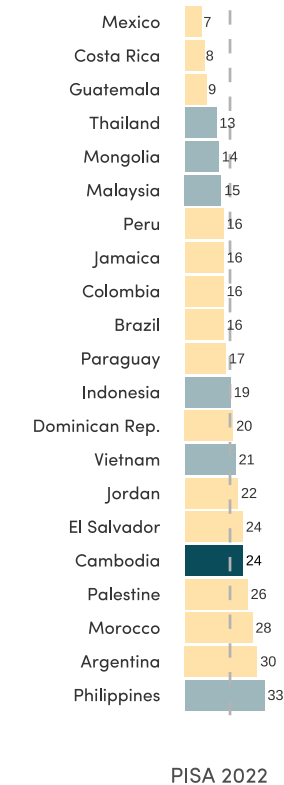
Cambodia Compared to Other Countries

The graphs below include only countries with data from the same international survey, which means the data were collected from children of similar ages using the same questions. **Below are country averages.**



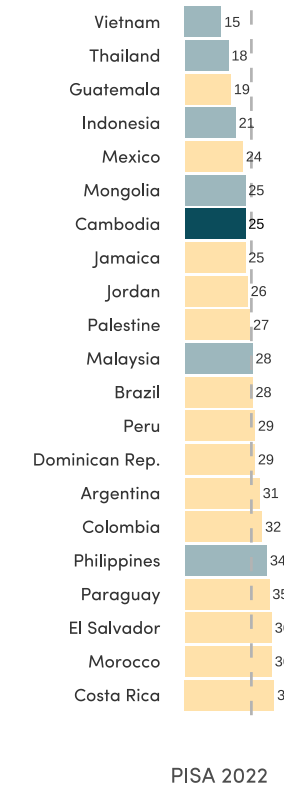
Physical Bullying is...

4 percentage points higher than the East Asia and Pacific average, and 5 percentage points higher than the average for middle-income countries with data.



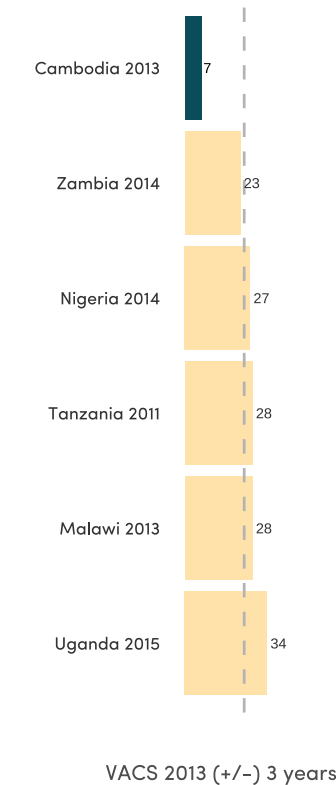
Emotional Bullying is...

1 percentage point higher than the East Asia and Pacific average, and 3 percentage points lower than the average for middle-income countries with data.



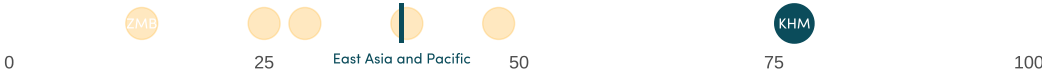
Sexual Violence is...

18 percentage points lower than the average for low- and middle-income countries with data.



Corporal Punishment (Teachers)

Students who experienced corporal punishment from teachers (%) - VACS 2013 (+/-) 3 years



Corporal Punishment (Caretakers)

— No Data —

Notes

- International surveys cover different forms of violence and do not use a standard definition of violence.
- This brief covers international survey data. We recommend complementing it with national surveys (e.g., household surveys) when available.
- The violence figures included in this brief are likely an underestimate, as many victims do not disclose their experiences of violence.⁶
- Country comparisons created with DHS, VACS, and GSHS data, include low- and middle-income countries within +/- 3 years of Cambodia's survey round. Graphs created with MICS, TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA, PISA-D, and ERCE, include low- and middle-income countries with data on the same survey round.
- Cambodia participated in a [benchmarking exercise](#) with [Safe to Learn](#) to establish baselines and track progress on efforts to end violence in, around, and through schools.

Sources

1. Calculations using PISA 2022.
2. Calculations using VACS 2013. Surveys ages 13 to 24.
3. [End Corporal Punishment of Children](#), data accessed 2024. Note: "Some" represents cases where prohibition is stated for specific provisions (eg., [forms of corporal punishment or school levels](#)). Alternative Care refers to cases where a child's primary caregiver is not their parents (eg. foster care).
4. [Evans, Hares, Smarrelli, and Wu](#). CGD 2023.
5. While DHS asks about teacher and peer perpetrators of physical violence, we exclude from our analysis as the age range does not reflect the period when children are most likely to experience corporal punishment. If the focus is on physical violence against women by teachers starting at age 15, DHS data can provide relevant insights.
6. [Smarrelli, Wu, Baago-Rasmussen, Hares, and Naker](#). CGD 2024.