

# Violence against children in and around schools in Uganda

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 Uganda, and highlights key data gaps.

**Bullying** refers to repeated emotional or physical aggressive behaviours including any form of isolating, rejecting or excluding from a group, or hitting, kicking, pushing by peers. Overall data on bullying is not available.<sup>1</sup> 6% girls and 9% boys experienced physical attacks from peers in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>



## 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 34% of children experienced sexual violence before the age of 18.<sup>2</sup>



Among those exposed to any form of sexual violence in their lives, 23% occurred at school.



## Corporal Punishment

**Corporal punishment** refers to any form of punishment involving physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort. 39% of children reported experiencing corporal punishment from teachers.



## Is corporal punishment banned in these settings...<sup>3</sup>



## Data Gaps

**VACS 2015** covers child prevalence of physical and sexual violence by peers, parents, partners, and teachers, and emotional violence from parents. **DHS (2011, 2016)** provides sexual violence data. Data cannot be broken down by disability or LGBTQ+ status.<sup>4</sup> The table below denotes where data is available.

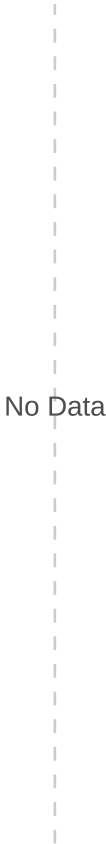
Type of Violence	Aged 6 to 12	Aged 13 to 22	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2018	2019 or after
Physical (Peers)		✓		VACS	
Emotional (Peers)					
Sexual (Peers)		✓		VACS	
Sexual (Teachers)		✓		DHS, VACS	
Corporal Punishment (Teachers)		✓		DHS <sup>5*</sup> , VACS	
Corporal Punishment (Caretakers)					

# Uganda 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.**



**Bullying data is not available**



**Physical Attacks are...**  
3 percentage points higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa average, and 3 percentage points higher than the average for low- and middle-income countries with data.



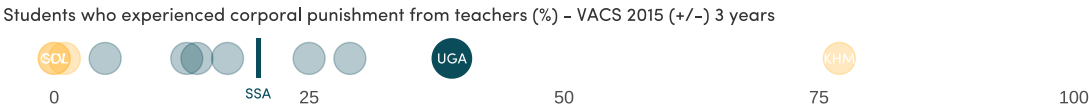
**Sexual Violence is...**  
11 percentage points higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa average, and 15 percentage points higher than the average for low- and middle-income countries with data.



VACS 2015 (+/-) 3 years

VACS 2015 (+/-) 3 years

**Corporal Punishment (Teachers)**



**Corporal Punishment (Caretakers)**



**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.<sup>6</sup>
- Country comparisons created with DHS, VACS, and GSHS data, include low- and middle-income countries within +/- 3 years of Uganda'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.
- Uganda participated in a [benchmarking](#) and [diagnostic](#) exercise with [Safe to Learn](#) to establish baselines and track progress on efforts to end violence in, around, and through schools.

**Sources**

1. Examples of surveys that include questions on bullying are PIRLS, PISA, TIMSS, and GSHS.
2. Calculations using VACS 2015. 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.