

SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA



Results of the 2012 National School Violence Study

Patrick Burton and Lezanne Leoschut

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Abbreviations

BBM	BlackBerry Messenger
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
DBE	Department of Basic Education
GEM/BEM	Girls' Education Movement, Boys' Education Movement
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
OSF-SA	Open Society Foundation of South Africa
NSVS	National School Violence Study
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
YISS	Youth Internet Safety Survey

Executive summary

Violence in schools has garnered considerable media attention in South Africa in recent years. In the past year alone, local media coverage of brazenly violent acts – which have at times proven fatal – have again fuelled public opinion that school violence in South Africa is escalating at an alarming rate and that something needs to be done about it.

This monograph presents the findings of the second National School Violence Study (NSVS) undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP). This 2012 study comes four years after the first sweep of the study, which was conceptualised to provide sound empirical data on the true nature and extent of violence in South African schools.

The first NSVS in 2008 found that 22% of the secondary school learners surveyed had succumbed to some form of violence in the 12 months preceding the study. In 2012, 22.2% of high school learners were found to have been threatened with violence or had been the victim of an assault, robbery and/or sexual assault at school in the past year. While this figure extrapolates to 1,020,597 learners who had encountered violence at school in the past year, it does suggest that the levels of violence in secondary schools had remained relatively constant over the past four years. In addition to exploring any changes and trends in violent victimisation at schools, the second sweep of the NSVS provided the opportunity to explore new and emerging forms of violence affecting young people, such as cyber violence.

KEY FINDINGS

The study sample comprised 5,939 learners, 121 principals and 239 educators. In total, more than a fifth of learners had experienced violence at school. To summarise:

- 12.2% had been threatened with violence by someone at school
- 6.3% had been assaulted
- 4.7% had been sexually assaulted or raped
- 4.5% had been robbed at school.

Although cyber violence is not confined to any particular physical environment, such as schools, the study results highlighted the relationship between online violence and offline, or more traditional, forms of violence (that is, physical violence). This suggests that cyber violence is just one part of a broader spectrum of violence affecting learners in South Africa.

One in five (20%) scholars had experienced some form of cyber bullying or violence in the past year. While concerning, these figures show that cyber violence is not the epidemic that many believe it to be – it is still less prevalent than other forms of school violence.

Violence at schools was often not a one-off encounter. The rate at which learners were repeatedly victimised was more pronounced in the case of threats of violence and sexual assaults. Province was a significant predictor of school violence; age, however, was not, with the levels of violence across the age cohorts in this study being fairly similar. There was little difference between male and female learners and the likelihood of succumbing to threats of violence, robbery and assault at school; however, females reported significantly higher rates of sexual assault than male learners.

The violence occurring at schools was not limited to incidents between learners, and included acts perpetrated against, and by, educators. More than a quarter of principals claimed to have received reports of verbal violence, and more than a tenth received reports of physical violence in which educators were the aggressors. Educators were also often victims of verbal violence (52.1%), physical violence (12.4%) and sexual violence (3.3%) perpetrated by learners.

Alcohol, drugs and weapons were easily accessible for many learners: one in seven learners reported easy access to alcohol, one in ten reported easy access to drugs, nearly a tenth asserted that it would be easy for them to obtain a firearm at school, and one in five learners claimed having easy access to knives or other weapons at their school. The ease of access to weapons and substances was facilitated by personal knowledge of individuals who were involved in various drug-related activities at school: nearly a quarter of the sample knew people who had brought weapons to school with them, one in six knew people at school who were involved in criminal activities, and nearly a tenth knew people at their school who sold or dealt in drugs.

School violence affects not only those who are directly victimised but also those who witness the violence occurring at schools. This creates an atmosphere

of fear and apprehension, which interferes with one's ability to learn. More than a tenth of learners claimed that there was an area at school where they usually experienced fear (specifically toilets), while for one in six learners, fear was associated with the journey to and from school. Even so, most learners felt safe at school, reflecting the extent to which youths have become desensitised to the violence occurring within the social spaces they occupy.

Like the 2008 study, the 2012 NSVS once again highlighted the extent to which family and community factors intersect with the levels of violence occurring at schools. The results showed that by the time young people enter secondary school many of them have already been exposed to violence, either as victims or witnesses, in their homes or communities. More than a tenth of the participants had seen people in their family intentionally hurting one another, one in ten learners had themselves been assaulted at home, while less than a tenth had been robbed or sexually assaulted at home – a situation that significantly increased their risk for violence in the school environment. Similarly, close to half of the sample had witnessed a physical fight in their community, with the victims and perpetrators in these acts often known to the respondents.

The effect of neighbourhood crime and violence is underscored by the following statistics: 60.5% of learners who had experienced violence at school claimed that crime was a problem in their neighbourhood, compared to 46.5% of non-victims who said crime was a problem in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, 63.8% of learners who had experienced violence at school claimed to have witnessed a fight in their neighbourhood, compared to 44.4% of non-victims who had witnessed a fight in their community.

This scenario was exacerbated by the presence of family and neighbourhood adults in the lives of these young people who had been incarcerated or involved in drug-related or other criminal activities. Some 23.7% of learners had siblings who had been incarcerated for criminal offences, while 9.4% of learners reported that any of their parents or caregivers had ever been imprisoned. Given the proximity of young people to potential offenders, one can expect their risk of violence to be enhanced. These statistics highlight the importance of safe communities and safe home environments as prerequisites for safe schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

School violence is undergirded by a myriad of individual, school, family and broader community-level risk factors that coalesce to create vulnerability for violence. For this reason, any attempt to curb violence occurring in schools needs to extend beyond the school itself.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has provided a framework for a whole-school approach – a strategy advocated for in the 2008 NSVS, following the recognition that a school comprises several interdependent components, including learners, educators, principals, parents, school bodies and teams.

In line with this framework, the following recommendations are made.

- The DBE's School Safety Framework should be prioritised and accompanied by a roll-out and implementation plan, as well as progress monitoring systems to hold individual schools accountable for implementation.
- The 2012 NSVS highlights the need for performance management systems to ensure that principals and educators are held accountable for classroom safety.
- Environmental design factors that contribute to violence in schools should be prioritised and dealt with, but should not be seen as a standalone measure to curb violence. Instead, environmental design factors should be integrated with more developmental approaches to safety promotion and violence prevention.
- School violence prevention initiatives should be evidence based. This necessitates the development of an evidence base of what works and what does not work in violence prevention in South Africa. This will ensure that resources and efforts are targeted where they are most likely to be effective.
- An adequate and reliable set of school safety indicators should be developed against which the progress of school safety can be assessed at both provincial and national level.
- The short- and long-term impact of safety initiatives should be evaluated prior to the roll-out of any intervention strategy in schools. The need for short-term impacts (such as reducing levels of fear within schools and increasing perceptions of safety) should be balanced with longer-term effective and proven violence-prevention initiatives.
- The planning and implementation of school safety plans should be integrated into local development plans to ensure partnerships with other local stakeholders.
- Prevention efforts need to be implemented across schools to address new and emerging forms of violence affecting young people, such as cyber violence.
- Easily accessible and child-friendly reporting mechanisms should be implemented in schools, alongside adequate response systems.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of each and every child. It is crucial for children's development, enabling them to cultivate their creative talents and critical thinking, gain life skills, join hands with friends and develop social relations, and grow with dignity, confidence and self-esteem as individuals. [It] has a unique potential to generate an environment where attitudes condoning violence can be changed and non-violent behaviour can be learned. From children's early years, schools are well placed to break patterns of violence and provide skills to communicate, to negotiate and support peaceful solutions to conflicts.

*Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative
of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children*

Violence in South African schools is not a new phenomenon. It is likely that as long as formal schools have existed, violence of some form has taken place within the physical walls of the environment. School violence has undoubtedly predated the school safety literature and initiatives that have emerged over the past ten years. It is only in the last decade in South Africa that school violence has become a national concern. Schools, which should be a safe haven for young people, and where children of school-going age spend three-quarters of their waking hours, are instead sites where young people are apparently as at-risk of falling victim to violence as they are in the homes and communities in which they live.

Public and policy-maker impressions and perceptions of school violence are often influenced by the high-profile and often very violent incidents covered in the media. These unfortunate incidents are usually isolated instances on which

media attention is concentrated for days or weeks at a time. The incidents, however, tend to divert attention away from the more fundamental problem of school violence and the more common form that school violence takes – that is, the repetitive, on-going forms of violence (physical or emotional) that impact on young people's attachment to school, as well as on their participation and performance therein.

If policy-makers, parents, school staff and management are to successfully address the challenges of school violence then they need reliable and standardised data on the extent, nature and characteristics of violence related to schools in South Africa.

In 2008, in the absence of any nationally representative data on the extent and nature of school violence in South Africa, the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), with the support of the (then) National Department of Education, undertook a national school violence baseline study. The study collected data from both primary and secondary schools in all nine provinces of South Africa, and for the first time provided an accurate picture of violence in schools.

In 2012, again with the cooperation of the renamed national Department of Basic Education (DBE), the CJCP undertook a second sweep of the National School Violence Study (NSVS), this time focusing only on secondary schools in all nine provinces. This monograph documents the findings of the second sweep of the study and provides an important picture of the current state of violence in South African schools, as well as whether any progress has been made over the past four years in addressing this critical issue.

DEFINING VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL

Violence is often seen as being synonymous with crime; however, not all crime is violence and not all violence is criminal. This is particularly so with violence relating to school and the school experience. For example, many forms of bullying, which are common at school, do not constitute a crime but are violent in nature and result in substantial harm to the victims. Indeed, violence such as bullying is often considered too inconsequential to constitute violence, with little recognition of the damage – psychological, emotional and/or physical – that can be caused.

The definitions used in the collection of the data for this and the previous study, and which have informed the analysis of the data presented herein, are generally taken from the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2002 report on violence and health. The report defines violence as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, (against oneself), another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.¹

The exception to the above definition in the scope of this monograph is self-inflicted harm, which was not included in the study. It is important to note the inclusion of both actual and threats of violence, as well as the inclusion of power and physical force.

The term 'violence at school', or 'school violence', conjures up a neatly contained picture of violence – that is, violence that occurs within the physical border of the school environs. But this image is not wholly accurate. Included in the definition is violence associated with the way young people 'experience' school. This therefore includes acts that are, on a daily basis, associated with school, specifically travelling to and from school, or arriving at or waiting outside the school grounds.

In the case of cyber bullying and online aggression – which is included in the study for the first time – the physical constraints are more artificial as violence perpetrated online transcends physical boundaries. The study explored online violence generally, as well as its association with the school environment through classmates/schoolmates or educators as both perpetrators and victims.

While often referring only to instances of bullying, sexting, happy slapping, flaming and outing, the examination of cyber bullying and online violence in the study was expanded to include:

- Instances of online fights
- Having rude, offensive or insulting messages sent to one
- Having cruel and hurtful rumours posted or sent about one
- Having personal or embarrassing secrets posted online or sent online
- Being threatened with harm online
- Having messages posted by others using one's account
- Having nude or sexually explicit images, texts or messages sent without one's permission.

Finally, in keeping with the WHO definition of violence, the study also explored the use of corporal punishment in schools. Although corporal punishment is illegal in South African schools and essentially constitutes assault under the South African Criminal Code, it is still commonly reported to occur.²

WHY IS SCHOOL VIOLENCE IMPORTANT?

Violence at or around schools is arguably one of the most important issues facing

young people in South Africa today. Its importance goes beyond the immediate physical harm that can result for the learner, or the psychological harm attached to either direct or indirect victimisation. In fact, the long-term consequences of violence associated with school far outlast the short-term outcomes.

Both direct and indirect violence associated with school often results in truancy from school as learners become too scared to attend or try to avoid the school environment in an attempt to avoid the attendant violence. This is particularly important in an environment where the completion rate for learners from reception year through to Grade 12 is less than 50%. Related to this – and often precipitating school drop-out – is that school violence often results in a decrease in educational performance as victims battle to focus on content and on their school work in general.

Depression and fatigue, two other common results of violence, can in turn further impact negatively on school performance. Depression, together with other symptoms, can translate into longer term psycho-social effects, which have an impact not only for the individual victim but for the way that individual associates with and assimilates into society in general.

The relationship between violent victimisation and later aggressive behaviour is well-documented. Those who are victimised at a young age are at greater risk of themselves engaging in violent and anti-social behaviour as they get older. Similarly, those who are bullied at school are at greater risk of themselves engaging in bullying behaviour. In a society that is already often perceived both domestically and internationally as being one of the most violent in the world, this in itself justifies concerted action to break the cycle of violence that young people are exposed to – starting with the school environment.

School violence can also erode the ability of victims to form healthy, pro-social and trusting relationships with peers and adults. This is predominantly the case when violence is experienced at the hands of adults, particularly those placed in a position of care over the child, such as educators. Furthermore, such violence (including all forms of corporal punishment) as well as exposure to violence can reinforce the message that violence is the most appropriate way of resolving conflict and instilling discipline – messages that are internalised and acted upon as the young person grows into adulthood. Conversely, trusting relationships with peers and adults can serve as a strong protective or resilience factor for young people, particularly those growing up in adverse circumstances.

Finally, violence at school can erode young people's sense of hope and optimism in their future, and, consequently, their ability to cope with any adversity and difficulties they may face growing up in a social and economic environment that is, at best, challenging.

The above factors are interrelated and cannot be easily isolated: learning outcomes are related to economic potential, as are physical and mental health. When positive, they reflect the fundamental rights of children enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;³ when negative (even

when not directly violating children's rights), they serve to increase the risk that these rights will be threatened or undermined.

There is, however, a flip side to school violence: where schools are effectively transformed into places of safety and learning, and into environments where young people feel protected, appreciated and nurtured, the results have consequences far beyond the immediate school environment and extend to the short- and medium-term trajectories of the learners.

Schools and the school body – comprising learners, administrators, management and educators – are all an integral part of safety more generally at a community level. As the role of communities and local level crime and violence prevention is increasingly recognised, so too is the role of safe schools as a central component of these strategies. The creation and maintenance of a safe school environment can be an essential component in shifting the societal values and norms associated with community violence, particularly where schools are located within communities characterised by violence.

School safety programmes and interventions can address a wide range of issues that reinforce violence within both the school and community, including behaviours, attitudes, patterns and forms of communication, policies and norms. Examples might include conflict mediation and resolution approaches, programmes that embrace cultural diversity, or healthy masculinity interventions. Furthermore, through participation in local safety forums and structures, schools can play an important role in steering communities towards safety.⁴

Finally, schools that drive school safety programmes, in partnership with local partners (e.g. local government, the police and other stakeholders), can reap tangible benefits for community-level safety beyond the immediate confines of their school, with positive safety outcomes for their own learners and the community in general. Simple examples of this would be engaging with relevant authorities to tackle immediate dangers, such as alcohol and drug sale points in school vicinities, or environmental barriers (e.g. long grass, broken street lights) relating to safety to and from school.

This last point is of even greater importance in countries or localities characterised by high levels of youth violence in particular. Violence prevention literature is increasingly emphasising the importance of reducing risk factors while concurrently increasing protective or resilience factors in young people. Many of these risk and protective factors lie at the school level. By building resilience at this level, a synergistic impact on other spheres of protective factors can be affected.

School-level risk factors include truancy and drop-out, poor educator–learner bonds and relationships, disorderly school environments, association with delinquent peers, and a negative or harmful school climate. Conversely, school-level protective factors include positive educator–learner bonds, academic motivation and success, school discipline and clear rules, non-deviant friends and peers, and involvement in structured pro-social activities.⁵

A recent UNICEF report identified three compelling arguments for focusing on the issue of violence at schools:

- School violence results in a violation of the basic rights of children. Violence at school may result in decreased educational performance and increased isolation, and may place both their mental and physical health at risk. Further, it may result in secondary victimisation, instilling fear and negatively impacting on children who may not have directly experienced violence but may have seen friends or peers affected.
- The second argument relates to the social impact of the phenomenon, and, inversely, to the potential of violence-free schools to contribute to social cohesion. By creating violence-free schools, there is increased likelihood of impacting positively on the environments in which the school is located – a particularly important fact when schools are located in communities characterised as violent. Essentially, by creating violence-free schools, a ‘ripple-effect’ on violence prevention and social cohesion can be initiated in communities.
- Finally, eliminating school violence can make a substantial contribution to the development capacity of countries. Data points to the economic and social impact that school violence, including bullying, has – both in the short term and in terms of the long-term economic opportunities for learners. Getting young people (particularly girls) into school, and keeping them there safely, is particularly important for national development.

Source: Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children, Tackling Violence in Schools: A Global Perspective. Bridging the Gap between Standards and Practice. New York: United Nations, 2012.

This is, of course, beyond the more immediate positive outcomes of improved educational outcomes that result from safe schools, where learners feel sheltered, protected and can focus on learning. Such outcomes are even more important in developing economies, where economies are in desperate need of professional skills and where the economic burden of unemployed is already profound.

Another factor to consider is the direct costs of health care and intervention that school-related violence can place on an economy. For example, it is estimated that school violence in Brazil costs the state approximately US\$943 million a year, while the figure in the United States is an estimated US\$7.9 billion. In Egypt, nearly 7% of potential earnings are lost as a direct result of school drop-out (although it is unclear what percentage of these drop-outs relates to school violence).⁶

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The design of the study is largely consistent with that of the 2008 study, with common key indicators and definitions used across both sweeps. One important difference, however, was factored in to the 2012 study. Over the past six years, cyber bullying and other forms of online violence have emerged as a new form of

violence affecting young people, both in and outside of school. While the 2008 NSVS did not look at this form of violence, cyber bullying was included in the 2012 sweep.

A reference group was convened to guide the design of the study, the instrument, and the various reporting and ethical considerations. The group included representatives from civil society, academic institutions, international agencies and government. A comprehensive annotated training manual was compiled for the training, and included explanations of the sampling process, the instruments, reporting requirements and informed consent.

The study utilised a primarily quantitative approach. Pre-coded instruments were designed for learners, educators and principals. Each instrument was tested in a pilot at two sites (both of which were excluded from the final sample).

A stratified sample was used for this study. In a sample such as this, the total study population – in this case, the total number of secondary schools in South Africa – is divided into subgroups that vary according to a specific feature known to be related to the study results.⁷ Thus, the sample of secondary schools was stratified by *province*.

To ensure that each province was fully represented in the study, the percentage that schools in each province make up of the total number of secondary schools in the country was calculated. Based on this calculation, the percentage of the sample that should come from each province was determined.

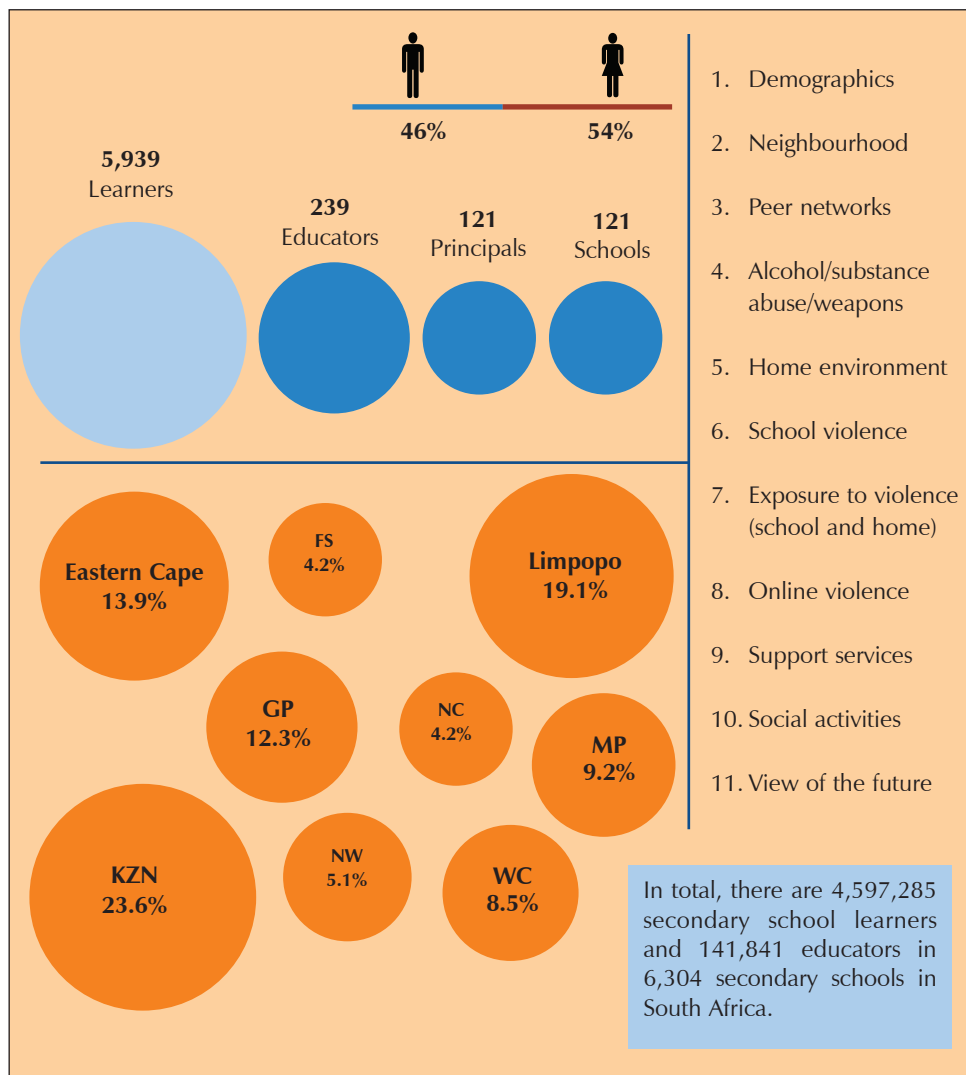
Since the sample was drawn proportionate to size, provinces with a greater number of secondary schools had greater representation in the study sample. The DBE Education Management Information System was used as the sampling frame, from which a total of 121 schools were randomly selected.

Letters of introduction from the DBE were sent to each school and visits were scheduled by the research teams. At each school, the principals and learners were briefed, and informed consent forms were distributed to all learners. Ten learners from each grade were randomly recruited from those who returned completed informed parental consent, resulting in a sample of 50 learners per school. In addition, the principal and two educators were interviewed per school. In total, a sample of 5,939 learners, 121 principals and 239 educators was achieved. Two of the original schools selected into the sample refused participation and were replaced with two substitute schools drawn randomly from the sample.

A few schools included in the sample were combined schools that offered only a limited number of secondary grades. Where this was the case, the total of 50 learners interviewed was spread across the available grades. For example, in a school that offered only grades 8 through to 10, 17 interviews per grade were conducted.

All interviews were conducted in private, on a one-on-one basis, with a fieldworker of the same gender as the respondent. Learners were informed that they could stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question they did not feel comfortable answering. A referral system was established through

Figure 1: Study sample demographics



which participants could be referred to local counselling centres or support systems. All interviews were conducted in the vernacular of the learner to ensure comprehension and the most accurate recording of responses. Following a rigorous quality control process both in the field and prior to data capture, the data was double-captured into Epi-Info to ensure the eradication of any capture errors, and was validated. The data was converted in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

In total, just one-fifth (19.9%) of the schools sampled were located in metropolitan areas, slightly over one-fifth (22.8%) were in urban areas and over half (57.3%) were in rural areas. Females were slightly over-represented in the

sample, with 54% of the total sample of learners being female while just under half (46%) were male.

In the analysis of the data, relationships between variables have been tested to ensure that differences are larger than might be expected due to sampling variation. Unless otherwise reported, relationships are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

ORGANISATION OF THE MONOGRAPH

The next chapter, **Chapter Two**, discusses the experience of violence in schools and explores the nature and forms of violence, key variables and variations in the extent of violence, as well as corporal punishment. **Chapter Three** discusses the fear and nature of violence in and related to schools, including reporting trends and the use or availability of alcohol, drugs and weapons at school. **Chapter Four** explores learners' home and community environments, and examines the relationship between these environments and experiences at schools. **Chapter Five** details learners' experiences of online violence and their use of social media, while **Chapter Six** explores the impact of violence on young people. Finally, **Chapter Seven** details the conclusions drawn from the data and provides recommendations for both policy and implementation-level actions that can be taken to deal with the violence described in the previous chapters.

Violence in schools

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- School violence is a complex phenomenon.
- On the whole, one in five learners (22.2%) had succumbed to some form of violence while at school in the 12 months between August 2011 and August 2012.
- This translates to 1,020,597 secondary school learners who had been violently victimised at school in the past year.
- When comparing the 2008 (22%) and 2012 (22.2%) results, the data showed that violence in schools remained relatively constant over the past four years.
- Variations were observed for the individual types of violence assessed: levels of assault and sexual assault had increased slightly over the past four years, while the rates of robbery and threats had shown slight decreases during this period.
- Province was a significant predictor of school violence.
- Gender and age were insignificant in predicting violence at school.
- Violent incidents at schools were not limited to acts occurring between learners but included violence perpetrated against and by educators.
- Little headway has been made in reducing the levels of corporal punishment at schools, with provincial rates ranging between 22.4% and 73.7%.
- Certain forms of victimisation, specifically bullying, were found to create vulnerability for other more serious and criminal victimisations.

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, as elsewhere, young people are a central focus in deliberations around crime, and specifically violence-related issues. It has been known for some time now that young people succumb to violence at much higher rates than their adult counterparts. Much of the violence they experience occurs within the school environment – a context where young people spend a substantial amount of time.

Despite the growing attention that this subject has garnered in the media over the past few years, studies on the nature and extent of school violence in South Africa are lacking – even in the face of the grave costs to the country’s youth, and society as a whole, if the issue is not fully understood and addressed.

The 2008 National School Violence Study (NSVS) was a landmark investigation that provided national level data in response to pressing questions at the time:

- How serious a problem is school violence?
- How many learners are affected by violence within schools across the country?
- Which learners are falling victim to this form of violence?
- When and where is this problem occurring?

The findings highlighted in this chapter demonstrate that little has changed over the past four years. Many young people in South Africa continue to be expected to learn in school environments that hold a considerable amount of risk for violence.

THE EXTENT OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

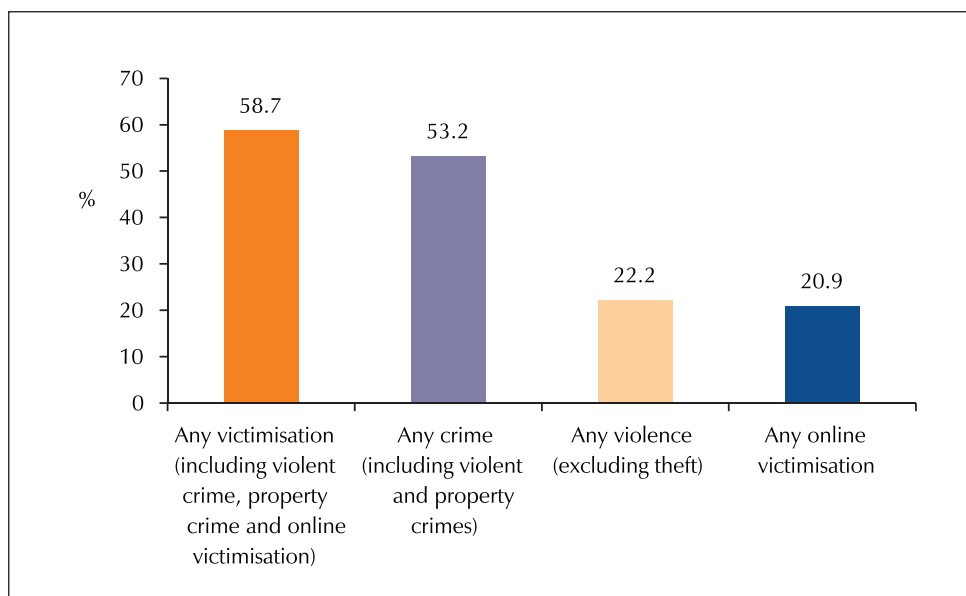
In keeping with the first sweep of the NSVS, the 2012 school violence study explored the prevalence of four specific types of violence among secondary school learners occurring within the school grounds. Specifically, experiences of threats of violence, assault, sexual assault and robbery were assessed. Although the focus was on violent crimes at school, the study also gauged the prevalence of non-violent crimes among learners, particularly theft, in the past year.

The rapid uptake of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in South Africa has inadvertently opened up new avenues for victimisation against young people, and has generated a great deal of concern from practitioners, policy-makers and the lay public.

This necessitated the need to explore the extent of online violence as experienced by secondary school learners. (Only the overall percentage of learners experiencing online violence is mentioned in this chapter as the nature of this emerging form of violence is detailed in Chapter Five.)

The victimisation rates taken together revealed that more than a fifth – a total of 22.2% – of the sample had experienced any of the four types of violence asked about at their schools in the 12 months preceding the study (that is, from August 2011 to August 2012) (see Figure 2). This figure translates to 1,020,597 secondary school learners country-wide who have fallen victim to some form of violence while at school in the past year. The percentage was up by 0.2% from the 22% observed in the first wave of the study, suggesting that violence in schools had remained relatively unchanged over the past four years.

Figure 2: Overall victimisation rates (%)

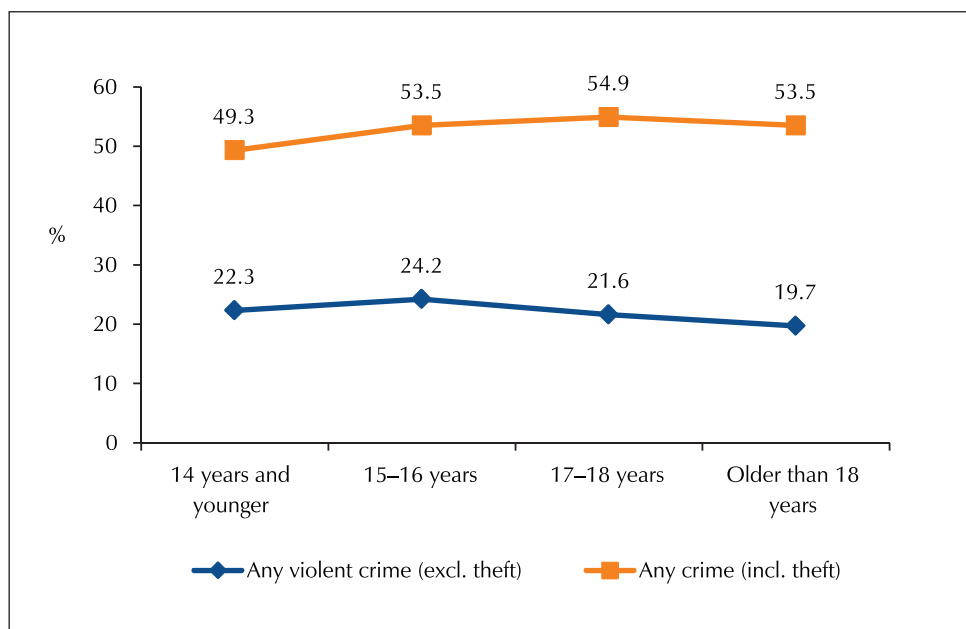


When considering theft of personal belongings, the overall victimisation rate increased significantly to 53.2%, indicating that a total of 2,445,756 high school learners had succumbed to crime (including violent and property-related crime) in the past year. This percentage increased even further when the experience of cyber violence was included in the analysis. Here, the overall victimisation rate soared to 58.7%, indicating that 2,698,606 of South Africa’s high school learners had fallen prey to violent crime, property-related crime, online victimisation of some sort, or a combination of these, over the past year (see Figure 2).

Violence was significantly more prevalent in schools located in urban areas (26.2%) compared to those in metropolitan (21.7%) and rural areas (20.8%; $p < 0.05$). Violence was experienced to similar degrees by all learners across the age cohorts. The learners surveyed ranged in age from 12 years to older than 18 years.

As evident from the percentages in Figure 3 (*next page*), the experience of violence tended to increase with age up to the age of 16 years (from 22.3% by learners 14 years and younger, to 24.2% by learners 15–16 years of age), whereafter it tended

The CJCP’s 2008 Lifestyle Study provided evidence for the country-wide prevalence of violent victimisation among young people between the ages of 12 and 22 years. Of the more than 4,300 youths interviewed, 16.4% had ever had property stolen, 14.4% had ever been assaulted, 10.2% had ever been robbed and 3.6% had ever been sexually assaulted. Much of these victimisations had occurred while the participants were at school. Schools were identified as the site of victimisation in 47.2% of thefts, 21.9% of assaults, 7.3% of robberies and 4.2% of sexual assaults.

Figure 3: School victimisation, by age (%)

to decline slowly, with older learners reporting the lowest levels of violence. This trend could be attributed in part to the smaller physiques of younger learners, who would be unable to protect themselves from harm to the same extent that an older, physically stronger learner would.⁸

A slightly different pattern was observed when theft was included in the analysis, with younger learners reporting the lowest levels of victimisation and those older than 14 years experiencing progressively higher levels of victimisation (see Figure 3). This is in line with the expectation that older learners usually have greater access to covetable goods which they may have in their possession while at school, affecting their suitability as targets for theft and other property-related crimes.

A greater proportion of Indian learners (31.8%) had encountered some form of violence at school in the past year, followed by Coloured (26.3%) and black learners (22%). By contrast, significantly fewer white learners (15.9%) had reported violence at schools during the 12-month period prior to being interviewed for the study ($p < 0.05$).

Consistent with the 2008 results, threats of violence were the most common violent incident experienced by high school learners, and were reported by a total of 12.2% of the sample. The percentage had decreased by 2.3% from 14.5% in the first sweep of the NSVS. Even so, the percentage remains high, translating to 560,869 learners who had succumbed to this form of violence while at school.

Threats of violence are just as important as actual violent events. While threats of violence may not result in physical harm, the psychological harm caused results

in feelings of fear, which in turn may impact negatively on learners' attachment to school, resulting in absenteeism, truancy and poor academic performance.

The second most frequently reported form of violence at school was assault. To distinguish this from robbery, the term assault was used to refer to incidents where learners may have been attacked or hurt by someone physically, using any kind of weapon or their hands, without having any of their belongings taken. This definition incorporates both common assault as well as assault with the intent to commit grievous bodily harm.

A total of 6.3% of secondary school learners had reported an assault in the past year. This proportion was greater than that observed in 2008 (4.3%), suggesting that the levels of assault in schools had increased by 2% over the past four years. When generalising this figure to all learners in South Africa, one can infer that 289,629 secondary school learners had fallen victim to assault at school between August 2011 and August 2012. Put differently, the rate of assault on secondary school learners is 63 per 1,000 learners.

The physical attacks varied in nature. At times they involved a single perpetrator, while at other times multiple perpetrators were implicated. Weapons used in the assaults were wide-ranging and included illegal items such as guns or knives as well as any other object within the perpetrator's reach at the time of the assault, such as pencils, sticks, rocks or stones.

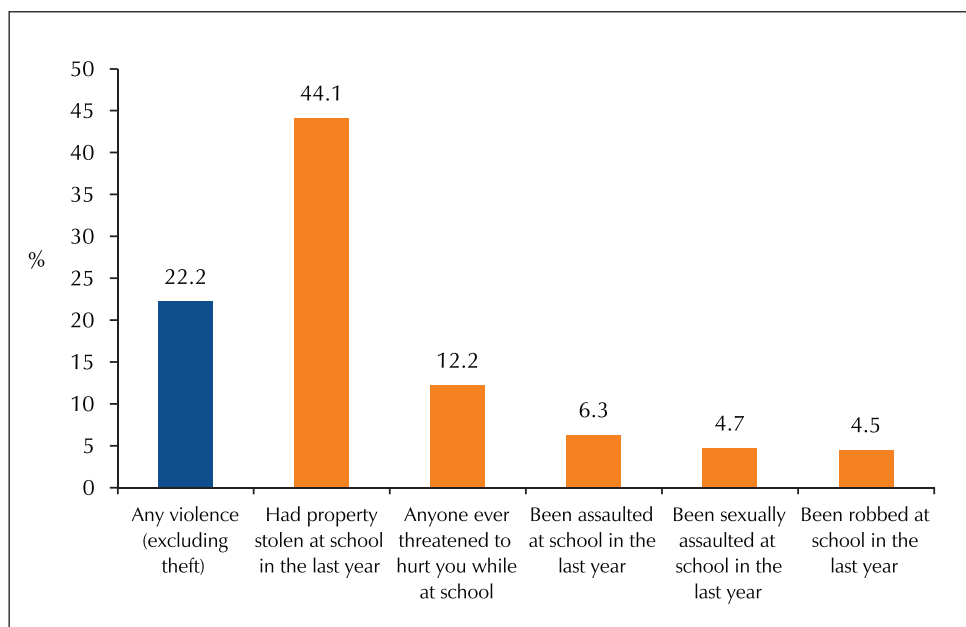
Fights are common at school – so much so that it has long been considered normal adolescent and playground behaviour. There is, however, a move away from this mode of thinking due to the increasing frequency of fights and the escalating levels of violence in the attacks.

A total of 4.7% of learners recounted an experience of sexual assault at school (see Figure 4, *next page*). This figure was up by 1.6% from the 3.1% observed in 2008, and proved to be more common than robbery among secondary school learners. Sexual assault and rape were combined for the purpose of this study and refer here only to uninvited sexual contact of any kind, irrespective of whether or not penetration occurred. For this reason, the question was asked in such a way as to exclude any form of consensual sexual activity that may occur between individuals, as well as issues relating to statutory rape and the age of consent. Even with the increase, the statistic obtained should be interpreted with caution given the sensitive nature of this crime and the resultant tendency to underreport sexual assault to both authorities and significant others.

Victimisation at school takes on many different forms and is not limited to criminal violence. The 2012 NSVS shows that:

- 13% of learners reported bullying
- 14% of learners claimed to have someone at school threaten to say something about them that was intended to stigmatise them
- 13.3% of learners reported that they had ever been forced by someone at school to engage in activities, against their will, that they felt were wrong and did not want to engage in.

Figure 4: Combined victimisations experienced at school (including theft) (%)



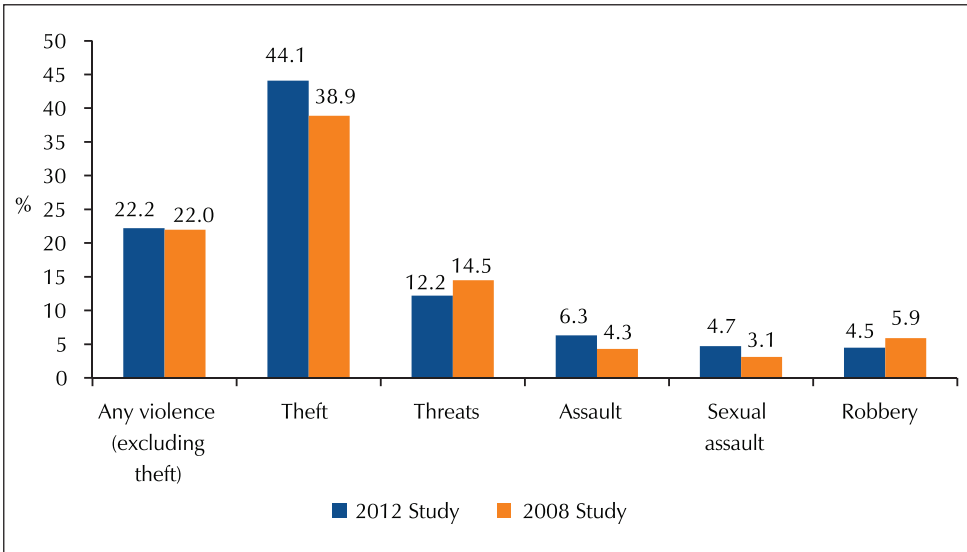
When extrapolating this percentage to the total population, it is found that 216,072 learners had encountered a sexual assault on school premises in the past year, at a rate of 46.9 learners per 1,000.

Robbery was the least common form of violence experienced by the learners, although this figure was only fractionally smaller than that observed for sexual assault (see Figure 4). To assess the levels of robbery at schools, learners were asked whether someone had ever taken something that belonged to them by force, violence or by threatening to hurt them. The crime of robbery thus combines theft with the use or threat of violence. In response to this question, 4.5% of learners claimed to have been robbed at school in the past year. This translates to 206,878 high school learners who had their property taken from them by force while at school, at a rate of 45 per 1,000 learners. Learners were typically robbed of money (25.5%), school stationery (24.5%), electronic items such as cellular phones, iPods or MP3 players (22.1%), and at times even food (2.1%) and clothing (1.2%).

In addition to these violent crimes, learners were asked about property-related crimes, specifically theft, at school. As in 2008, theft of personal property was widespread within schools, constituting the most frequently reported crime among secondary school learners. The 44.1% of past-year theft victims translates to a total of 2,027,403 learners who had succumbed to theft in schools across the country in the 12-month period between August 2011 and August 2012, at a rate of 441 per 1,000 learners. This rate was up by 5.2% from the 38.9% in 2008.

Similar to the items taken during robberies, items stolen ranged from school stationery (reported by 51.6% of theft victims) to electronic goods such as MP3

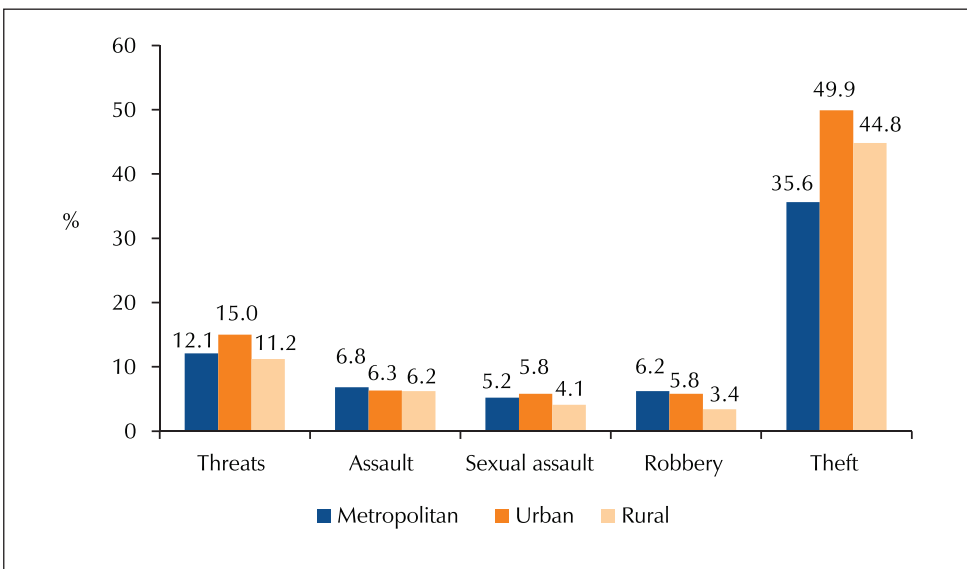
Figure 5: Comparative victimisation rates, 2008 and 2012 (%)



players, iPods and cellular phones (16.4%), classwork or textbooks (15.9%), and money (7.9%).

When considering area classification, levels of school violence were found to be highest in schools situated in urban and metropolitan areas. Learners attending schools in urban areas reported the highest rates of threats of violence (15%) and sexual assault (5.8%) compared to learners from metropolitan (12.1% and 5.2%)

Figure 6: Victimization by area type (%)



respectively) and rural schools (11.2% and 4.1% respectively). Conversely, levels of assault (6.8%) and robbery (6.2%) were most prevalent among learners attending schools in metropolitan areas compared to learners from schools in urban (6.3% and 5.8% respectively) and rural areas (6.2% and 3.4% respectively). Thefts were also most likely to occur in urban schools (49.9%) compared to schools in rural (44.8%) and metropolitan areas (35.6%) (see Figure 6, *previous page*).

MULTIPLE VICTIMISATION

The study results provide evidence to suggest that specific forms of victimisation create vulnerability for others. Learners who fall prey to violence are often re-victimised subsequent to their initial encounter with violence, and experience several forms of victimisation.⁹

Although it was evident from the data that most learners who had encountered violence at school had experienced only one type of violence (17.7%), 4.5% had been exposed to two or more types of violence within the school environment in the past year alone (see Figure 7).

This notion was further borne out in the relationship between bullying and criminal victimisation, indicating that bullying often heightens susceptibility to other more serious and violent forms of victimisation occurring at school.¹⁰

Significantly more learners who had ever been bullied at school (56.5%) had also been the victim of a violent crime in the past year, compared to violent crime victims who had never been bullied at school (17.1%; $p < 0.05$) (see Figure 8). The pattern remained unchanged when property crimes were included in the analysis, suggesting a greater likelihood that these victims too had also been bullied (78.7%)

Figure 7: Multiple victimisations (%)

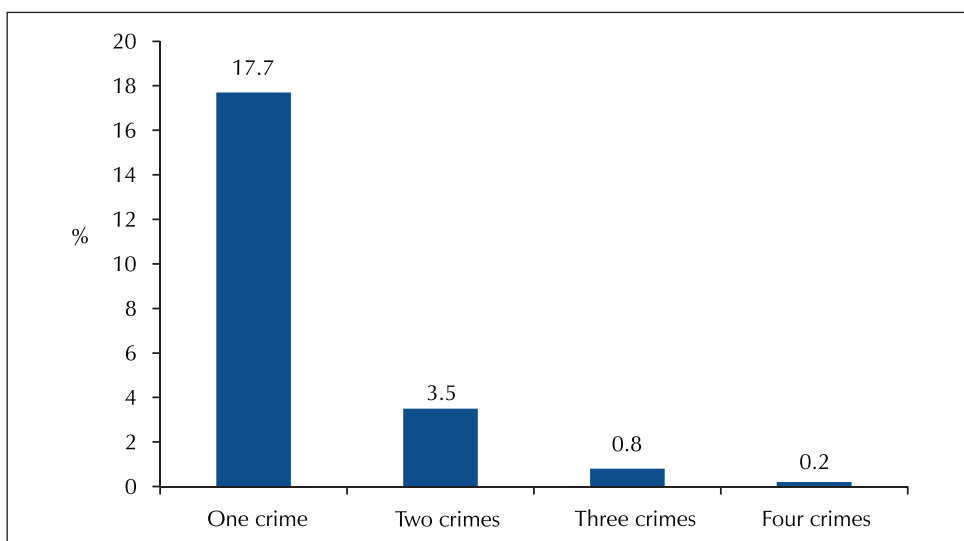
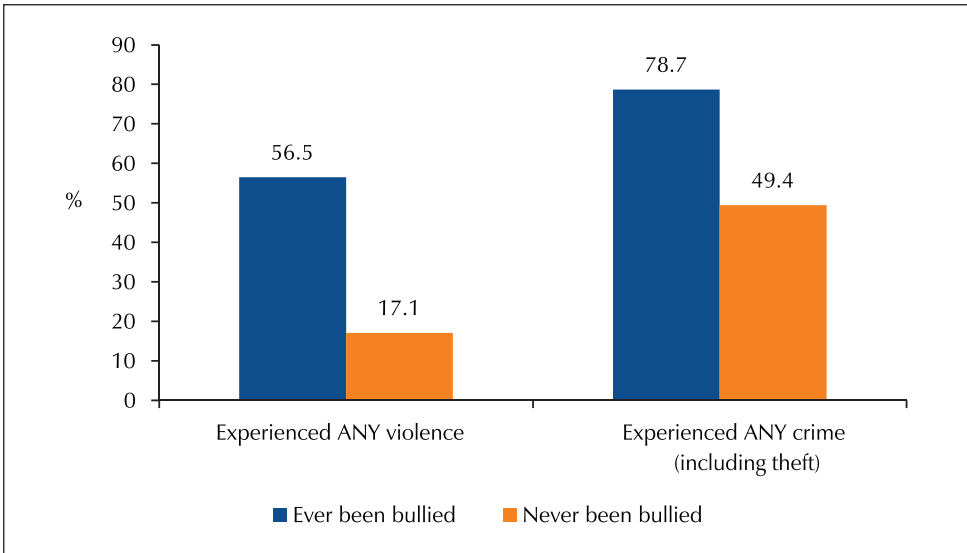


Figure 8: The effect of bullying on criminal victimisation (%)



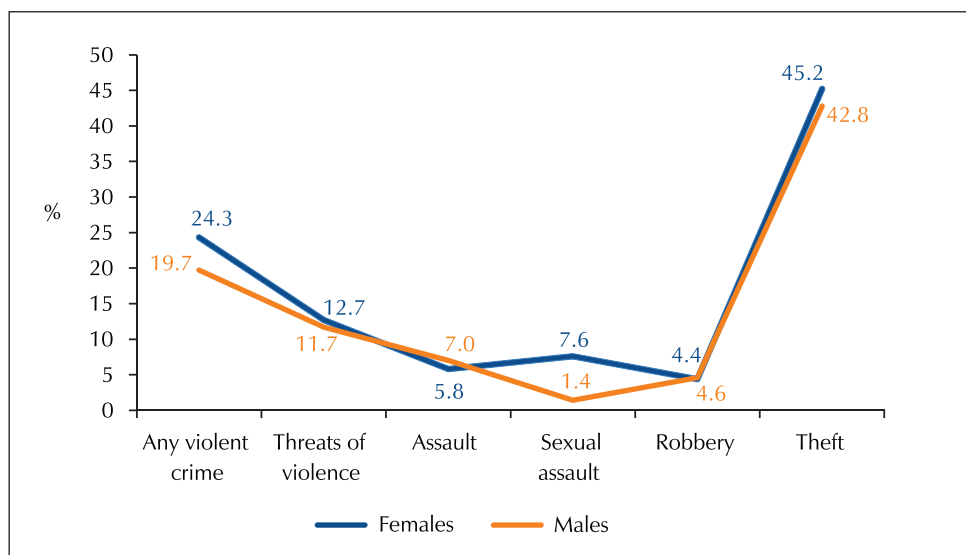
at school. This draws attention to bullying in school grounds as a key area for any intervention strategy aimed at reducing the levels of violence occurring at schools.

VIOLENCE BY GENDER

Both male and female learners are affected by violence; however, certain types of crimes have been more strongly associated with the individual sexes. Gender-based violence, acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are experienced at far higher levels by female learners, while males are usually found to experience higher levels of physical assaults.

The findings from the 2012 NSVS deviated somewhat from the norm in that females were found to be more susceptible to violence in general. When the victimisation rates were taken together, a total of 24.3% of female learners fell victim to violence at school in the past year compared to 19.7% of male learners ($p < 0.05$). This trend remained unchanged when property crimes were included in the analysis (see Figure 9, next page).

Notwithstanding this, when the individual crimes were considered, the results were largely consistent with commonly known trends associated with violence and gender. Figure 9 shows there was little difference between male and female learners and the likelihood of experiencing threats of violence, robbery and assault. This was evident in the slight, and at times only fractional, differences between males and females and the rate at which they experience these crimes. Even so, robbery and assault were more frequent among male learners. Contrary to this, the most distinct difference was observed for sexual assault, including rape, which was highest among female learners (7.6%) compared to males learners

Figure 9: Victimisation, by gender (%)

(1.4%). With regard to property crimes, there were also slight differences between male and female learners and their susceptibility to theft.

In addition, girl children often fall victim to other forms of victimisation occurring at school. One in seven female learners – a total of 15.1% – reported being victimised in ways other than the criminal acts explored. The majority of these incidents involved unwanted touching (70%), being pushed or shoved into toilets (14.9%), being subjected to verbal abuse or teasing (6.8%), or being hit, punched or slapped (4.5%). As with some of the other crimes asked about, these gender-based incidents involved either single perpetrators or several perpetrators who tended primarily to be male (90%). Research shows that violence levelled against females is often undergirded by the intention to intimidate or demean, or is attributed to sexual interest and bravado on the part of boys or men involved.¹¹

VIOLENCE BY PROVINCE

Past-year experience of violence tended to vary by province – a trend that was consistent with the 2008 study results. This variation can be attributed to a number of different factors stemming from both inside and outside the school, which coalesce to create environments that are conducive to violence.

The provincial incidence of crime may have some bearing on the levels of violence within schools. Other factors include the in-province capacity of school authorities to address the safety-related concerns of the school and the monetary resources available to target physical infrastructure. The interventions employed by individual provincial departments of education may also serve to mitigate levels of violence within schools.

A great deal of variation was noted when considering the in-province trends. In the Western Cape and Mpumalanga provinces, all crime types (including property crimes) had increased from 2008 to 2012, with the exception of threats of violence, which had shown a reduction. In the Eastern Cape, all crimes had increased except robbery, which was lower than that observed in 2008. In the Northern Cape and Free State, the rates of sexual assault and theft were higher than that observed in 2008, while a reduction was noted for the other crimes explored. Levels of assault and theft had increased in KwaZulu-Natal since 2008, while the other crime types had decreased. In Gauteng, the number of assaults and robberies at schools had increased, while threats, sexual assaults and thefts had decreased. Limpopo showed an increase in assault, sexual assault and robbery, while threats and thefts were lower in 2012. Assault, sexual assault and thefts had increased in the North West in 2012, while threats and robberies had decreased.

The effect of these factors on school violence may be, and often are, compounded by community-level factors, such as access to alcohol, drugs, firearms or gang activity.

Overall, violent victimisation is highest in the Free State, with 30.4% of all learners surveyed in this province reporting an experience of some form of violent crime in the past year. The Western Cape (28.7%) and Limpopo (25.2%) emerged as the provinces with the second- and third-highest rates of violent victimisation (see Figure 10).

On the whole, seven out of the nine provinces had provincial (violent) victimisation rates that exceeded the national average of 22.2%. Only Gauteng and the Eastern Cape had provincial victimisation rates that were less than the

Figure 10: Any crime versus any violence (%)

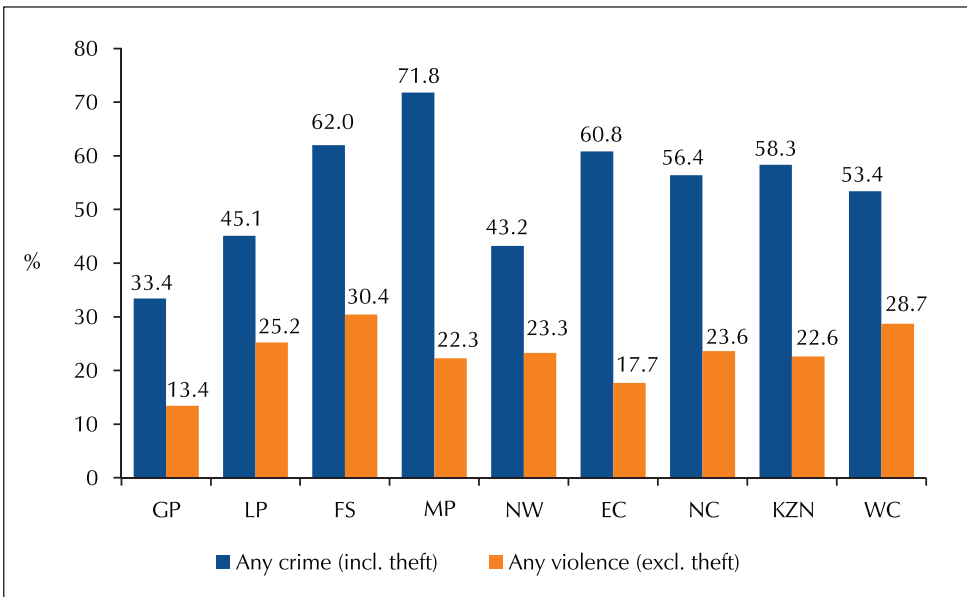


Table 1: Experiences of violence, by province (% of learners reporting victimisation including theft)

	Threatened with violence	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Theft
Gauteng	9.0	4.1	0.7	2.2	23.8
Limpopo	15.9	5.8	3.8	4.9	34.5
Free State	13.2	6.4	9.2	7.2	52.0
Mpumalanga	11.0	6.0	7.3	6.0	64.1
North West	11.0	9.6	3.7	4.0	27.2
Eastern Cape	10.3	3.3	3.6	3.3	55.9
Northern Cape	7.2	6.0	11.2	3.6	48.0
KwaZulu-Natal	11.3	8.2	3.9	3.7	49.9
Western Cape	18.5	9.2	9.2	8.8	42.2

The percentages in bold indicate the three provinces with the highest reported rates for the individual crime types

national average observed. They were also the two provinces with the lowest victimisation rates.

A different provincial trend emerges when property-related crimes are included in the analysis. Mpumalanga (71.8%) emerges as the province where criminal victimisation is highest in schools, followed by the Free State (62%) and the Eastern Cape (60.8%) (see Figure 10). As with violent victimisation, Gauteng was again the province with the lowest levels of criminal victimisation within schools.

Threats of violence were common across all provinces. Even so, the highest rate for this form of violence was observed in the Western Cape (reported by 18.5% of learners), followed by Limpopo (15.9%) and the Free State (13.2%). Assault was most common in the Western Cape (9.2%), the North West (9.6%) and KwaZulu-Natal (8.2%). In the case of sexual assaults, the Northern Cape had the highest levels of reported cases (a total of 11.2%), followed by the Free State (9.2%) and the Western Cape (9.2%). The highest rates of robbery were reflected in the Western Cape (8.8%), the Free State (7.2%) and Mpumalanga (6%) provinces. Although property-related crimes, particularly theft, were frequently reported across all provinces, rates were highest in Mpumalanga (64.1%), the Eastern Cape (55.9%) and the Free State (52%). See Table 1.

Many of these provincial trends mimic those observed in the 2008 sweep of the study, with a few differences. The Western Cape, Limpopo and Free State emerged as the provinces with the highest frequency of threats of violence in both 2008 and 2012. In the case of robbery, the Free State and the Western Cape had the highest rates in both 2008 and 2012. Differences were, however, noted for the crimes of assault and sexual assault. Although the Western Cape emerged as one of the provinces where assault was highest in both 2008 and 2012, it was the only

Table 2: Comparative experiences of violence by province, 2008 and 2012 (%)

	Threatened with violence		Assault		Sexual assault		Robbery		Theft	
	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008
Gauteng	9.0	14.7	4.1	3.2	0.7	4.4	2.2	2.0	23.8	46.1
Limpopo	15.9	16.1	5.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	4.9	4.3	34.5	37.8
Free State	13.2	17.4	6.4	12.2	9.2	2.2	7.2	20.9	52.0	37.1
Mpumalanga	11.0	12.5	6.0	3.0	7.3	4.4	6.0	3.0	64.1	45.1
North West	11.0	12.3	9.6	3.9	3.7	1.1	4.0	4.5	27.2	20.6
Eastern Cape	10.3	6.6	3.3	2.3	3.6	1.5	3.3	3.4	55.9	29.6
Northern Cape	7.2	12.1	6.0	7.7	11.2	2.0	3.6	19.0	48.0	34.3
KwaZulu-Natal	11.3	15.8	8.2	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.7	4.1	49.9	49.4
Western Cape	18.5	21.2	9.2	5.3	9.2	2.7	8.8	8.1	42.2	28.9

The percentages in bold indicate the three provinces in 2012 with the highest reported rates for the individual crime types

The percentages in blue indicate the three provinces in 2008 with the highest reported rates for the individual crime types.

province in the top three that remained unchanged. In the case of sexual assault, none of the provinces with the highest frequency of this crime in 2008 (that is, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal) were among the top three provinces for this crime in 2012. See Table 2.

Overall, as in 2008, the Free State and Western Cape provinces demonstrated the highest frequency of incidents across all the crime categories assessed. The level of violence within Western Cape schools may be expected given the recent upsurge in gang-related activities in several communities across the province. The issue has prompted the provincial department of education to focus on new interventions in an attempt to stem the tide of violence, for example the deployment of Metro police officers in selected schools.

Although the presence of school resource officers in schools was initially associated with lower levels of fear of crime and increased perceptions of learner safety at schools,¹² later studies have found that the visibility of school resource officers increases resistance and anti-social behaviour among learners and erodes educator-learner relationships.¹³

This suggests that the initiative is not as effective in addressing violence in schools as was initially thought. Research has also consistently shown that the visibility of school staff, specifically educators, serves as a greater deterrent for criminal and violent behaviour within schools than police officers.¹⁴ The significance of this will become clearer in later chapters of this monograph.

The high levels of violence in the Free State in both the 2008 and 2012 studies suggest there is an urgent need to prioritise this province when it comes to school safety.

PRINCIPAL AND EDUCATOR VIEWS OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Principal and educator views gathered for this study provide an interesting contrast to the information presented thus far. Principals generally felt that their schools were places of safety for both their educators and learners.

Four out of five principals stated that they believed that educators at their school felt safe while teaching (84.2%), and 81.8% believed that learners felt safe while at school. Educators, on the other hand, were less likely to express this view. Only 70% of educators reported that teachers at their school felt safe when teaching and 73.4% thought learners felt safe while on school premises. This difference in perception may be attributed to principals believing that levels of safety at their school reflect on their ability not only to manage safety-related issues at the school, but reflect on the school as a whole. See Table 3 (page 26).

When asked about their own levels of safety at school, nearly a third – a total of 31% – of the educators surveyed admitted to ever having felt unsafe while on school premises. Fearing for one's safety at school may have negative implications, such as a lack of commitment to school, poor school attendance and poor relationships with learners, all of which may impact negatively on educators' quality of teaching.

For the most part, various forms of violence and other types of victimisation were perceived as having decreased or remained unchanged at schools over the previous three years.¹⁵ A reduction in the levels of physical violence was reported by 60.8% of principals, while 50.4% also reported a decrease in the levels of sexual violence occurring at their schools during the same period of time.

Verbal abuse was believed to have become less of a problem at schools, with 48.3% of principals reporting a reduction in cases of verbal abuse at their schools. Although violence was generally seen as being on the decline, a few principals reported an escalation in violence at their schools. One in four principals (25%) claimed that the incidence of verbal abuse had worsened at their schools during the previous three years.

Physical violence was believed to have escalated at 16.7% of these schools, while 1.7% of principals also reported an increase in the levels of sexual violence at their schools. In addition, 19% – nearly a fifth – of schools reported an upsurge in the incidence of cyber bullying or bullying through various forms of social media involving learners at their school. See Figure 11.

Much of the rise in the levels of violence occurring at schools was attributed to the lack of discipline that children receive at home (37.8%), resulting in children being perceived as more mischievous (35.6%) by principals. Other reasons for the higher levels of violence in schools were a lack of positive role-models (4.4%), an increase in alcohol and drug consumption among learners (4.4%) and a perceived lack of alternative ways of effecting discipline within the school environment (4.4%).

In addition to these perceptions, principals were asked whether they had received actual reports of violent incidences occurring at their schools in the past

year. Reports received by the 121 principals closely reflect the general trends emerging from the learner data.

With regard to violence occurring between learners, 74.4% of principals claimed to have received reports of physical violence between learners, 78.5% had received reports of learners verbally abusing one another, and one in two schools (53.7%) had received reports of incidents involving drugs or alcohol at school during the past year (see Figure 12, page 28). The latter point was corroborated by the number of educators who reported having learners in their classrooms who have come to school drunk (33.1%) or under the influence of drugs (22.2%) in the past year. Furthermore, 30.5% of educators claimed to have learners in their classrooms who had become intoxicated after consuming alcohol on school property, while 24.7% of the 239 educators surveyed reportedly had learners in their classrooms who had gotten high while at school during the past year. See Table 3.

Incidents involving weapons were also commonplace at these schools. Two out of five principals reported having cases brought to their attention involving weapons of some sort in the last year alone. More than a quarter of principals (26.7%) also reported having been made aware of cases involving cyber bullying

- Areas where educators were most likely to report feeling unsafe while at school were:
- Classrooms (29.9%)
 - Toilets (20.8%)
 - Other open areas (15.6%)
 - Outside of the school gate (10.4%)
 - Near the learners' toilets (7.8%)
 - Playgrounds (6.5%);
 - Walking between classrooms (3.9%).

Figure 11: Principals' perceptions of crime at their schools over the previous three years (%)

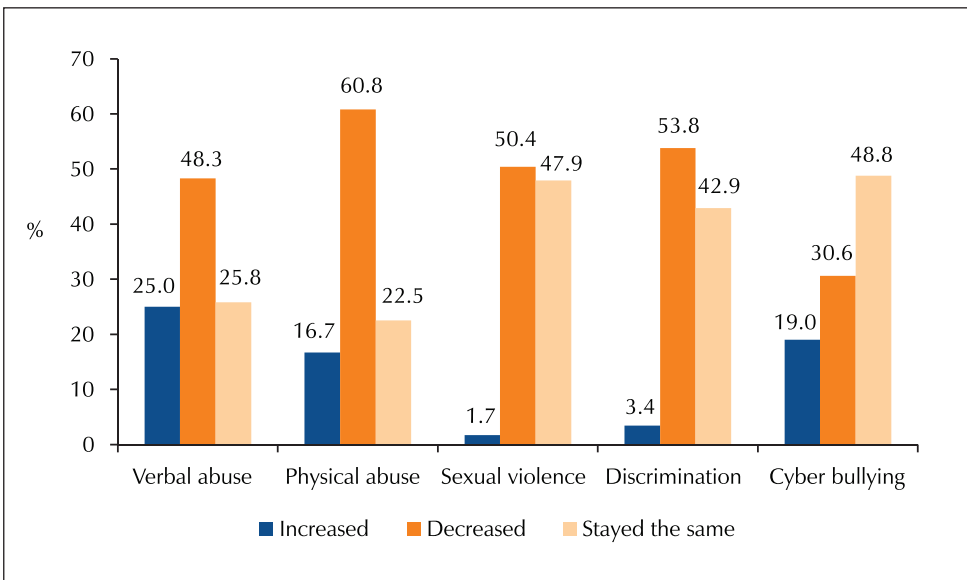


Table 3: Principal and educator views on safety (%)

NSVS 2008		NSVS 2012	
Principals (n=139)	Educators (n=277)	Principals (n=121)	Educators (n=239)
PERCEPTIONS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81.2% believe incidents of violence are generally reported by their learners • 77% believe that educators at their school feel safe when teaching • 82.7% believe their learners feel safe at school • 51.1% believe there are certain areas at school that are particularly unsafe for learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84.1% believe incidents of violence are generally reported by their learners • 58.1% believe that educators at their school feel safe when teaching • 68% believe their learners feel safe at school • 57.4% believe there are certain areas at school that are particularly unsafe for learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95.8% believe incidents of violence are generally reported by their learners • 84.2% believe that educators at their school feel safe when they are teaching • 81.8% believe their learners feel safe at school • 44.6% believe there are certain areas at school that are particularly unsafe for learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90.3% believe incidents of violence are generally reported by their learners • 70% believe that educators at their school feel safe when they are teaching • 73.4% believe their learners feel safe at school • 42.3% believe there are certain areas at school that are particularly unsafe for learners
ACTUAL REPORTS RECEIVED IN THE PAST YEAR			
Incidents between learners			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (85.6%) • Physical violence (85.6%) • Sexual violence (32.4%) • Reports involving weapons (54.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (82.6%) • Physical violence (82.9%) • Sexual violence (22.6%) • Reports involving weapons (43.4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (78.5%) • Physical violence (74.4%) • Sexual violence (11.6%) • Reports involving weapons (44.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (73.6%) • Physical violence (66.1%) • Sexual violence (10%) • Reports involving weapons (36.8%)

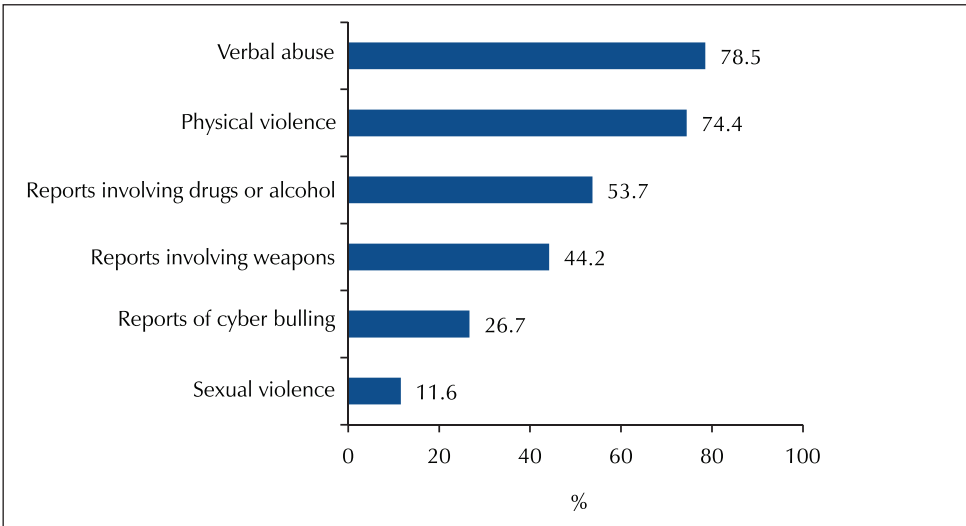
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports involving drugs/alcohol (74.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports involving drugs/alcohol (81.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports involving drugs/alcohol (53.7%) • Reports of cyber bullying (26.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports involving drugs/alcohol (43.1%) • Reports of cyber bullying (18.5%)
Incidents between learners and educators			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (59.7%) • Physical violence (25.2%) • Sexual violence (2.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (57.2%) • Physical violence (23.6%) • Sexual violence (2.9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (52.1%) • Physical violence (12.4%) • Sexual violence (3.3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (41%) • Physical violence (7.9%) • Sexual violence (0%)
Incidents between educators and learners			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (41%) • Physical violence (25.2%) • Sexual violence (2.9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (37%) • Physical violence (14.5%) • Sexual violence (3.3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (28.1%) • Physical violence (14%) • Sexual violence (2.5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse (22.2%) • Physical violence (2.5%) • Sexual violence (1.3%)

or abuse via different forms of social media between learners at their schools in the past year.

Violent incidents at these schools were not limited to incidents occurring between learners. At times, educators themselves fell victim to violence or were implicated as perpetrators in some of the cases brought to the principal's attention. With regard to the former, learners were reported to have inflicted various forms of violence on their educators, including verbally abusing or hurling insults at their educators (52.1%), physically assaulting their educators (12.4%), and sexually assaulting their educators (3.3%) (see Figure 14, *next page*).

For the most part, the reported cases of learner-on-educator violence were lower than the number of incidents reported to principals in the first sweep of the study in 2008. Verbal assaults on educators had decreased from 59.7% and physical violence was down from 25.2% in 2008. Sexual violence, however, had increased, though not significantly, from 2.2% in 2008 to 3.3% in 2012. See Table 3.

Figure 12: Actual reports of violence between learners reported to principals (%)



Educators interviewed in the study corroborated these findings. A total of 29.3% had themselves ever been insulted, sworn at or shouted at by a learner, 9.6% had ever been threatened by a learner, 4.6% had ever been sexually harassed by a learner, and 4.2% had ever had an object thrown at them. In addition, 4.2% had ever had a weapon pointed at them while at school, 4.2% had been robbed and 2.1% had ever been physically hurt while at school (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Educator experiences of violence at school (%)

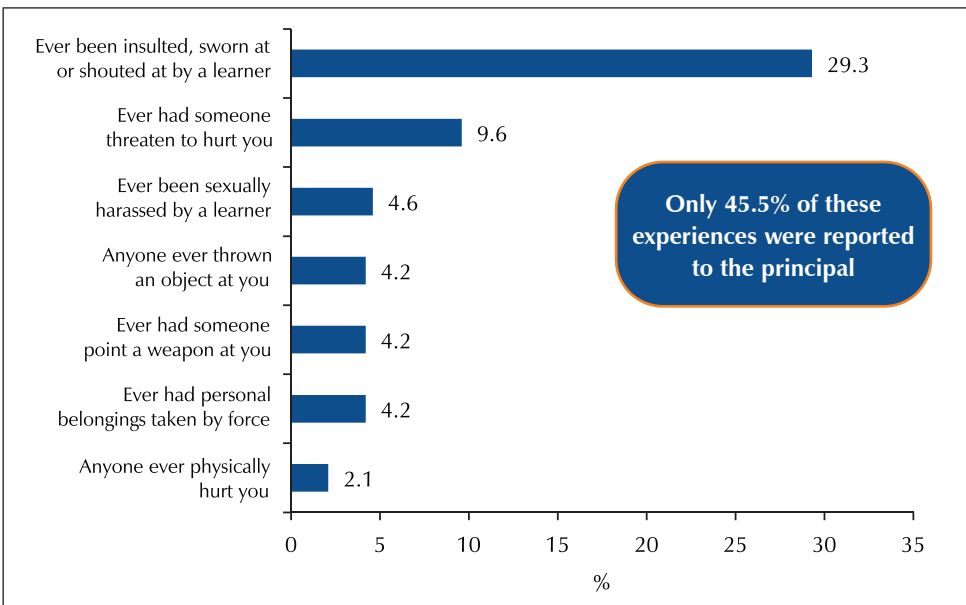
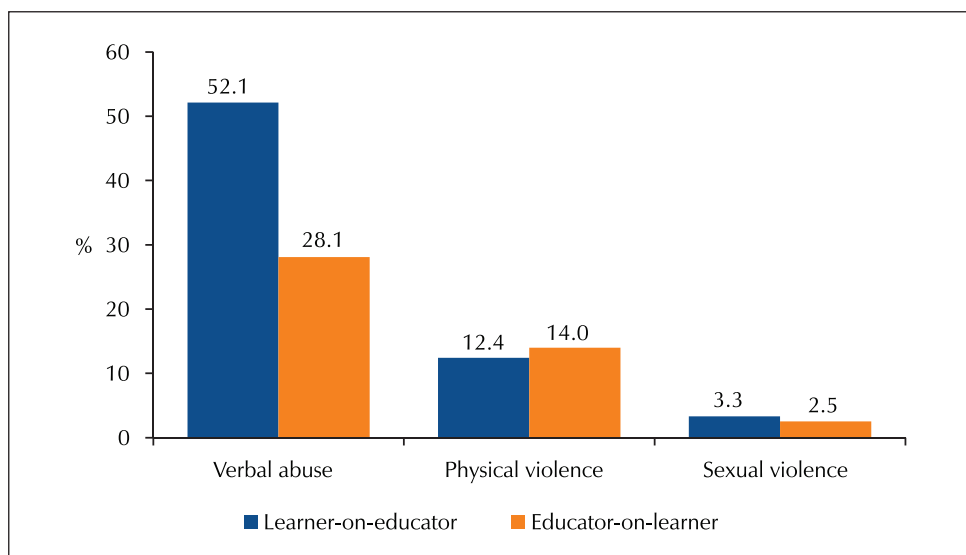


Figure 14: Reports of violence at school (%)



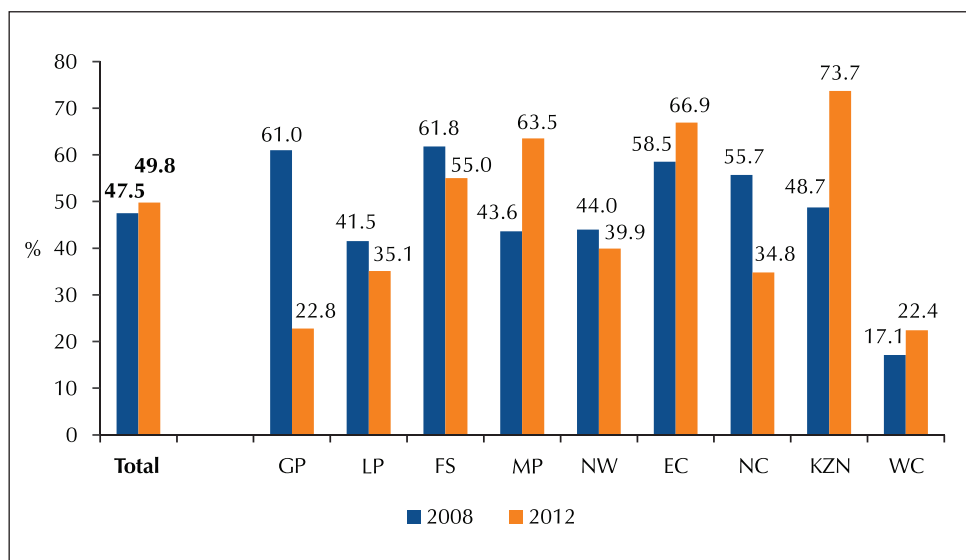
When asked if they had reported these incidents to the principal, only 45.5% – less than half of the educators – responded positively, suggesting that, at some of these schools, the levels of violence brought to the principal’s attention is an inaccurate reflection of the full extent of problems at the school.

Educators were also implicated as perpetrators in the violence against learners. A total of 28.1% of principals had cases reported at their schools where educators had been verbally abusive towards learners, 14% had cases of physical violence against learners by educators brought to their attention in the past year, and 2.5% of principals also reported cases involving sexual violence against learners by educators in the past year (see Figure 14). Even though these figures were much lower than the levels of violence perpetrated against educators, or perpetrated by learners, this situation still warrants consideration and response, especially since it has been raised in both waves of the study.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Corporal or physical punishment has been abolished in South African schools since 1996. South Africa’s ratification of international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and regional charters such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has further cemented the country’s commitment to protecting children from violence.

However, despite these legal provisions, the 2012 NSVS provides evidence to suggest the continued use of physical punishment within South African schools as a means of effecting discipline. Overall, a total of 49.8% of the learners surveyed claimed to have been caned or spanked by an educator or principal as punishment

Figure 15: Corporal punishment at school, by province (%)

for wrongdoings. This percentage was up from 47.5% in 2008, suggesting that little headway has been made in reducing corporal punishment in schools over the past four years. Similar figures were observed in national studies exploring youth victimisation in both 2005 and 2008.

The CJCP's 2005 National Youth Victimization Study found that 51.4% of the more than 4,000 young people surveyed had ever been hit, caned or spanked at school.¹⁶ In 2008, a National Youth Lifestyle Study showed that 51.7% of youth between the ages of 12 and 22 years had been physically hit at school.¹⁷

Provincial rates of corporal punishment ranged from 22.4% to 73.7%, with the highest levels of corporal punishment observed in KwaZulu-Natal (73.7%). When assessing the rates per province, the data shows increases as well as decreases in the rates of corporal punishment by schools across the country. Increases in the use of corporal punishment over the past four years were noted for Mpumalanga (rates increased from 43.6% in 2008 to 63.5% in 2012), the Eastern Cape (rates increased from 58.5% in 2008 to 66.9% in 2012), KwaZulu-Natal (rates increased from 48.7% in 2008 to 73.7% in 2012) and the Western Cape (rates increased from 17.1% in 2008 to 22.4% in 2012).

The most significant decrease in the rates of corporal punishment reported by learners was observed for Gauteng, with rates dropping from 61% in 2008 to 22.8% in 2012. The use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline was also less frequently reported in Limpopo, the Free State, the North West and the Northern Cape in the 2012 wave of the study. See Figure 15 for these percentages.

While the difference between male and female learners was not significant, males (50.4%) did report fractionally higher levels of corporal or physical punishment than female (49.4%) learners.

What becomes clear from the data is that knowledge does not necessarily translate into behaviour change. Nine out of ten (91.7%) principals reported that educators at their schools are generally aware of the content of the policies and procedures that relate to them within the school environment. This suggests that despite awareness that corporal punishment is now illegal within schools, some educators may still be ill-equipped to employ non-violent means of discipline within the classroom. This does an injustice to the crucial role that educators and schools can play in modelling pro-social and non-violent behaviour, and, in so doing, building the resilience of learners at their schools.

The UNESCO handbook on Stopping Violence in Schools indicates that corporal punishment:

‘... neglects to teach students how to think critically, make sound moral judgements, cultivate inner control, and respond to life’s circumstances and frustrations in a non-violent way. Such punishment shows students that the use of force - be it verbal, physical or emotional - is acceptable, especially when it is directed at younger, weaker individuals. This lesson leads to increased incidents of bullying and an overall culture of violence in schools.’

Source: UNESCO, *Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for Teachers*, p 10. Available at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/teacher-education/single-view/news/stopping_violence_in_schools_a_guide_for_teachers/.

CONCLUSION

Violence occurring within schools is a complex phenomenon. The data presented in this chapter demonstrates that the kind of violence that South African learners encounter at schools varies, ranging from mere bullying to more severe victimisation, such as assault, sexual assault (including rape), being threatened with violence, and robbery. In addition, new forms of violence affecting learners, such as cyber bullying, are now emerging as a cause for concern.

School violence affects not only the children who are directly victimised in these incidents but also those who witness it. This indirect victimisation contributes to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity at school, which inevitably interferes with learning, stunts academic performance and, ultimately, impacts negatively on the longer-term developmental trajectories of young people.

Fear and the nature of violence in schools

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Fear is common at secondary schools, specifically among female learners.
- For many victims, the violence they encountered at school was not a one-off experience.
- Classrooms were by far the most common site for victimisation, followed by playing fields or sports areas.
- In nine out of ten cases, the perpetrators in the violence levelled against learners were known to the victims.
- Most acts of violence at school were reported, primarily to educators.
- When experiences of school violence were not reported, a lack of confidence that reporting would result in any change and believing it was not necessary to report were two of the most common reasons provided for non-reporting.
- It was positive to find that when cases of violence against learners were reported, educators were inclined to act on the report.
- Victims were seldom referred to or informed about available counselling or other support services following their violent experiences.
- Violence at school was compounded by the easy accessibility of alcohol, drugs and weapons at school, as well as the presence of individuals at school who are engaged in drug-related activities.

INTRODUCTION

The statistics detailed in the previous chapter demonstrated the (sometime escalating) rates of various forms of violence levelled at high school learners across South Africa – a scenario that raises many questions regarding the nature of school violence. The answers to these questions will form the basis for effective

targeted interventions, which will enable schools to respond appropriately to curb the violence that is eroding learner safety at their schools.

The main issues discussed in this chapter therefore include where and when violence occurs, who tends to perpetrate these acts against learners, whether learners report the violence they encounter at school, the actions taken (if any) by school authorities in response to reporting, as well as the prevalence of alcohol, drugs and weapons at school and the bearing this has on school crime and violence. The findings presented here highlight how key variables associated with the school context intersect with the violent victimisation of learners.

ON-GOING NATURE OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

In keeping with the 2008 data, the violent acts occurring in schools are often not isolated, one-off experiences. Not only do learners fall prey to multiple forms of violence, as shown in the previous chapter, but even when they succumb to only one form of violence, they usually do so repeatedly. The percentages shown in Table 4 clearly demonstrate that sizeable proportions of youth across the crime categories are re-victimised.

In the case of threats of violence (48.7%) and sexual assault (41.2%), less than half of those who had been exposed to these crimes in the past year reported a single experience. In fact, 30.3% of learners who had been threatened with violence had been exposed to this at least twice in the past year, while 21% had experienced this three or more times. A total of 28% of sexual assault victims recounted at least two incidents of sexual assault in the past year, while close to a third (30.5%) of sexual assault victims had been subjected to such violence three or more times in the past year.

While repeat victimisation results in elevated levels of fear and anxiety, it has also been associated with a range of harmful consequences for young people, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.¹⁸

Although the majority of assault (53.2%) and robbery (54.1%) victims had succumbed to these crimes only once, fairly large proportions had still been

Table 4: Frequency of victimisation at school (%)

	Once	Twice	Three or more times
Threats of violence	48.7	30.3	21.0
Assault	53.2	22.3	24.5
Sexual assault	41.2	28.0	30.5
Robbery	54.1	27.4	18.0
Theft of personal belongings	27.9	29.1	42.9

subjected to repeat victimisation. Of those who had been assaulted in the past year, 22.3% had been physically attacked twice by aggressors at school, while 24.5% – one in every four victims – had been assaulted three or more times during this time period. With regard to robbery, 27.4% of learners had been robbed at least twice in the past 12 months, while 18% had succumbed to this crime three or more times. See Table 4.

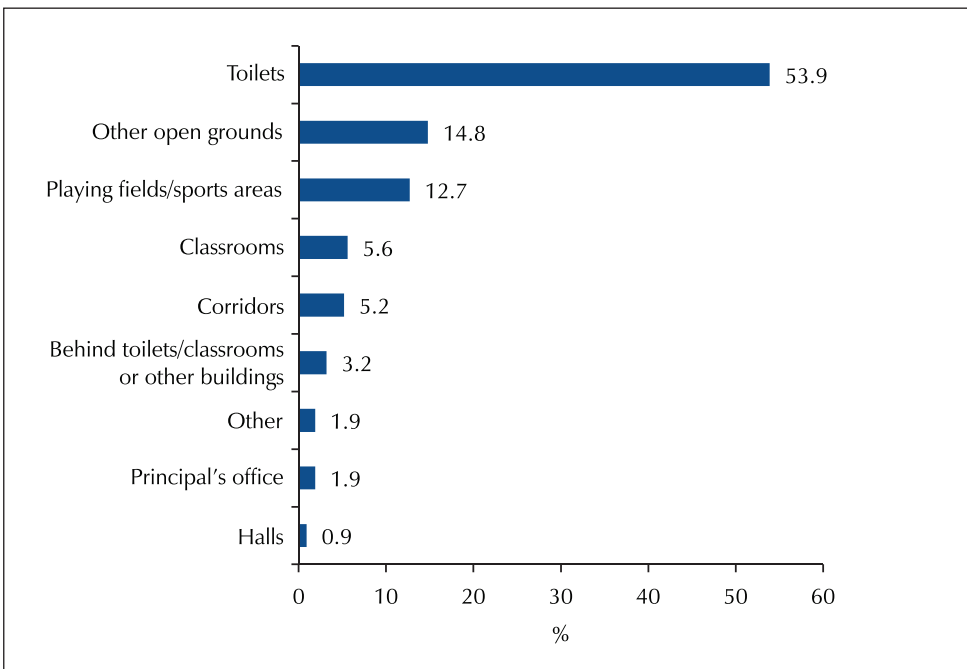
Repeat victimisation was much more noticeable in the analysis of property-related crime. Less than 30% of theft victims reported an isolated incident. Contrary to this, 29.1% recounted at least two occasions on which they had belongings taken from them, while 42.9% – two out of five theft victims – had their property stolen on three or more occasions in the past year alone.

FEAR WITHIN SCHOOLS

Fear is common within South African schools. This is to be expected given the rate at which learners are victimised at school. For many learners, schools seem to be places that elicit feelings of fear. One in ten (11.9%) learners claimed that there was an area at school where they usually felt fearful. This percentage was up slightly from the 10.7% observed in the 2008 wave of the study.

Consistent with the first study, Figure 16 shows that toilets were again the most common area identified at schools where learners felt afraid (reported by 53.9% of

Figure 16: Places at school where learners are afraid (%)



The data from the educator interviews corroborated these findings: two out of five educators (42.3%) felt that there was an area at school that was particularly unsafe for learners. These areas were primarily toilets (45.3%), followed by classrooms (16.4%), other open areas (13.9%), areas outside of the school gate (11.5%) and sports or playing fields (9%).

learners). Girls specifically recounted incidents where they had been pushed inside toilets, and often fell prey to unwanted sexual touching and other forms of sexual victimisation perpetrated by male learners, who acted alone or sometimes in groups.

In addition to toilets, other places at school where learners often felt fearful included other open grounds or spaces (reported by 14.8% of learners) and playing fields or sports areas (reported by 12.7% of

learners) (see Figure 16). Educators shed some light on why these areas may pose a risk for learners.

For the most part, educators or school authorities claimed to be unable to control what happens at these places (50.4%) often because outsiders are able to access the school grounds (13.2%) here, and because these areas are unkempt (13.2%) – a situation that is exacerbated by a lack of staff members to monitor the areas (14.9%) sufficiently. These observations highlight the importance of two key safety-promotion aspects, namely: school management and school design (or environmental prevention). Schools need to ensure that secluded areas where learners may be susceptible to unsafe outside influences are minimised, while at the same time cleaning and maintaining any open spaces within the school grounds to ensure accessibility to safe spaces for learners.¹⁹

Although considered as areas where learners were most likely to experience fear, these three areas were, however, not the most common sites for violence occurring within schools. Classrooms were in fact the most common site for victimisation across the different crime categories, accounting for 44.3% to 91.5% of crime locations. See Table 5.

Given the frequency with which learners fall prey to violence, they were asked to recall the last time they had experienced the different crimes asked about and to identify where on the school premises the incident had occurred. The data pointed to the classroom as the site for crime in nine out of ten thefts (91.5%), three out of five (60.2%) robberies, one out of two assaults (51%) and sexual assaults (54.2%), and two out of five cases where learners were threatened with violence (44.3%) (see Table 5). This finding was consistent with the 2008 data, where classrooms also emerged as the primary site for violence occurring at schools.

The high levels of violence occurring within classrooms is a cause for serious concern since it undoubtedly acts as a barrier to learning and infringes on children's right to a quality education.

Classrooms should be among the safest areas in the school, and under the constant supervision of educators. However, the data suggests that educators are often absent, leaving classrooms unsupervised and learners at risk for violence; or,

if present, educators are not in control of the classrooms and fail to monitor what is happening in them.

The failure of educators to effectively manage disruptive classroom behaviour has been associated with lower levels of academic achievement, specifically among at-risk learners.²⁰ This provides an important area for intervention, given that educator visibility and presence in classrooms has been shown to have a diminishing effect on criminal and violent behaviour at schools.²¹ It is therefore vital to implement mechanisms to ensure educator accountability for what happens in their classrooms.

Playing fields or sports areas were the second most frequently identified sites for school violence, reported as the scene of the crime for 24.8% of assaults, 14% of robberies, 13.2% of sexual assaults, and 25% of cases where learners were threatened with violence (see Table 5). Though not the most frequently reported site for violence, toilets still emerged as areas where crimes tended to occur, specifically in the case of sexual violence, with more than a tenth (12.5%) of the sexual assaults experienced reported to have happened in school toilets. Other crimes, such as assault (5.5%) and threats of violence (4.1%), were also said to occur in toilets, albeit to a much lesser degree. Corridors and open grounds other than playing fields or sports areas at the schools were frequently mentioned as sites specifically for assaults, sexual assaults and

The ability of educators to organise classrooms and manage learner behaviours is often claimed to be hampered by class size. According to the Department of Basic Education statistics, the learner–educator ratio is 30.4 for both state-paid and school governing board–paid educators.

When only state-paid educators are considered, the ratio increases slightly to 32.3. This suggests that the educators’ reasons for poor classroom management have more to do with a lack of skills than class size.

Source: Department of Basic Education, *School Realities*, 2012. Available at <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=MMXRV>.

Table 5: Location where last (if more than one) incidence of violence occurred (%)

	Classrooms	School gate area	Playing fields	Corridors	Toilets	Other open grounds	Halls	Principal's office
Threats of violence	44.3	1.0	25.0	11.1	4.1	13.5	1.0	0.0
Assault	51.0	0.6	24.8	5.0	5.5	11.8	0.6	0.6
Sexual assault	54.2	0.0	13.2	11.4	12.5	6.6	0.4	0.0
Robbery	60.2	0.8	14.0	7.2	6.8	6.4	1.1	3.4
Theft	91.5	0.0	4.6	1.1	0.3	1.0	0.2	0.6

The reasons for feeling unsafe at school were primarily due to a fear of being hurt (41.1%), a fear of criminals (31.5%) and a fear of classmates (13.8%). Not only do these statistics further support the themes emerging from the data presented thus far, they also identify areas where resources and interventions should be targeted to improve learner safety at school.

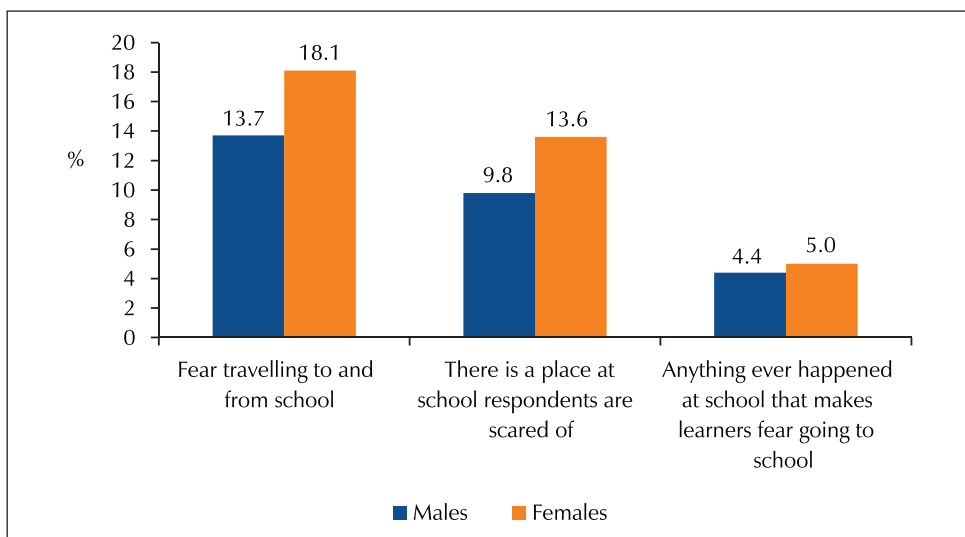
incidents involving threats of violence. This is not surprising given that aggressors often choose to act where adults cannot observe their actions.

Returning to the issue of fear, when learners were asked whether anything had ever happened to them within the school grounds that made them fear going to school, 4.7% responded positively. Fear was also associated with the journey to and from school (16.1%). The 2012 figure was marginally higher than that reported in 2008 (14.3%), suggesting that

many learners continue to be subjected to the possibility of violence and other forms of victimisation while travelling to and from school. Although the difference was not statistically significant, learners from rural areas (16.4%) did report slightly higher levels of fear when travelling to and from school compared to learners in urban (15.7%) and metropolitan areas (15.6%).

A sizeable proportion of the country’s learners are not afforded the luxury of being transported to and from school in a private vehicle and are forced to rely on various forms of public transportation, such as taxis, buses or trains, to get to school. In rural areas (though not limited to these areas), some learners still travel on foot and often walk long distances to reach their educational institutions. Since learners often make this journey by themselves without the presence of adults, their risk for various forms of victimisation, including crime and road accidents, is heightened.

Figure 17: Feelings of fear, by gender (%)



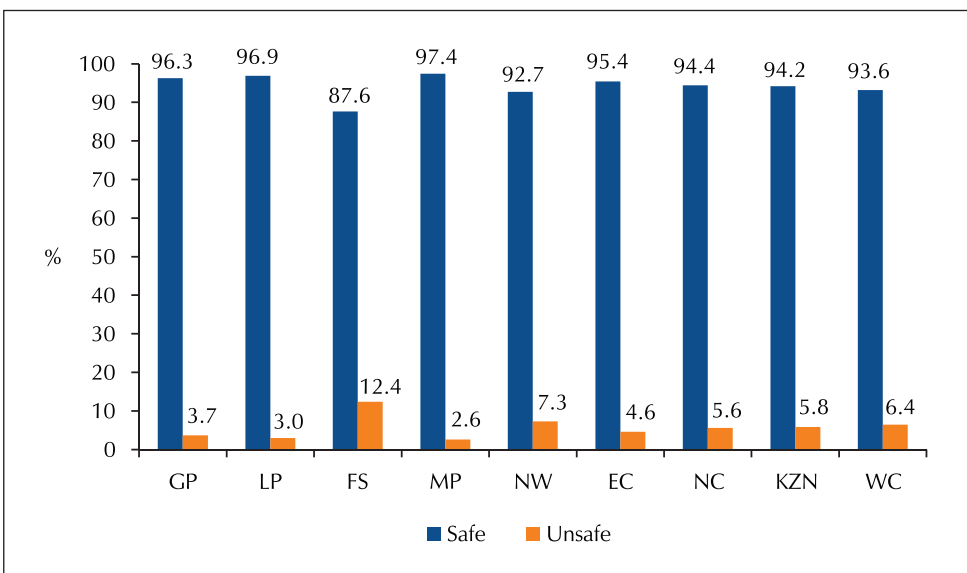
Girls are particularly vulnerable during this journey, which puts them at risk for sexual assault and rape.²² It was therefore not surprising to find that female learners were more likely to report feelings of fear and anxiety when travelling to and from school. A total of 18.1% of female learners were fearful compared to 13.7% of male learners (see Figure 17). Overall, girls reported higher levels of fear on all three variables compared to their male counterparts. Girls' elevated levels of fear may be attributed to their perceived physical vulnerability to crimes and their inability to protect themselves against crimes that contain a threat of physical harm.

The overwhelming majority of learners reported generally feeling safe at school. This, in spite of the actual (and potential for) victimisation encountered both at school and while travelling to and from school.

Nine out of ten learners reported feeling safe at school – 79% felt safe all the time and 16% felt safe only some of the time – while 5% of learners indicated never feeling safe at school. Learners in the Free State were significantly more likely to report *never* feeling safe within the school environment compared to learners in the other eight provinces.

The provincial figure for the Free State (12.4%) was higher than the national percentage observed (5%, $p < 0.05$). This is expected given the high rates of victimisation levelled against learners in this province. The Free State was followed by the North West (7.3%) and the Western Cape (6.4%). Conversely, learners in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng – provinces with some of the lowest violent victimisation rates – reported the highest levels of perceived safety at school (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Perceptions of safety, by province (%)



PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE WITHIN SCHOOLS

Being aware of who the aggressors are in the acts of violence occurring within schools enables school authorities to respond appropriately and to address the needs of both victims and perpetrators to prevent further victimisation. For this reason, learners were asked whether they knew the individuals who had perpetrated the violence against them. Such knowledge would go a long way in devising targeted intervention strategies.

In most cases, the learners were acquainted with the individuals who had perpetrated violence against them. Knowledge of the offender was reported in approximately nine of out ten threats (93.6%), sexual assaults (90%) and assaults (87.5%) reported. The perpetrators seemed to be less known in the case of property-related crimes, with one in two (55.8%) victims of robbery and less than a quarter (23.4%) of theft victims claiming to know the person who had robbed or stolen goods from them (see Figure 19).

It was revealed that much of the violence encountered by learners at school was perpetrated by other pupils, either classmates of the victims or other learners at the school. In fact, school pupils were responsible for approximately 90% of the threats, sexual assaults, robberies and thefts of personal belongings reported. In the case of assault, only 69.8% of crimes were perpetrated by fellow learners at the school. See Table 6.

In addition to school pupils, educators were also implicated as perpetrators in a percentage of the crimes experienced, though to a much lesser degree than other learners. Teachers were identified as perpetrators in 25% of assaults reported, 9.1% of robberies, 6.9% of thefts and 6.8% of cases in which learners had been threatened with harm while at school. Educators were identified as the aggressors

Figure 19: Knowledge of perpetrators (%)

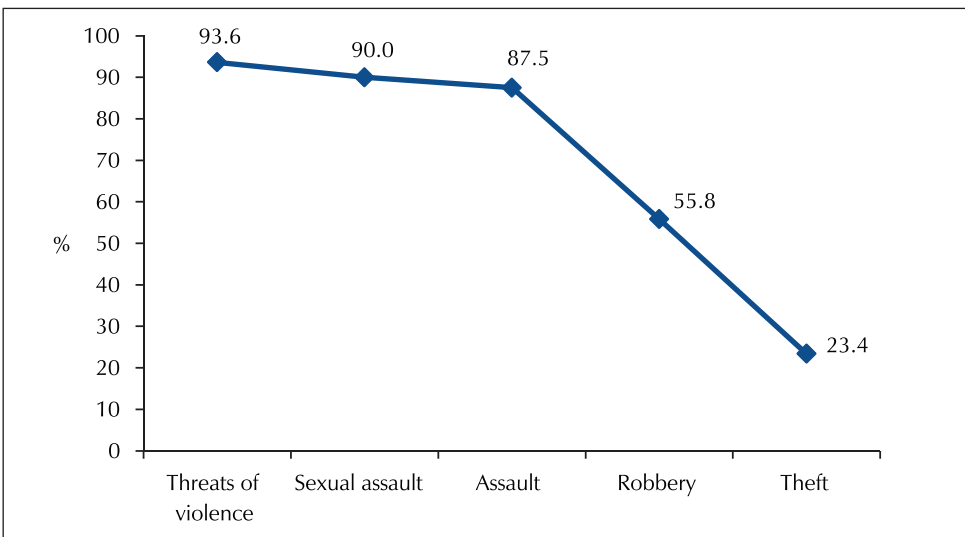


Table 6: Who are the perpetrators of the various violence types (%)

	School teacher	School pupil	Family member	Other person of authority	Person from outside the school	Gang member	Total
Threats	6.8	90.3	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.1	100
Assault	25.0	69.8	0.9	3.7	0.6	0.0	100
Sexual assault	3.9	90.9	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	100
Robbery	9.1	86.0	1.4	2.1	0.7	0.7	100
Theft	6.9	91.3	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.0	100

in 3.9% of sexual assaults (see Table 6). Although uncommon, crimes perpetrated by gang members were present in the threats and robberies reported by these learners.

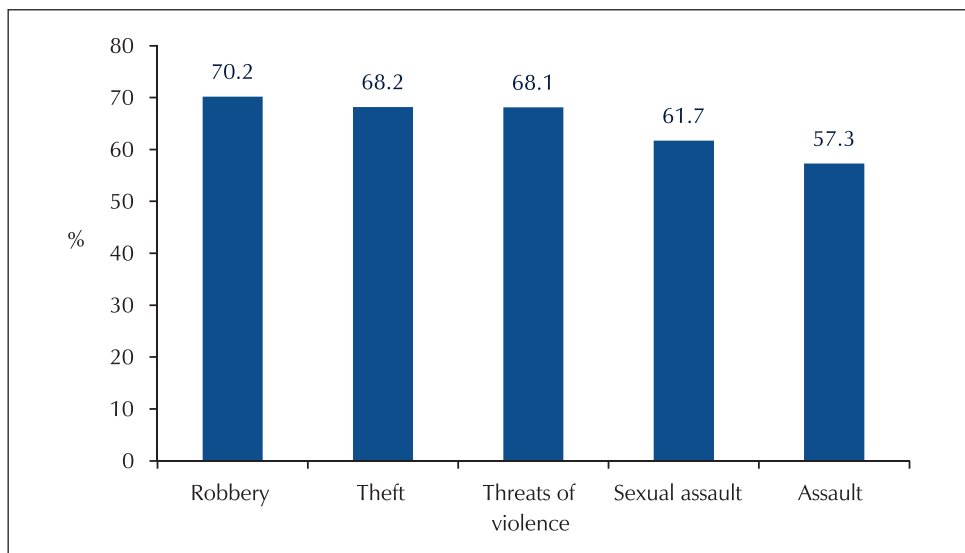
REPORTING OF VIOLENCE BY LEARNERS

Schools need accurate data on the incidents of violence occurring within their facilities in order to respond to and monitor the situation properly. However, this relies on learners' reporting the violence they experience at school to the relevant school authorities.

Even though the findings point to fairly high levels of reporting, the figures are still wanting (see Figure 20, *next page*). The highest level of reporting was observed for robberies, with slightly more than seven out of ten incidents of robberies being reported. Close to seven out of ten threats (68.1%) encountered at schools were reported.

The figures are even more telling when considering the rates of reporting for sexual assault and assault. With regard to the former, only 61.7% of cases were reported, suggesting that close to 40% of sexual assaults occurring at schools go unreported. This is an issue of grave concern given the frequency with which learners are victimised and re-victimised sexually at schools. In the case of assaults, only 57.3% of victims had informed anyone about the physical attack experienced. See Figure 20.

Educators were the individuals most often informed about violence occurring within schools, followed by friends. This trend was observed across all the crime types explored. Learners seemed to be less likely to inform their parents or other family members about their victimisation and more inclined to tell their friends (see Table 7, *page 43*). Nearly a third (31.1%) of sexual assault victims chose to inform their friends about their experience rather than an adult. Similarly, a quarter of robbery victims (25%), assault victims (24.8%) and those who had

Figure 20: Reporting rates for victimisation (%)

succumbed to violent threats at school (25.6%) opted to speak to their friends about their crimes.

These findings suggest that friends or peers are acutely aware of the levels of violence occurring within schools (an awareness that may well elude adults at the schools), contributing to their own feelings of insecurity and fear at school, regardless of personal victimisation. There is therefore a need for schools to establish an environment that encourages the reporting of violence or the threat thereof by learners (as well as educators). This environment is contingent on learners being ensured that the goal of reporting is intervention and not punishment, since learners often fail to report in order to avoid being perceived as tattle-tales. In addition, schools need to put mechanisms in place that would facilitate the safe reporting of troubling behaviour to caring and responsive adults at the school. These mechanisms should be easily accessible and allow for confidential reporting.

However, a safe space for reporting violence is not sufficient, in and of itself, to improve school safety. Once violence is reported at schools, it is imperative that learners are ensured that action will be taken to prevent further victimisation.

It is encouraging that educators are most often informed of the violence occurring within schools – revealing that learners trust that their educators will respond to their situation of need. This, however, places great responsibility on educators to respond to matters that are brought to their attention. Their failure to do so may convey the message that violence at school is acceptable.²³

Students were asked whether the person they had informed about the violence had taken any action following the report. On a positive note, with the exception of theft, for all violent crimes, action was taken in most cases (see Figure 21).

Table 7: Who learners would inform about the violence experienced (%)

	Educator	Friends	Parents	Principal	Police	Prefect	Learner support officer	SRC member	Counsellor	Sibling	Other family member
Threats	48.1	25.6	13.7	6.7	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.8	0.2	2.9	1.0
Assault	43.0	24.8	23.5	5.7	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0
Sexual assault	49.7	31.1	13.7	2.2	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.1
Robbery	48.0	25.0	13.8	4.1	2.0	1.0	2.6	0.5	0.0	1.0	2.0
Theft	54.3	33.8	7.9	1.8	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.2

Overall, action was reported to have been taken or facilitated by the person or persons informed in six out of ten assaults (61.9%), sexual assaults (63.8%) and threat of violence incidents (64.6%) reported.

Even so, in a significant number of cases across the crime types no intervention had taken place despite a report being made about violence. This leads one to ask why, in these cases, educators did not take action when incidents of violence were reported to them at school. This is especially troubling when the educators indicate knowing what to do, or what the correct procedure would be to follow, when there are thefts or robberies at school (93.7%), when they receive reports of

Figure 21: Action was taken by the person informed of the violence (%)

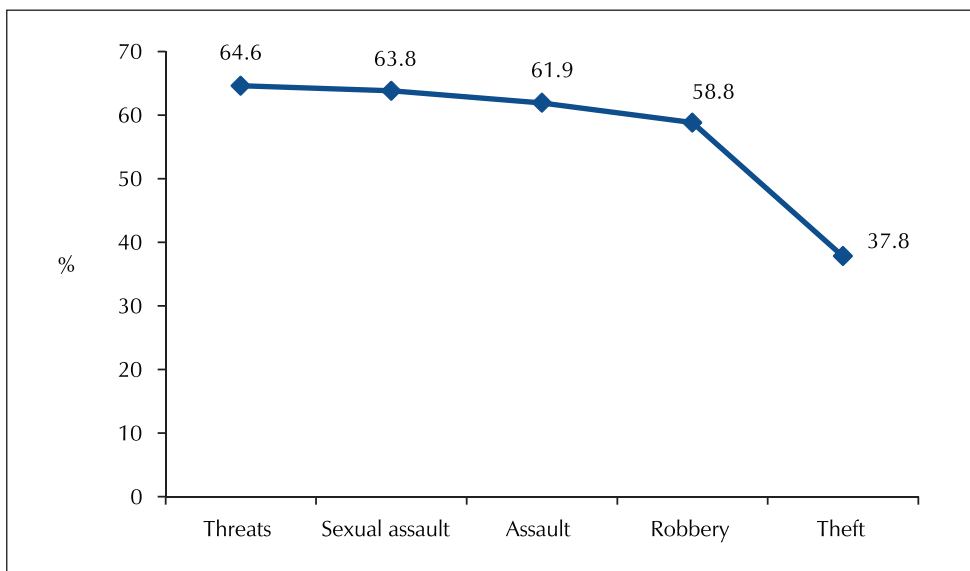


Table 8: Principal and educator views on reporting (%)

National School Violence Study 2012	
Principals (n=121)	Educators (n=239)
PERCEPTIONS OF REPORTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators know what to do in an emergency (91.7%). • Educators know what to do if there are illegal drugs at school (91.7%). • Educators know what to do if dangerous weapons are reported at school (95%). • Educators know what to do if thefts, robberies and assaults occur at school (95.9%). • Educators know what to do if they see or receive reports of bullying at school (98.3%). • Educators know what to do if they receive reports of cyber bullying (75.2%). • Educators know what to do if they receive reports from learners about any type of abuse by an educator (86.8%). • Educators know where to report incidents, safety issues, violence and threats (97.5%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators know what to do if there are illegal drugs at school (92%). • Educators know what to do if dangerous weapons are reported at school (91.6%). • Educators know what to do if thefts, robberies and assaults occur at school (93.7%). • Educators know what to do if they see or receive reports of bullying at school (93.3%). • Educators know what to do if they receive reports of cyber bullying (72.3%). • Educators know what to do if they receive reports from learners about any type of abuse by an educator (88.7%). • Educators know where to report incidents, safety issues, violence and threats (94.6%). • Educators follow the correct procedures when threats or incidents are reported to them (92.5%). • The principal or senior management follow the correct procedures when threats or incidents are reported to them (93.3%).

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT SERVICES

- The school knows who to contact at the local police station if support is needed (93.4%).
- There is a network of services that come to school to offer support (86%).
- The school has established relationships with religious or faith-based community structures who the school can call on for support (86%).
- The school has established relationships with other community structures and organisations who the school can call on for support (75.2%).
- The school refers troubled learners or learners in need to appropriate services (90.9%).
- The school has access to readily available school psychologists and social workers (74.4%).
- The school has established a confidential system for learners to report incidents of violence (76%).

any form of bullying at school (93.3%), and when they receive reports of dangerous weapons on school property (91.6%) (see Table 8).

Individuals informed of crimes occurring at schools were more inclined to take action in the event of a violent crime. Only 37.8% of theft victims reported that action had been taken in response to them reporting stolen property at school. This could be attributed to the common perception that property-related crimes are not as serious as violent crimes and therefore do not warrant the same urgency. However, as shown in Chapter Two, theft victims demonstrate an increased likelihood of being victims of a violent crime. Thus, early intervention in the case of non-violent crimes might prevent further violent victimisation.

Where action was taken by the individual reported to, responses usually took the form of discipline, as well as informing the parents and the local police about the incident (see Table 9, *next page*). In the case of property-related crimes, discipline was less likely since the perpetrators are usually not known in these crimes.

Victims of violence were seldom informed about available counselling and other support services following their experiences, although this might be reflective of the poor availability of support services. Less than a tenth of threat (8.1%), assault (9.8%) and robbery (7.3%) victims had been informed about available support services by the person to whom they reported their experiences. A greater number of sexual assault victims (17%) had been informed about counselling services and other support services. However, the need for psychological support following violent experiences is clearly borne out in the percentages of learners who actually sought assistance after being informed about

Table 9: Action taken by the person informed (%)

	Threats	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Theft
Person was disciplined	76.3	63.5	50.4	45.3	42.3
Parents were told	12.9	15.3	22.7	28.3	12.9
Police were informed	3.8	13.9	8.4	12.3	2.5
Person was expelled/fired	3.5	5.1	6.7	2.8	1.3
Reported matter to school	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.9	0.0
Asked class/school and searched for item	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	34.3
Item was replaced/returned	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
Other	3.5	2.2	6.7	10.4	2.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

different service providers: 51.3% of threat victims; 52.4% of assault victims; 63.3% of sexual assault victims; and 60% of robbery victims.

For this reason, it was not surprising to find that learners who did not report

Researchers have found that the most common reasons for failing to report experiences of violence or bullying at schools were the following:

- Fearing reprisals.
- Feeling ashamed.
- Thinking they would not be believed if they told.
- Not wanting to worry their parents.
- Thinking that reporting would not change the situation.
- Fearing that their parents' or teachers' advice or responses would exacerbate the situation.
- Being concerned that the perpetrator would find out who had reported the incident.
- Not wanting to be perceived as a tattle-tale.

Source: Sampson R, *Bullying in Schools, Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Series, No 12, Office of Community Orientated Policing Service, US Department of Justice.* Available at <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/e12011405.pdf>.

the violence they had encountered at schools would often attribute their decision not to do so to the belief that reporting would not help. In other words, reporting their crimes would not result in any action being taken by those informed of the incidents. This belief was the most common reason for the non-reporting of robberies and thefts, but was also a common reason for failing to report any other form of violence experienced at school.

More specifically, two out of five robbery victims (39.2%), more than a quarter of threat victims (28.8%), more than a fifth (23.1%) of assault victims, and 19% of sexual assault victims who did not report their crimes to anyone believed that reporting their victimisation would not lead to any action (see Table 10). This perception caused one in two

Table 10: Reasons for not reporting school violence (%)

	Threats	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Theft
Did not think it was important to do so	29.2	31.4	27.6	25.7	38.8
Did not think it would help to do so	28.8	23.1	19.0	39.2	51.0
Was embarrassed	7.1	3.2	27.6	2.7	2.0
Was too scared to tell	23.0	17.3	15.2	28.4	4.5
Was threatened with harm if I told	9.3	5.8	1.0	2.7	0.9
Was threatened I'd fail if I told	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Realised I was the one in the wrong	0.0	17.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	7.6	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(51%) theft victims not to inform anyone of their experience, and was consistent with the low levels of action being taken in response to thefts reported to school authorities, as mentioned earlier.

With the exception of robberies and thefts, the most common reason for failing to report other crimes, such as assault, sexual assault and threats of violence, was thinking that it was not important to do so.

This is alarming given the established deleterious outcomes of criminal victimisation, whether violence is involved in the act or not. The fact that young people think it is not important to report when they have been threatened with violence or physical harm (29.2%), assaulted (31.4%), sexually assaulted (27.6%) or robbed (25.7%) speaks to the extent to which violence has become an everyday feature of the schools and communities in which these learners live. Furthermore, fear of reprisals prevented 23% of threats, 17.3% of assaults, 15.2% of sexual assaults and 28.4% of robberies from being reported to school authorities, parents, friends or anyone else.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND WEAPONS AT SCHOOL

The risk for school violence is often compounded by community-level factors, such as alcohol and drug availability, as well as access to firearms and other weapons. In keeping with the 2008 study, the 2012 NSVS results again demonstrated a link between violence at schools and access to substances and weapons within the school grounds. Learners were acutely aware of people at their school who were involved in various drug-related activities, ranging from the use of, to the purchasing and selling of, drugs.

With regard to the use of substances, 47.1% – nearly half of the sample – reported personally knowing people at their school who smoke marijuana, while 12.2% – more than a tenth of the sample – were personally acquainted with people

The learners also reported to know people who have:

- Been drunk at school (27.6%)
- Been high at school (31.8%).

at their school who used any other illicit drugs (excluding marijuana), such as mandrax, tik, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, whoonga or nyaope (see Figure 22). This was consistent with the proportion of learners who claimed to know people at their school who buy drugs (12.7%). Fewer (6.3%) learners claimed to know people

at their school who sell or deal in drugs. Despite this, the percentage is sizeable enough to warrant attention.

What was even more telling was the percentage of learners who were personally acquainted with people at their school who were involved in violence-related activities. One in seven learners – a total of 15.5% – reported personally knowing people at school who were involved in any activity that could have gotten them in trouble with the police, such as stealing, selling stolen goods, and mugging or assaulting others.

In addition, approximately one in four learners (24.1%) claimed to know people at school who had brought weapons, such as firearms or knives, to school with them. The proximity of these offenders to learners significantly enhances their risk for violence at school. The data in Table 11 clearly demonstrates the greater vulnerability of learners to violence when they are personally acquainted with transgressors at school. This vulnerability was seen across all crime types.

Province was significantly associated with knowledge of people at school involved in drug and violence-related behaviours (see Table 12, page 50). Learners

Figure 22: Knowledge of people involved in drug-related and violence-related behaviours at school (%)

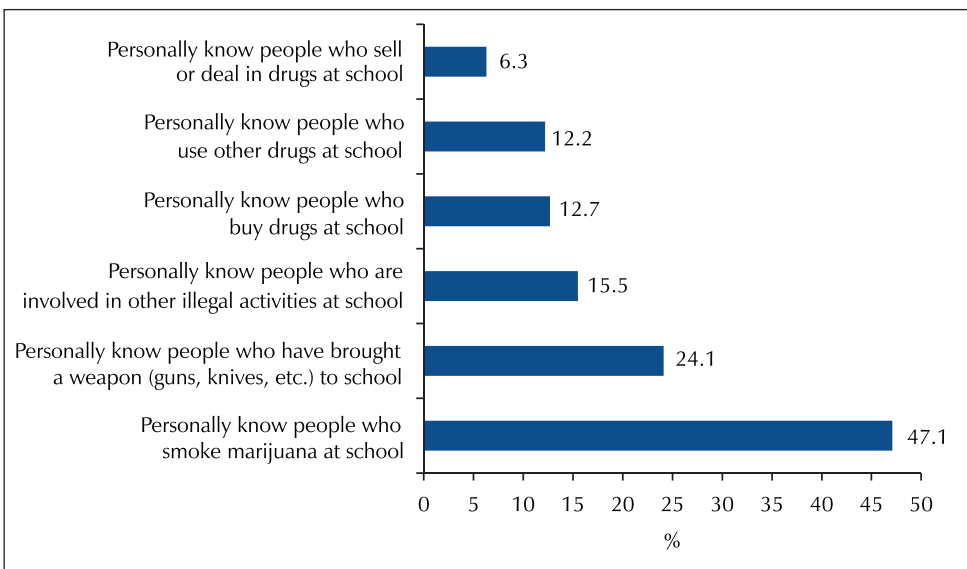


Table 11: Knowledge of people who...by victimisation (%)

		Threats	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Theft
Smoke marijuana	Yes	15.1	7.9	6.4	5.6	47.0
	No	9.8	5.0	3.2	3.5	41.8
Use other drugs	Yes	16.8	9.5	6.6	7.4	42.5
	No	11.6	5.9	4.5	4.1	44.4
Sell drugs	Yes	21.2	11.6	8.6	8.9	47.8
	No	11.7	6.0	4.4	4.2	43.9
Buy drugs	Yes	19.2	8.4	9.2	7.5	51.8
	No	11.3	6.0	4.0	4.1	43.1
Brought weapons to school	Yes	19.5	10.5	7.0	8.4	51.8
	No	9.9	5.0	3.9	3.3	41.8
Engage in any other illegal activity	Yes	18.0	10.0	5.3	7.2	44.1
	No	11.2	5.6	4.6	4.0	44.3

in the Free State (76%), North West (58.8%) and the Northern Cape (58%) were most likely to report knowing people at school who smoke marijuana, while personally knowing people at school who use other illicit drugs was highest among learners in Gauteng (19.6%), the Northern Cape (18%) and the Free State (14.8%) provinces.

Knowledge of people at school who sell or deal in drugs was highest in the Western Cape (reported by 11.4% of learners), followed by learners in the Free State (9.2%) and KwaZulu-Natal (7.4%). Knowledge of people who buy drugs was highest among Free State learners (24.5%), followed by scholars in the Northern Cape (17.6%) and the Western Cape (14.6%). See Table 12.

With regard to violence-related behaviours, learners in Gauteng (27.8%) were most likely to report knowing people at their schools who had done things that could have gotten them in trouble with the police, followed by learners in the North West (19.9%) and the Free State (19.6%).

In Chapter Two, Gauteng emerged as one of the provinces with the lowest rates of violent victimisation – this, despite the high levels of knowledge of people at school involved in criminal behaviour, which has been found to be a risk factor for violence.

Table 12: Knowledge of people at school who...by province (%)

	Smoke marijuana	Use other drugs	Sell or deal in drugs	Buy drugs	Have done things that could have gotten them in trouble with the police	Have brought weapons to school	Have been drunk at school	Have been high at school
GP	55.2	19.6	5.9	12.6	27.8	19.5	22.2	36.7
LP	42.7	9.2	4.8	10.7	16.3	19.9	18.9	21.3
FS	76.0	14.8	9.2	24.5	19.6	43.2	44.4	60.4
MP	47.6	11.0	2.9	11.8	8.8	16.9	28.1	31.8
NW	58.8	12.0	5.6	10.7	19.9	30.0	30.8	41.9
EC	39.4	9.9	5.0	11.2	10.7	28.4	30.1	32.7
NC	58.0	18.0	6.8	17.6	7.6	36.0	30.4	44.0
KZN	44.1	11.1	7.4	12.3	12.4	23.3	32.4	28.5
WC	39.1	12.6	11.4	14.6	19.4	23.9	24.8	29.1

The percentages in bold indicate the three provinces where learners were most likely to report knowledge of criminality at school.

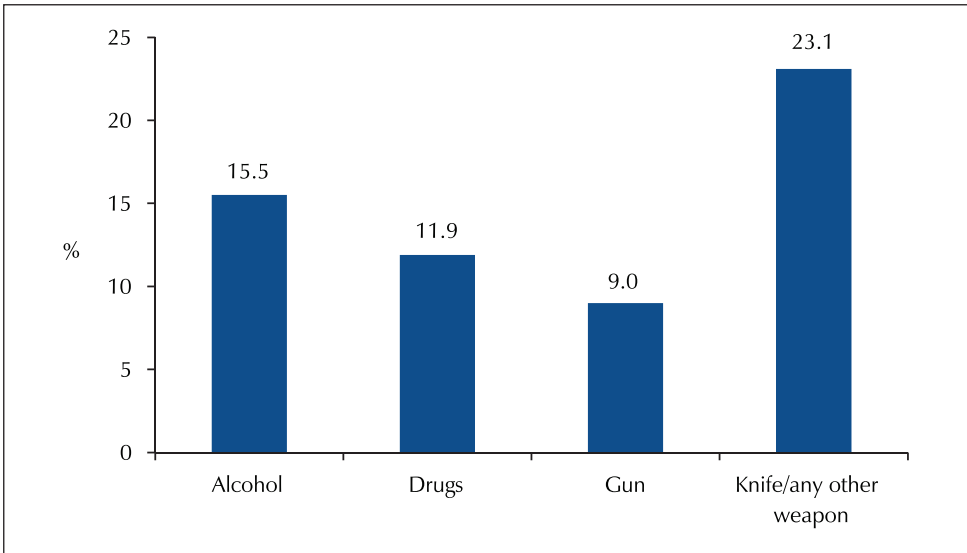
For the past few years, Gauteng province has placed a strong emphasis on improving school management. The 2012 data provides evidence to suggest the important role that effective classroom and school management can play in mitigating the other risk factors for school violence.

Scholars in the Free State were significantly more likely to personally be acquainted with people at their schools who had brought a weapon to school with them (43.2%), followed by learners in the Northern Cape (36%) and the North West (30%). See Table 12.

What becomes apparent from these figures is the consistent presence of the Free State among the top three provinces for all the violence and drug-related variables assessed. This provides some explanation for the high victimisation rates observed among Free State learners.

It was relatively easy for learners to access substances at school – a situation facilitated by the presence of individuals involved in anti-social and criminal activities in the lives of these young people. One in six (15.5%) learners asserted that it would be easy for them to access alcohol at school, while more than a tenth (11.9%) claimed easy access to drugs, including tik, mandrax, crack cocaine or ecstasy at school (see Figure 23). These findings were corroborated by data obtained from educators. In the past year alone, 36.8% of educators had incidents reported to them involving the use of weapons between learners, while 43.1% had received reports involving drugs or alcohol between learners. Most of the incidents had occurred in the month prior to being interviewed for this study.

Figure 23: Easy access to substances and weapons at school (%)



The ready accessibility of substances and weapons at schools is borne out in the number of actual reports received by these educators. In the month prior to being interviewed, while 25.7% of educators had received only one report involving drugs or alcohol, 47.3% had received two to five such reports, and 27% had received six or more such reports. With regard to weapons, while 38.9% of educators had received only one such report, 45.8% had received two to five such reports, and 15.3% had received six to ten such reports in the 30 days preceding the study.

CONCLUSION

A safe and non-violent school is inexorably linked to a safe and non-violent community²⁴ – an issue that will be explored in detail in the next chapter of this monograph.

The data presented thus far highlights several factors associated with the school environment, which undergirds violent victimisation occurring within schools. These factors – including unkempt areas with poor lighting, areas that allow strangers access to the school grounds, the availability of alcohol, drugs and weapons, the lack of safe reporting mechanisms, unsupervised classrooms, and a failure to respond when cases of violence are reported at schools – exacerbate an already risky situation.

Antecedents of school violence: A profile of learners' communities, homes and families

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Schools are microcosms of the communities in which they are located; thus the violent acts occurring in schools are influenced by many family and community-level risk factors that serve to heighten susceptibility to victimisation.
- Crime (49.6%) and violence was widespread in the communities in which learners lived.
- The average age at which learners first witnessed violence in their community was 14 years, suggesting that a great number of young people have already been subjected to some form of violence by the time they enter high school.
- Many youths were exposed to community adults or other young people who were involved in drug-related and other illegal activities in their neighbourhoods.
- Alcohol (64.7%), drugs (27.6%), firearms (17.2%) and other weapons such as knives (50.5%) were easily accessible in the areas in which these learners lived – factors that were strongly associated with their own substance use and weapon carrying at school.
- One in three learners was raised in a single-parent family.
- Family criminality was widespread.
- Many learners did not have to leave their homes to be at risk of violence.
- The results highlighted the presence of delinquent peers in the lives of young people – a scenario that increases their risk for violence.

INTRODUCTION

It is becoming widely recognised that no one factor contributes to violence perpetrated against or by learners. Violence occurring within schools has many antecedent factors that stem from the different social settings within which young people operate, including the school environment, the family and the broader community in which young people live.

This ecological perspective purports that the characteristics of these settings, as well as the people that learners come into contact with in these contexts, converge to constitute a significant source of risk for violence.²⁵ This chapter provides a snapshot of the young study participants' families and communities, and demonstrates how these settings contribute to learner vulnerability to school violence.

COMMUNITIES

It is widely accepted that schools are microcosms of the broader communities in which they are located. For this reason, the social ills prevalent in communities are known to permeate the school environment to various degrees. Community characteristics such as levels of social disorganisation, crime, exposure to violence, access to illegal substances and firearms, and proximity to criminals all affect children's risk for violence within the school environment.²⁶ The results emanating from the 2012 study once again provide evidence for this.

Crime was a common occurrence within the learners' neighbourhoods, perceived as a problem by 49.6% of the participants (see Figure 24). Province was a significant predictor of crime. The highest levels of perceived crime were

Figure 24: Fighting and violence in the neighbourhood (%)

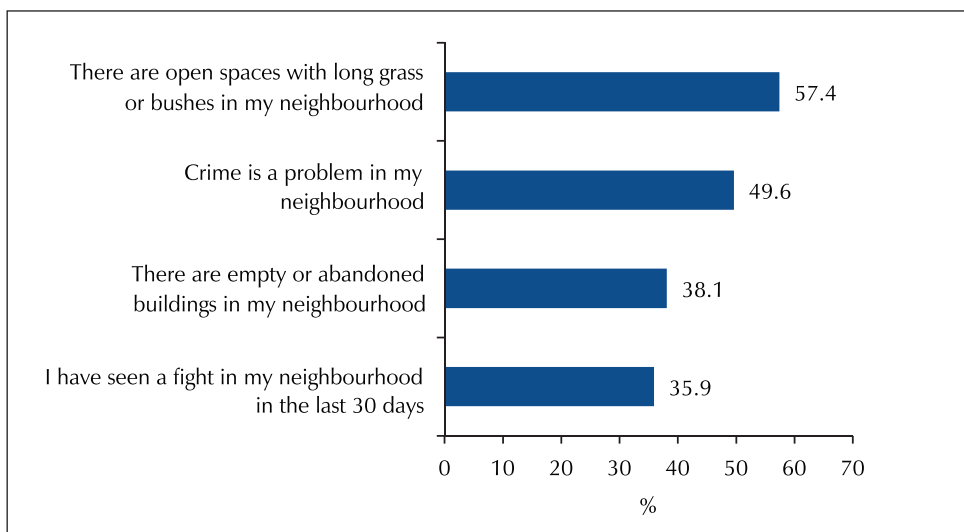
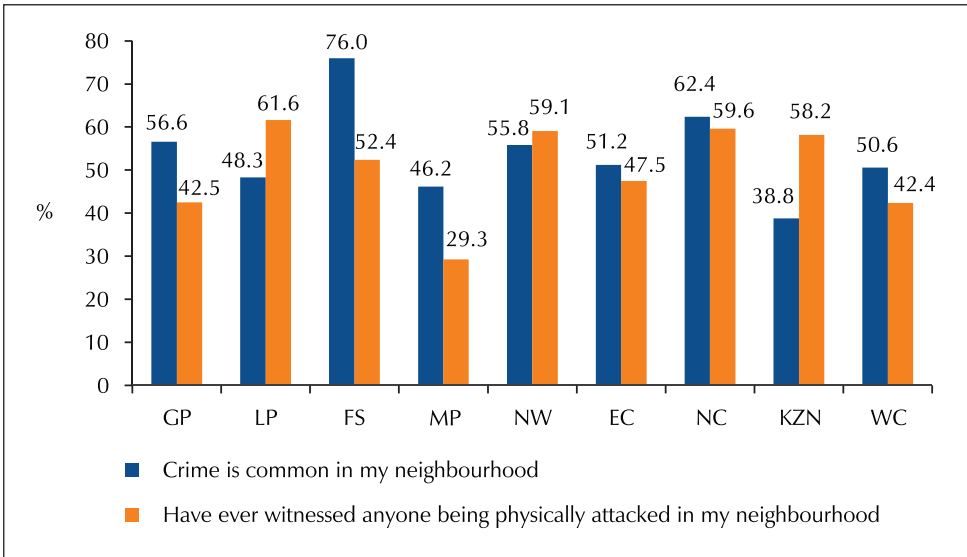


Figure 25: Crime and violence in the neighbourhood, by province (%)



reported in the Free State (76%), with the provincial figure being 26% higher than the national average observed, and 13% higher than the province with the second highest rates of perceived crime (the Northern Cape at 62.4%) (see Figure 25). The influence of community crime on violence occurring within schools is attested to by the fact that the Free State had one of the highest levels of school violence across all the crime types explored.

The crime situation seemed to be influenced by environmental factors that facilitate criminal activity in these communities, such as unkempt, open spaces with long grass or bushes (57.4%), as well as the presence of empty or abandoned buildings (38.1%) that provide aggressors with the ideal places to commit criminal acts without being seen or heard.

In addition to crime, violence exposure too was widespread in these communities. In the month prior to being interviewed for the study, one in three learners (35.9%) had witnessed a fight in their neighbourhood. The percentage increases when lifetime exposure to community violence is explored: nearly half (48.7%) of the sample had *ever* seen anyone being intentionally hurt by someone else outside of their home. When this question was posed to the learners they were informed that the term ‘hurt’ referred to being beaten, punched, kicked, physically pushed, hit, slapped or attacked with any weapon.

Community violence exposure was highest in Limpopo and was reported by 61.6% of learners in this province, followed by the Northern Cape (59.6%) and North West (59.1%) provinces (see Figure 25). Even though the Free State was not ranked as one of the three provinces with the highest levels of exposure to community violence, the provincial rate of 52.4% was still greater than the national average observed for community violence exposure (48.7%).

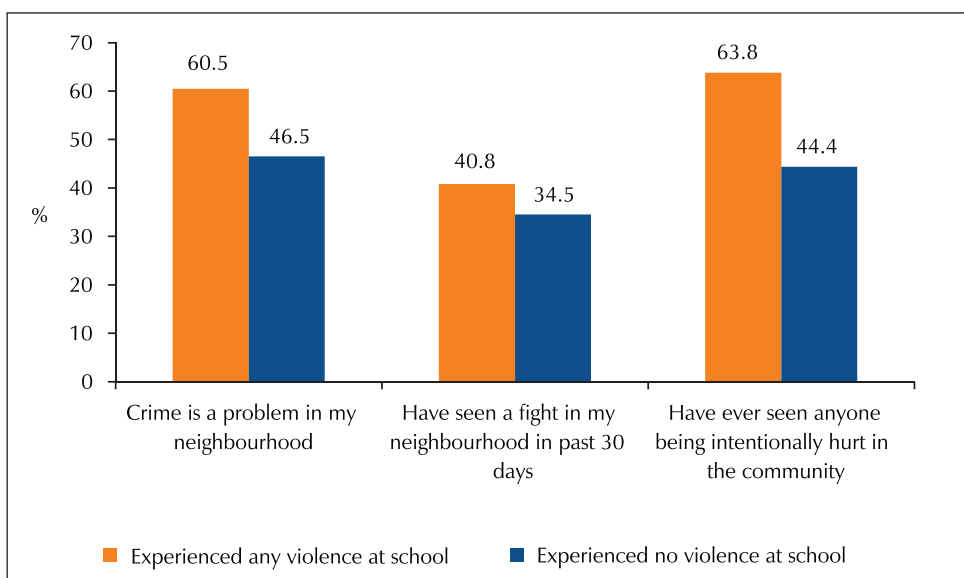
The results showed that these learners had been exposed to violence at a young age. Although age at first exposure to community violence ranged from one to 25 years, the average learner had first witnessed violence in his or her community at the age of 14 years (M=13.85; SD=3.264).

Even so, 41.2% of those who had ever been subjected to community violence had first encountered such an experience prior to the age of 14 years, suggesting that many learners have already been exposed to some form of violence by the time they enter secondary school.

This is an important finding given that prior violence exposure is a significant predictor of future victimisation and delinquent behaviour.²⁷ The effect of this on children and young people's risk for violence is exacerbated when the people they witness being attacked are known to them. One in two (56.4%) witnesses to community violence reported knowing the victims in the attacks, and in 12.5% of these cases the victims were in fact relatives of the learners. Victims were typically identified as other relatives such as aunts, uncles or cousins (33.3%), siblings (21.1%), and mothers or fathers (6.3%).

In cases where victims were not related to the learners, they tended to be neighbours (19.4%) and friends (18.2%). Perpetrators of this violence were also typically known (48.8%) to the learners, suggesting that many young people grow up in communities where violent and aggressive behaviour is modelled by significant individuals in their lives. Violent behaviour that is modelled is more likely to be imitated and replicated when the person modelling the behaviour has a relationship with the child or young person than when there is no relationship between the individuals.

Figure 26: Any violence and prevalence of indicators of disorganised communities (%)



Violence was witnessed in various places in the community, most commonly on the streets, as reported by 69.9% of the learners, and at shops or malls (12.5%). Nearly a tenth (9.1%) of these violent acts had been witnessed in open spaces or areas in their neighbourhood, supporting the earlier assertion that unkempt open spaces often constitute ideal sites for crime and violence in communities. In addition, taverns, bars and shebeens (4.5%) were commonly highlighted as sites for violence, although this was reported by less than 5% of those who had witnessed violence in their communities, outside of their homes.

As was the case in 2008, crime and violence exposure were proven to heighten susceptibility to school violence.²⁸ Analysis revealed that learners who are subjected to specific community conditions, such as high levels of crime (60.5%) and violence exposure (63.8%), were significantly more likely to have fallen victim to violence at school than those not exposed to these conditions.

Exposure to violence also affects learners' risk for violence owing to the negative impact that violence has on their emotional and behavioural development. Researchers have consistently highlighted a range of internalising and externalising behaviours associated with violence exposure, including poor self-image, depression, poor impulse control, poor cognitive abilities, fighting, cruelty, lying and the destruction of property;²⁹ factors that not only interfere with a healthy developmental trajectory but also put young people at risk for bullying and other forms of violent victimisation at school.

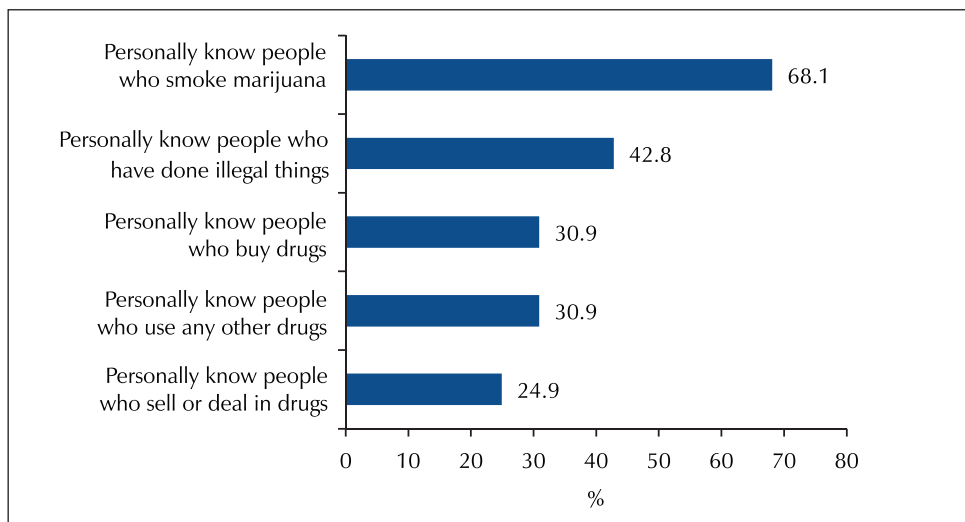
Other factors stemming from the community were also found to be powerful facilitators of crime and violence. These included knowledge of criminality in the community as well as access to alcohol, drugs and weapons in the community. With regard to the former, it has been proven that the presence of criminal acquaintances in a young person's life is one of the strongest predictors of delinquency.

Knowledge of individuals involved in various drug-related activities was widespread in the sample: 68.1% personally knew people who smoked marijuana, nearly a third personally knew people in their community who buy (30.9%) or use (30.9%) any drugs other than marijuana, and 24.9% personally knew people in

COMMUNITY-LEVEL RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE

- Poverty and unemployment
- High levels of neighbourhood crime
- Availability of drugs and firearms
- Gang activity
- Lack of access to recreational opportunities and facilities
- Poor housing
- Neighbourhood adults involved in crime
- Lack of job opportunities

Source: Maree A, Criminogenic risk factors for youth offenders. In Bezuidenhout C & Joubert S, Child and Youth Misbehaviour in South Africa: A holistic view. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 2003.

Figure 27: Knowledge of criminality in the community (%)

their community who sell or deal in drugs (see Figure 27). In addition to drug-related activities, respondents were asked whether they knew any people in their community who had engaged in any other activities that could have gotten them in trouble with the police, such as stealing, assaulting or mugging others. In response to this question, 42.8% – more than two-fifths – of the sample indicated knowing someone like this.

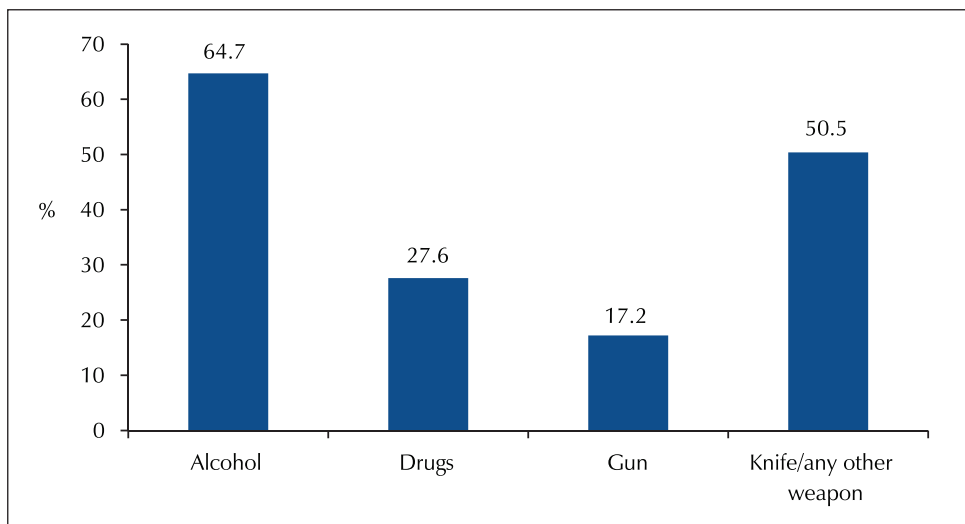
This knowledge puts learners at risk for violence by heightening their exposure to would-be offenders, and may also facilitate their bringing alcohol and drugs into the school environment.

Given the proximity to individuals involved in various drug-related activities, it was not surprising to find that many of the communities in which learners live are characterised by a high rate of alcohol and drug availability. Nearly two-thirds (64.7%) of learners claimed that it would be easy for them to access alcohol in their community.

There is a substantial body of literature that speaks to the association between alcohol and violence. Drugs, although less accessible than alcohol, were still easy to obtain for 27.6% of the secondary school learners surveyed. The study also assessed access to weapons, such as firearms and knives, and found that 17.2% of the learners were able to obtain a firearm in their community with relative ease, while 50.5% were able to obtain a knife or any other weapon (see Figure 28).

Weapon carrying has been strongly associated with violence perpetration. The ease with which learners are able to access weapons in their neighbourhoods has been shown to facilitate weapon carrying within the school environment ($p < 0.05$).³⁰ More than two-fifths (44.9%) of respondents who reported easy access to firearms in their community had personally ever taken a weapon to school with them, compared to only 17% of learners who had reported that it would be hard

Figure 28: Easy access to alcohol, drugs and weapons in the community (%)



for them to access firearms in their community. Similarly, 28.4% of learners who claimed easy access to firearms in the community reported that any of their friends had ever brought weapons to school with them, compared to only 16.8% of learners who claimed that they would have difficulty accessing firearms in the area in which they live.

Similar proclivities were observed when considering easy access to knives or any other weapons in the community, with more learners who recounted easy access to knives and other weapons (76.8%) in the community reporting that they themselves had ever taken a weapon to school with them, compared to those who reported difficult access to knives (23.2%).

Despite the often disorganised and disorderly communities in which young people live their lives, the study findings still highlighted generally positive attitudes among learners towards their neighbourhoods.

Three statements related to their neighbourhoods were posed to the learners, who were then asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

Approximately nine out of ten learners claimed to like the area in which they live, with 46.9% strongly agreeing and 42.4% agreeing with this statement. This attitude was further reflected in the percentage of learners who indicated that they would prefer to stay in their community rather than move to a different area, with more than two-thirds of learners disagreeing (41.5%) or strongly disagreeing (27.7%) with the statement 'I'd like to move out of my neighbourhood'. By and large, learners felt safe in their neighbourhoods, with

On average, the learners in this study were resident in households comprising 5.6 members (M=5.66). Even so, 28.4% of learners reportedly lived in households comprising seven to 12 members.

Table 13: Perceptions of the neighbourhood (%)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would like to move out of my neighbourhood	11.6	19.1	41.5	27.7
I like my neighbourhood	46.9	42.4	8.5	2.3
I feel safe in my neighbourhood	45.6	37.9	13.0	3.5

eight out of ten learners strongly agreeing (45.6%) or simply agreeing (37.9%) with the statement ‘I feel safe in my neighbourhood’. See Table 13.

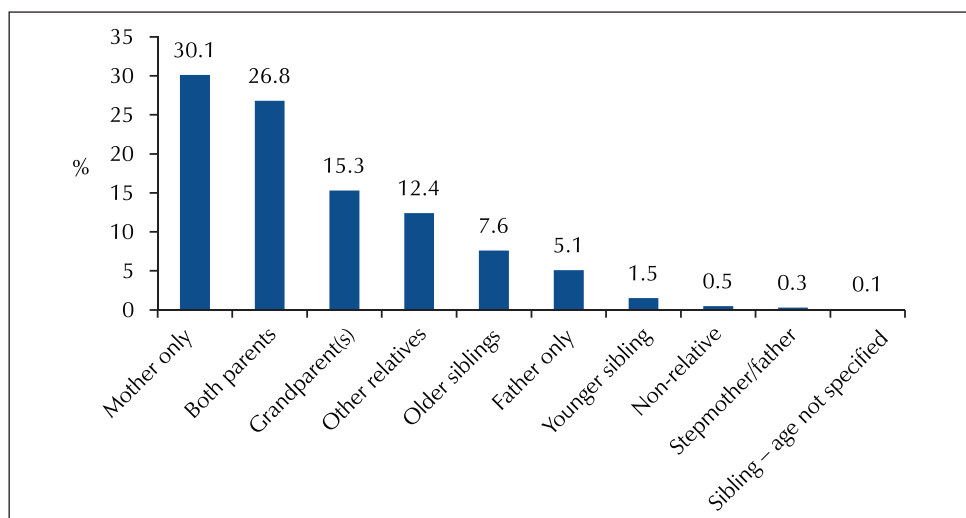
Less than a fifth of learners reported feeling unsafe in their communities, despite the levels of crime and violence and their proximity to criminal offenders. This may be indicative of the extent to which crime and violence have become normalised in many South African communities, and the subsequent desensitisation of young people to this scenario.

FAMILIES

The attributes of a young person’s family and home environment also play a key role in the child’s risk for victimisation and violence perpetration. Families constitute the primary context in which young people learn about behaviours that are considered acceptable or unacceptable in their societies. Thus, the behaviours and attitudes that are modelled by significant others in the family environment set the scene for behaviours imitated and replicated by children and youths.

Family composition is one feature of family life that has regularly been linked

Figure 29: Who respondents live with most of the time (%)



with youth violence.³¹ The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that many learners are at risk of violence as a result of the family settings they are raised in. More than a third of learners are raised in single parent families, 30.1% live in homes with their mother only and 5.1% live in homes with their father only. It is known that children brought up in single-parent homes are at increased risk for violence compared to those raised in two-parent (26.8%) homes (see Figure 29).³²

One in seven learners (15.3%) were being raised in homes headed by their grandparents, while slightly more than a fifth of the sample were living in homes where other relatives, such as aunts and uncles, siblings and stepparents, were their primary guardians. Nine out of ten (90.8%) learners were raised in homes where the oldest member was over the age of 35 years.

Family criminality is one of the most consistent correlates of youth violence and was thus essential to explore in this school violence study. Overall, the results showed that 23.7% – nearly a quarter – of the sample reported that any of their siblings had ever been in jail. Nearly a tenth (9.4%) of the learners claimed that any of their parents or primary caregivers had ever been incarcerated for criminal activity (see Figure 30).

Although the crimes perpetrated by the learners' relatives were not explored, there is some evidence to suggest involvement in drug-related activities. In the past year, 14.2% of the learners had family members who had used any drugs, including marijuana, mandrax, tik, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, whoonga or nyaope.

The 2012 family criminality rates were comparable to those observed in the 2008 sweep of this study. Then, too, nearly a tenth (9.2%) of secondary school learners reported that their parents had been incarcerated for crime, 20.2% had siblings who had been imprisoned and 15.2% had family members who had used illegal drugs.

Figure 30: Family criminality (%)

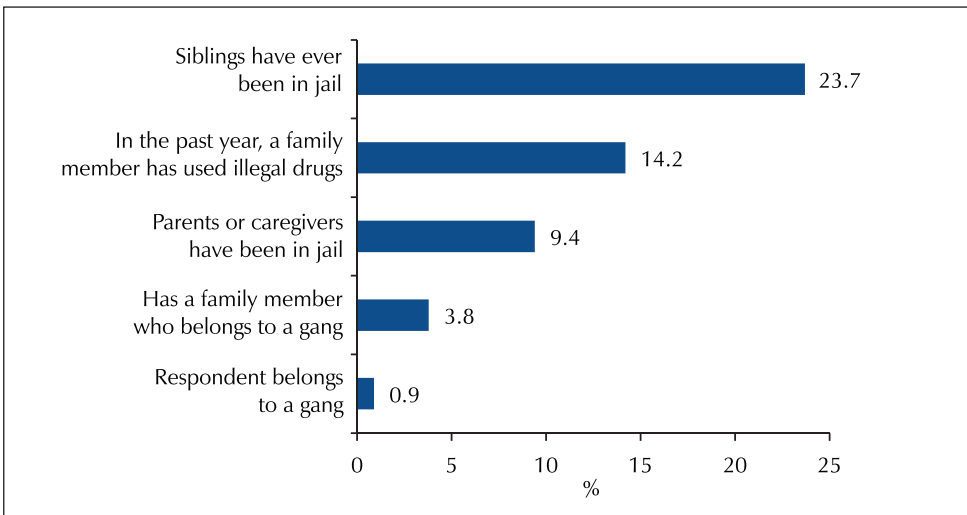


Table 14: Influence of parental and sibling criminality on violent victimisation at home and school (%)

		Experience of violence at home			Experience of violence at school			
		Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Threats	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery
Parent criminality	Yes	24.2	7.5	17.2	26.5	16.2	11.9	10.7
	No	9.6	2.9	10.3	14.5	7.1	6.6	5.3
Sibling criminality	Yes	15.1	4.6	10.2	17.5	9.6	7.7	6.6
	No	9.8	2.9	11.2	15.1	7.3	6.9	5.5

In keeping with the 2008 study, family criminality was strongly associated with violent victimisation both at home and at school. Learners who had family members who had previously been incarcerated were significantly more likely to have experienced various forms of violence. Experience of assault, sexual assault and robbery both at home and at school was greatest among learners who reported family criminality (see Table 14).

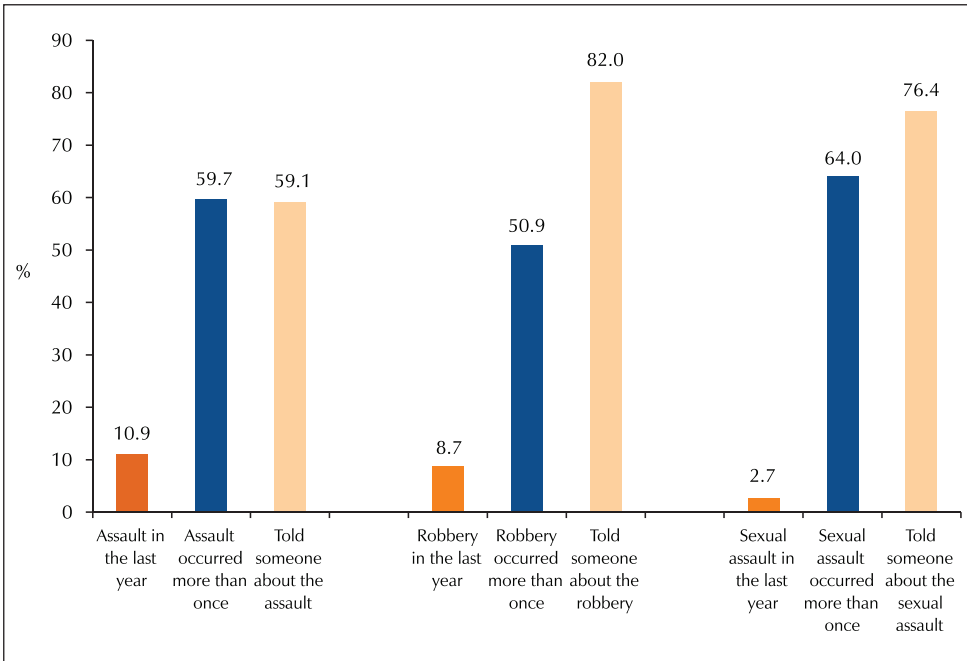
Parental criminality had a greater influence on violent victimisation than sibling criminality. This was attested to by the sizeable differences in victimisation rates between learners who had parents who had previously been imprisoned and those who had siblings who had been imprisoned before. Simply put, a greater number of significant differences were observed for parental criminality ($p < 0.05$) (see Table 14).

Violent victimisation was not limited to the school environment. In fact, the data showed that many learners did not have to leave their homes to be vulnerable to violence. One in ten (10.9%) participants had experienced an assault at home in the 12 months preceding the study.

In order to capture the levels of assault perpetrated against learners within the home, respondents were asked to report only on situations where they had been attacked physically or hurt, and to exclude incidents where they may have been physically punished for any wrongdoings.

As Figure 31 shows, close to a tenth (8.7%) of the learners had been robbed and 2.7% had experienced a sexual assault at home in the past year. As with violence at school, victimisation occurring at home also tended not to be isolated incidents: half (50.9%) of robbery victims, 59.7% of assault victims and 64% of sexual assault victims at home claimed victimisation on multiple occasions. Although reporting rates for these crimes were high (i.e. 59.1% for assault, 76.4% for sexual assault and 82% for robbery), there were still fairly large numbers of youths who did not inform anyone of the crimes they had been subjected to, suggesting that many were not provided with much-needed counselling and other support services following these violent incidents.

Figure 31: Violence victimisation in the past year, at HOME (%)



Experience of crime in the home was strongly associated with school violence. Analysis revealed that learners who had succumbed to an assault, sexual assault or robbery at home were significantly more likely to have experienced threats of violence at school, as well as an assault, sexual assault and robbery at school in the year prior to the study (see Table 15). Even though learners who had been victimised at home also showed higher levels of property-related crimes, specifically theft, the difference was not significant when comparing learners with prior victimisation experience at home and those with no such experience.

Table 15 shows the effect of being a direct victim of violence within the home to victimisation at school. However, young people are also subjected to indirect

Table 15: Relationship between school violence and violence at home (%)

		Threats	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Theft
Assault at home	Yes	21.6	15.9	8.3	8.3	45.7
	No	11.0	5.2	4.3	4.0	43.9
Sexual assault at home	Yes	31.5	11.1	22.2	10.5	52.5
	No	11.7	6.2	4.2	4.3	43.9
Robbery at home	Yes	26.2	13.9	9.4	14.3	58.7
	No	11.0	5.6	4.3	3.6	42.8

FAMILY-LEVEL RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE

- Economically stressed family
- Child abuse and neglect
- Lack of parental interaction
- Poor parental supervision
- Single parent families
- Parents using alcohol and/or drugs
- Negative relationships with parents
- Exposure to high levels of family violence and conflict
- Delinquent or criminal behaviour by siblings
- Harsh or inconsistent disciplinary practices
- Parental criminality

Adapted from Maree A, Criminogenic risk factors youth offenders. In Bezuidenhout C & Joubert S, Child and Youth Misbehaviour in South Africa: A Holistic View. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 2003.

forms of violence within the home environment. One in two learners (50.8%) reported that people in their family shout or scream at each other when they are angry. In 22.3% of these families, arguments often escalate to physical fights, while more than a tenth (12.2%) of learners had ever witnessed people in their family intentionally hurting one another physically. See Figure 32.

Parents or caregivers who themselves are caught up in cycles of violence in the home may experience difficulty being emotionally present and responsive to the needs of their children,³³ suggesting that the levels of support learners receive from their families following an experience of violence may be compromised. This is an important finding, especially since so few learners are referred to external counselling or support services following a violent experience.

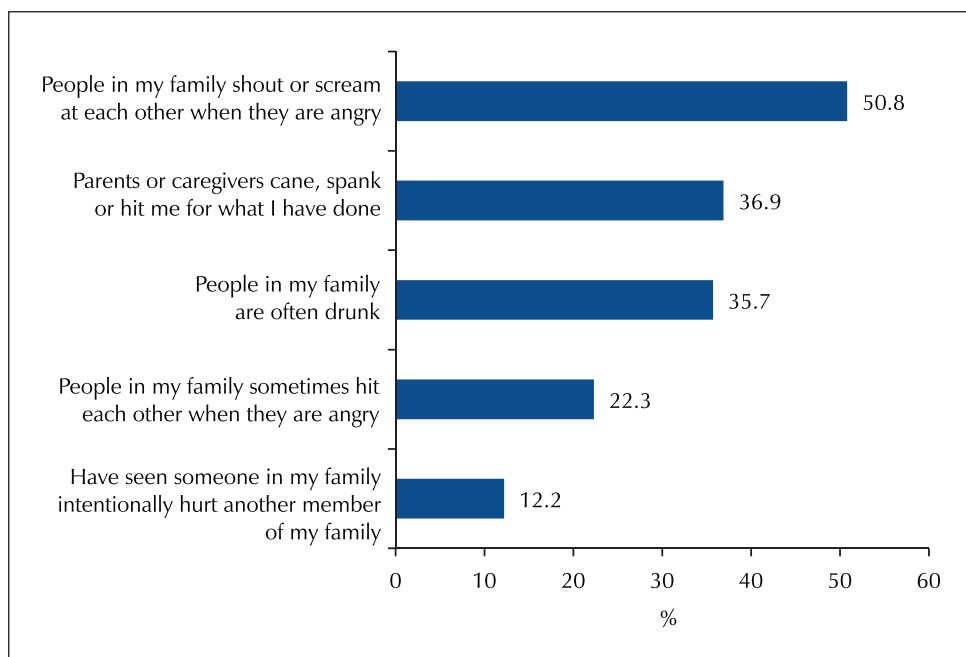
The age at which these learners had first witnessed violence within their homes ranged from two to 21 years. On average, most learners were 13 years of age when they had first seen people in their family intentionally attacking one another (M=13.31 years; SD=3.011). Most of these acts were serious. In more than

half of these incidents (51%) weapons had been used, more commonly knives (42.7%), sticks (37.2%), pangas or bushknives (7.1%), and guns (6.5%). Other less commonly reported weapons were bottles (1.6%), stones (1.4%) or sjamboks (1.1%). Alcohol seemed to be involved in many of the acts of violence occurring within these homes (35.7%).

Earlier studies have shown that witnessing violence in the home can be just as damaging as being directly affected by the violence occurring in the home.³⁴ The negative implications for such exposure is exacerbated if the child is subjected to similar violence outside of the home – as is the case for many of these learners.

The use of violence as a means to resolve conflicts in the home was further borne out in the percentage of learners who reported that they are caned or spanked for their wrongdoings by their parents or caregivers (36.9%) (see Figure 32). Many studies have shown a relationship between levels of family conflict and

Figure 32: Family conflict (%)



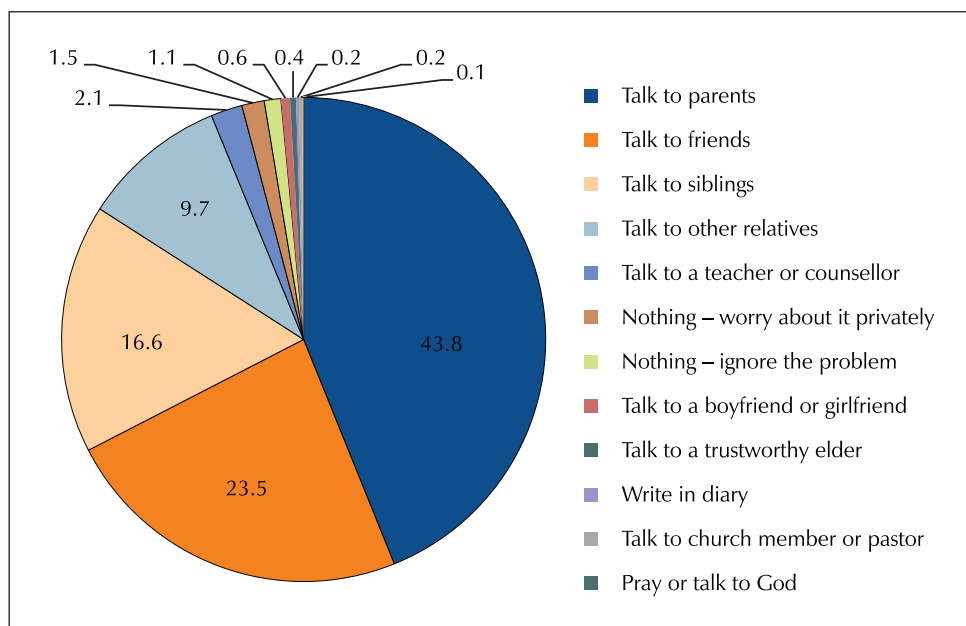
violence exposure and experience.³⁵ In fact, this relationship was also observed in the first sweep of the schools violence study in 2008.

Children learn behaviours by watching and imitating others, specifically individuals in their primary socialising contexts – that is, family and community settings. This chapter demonstrates that violence is an everyday part of these young learners’ existence. Clearly, the message that is being communicated and reinforced within these important socialising contexts is that violence is a permissible means of resolving conflict.

Family environments serve not only to facilitate crime and violence but also serve as a control mechanism for moderating the likelihood of later violence and delinquency. Put differently, family environments characterised by a fair amount of social support in the form of positive parent–child relationships and parent–child involvement may serve to mediate the community-level risk factors for violence. It was therefore encouraging to find that nine out of ten learners reported that their parents listen to their point of view or create opportunities for them to share their opinions on family matters (92.5%). Furthermore, 95% of learners claimed that when they have done something well, their parents or caregivers tell them they are proud of their accomplishments.

Since family environments with warm and supportive parent–child relationships may reduce vulnerability for violent victimisation,³⁶ the family setting becomes a crucial area of intervention if one hopes to effectively reduce the violence levelled at young people in South Africa. Notwithstanding the

Figure 33: People learners would talk to about something important to them (%)



prevalence of violence, learners still felt safe within their homes. The overwhelming majority of learners reported feeling safe at home (91.1% felt safe all the time and 7.3% felt safe only sometimes). A mere 1.7% of learners did not feel safe at home.

To gauge the social support available to the learners, respondents were asked who the first person would be that they would talk to if they encountered any problem, not just problems related to experiences of violence. Parents were identified as the primary source of support for these learners, reported by two out of five learners (43.8%) as the first person they would seek assistance from with a personal problem. Friends were the second most frequently identified individuals who learners would confide in, reported by 23.5% of learners.

These statistics highlight the importance of parental involvement in safety initiatives at schools, as well as the role that peers can play in helping schools to identify and support learners who succumb to violence.³⁷ This, however, will necessitate the availability of easily accessible reporting mechanisms at schools.

Other individuals who learners will talk to about things that are important to them include siblings (16.6%), other relatives (9.7%), and educators or school counsellors (2.1%). See Figure 33 for a complete list.

PEER NETWORKS

During adolescence, peers become an increasingly important influence on learners' attitudes and behaviours. The peer group has been repeatedly

Table 16: Delinquent peer networks (%)

	My friends have	I have personally
Smoked marijuana	17.0	3.5
Used other drugs excluding marijuana	3.8	0.7
Sold or dealt in drugs	2.1	0.6
Bought any drugs	6.0	1.4
Done things that could have got them in trouble with police	6.3	1.9
Attacked someone with the idea of hurting them	8.8	4.3
Brought weapons to school	3.5	0.8
Owned a gun	0.8	–
Come to school drunk or under the influence of alcohol	5.7	1.4
Come to school high or after using drugs	6.0	1.7

highlighted as a significant risk factor for violence by criminologists and victimologists alike.³⁸

As is evident from the study, for some learners, time away from the home is often spent engaging with delinquent and anti-social peers – peers often involved in drug-related activities, as reported by almost a fifth of the total sample. More specifically, 17% had friends who smoked marijuana, 6% had friends who had bought any drugs, 3.8% had friends who had used any other drugs excluding marijuana, and 2.1% had friends who had ever sold or dealt in drugs (see Table 16).

Time spent with delinquent peers at school significantly impacts on learner experiences and behaviours while at school. A total of 4.1% of learners admitted to having been involved in any kind of drug-related activity themselves, having used, sold or bought any drugs.

The powerful influence of delinquent peers on learners' own delinquent behaviour becomes clear when considering that a total of 20.8% of learners who themselves had ever sold, used or bought any drugs also had friends who had engaged in similar behaviour.

In addition to these drug-related activities, the learners also reported having friends who have engaged in violent and aggressive behaviour towards others. Close to a tenth (8.8%) of learners had friends who had attacked someone with the idea of hurting them, 3.5% had friends who had brought any weapons to school with them, and 6.3% of learners reportedly had friends who had done things that could have gotten them in trouble with the police, such as mugging and assaulting others (see Table 16). Clearly, peer influence on scholars extends beyond merely increasing the tendency for delinquent and anti-social behaviour but also puts learners at risk of victimisation, especially when peers are involved in violent behaviour ($p < 0.05$). See Table 17 (*next page*).

Table 17: The influence of peer networks on violent and non-violent victimisation (%)

		Threats	Assault	Sexual assault	Robbery	Theft
Have peers who have engaged in drug-related activity	Yes	16.5	8.6	6.3	6.7	47.1
	No	11.3	5.8	4.4	4.0	43.4
Have peers who have engaged in violent behaviour	Yes	26.6	13.0	9.5	9.6	56.2
	No	10.5	5.5	4.2	3.9	42.6

Involvement with delinquent peers places learners in contexts that put them at increased risk for victimisation, given their greater exposure to would-be offenders.³⁹

CONCLUSION

The findings in this chapter demonstrate that learners participating in the school violence study spend a substantial amount of time in settings where they are exposed to offenders of crime and violent acts. It seems that these offenders are encountered in all spheres in which learners operate, including their homes, their peer group, as well as in the broader community in which they live. Thus, safety at schools is inescapably linked to the community in which the school is located. It is unreasonable to expect schools to take sole responsibility for dealing with an issue that clearly has deep societal origins. Any plans to improve safety and security at schools will inevitably have to extend beyond the school environment itself.⁴⁰

Violence-prevention practitioners have for a long time focused primarily on the individual at risk of violence (both as victim and perpetrator). However, the evidence documented here points to a need for greater attention to be paid to the environmental features that facilitate risk and which intersect with violent school victimisation.⁴¹

Online violence

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- A total of 81.1% of learners owned or had access to a mobile phone.
- More than half (54.3%) of the learners owned or had access to a computer, laptop or tablet computer.
- Access to telephony or internet services was ubiquitous across area type.
- In total, 20.9% of the learners in this study reported an experience of online violence.
- Experiences of online violence were highest among learners from metropolitan areas.
- The aggressors in the online violence reported were largely friends of the victims.
- Online violence was typically perpetrated through means of pictures or video clips (35.3%), instant messaging platforms such as Mxit, BBM, WhatsApp or MSN/Yahoo (27.2%) and simple text messages (14.7%).
- More than a tenth (12.1%) of learners reported ever having met someone offline whom they had first met online.
- Friends were by far the most common individuals informed about the online violence encountered by these victims.
- Experience of online violence was strongly associated with the perpetration of similar behaviours.
- Overall, the findings in this chapter demonstrate that although online violence is significant enough to warrant attention, it is neither an epidemic nor rapidly exceeding the extent of offline bullying, as is commonly believed.

INTRODUCTION

Violence inflicted online and through various social media platforms is becoming increasingly common. Although often not considered violence, general forms of bullying (cyber bullying), harassment and stalking frequently occur, using communication tools as the medium. New forms of violence, such as sexting or 'outing', are also emerging, taking advantage of the almost infinite reach and audience that the internet and mobile technology affords, as well as the practically instant distribution opportunities.

While not yet extensive, literature on the phenomenon of cyber bullying and online violence is increasingly making the link between online and offline behaviour, with sufficient evidence reported of the correlation between online and offline violence to warrant some concern.

Even without this link, the impact of online violence on young people can be destructive and harmful. In the most extreme cases, online victimisation can result in suicide or self-harm, with several cases reported in both the international and national media over the past 24 months.

In less extreme cases, online victimisation is likely to result in depression, anxiety, sleeplessness and, ultimately, may facilitate the development of many of the same symptoms as offline violence – that is, lack of self-esteem, a breakdown in healthy peer and youth-to-adult relationships, and other results discussed in Chapter One of this monograph.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

It should be noted at the outset that definitions of cyber bullying, online harassment and online violence or aggression vary considerably between and within countries and studies. This undermines the ability to compare data across different environments. For example, some have argued that cyber bullying should only be used when online experiences are part of, or related to, offline bullying.

Others, such as Hinduja and Patchin, take a much broader definition of cyber bullying, defining it as 'willfull and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices'.

Sources: Wolak J, Mitchell J & Finkehor D, *Online Victimisation of Youth: Five Years Later. Research Report, Crimes Against Children Research Centre, University of New Hampshire & National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2006*; Hinduja S & Patchin JW, *Summary of Cyberbullying Research 2004-2010, 2010*. Available at: <http://cyberbullying.us/research>.

Several points need to be kept in mind when discussing online violence. First, online violence is a recognisable, measurable and preventable form of violence experienced by young people. Second, there is a danger that the seriousness of online violence will be undermined if an artificial division is created between online violence and other forms of violence against young people. This is not aided by the fact that what occurs online is often not recognised by policy-makers, violence-prevention practitioners or children themselves as violence. Marwick and Boyd⁴² point to the fact that children are more likely to perceive their experiences online as 'drama' rather than bullying –

a term that may trivialise both the incident and the impact of the experience. Conversely, there are sufficient issues that are unique to the nature of online violence, and to understanding the relationship of online violence to offline lives, which warrant a discussion of online violence and cyber bullying separate from other forms of violence. It is for this reason that the chapter explores online violence in detail, separate from the previous discussions on violence experienced at school.

Finally, unlike physical and emotional offline violence, which is much more subject to physical spaces and where a delineation between the school, home and community environment makes sense, online violence is usually not confined to any particular physical environment. It cuts across all the spheres and spaces in which young people live their lives.

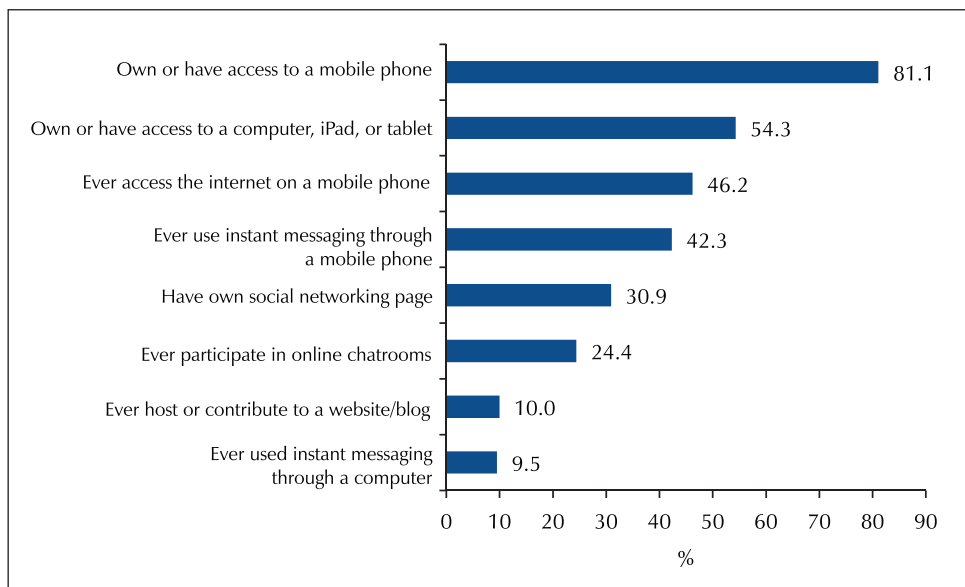
CONTEXTUALISING ONLINE VIOLENCE

Unlike physical or emotional violence, which may be inflicted without the aid of any weapons, online violence generally depends on access to, or ownership of, devices through which the internet, or social media generally, is accessed. Such access is not restricted to the internet though, with bullying and teasing just as likely to occur through texting and short messaging as through internet-based platforms such as Facebook.

Further, the internet is no longer limited to access to laptops or computers, with mobile technology making the internet infinitely more accessible to populations with previously very limited access to online material. Indeed, in largely rural populations, where universal access to computers may be unfeasible, or the likelihood of which lies at least beyond the immediate future, data-enabled cell phones or smart phones are making the internet much more accessible to people of all ages. As with most new technology, the uptake of such opportunities tends to be quickest among younger users. Children and youth are therefore among the fastest adopters of smart phones, with all the benefits and possible harms that accompany them.

To contextualise, four out of five (81.1%) learners interviewed reportedly owned or had access to a mobile phone, while more than half (54.3%) owned or had access to a computer, laptop or tablet computer, such as an iPad. Just under half (46.2%) claimed to access the internet on their smart phone, while slightly fewer – just over two in five (42.3%) – used instant messaging on their cell phone. This includes platforms such as Mxit, MSN Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM) or any other form of instant messaging. The percentage is significantly higher than those young people who use instant messaging on computers or laptops (9.5%), and reflects the shift from computer-based to mobile-based internet messaging (see Figure 34). The importance of mobile platforms therefore needs to be taken into account from a harm-identification and prevention-strategy perspective.

Figure 34: Online access and participation (%)



ICTs have been identified as powerful tools for development, and have the potential to extend education, health and other basic services to previously hard-to-reach rural communities.⁴³ However, there is also the risk of access to ICTs increasing what is referred to as ‘the digital divide’.⁴⁴ There is sufficient data to show that cell phones, for example, have provided previously marginalised rural communities with enhanced access to telephony; however, as many of the real and potential benefits of mobile telephony lie in the ability to access the internet, the

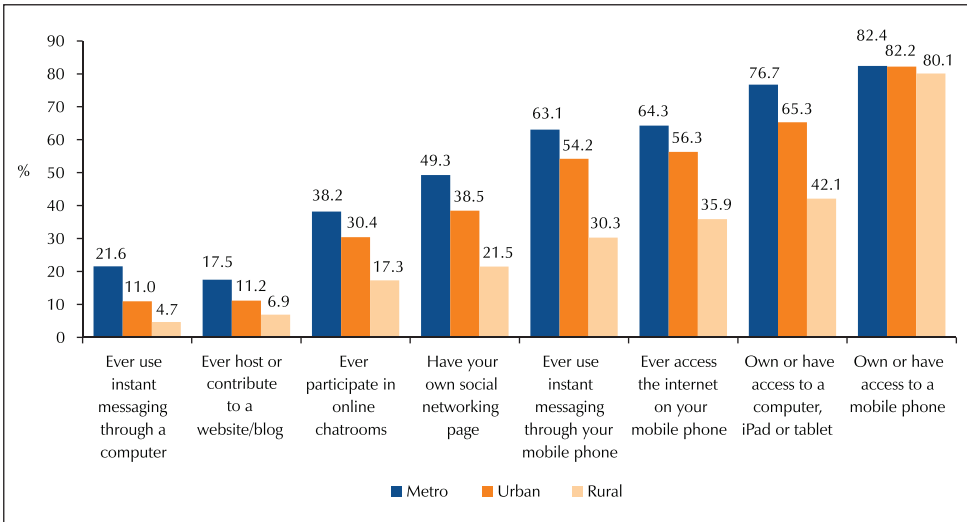
divide between those who can afford internet-enabled, or smart phones, and those who are restricted to traditional non-smart phones has yet to be significantly narrowed, and is unlikely to be so until an affordable smart phone comes on the market. This has important implications for safety online, as many of the dangers currently attached to online activity relate primarily to internet-enabled or smart phones.

When disaggregated by area type, the access to telephony and internet services reported by young people shows that while

World Wide Worx recently reported internet access in South Africa to have increased 25% in one year, from 6.8 million users in 2010 to 8.5 million users in 2011. The findings also revealed that 7.9 million South Africans access the internet via their mobile phones. These findings show that there is a rapid increase in access to mobile phones, an increase which some researchers attribute to mobile phone owners becoming younger and younger.

Source: World Wide Worx, *Internet Access in South Africa 2012*. Available at: <http://www.worldwideworx.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Exec-Summary-Internet-Access-in-SA-2012.pdf>; Valkenberg PM & Peter J, *Online communication and adolescent well-being: Testing the stimulation versus displacement hypothesis*, *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 12(4), 2007.

Figure 35: Access to telephony and internet services, by area type (%)



access to mobile telephony has to a large extent become ubiquitous across all area types, access to mobile internet is indeed much more differentiated (see Figure 35).

The internet tends to be most accessed (via fixed or mobile platforms) by young people at home in the afternoon or at home in the evening. This is to be expected given that this is when school-goers are most likely to have free time. Importantly for younger school-goers in particular, this is the time when they are most likely unsupervised.

SAFETY AND THE ONLINE–OFFLINE NEXUS

One of the most pressing concerns for parents of young people is the cross-over from online relationships to offline meetings. These concerns are fuelled by occasional high-profile media coverage of offline meetings that have resulted in harm or, in the most extreme cases, death of one of the individuals. While such fatal meetings are uncommon, the concern is real. In any society, young people are generally taught not to speak to or accompany strangers, and the phenomenon and danger attached to it is not new. Online social interaction, however, can let down a person’s guard and fool them into believing that a stranger is now a friend.

Undoubtedly, one of the attractions of social media sites is the ability not only to connect with people already in an individual’s network and social sphere, but also to connect with those unknown, who share common interests, passions and experiences. Through online interaction, the scale of people waiting to be met is endless.

One reason why the internet and everything attached to it is so powerful and useful is the exponential networking and connectedness power attached to it. As such, it is through the internet and social media platforms that young people,

often prone to feelings of alienation, are able to form connections that can be immensely useful and powerful in the formulation of identity and feelings of acceptance. Often, it is on the basis of these connections, or feelings of connectedness, that young people decide to make the transition from purely online to offline relationships, despite the dangers that may accompany such a move.

As the data from the study reveals, the possibility of relationships or connections moving from online to offline is very real in South Africa. In total, more than one in ten (12.1%) young people interviewed had met someone offline, in real life, after meeting them online. Males (13.9%) were slightly more likely than females (10.3%) to have met someone offline whom they had initially met online. Perhaps not surprisingly, those between the ages of 17 and 18 years were most likely to have met someone in real life that they met online, with 15.2% of this age category reporting they had met someone in real life, compared to 5.6% of those 14 years and younger, 12% of those aged 15–16 years, and 13.2% of those aged 18 years and older.

It is important to note, however, that in almost two out of five cases (38.2%) the learners' parents knew that they were going to meet the person, and/or knew something about the online interaction with the individual. Related to this, one in five (21%) young people reportedly spoke to their parents or caregivers about the people they meet online (see Figure 36).

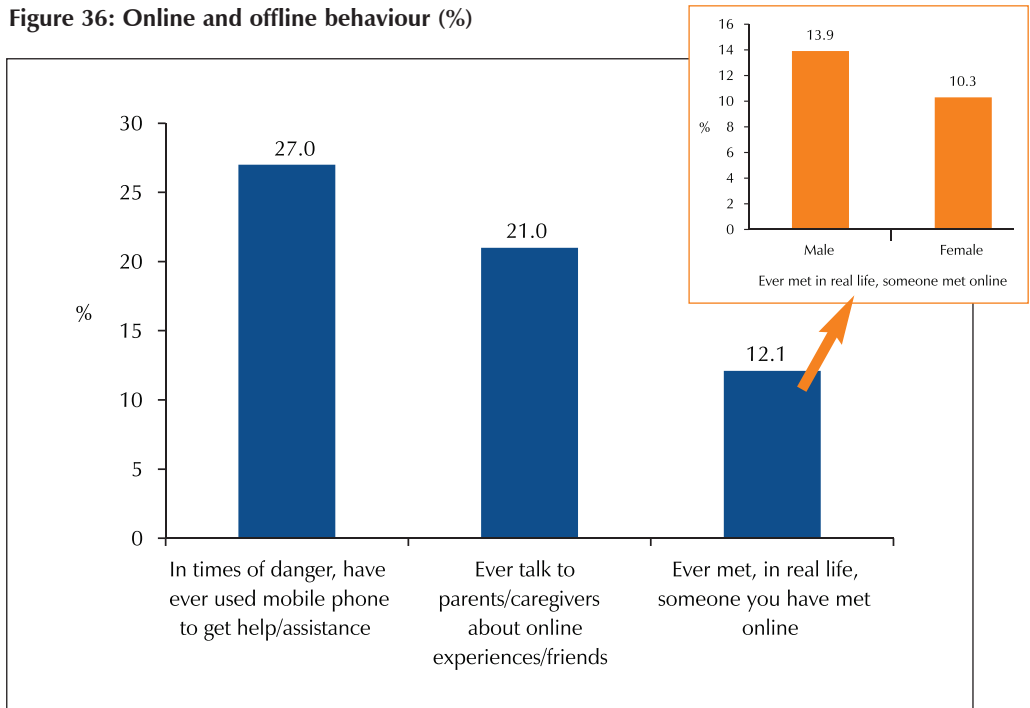
While it might be expected that the older age cohort of young people (those over 18 years) would be the least likely to tell their parents they were going to meet their online correspondent (27.3%), of concern is that only 35.7% of learners in the 15–16 year age cohort told a parent or caregiver they were going to meet someone offline. In total 43.1% of 17–18-year-olds were likely to tell their parents, while half (50.9%) of those 14 years and younger claimed to have told their parents when they were planning to meet someone offline.

Although it is reassuring that those 14 years and younger are the most likely to talk to their parents about physically meeting someone they met online, it is significantly concerning that just under half of children this age would meet someone offline without the knowledge of their parents or caregivers, or would have the opportunity to do so without their parents knowing.

This highlights a potentially critical area of communication between young people and caregivers. While recognising that many teenagers and adolescents are inherently protective of information, their friends and their online activities since these are deemed a personal space, engagement between young people and their caregivers is an important tool through which the resilience or capacity of young people to deal with difficulties faced online, and possible dangers, can be improved.

The importance of parent–child engagement and communication was further attested to by the fact that learners who regularly spoke to their parents or caregivers about people they had met online were significantly more likely to tell

Figure 36: Online and offline behaviour (%)



their parents when they were planning on meeting someone offline, whom they had first met online, than those who were not inclined to discuss with their parents the people they met online.

A positive message also exists in the data. Learners were asked whether they had ever used their cell phones to get help or assistance in times of danger or when they needed help. This is one reason why parents provide their children with cell phones, even to use within the school environment. In total, over one-quarter of young people interviewed reported that they had used their cell phones to call for help when they needed it (see Figure 36).

What remains unclear – and could be important for the development of safety strategies based on mobile technology – is who the person called in the case of an emergency. Was it a caregiver or parent, another family member, or friends and peers? A further note can be added here regarding communication and safety strategies. As important, if not more so, are the opportunities that present themselves for positive messaging through peer networks.

While young people often prefer to keep knowledge of their friends and other information from adults, they are much less secretive with their peers. Indeed, international research shows that up to one in two young people post information online, and that up to 40% of those who engage in risky behaviour online do so in the company of peers.⁴⁵ This opens up the importance of tapping into peer networks to disseminate and share safety strategies and responsible online behaviour, rather than relying solely on the caregiver–child space and communication.

ONLINE VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

Violence experienced online or via social media can be categorised into various typologies. Kowalski et al identify various forms of cyber bullying alone, including flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery, exclusion, cyber stalking and happy slapping.⁴⁶ Since this categorisation, other forms of online violence have continued to emerge, including sexting. Generally, cyber bullying is taken to be any form of harm or abuse of power or force, either threatened or actual, inflicted repeatedly and intentionally against an individual.

For this study, which targeted young people specifically within the school environment, the specific forms of violence and cyber bullying explored included:

- Any form of online fight with someone, where rude or angry language was sent in a chat room
- Ever having rude or insulting messages sent about one via computer or mobile phone
- Ever having messages sent or posted that were hurtful, with the intention of damaging one's reputation
- Ever having someone share secrets or embarrassing pictures or information online without one's permission
- Ever having someone use one's account and pretend to be one by sending messages and trying to damage one's reputation
- Ever having been threatened with harm or intimidated by someone online
- Ever having someone send sexually explicit images or messages about one by using a phone or computer.

Together, these individual experiences were analysed, and a composite variable representing *any* form of cyber bullying and online violence was constructed.

In total, 20.9% of young people, or 1,237 learners, had experienced some form of online violence or cyber bullying. This is significant for a number of reasons:

For the purpose of this study, online violence, aggression and cyber bullying were defined as violence that happened when messages are sent to someone, but also when people say things about someone to others, using technology as the medium. This includes when people post photos or videos of someone intended to embarrass or hurt that person on the internet, even though they were not sent directly to the individual. Cyber bullying was also taken to include when people say harmful or embarrassing things about someone, or things intended to hurt or stigmatise a person, on the internet or in chat rooms.

- The experiences reported by young people suggest that cyber bullying and online violence is significant enough to warrant attention at both a prevention and response level since it affects a substantial percentage of young people in South Africa.
- Contrary to popular perceptions and high-profile media reports, cyber bullying is not an epidemic, nor is it rapidly exceeding the extent of offline bullying or other forms of violence.

While one of the facilitators of online bullying is the anonymity behind the action, like bullying and many other forms of interpersonal violence, online bullying is in many instances associated with in-person knowledge of the perpetrator. The Youth Internet Safety Survey (YISS) 2 showed that 45% of those reporting being harassed or bullied online knew the harasser prior to the incident.

Source: Wolak J, Mitchell J and Finkelhor D, *Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later*. Alexandria, VA: Crimes Against Children Research Centre, University of New Hampshire & National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2006.

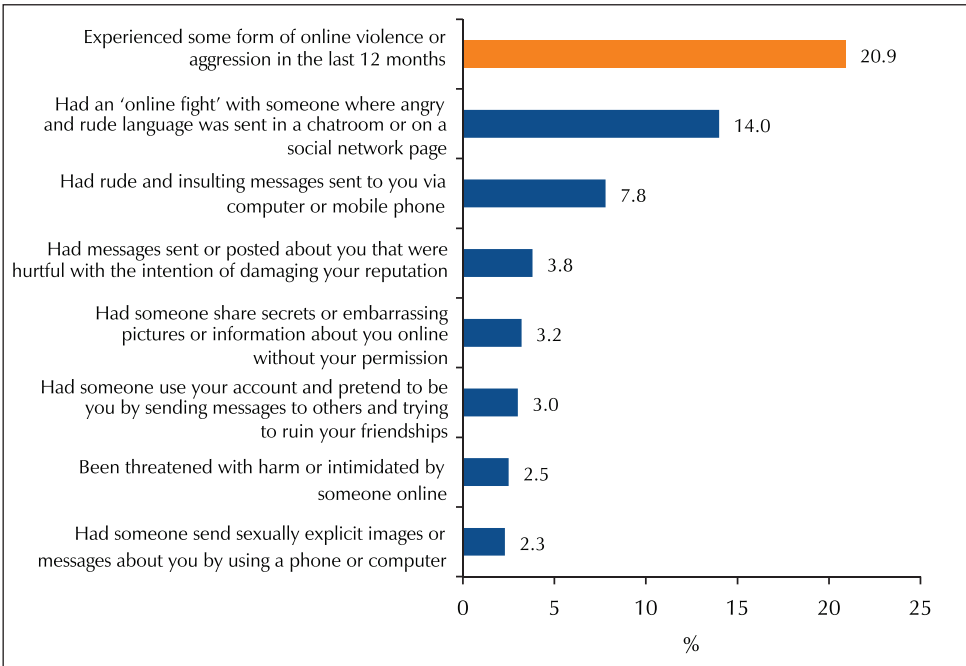
This last point is particularly important for framing the discussion on cyber bullying and online violence, and further emphasises the need to address this form of violence as just one within the broader ambit of violence affecting young people in South Africa. It also suggests that caution must be taken to afford cyber bullying and online violence the importance it deserves and the recognition that it constitutes a significant new form of violence effecting children, while not responding to it with a moral and intuitive reaction that is likely to be neither effective nor balanced.

An exploration into the various types of online violence shows that online fights, where angry and rude language is or was exchanged, is the most common form of experience, with 14% of young people in total reporting experiencing this in the past year. This is followed by just under one in ten (7.8%) young people who had ever had rude or insulting messages sent about them via cell phone or computer (see Figure 37, *next page*).

In total, 3.8% of young people had messages posted about them that were hurtful, with the intention of damaging their reputation. Only fractionally less (3.2%) had experienced someone sharing embarrassing or secret information about them online, or using their account to send harmful messages to others, with the intention of damaging their name or reputation (3%). A similar percentage (2.5%) had actually been threatened or intimidated by someone online or via cell phone, or had sexually explicit images or messages sent about them (2.3%). See Figure 37 (*next page*).

The impact of differential access to internet-enabled phones, or to the internet more generally, on experiences of online violence and negative experiences is clearly evident when these are analysed by area type. Without exception, young people living in metropolitan and urban areas were significantly more likely to experience some form of violence than those living in rural areas. This is most

Figure 37: Experiences of online violence in the last year (%)



marked in the case of online fights, where two out of five (21.1%) school-goers in metro areas compared to one in ten (9.9%) in rural areas had experienced this form of online violence. Less marked were experiences such as sexting, where 3.6% of school-goers in metro areas, 3.2% in urban areas and 1.6% in rural areas reported this experience (see Figure 38).

Figure 38: Experience of online violence, by area type (%)

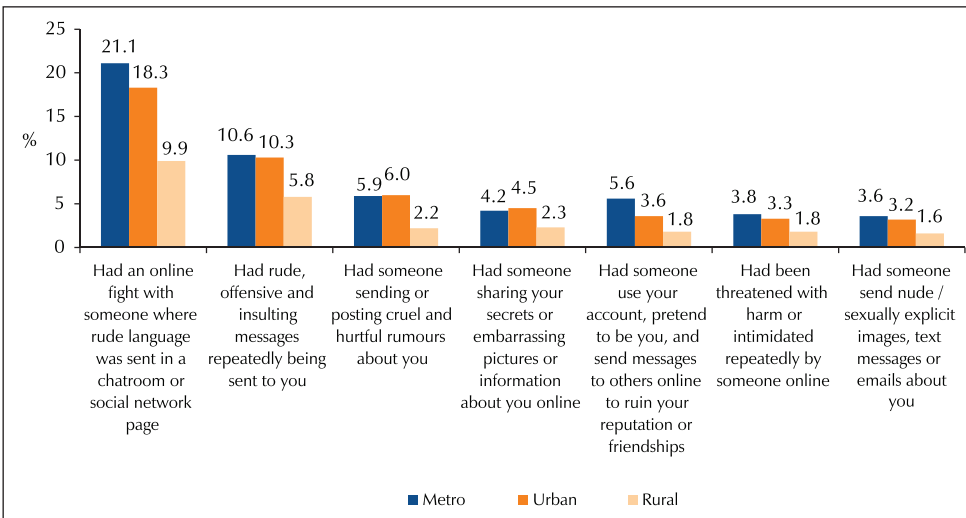


Figure 39: Person responsible for online violence (%)

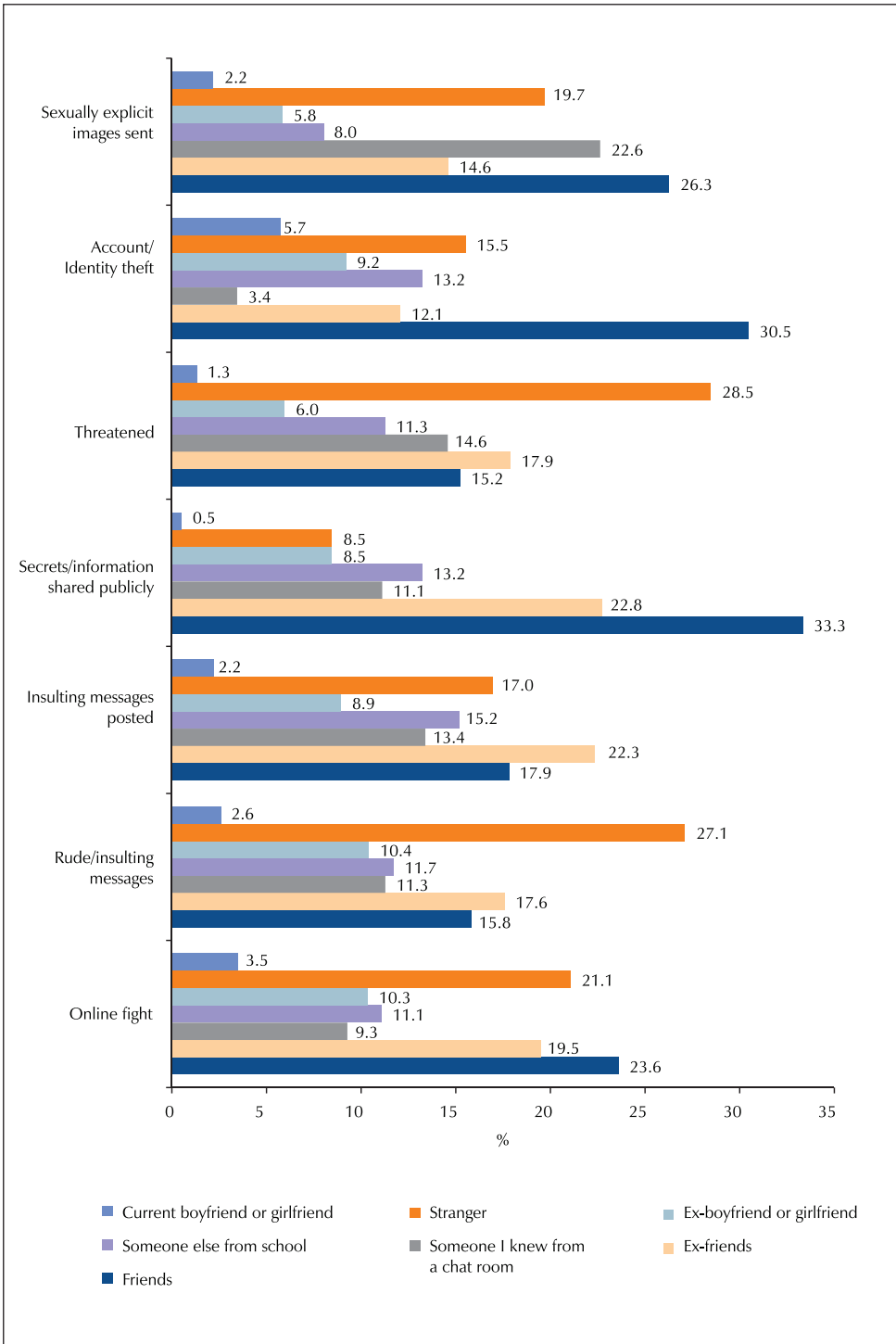
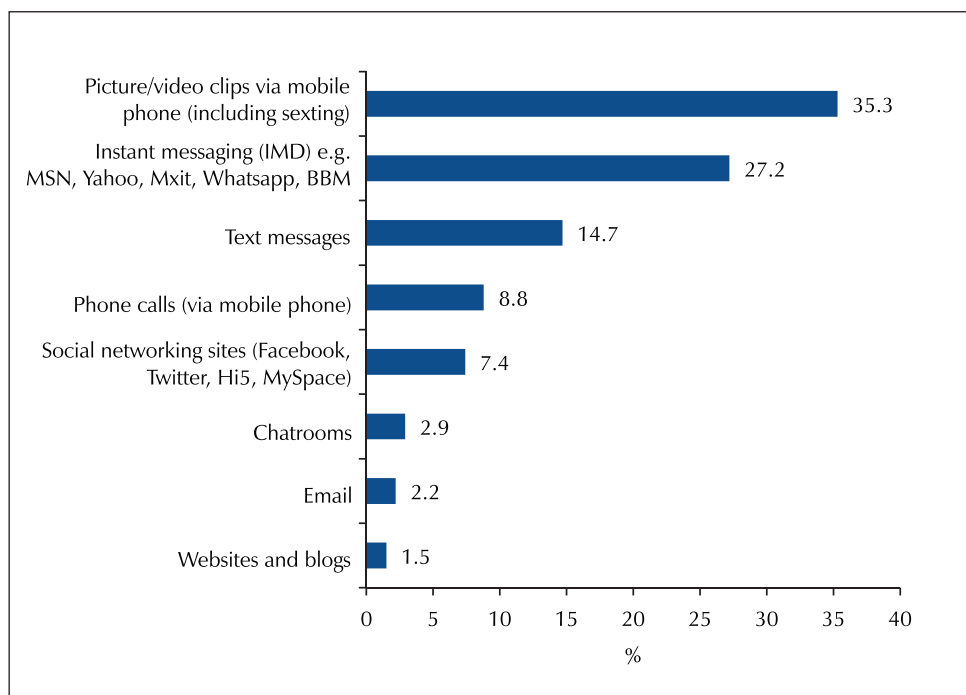


Figure 40: Medium used for sending explicit material (%)

Across all these types of experiences, the frequency most reported for the victimisation was one to two weeks. In total, close to a third of the young people reported victimisation over a one- to two-week period, with the exception of the distribution of sexually explicit images or messages, where most respondents reported that this was a one-off event which lasted less than a week (34.1%, compared to 29.7% who reported it lasted one to two weeks).

The data suggests that most of the bullying, 'drama' or violence tends to occur over a relatively short period of time – but enough to allow acts or events to be repeated as opposed to being single, isolated incidents. This is important in delineating patterns of behaviour or single acts of insult, abuse or aggression from bullying behaviour, which is categorised as repeated and intentional.

As with many forms of sexual violence and interpersonal violence, online violence is most commonly perpetrated by people known to the victims. In some instances, this may relate to the nature of the violence or incident. For example, in the case of sharing secret or personal information online without the individual's permission, a third of the cases (33.3%) were inflicted by a friend (see Figure 39, *previous page*). In many instances, it is unlikely that someone not close to an individual would be in a position to know secrets or private information that they could share.

Similarly, friends or peers close to the individual are most likely to be in a position to engage in online fights with others, and in this case accounted for the

people most responsible for online fighting (23.6%). However, friends are also cited as the people most responsible for distributing sexually explicit images or messages (26.3%). Only in the case of sending rude or insulting messages are ex-friends cited as those most likely to perpetrate the violence. This might reasonably be assumed to be part of taking revenge on people, where relationships and friendships have broken down. See Figure 39.

Related to the nature of the violence under discussion, the most common medium utilised for the perpetration of violence was reported to be picture or video clips distributed via cell phones (35.3%), followed by messages distributed through instant messaging platforms such as Mxit, BBM, WhatsApp or MSN/Yahoo (27.2%), and simple text messages sent via cell phones (14.7%). Other important platforms identified included social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Hi5, which accounted for 7.4% of the cases (see Figure 40). This profile speaks to the ease with which pictures and videos can now be generated and distributed, or modified and distributed, using simple smart phones.

REPORTING OF ONLINE VIOLENCE

As with any form of violence against children or youth, the ability of authorities or adults to respond appropriately is largely dependent on whether the victim reports the incident or behaviour to anyone. On a positive note, more incidents raised in the study were reported than not reported. Across all the types of violence, the majority of respondents told someone about the incident. Threats and intimidation, and theft of online identities were most reported (both 78.8%), while online fights were the least likely to be reported (69.1%). See Table 18 (*next page*).

Just as important as the actual reporting of violence is whom the individual chooses to report it to. It is of little consequence to victims of violence if those told are not in a position to act or to provide some form of support, whether this be direct psycho-social or indirect and informal support through peer networks, for example.

This is an important distinction: across all forms of violence reported, friends were those most reported to. This varied from just over two in five (42%) victims of account identity theft to three out of five cases (68.7%) in online fights (see Table 18).

An adult figure at least appears as the second most common figure reported to, with a teacher cited as the second most common in all forms of online violence, ranging from 13% in the case of online fights to over one in three (37.6%) in the case of the dissemination of

The first Youth Internet Safety Survey in 2004 showed that 44% of online bullies reported weak caregiver-child bonds compared to 19% of non-bullies. In addition, 32% of online bullies reported alcohol or substance use compared to 10% of those not classified as online bullies.

Source: Ybarra ML and Mitchell KJ, Online aggressors/targets aggressors and targets: A comparison of associated youth characteristics, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 45(7), 2004, pp 1308-1316.

Table 18: Frequency and reporting of incidents (%)

	Online fight	Rude/insulting messages sent	Insulting messages posted	Secrets/information shared publicly	Account theft	Threatened	Had images sent
Experienced	14.0	7.8	3.8	3.2	3.0	2.5	2.3
Frequency							
< 1 week	34.5	33.0	26.9	16.5	28.0	28.4	34.1
1-2 weeks	39.4	34.1	32.3	36.7	32.7	29.5	29.7
about a month	16.6	20.4	23.8	25.5	21.3	21.6	17.4
2-6 months	6.5	8.3	11.7	13.8	12.0	8.5	10.9
6 months-1 year	2.5	3.9	4.0	6.4	6.0	9.1	5.8
longer than 1 year	0.5	0.2	1.3	1.1	0.0	2.8	2.2
Reported							
Yes	69.1	71.6	73.8	70.4	78.8	78.8	69.6
No	30.9	28.4	26.2	29.6	21.2	21.2	30.4
To whom							
Teacher	13.0	18.4	23.5	37.6	26.9	23.1	28.1
Friend	68.7	57.1	50.0	44.4	42.0	49.1	54.2
Parent	8.0	10.0	12.7	9.0	14.3	11.1	7.3
Headmaster	0.3	0.6	4.2	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.0
Police	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.5	0.8	0.0	3.1
Prefect	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
Learner support officer	0.3	3.6	4.8	0.8	0.8	2.8	1.0
SRC	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0
Counsellor	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sibling	7.1	6.3	0.6	3.0	5.9	2.8	3.1
Other family member	1.2	1.8	1.8	.8	4.2	4.6	2.1
Girlfriend/boyfriend	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8	1.7	0.9	0.0

online secrets or personal information about the individual (see Table 18). Surprisingly, boyfriends or girlfriends constituted less than 1% of those reported to in all cases except theft of a victim’s account or online identity.

The predominance of friends and peers as those with whom victims share their experiences provides a useful entry point for the formulation of support strategies and prevention mechanisms in addressing this form of violence.

RESPONSE TO ONLINE EXPERIENCES

As with any form of violence or criminal activity, reporting and the proclivity to report, is largely dependent on confidence that action will be taken on reports. The reporting of crime, generally, is likely to be negatively impacted should communities feel that no action will be taken by the police if they report, or that reporting is unlikely to result in any positive outcome for the victim or the resolution of the case.

Similarly, reporting of violence by young people – and particularly within environments such as schools – is influenced by the perception that action will or will not be taken by those told, whether they be school authorities or parents.

Reporting of negative or ill-intentioned behaviour inflicted over cell phones or computers gains a further dynamic as young people may fear their access will be restricted, more tightly controlled or removed entirely if cases of violence or bullying are reported. Increased reporting rates should form part of any successful campaign aimed at the safety and well-being of young people, and this is no different in the case of online violence.

When asked whether any action was taken when they reported their experiences, young people were significantly less likely to report action taken in the case of online violence than when reporting offline violent experiences, as outlined in Chapter Three of the monograph.

In total, just over one in five (22.3%) young people reported that action was taken when reporting their experiences. This, in part, is related to the fact that peers or friends formed the bulk of those reported to. Indeed, levels of action

Figure 41: Type of action taken when reported (multiple response) (%)

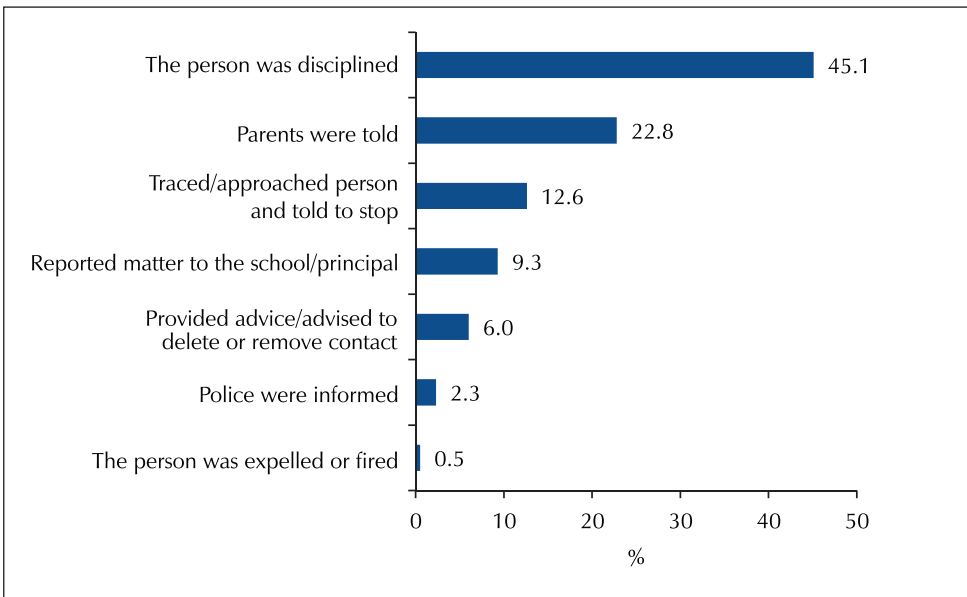
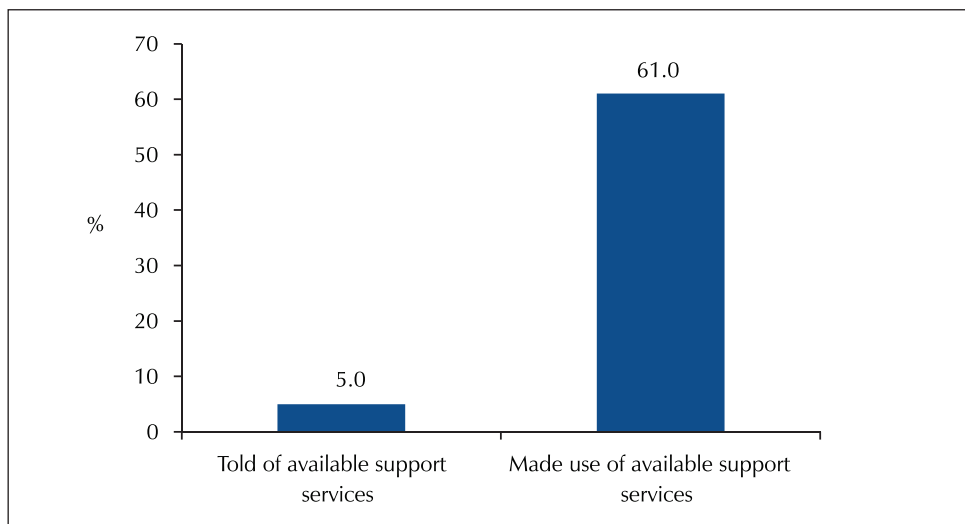


Figure 42: Knowledge and use of support services (%)

increased dramatically when looking at reporting just to teachers and parents. When action was taken, it most commonly took the form of formal discipline (45.1%) (correlating strongly with teachers as the authority reported to), followed by reporting the case to the parents of the young person responsible for inflicting the harm (22.8%), and approaching the person with an instruction to stop (12.6%) (see Figure 41, *previous page*).

Other actions included the matter being reported by the teacher/friend to the school principal (9.3%), advice being provided on how to deal with the event, or being advised to delete the contact from the phone (6%), and the person being expelled or fired (0.5%). In just ten cases, accounting for 2.3% of all those instances where action was taken, the matter was referred to the police (see Figure 41, *previous page*).

In only 5% of all cases where the matter was reported to someone was the victim of the violence made aware of support services available. This highlights two important points: the lack of available services to deal with online violence; and in the very few instances where such services are available (such as the Childline Mxit Counselling line), the lack of public awareness of such services. Importantly, the necessity and demand for such services is indicated in the data, with three out of five (61%, or 25 out of 41) young people who were told of such services reporting having utilised whatever support was available (see Figure 42).

IMPACT OF ONLINE EXPERIENCES

The rapidly growing literature on experiences of cyber bullying and online violence increasingly point to the commonalities in impact between offline and online bullying.⁴⁷ Many of the symptoms associated with offline victimisation are

becoming apparent in victims of online violence. These may be primary level psycho-social factors such as depression, low self-esteem and anxiety, or secondary factors such as low educational performance and outcomes, poor/negative peer and adult relationships, and social withdrawal.

A significant percentage of the young school-goers who had experienced some form of online violence or aggression reported negative psycho-social outcomes as a direct result of their experiences online. These included feeling sad and hurt, angry, embarrassed or anxious.

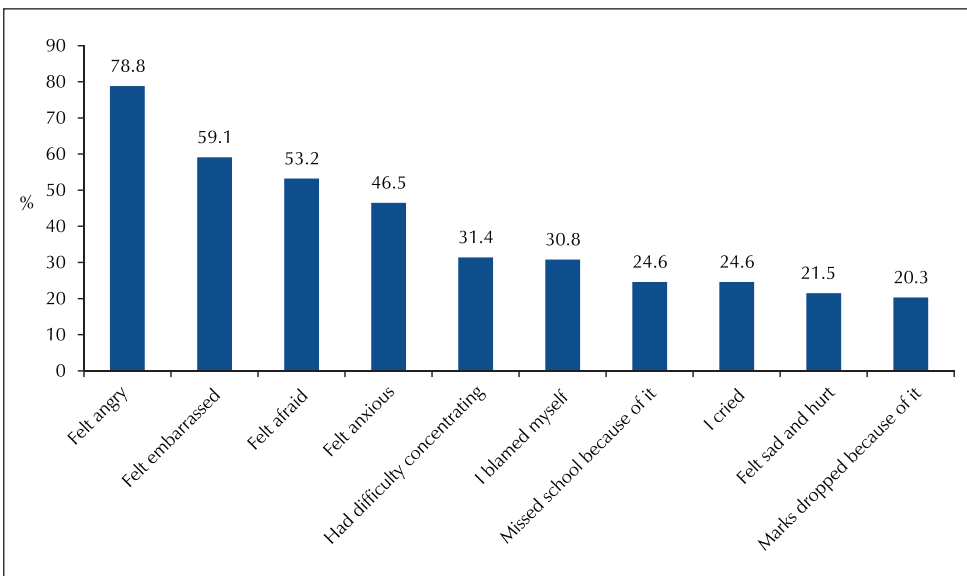
In total, more than three-quarters (78.8%) of those who had experienced some form of online violence or aggression felt angry, while almost three in five (59.1%) felt embarrassed. More than half (53.2%) actually feared for their safety and felt afraid, while only slightly fewer (46.5%) felt anxious. Others felt that their experiences impacted negatively on their concentration (31.4%) and in fact caused them to miss school (24.6%). See Figure 43.

This reflects findings from the United States-based Growing Up With Media Survey, where a strong relationship between experiences of cyber bullying and school behaviour problems, such as skipping school and carrying a weapon, was found.⁴⁸

Data from the second Youth Internet Safety Survey shows that young people who engage in aggressive online behaviour (defined as making rude or nasty comments or frequently embarrassing others) are more than twice as likely as those who do not to report online interpersonal victimisation.

Source: Wolak J, Mitchell J and Finkelhor D, Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later. Alexandria, VA: Crimes Against Children Research Centre, University of New Hampshire & National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2006.

Figure 43: Impact of online experiences (%)



In addition to those in the school violence study who reported that their experiences caused them to miss school, one in five (20.3%) went so far as to feel that their marks at school had dropped as a result of their experience.

SELF-REPORTED ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

As with offline bullying, a strong case has been made for the relationship between online experiences of violence and online perpetration of violence. In short, as with offline violence, those who are victims of violence at a young age are statistically more likely to themselves inflict violence on others.

The young people included in the school violence study were thus asked whether they had ever engaged in any harmful behaviour online. One in five (20.3%) reported that they had ever lied about their age, with males (21.2%) slightly more likely than females (19.6%) to report having lied about their age online. Those 17–18 years of age (23%) were most likely to report having lied about their age, while those 14 years and younger were least likely to report having lied about their age (15.3%).

Just over one in 20 young people admitted to ever having sent text messages to others in order to make fun of them or to make them angry, with females (6.4%) fractionally more likely than males (6%) to have done this. Those 17–18 years were again the most likely to report having done this (7.4%). Just 4.3%, or 258 young people, reported having posted something harmful or hurtful to others online, 3.2% reported ever having taken a picture of someone and posting it online

Figure 44: Self-reported online aggression (%)

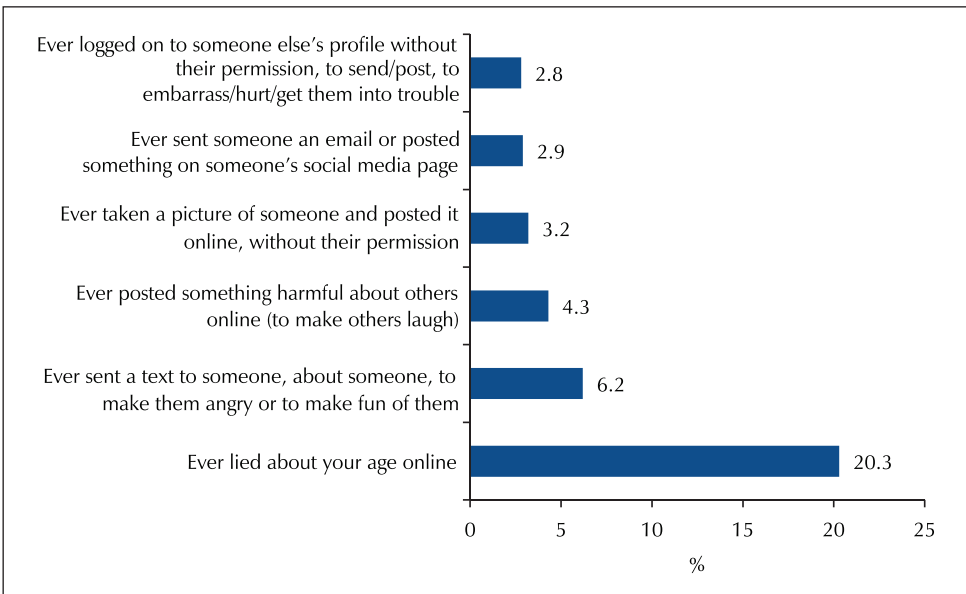


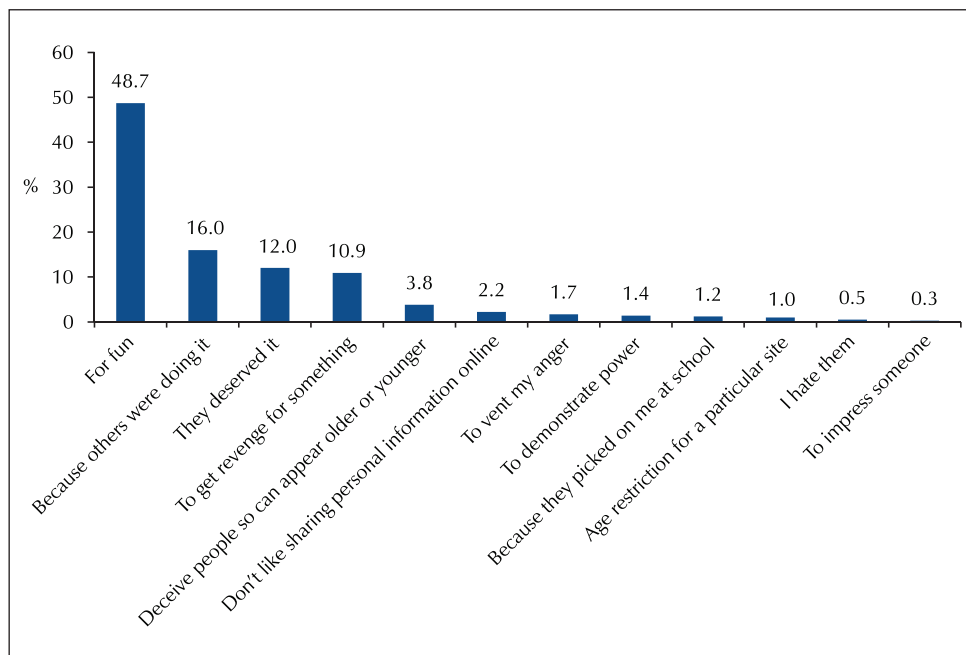
Table 19: Online behaviour, by gender and age (%)

	Ever lied about your age online	Ever sent a text to someone, about someone, to make them angry or to make fun of them	Ever taken a picture of someone and posted it online, without their permission	Ever sent someone an email or posted something on someone's social media page	Ever logged on to someone else's profile without their permission to send/post, to embarrass/hurt/get them into trouble
Sex					
Male	21.2	6.0	3.2	2.7	2.7
Female	19.6	6.4	3.2	3.1	3
Total	20.3	6.2	3.2	2.9	2.8
Age					
14 years and younger	15.3	4.0	2.2	1.5	1.3
15–16 years	21.3	6.3	2.8	3.2	3.3
17–18 years	23	7.4	4.3	3.6	3.5
Older than 18 years	18.4	6.2	2.8	2.6	2.4

without their permission, and 2.9% of young people reported having sent an email or posted something about someone on their social networking page (MySpace, Facebook, Twitter or Hi5) to make fun of them or hurt them. The same percentage (2.8%), or 169 individuals, reported that they had logged on to someone else's online account in order to send or post a message to hurt or get them in trouble (see Figure 44). While females were fractionally more likely to report having done any of these things than males, gender is not a significant factor in this behaviour (see Table 19).

As important as the act itself is the motivation behind the behaviour – to the extent that the individual is aware of the motivation. The most common reason reported for having engaged in any of these behaviours is simply for the fun of it, which accounted for fractionally under half (48.7%) of those who reported having done any of these things. Slightly less than one in five (16%) did so simply because others were doing it, and they felt compelled and justified based on peer behaviour, while just over one in ten (12%) did so on the basis that the person, or victim, deserved it. Related to this, a similar percentage (10.9%) reported that they did it to get revenge for something that the victim had in turn done to them. See Figure 45 (*next page*).

The reasons provided for engaging in these forms of online violence or aggression correspond relatively strongly to many of the reasons that one might find when exploring reasons for offline violence, and reflect the abuse or misuse of power of one individual over another.

Figure 45: Reasons for engaging in online behaviour (%)

Often offline violence or bullying is exacted to get revenge or because the other party is perceived as having done something to provoke or deserve the violent response.

However, in many instances it is simply for fun or entertainment at someone else's expense. Similarly, online perpetration of violence is strongly correlated with online victimisation, reflecting the relationship often identified in offline violence and bullying.

As Table 20 reflects, those who had experienced cyber bullying were significantly more likely to themselves engage in harmful online behaviour. In addition, as the number of online victimisation instances increased, so did the reports of the victims themselves who had engaged in online aggression or harm. This suggests that there is likely to be a strong correlation between experiences of online victimisation and the likelihood of the victims themselves engaging in similar behaviour.

In the case of online violence, three specific factors need to be kept in mind when exploring motivation and enacting of these behaviours:

- First, the physical, visible and personal cues that often mediate violent, aggressive or harmful behaviours are usually absent as the victim is not physically present when the online harm is perpetrated. This effectively removes the non-verbal signals that might mediate or prevent harmful behaviour.

Table 20: Experiences of cyber bullying and online perpetration of aggression (%)

Experienced cyber bullying									
	Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	Five times	Six times	Seven or more	Total
Ever lied about your age online*	11.0	46.8	60.8	68.3	82.5	80.0	100	100	20.3
Ever posted something harmful online about someone	0.9	5.9	17.7	33.7	69.8	65.0	90.9	81.8	4.3
Ever sent an SMS to someone to make them angry/make fun of them	1.7	11.0	26.0	43.6	69.8	80.0	100	90.9	6.2
Ever sent someone an email/posted something on a Facebook page	0.5	3.2	9.8	31.7	42.9	55.0	100	90.9	2.9
Ever taken a picture of someone & posted online without their permission	0.7	4.5	9.8	22.8	41.3	65.0	90.9	81.8	3.2
Ever logged in to someone else's account to embarrass, hurt or get them into trouble	0.7	2.4	8.3	25.7	36.5	65.0	81.8	90.9	2.8

* $P=0.000$ for all online aggression variables.

- Second, but related to this, is that the negative consequences of online harm are often not immediately evident, and its true impact may only become evident some time after the act. As the data on the impact of online experiences reveals, the sort of online violence, teasing and posting that many school-goers experience impacts negatively on both the victims' school experiences and on their psycho-social wellbeing, and this is something that peers are unlikely to be aware of.
- Third, the online environment may provide young people who feel disempowered, or who lack control over their offline life, with a sense of power and control that they would otherwise not have. This power may enable them to seek revenge or 'get even' with offline bullies or perpetrators of violence in a way they would otherwise not be able to.

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE AND OFFLINE VIOLENCE

There is a clear relationship emerging in both local and international data between online and offline bullying. This relationship is neither simple nor causal. What we know of it does, however, provide substantial evidence that intervening in online bullying may yield results in offline behaviour, and vice-versa. The 2004 Youth Internet Safety Survey in the United States showed that 51% of online bullies reported being a victim of traditional face-to-face bullying, compared to 30% of non-bullies. One in five online bullies reported being bullied online, compared to only 4% of non-bullies.

Source: Ybarra ML and Mitchell KJ, Online aggressors/targets aggressors and targets: A comparison of associated youth characteristics, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 45(7), 2004, pp 1308-1316. See also Livingstone S, Haddon L, Gorzig A and Olafsson K, Risks and Safety on the Internet: The Perspective of European Children. Full Findings. LSE, London: EU Kids Online, 2011.

CONCLUSION

The findings discussed in this chapter reveal a number of important points for those engaged in the field of violence prevention work with young people. While cyber bullying and online violence is by no means the epidemic that it is at times portrayed to be in the popular media, the levels at which it is experienced by young people still present cause for concern. These levels are only likely to rise as even more young people gain access to the already ubiquitous smart phones, and as internet access becomes more accessible to previously excluded populations through mobile technology.

Furthermore, while the extent of cyber bullying currently remains lower than offline violence, the psycho-social harm of online experiences is significantly worse than that reported for offline violence. This may relate to the more pervasive and omnipresent nature of social media and technology in young people's lives, and the fact that it is harder to escape the intrusion of online violence into daily lives.

While further analysis of the data is needed, these findings suggest that experiences of cyber bullying and online violence are likely to increase the risk of depression, anxiety, self-blame and negative self-worth, which in turn impact negatively on the well-being and resilience of young people as well as on their ability to adapt and respond to adversity and challenges in healthy pro-social ways. It is also likely to impact negatively on the way in which relationships with peers and adults are formed.

The findings suggests that there are important gaps in the prevention of online violence and in the provision of support services relating to this form of violence – gaps which are discussed in more detail later in this publication. The data, together with risk-taking behaviour such as meeting online acquaintances, suggests that rather than individual behaviour and experiences, the focus of research and prevention – including early warning mechanisms of potential harm – should be on patterns of victimisation, online experiences, and the relationship between patterns of online victimisation and offline risk factors and violent experiences.

Impact of school violence on young people

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- A substantial percentage of the sample reported negative feelings following their encounters with violence at school, ranging from feeling sad and hurt, to feeling embarrassed and blaming themselves for the event.
- Violent victimisation impacted negatively on the schooling experience, resulting in difficulties concentrating at school, absenteeism and poor school performance.
- Victims of online violence were significantly more likely to experience the negative feelings explored compared to victims of traditional or offline violence at school.
- Violence exposure generated attitudes tolerant of violence among victims, thereby increasing the likelihood for future violence perpetration.
- A sizeable proportion of learners were aware and demonstrated knowledge of SoulCity (80.9%) and Childline (59%) – two national services providing counselling, educational and other support services to children and youth.
- Overall, learners felt optimistic about their future.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of violence on young people is well-documented in both international and national literature. While it is beyond the scope of this report to explore in detail the impact of violent experiences on children and young people, it is largely accepted that experiences of violence by young people are likely to result in a wide range of emotional, behavioural and educational outcomes that occur across a victim's entire lifespan.⁴⁹

There is evidence to suggest that children and youth who are subjected to violence are at increased likelihood of experiencing depression, social isolation and loneliness, anxiety and apprehension. Consequences directly relating to educational outcomes include a noticeable decline in academic performance, a lack of interest in school and its related activities, lowered concentration, school drop-out and truancy.⁵⁰

Violence exposure has also been linked to an increased susceptibility to later anti-social and delinquent behaviours (including violence).⁵¹ The impact of violence is thus observed at a primary as well as a secondary level, and interferes with the normal development of healthy adult-child and peer relationships.

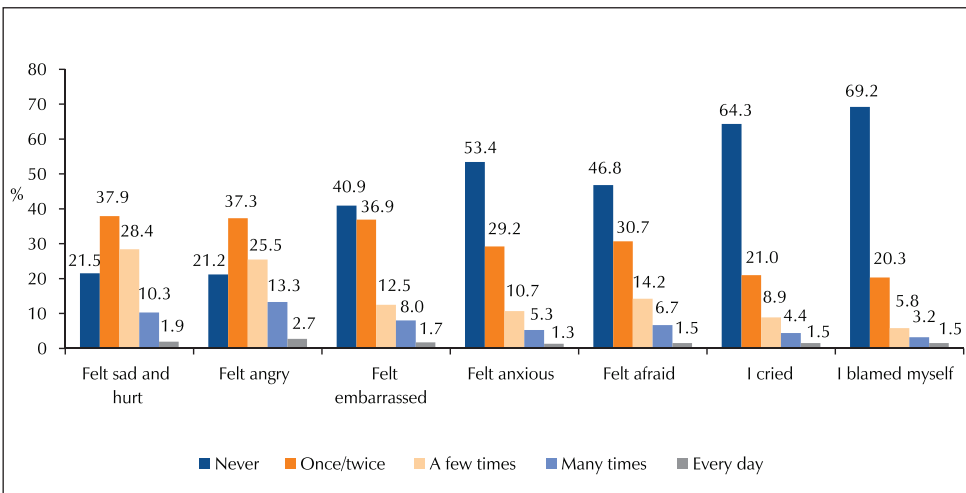
FEELINGS FOLLOWING THE SCHOOL VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED

While many young people reported not feeling any negative feelings following their experiences of violence at school, a substantial percentage felt emotions either in the short term or in the medium to long term, which impacted on them in negative ways and are likely to influence their well-being and quality of life.

Nearly two out of five (37.9%) victims of violence reported that they felt sad and hurt once or twice, while one in ten (10.3%) victims reported feeling sad and hurt many times following their experience(s) of violence (see Figure 46).

Similar proportions of learners reported feeling angry (37.3% once or twice, 13.3% many times) and embarrassed (36.9% once or twice and 8% many times) following the violence they had experienced. Three out of ten felt afraid once or twice (30.7%) immediately following the incident, while more than a tenth (14.2%) of victims felt afraid a few times following the event. In one in five cases (21%) the victim reported crying after the incident once or twice, while 8.9% had cried a few

Figure 46: Impact on learners following violence incidents (%)



times. Similarly, one in five blamed themselves for the violence immediately following the incident one or two times, while 5.8% had blamed themselves a few times. See Figure 46.

The impact of violent victimisation on school attendance and performance was also explored. While the majority of young people who had experienced violence reported that there was no impact on their school attendance, concentration or marks, there was still sufficient negative impact to directly reflect the relationship between experiences of violence, and school performance and attachment.

Just close to a fifth (17.4%) of young people reported missing school once or twice as a result of the violent incident, while 4.5% of learners had missed school a few times. This could be a result of either physical injuries resulting from the violence or psychological harm. In addition, more than one in ten (13%) victims reported that their marks dropped in the short term as a direct result of the violence, while significantly fewer (4.6%) reported that their marks dropped for a while, or ‘a few times’, after the violence. See Figure 47.

While the impact of cyber bullying, online aggression and harassment has been discussed in the preceding chapter, it is interesting to compare the reported impact of those young people who experienced online violence with those who experienced offline violence.

As Figure 48 (*next page*) demonstrates, a significantly higher percentage of those who reported online violence experienced some form of negative impact compared to those who reported offline violence only. The exception was those who reported feeling sad and hurt: in contrast to other negative feelings, those who experienced offline (or physical) violence only were significantly more likely to report feeling sad and hurt as a result of the incident (51.9%) than those who experienced online violence only (21.5%).

Figure 47: Impact of violence on school-related outcomes (%)

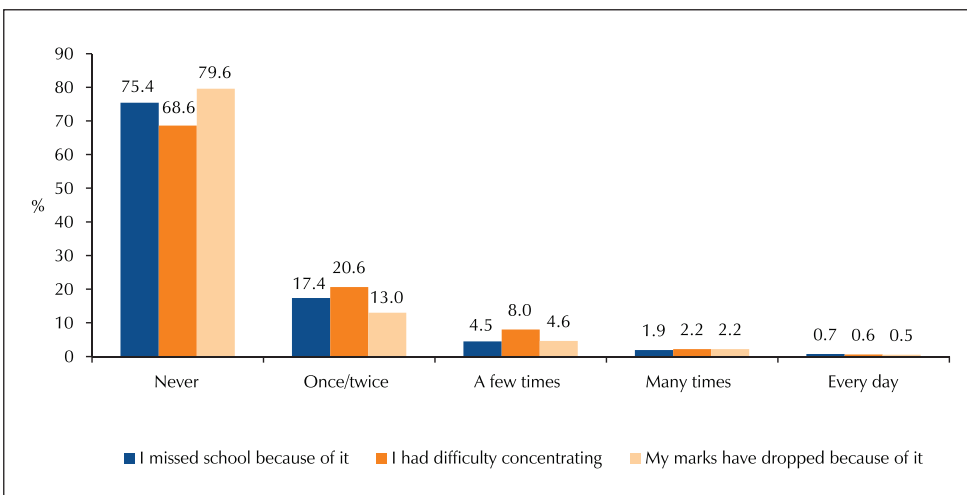
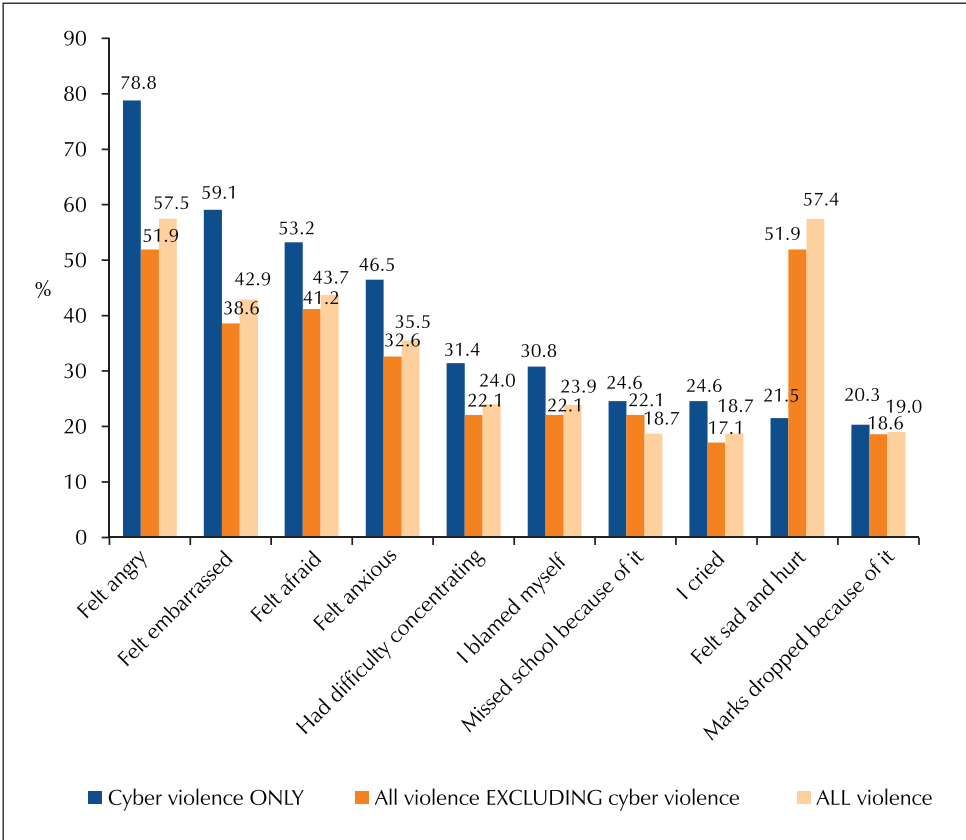


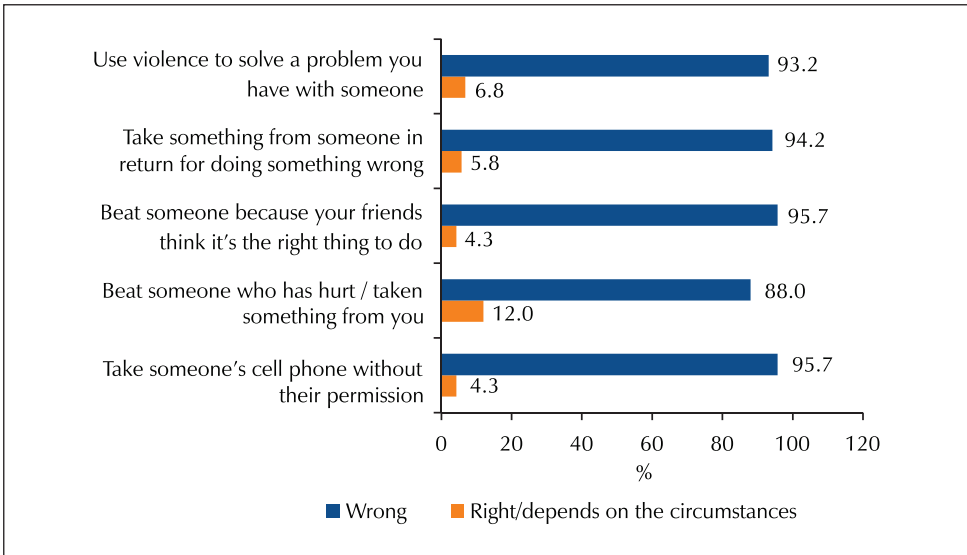
Figure 48: Impact of cyber violence compared to ALL and offline violence only at school (%)



These findings have important implications both for prevention strategies and for designing steps to be taken in response to violence against young people. The data suggests that the psychological impact of online violence can in fact be more harmful, and is certainly felt more often, than offline violence. This may be for a number of reasons, not least that the incident itself may be visible to thousands of people through the infinite distribution and viewing opportunities that exist, and that the act and the secondary consequences thereof may follow the victim into their personal as well as the public spaces. Ultimately, the embarrassment and associated feelings and behaviours (which may include anger, desire for revenge, and self-directed blame and lower self-perceptions) thus become much more public.

The impact of violent victimisation extends beyond generating feelings of embarrassment, fear, shame and tears, and has also been found to influence learner attitudes towards violence, which will inevitably influence learner behaviour.⁵² Overall, more than a tenth of learners (12%) felt that it was right or permissible, depending on the circumstances, to physically beat someone who

Figure 49: Is it right or wrong to... (%)



had hurt them or taken something from them, while 6.8% felt that it was right to use violence to solve a problem they had with someone (see Figure 49).

Furthermore, 5.8% thought it was right or permissible, depending on the circumstances, to take something from someone in return for doing something they knew was wrong, 4.3% felt it was right to beat someone simply because other people, such as their friends, thought it was the right thing to do, and a similar percentage (4.3%) thought it was acceptable to take someone's mobile phone without their permission (see Figure 49).

Participants who had succumbed to violence at school, as well as learners who reported having friends who engaged in violence-related behaviour (such as having done things that could have gotten them in trouble with the police and carrying weapons to school with them), were significantly more likely to claim that the scenarios presented in Table 21 (*next page*) were permissible ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that exposure to violence contributes to attitudes that are tolerant of violence, which has a significant bearing on the later perpetration of violent and aggressive behaviours.⁵³

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Knowledge and access of two specific national services were explored in the study, namely, Childline and the Soul City Soul Buddyz programme. Childline offers an online counselling facility in partnership with Mxit. It is currently one of the only South African online counselling services available to young people that deals specifically with issues of violence and abuse, both online and offline. Soul City has national coverage through visual and print media on a range of issues relating

Table 21: Influence of violent victimisation and violent peers on learner attitudes toward violence (%)

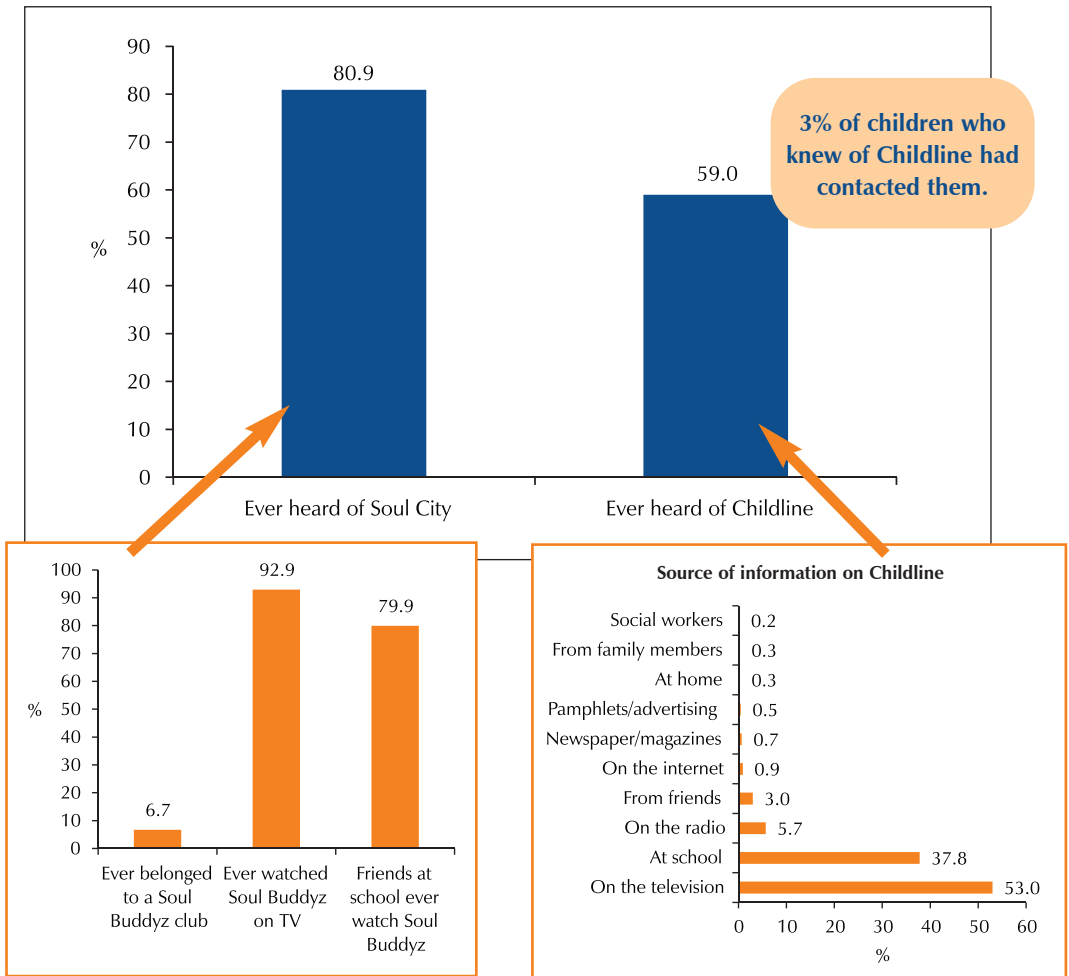
It is right or permissible depending on the circumstances to...	Have peers involved in violence-related behaviours		Have experienced violence at school	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Take someone's mobile phone without their permission	7.5	3.9	6.8	3.6
Beat up someone who has beaten you, hurt you, or taken something from you	22.7	10.7	13.6	11.6
Beat up someone for any reason, because people around you think it is right to do so	7.5	3.9	5.4	4.0
Take something from someone in return for doing something you know is wrong	13.5	4.8	7.7	5.2
Use violence to solve a problem you might have with someone	15.1	5.8	9.6	6.0

to safety and child protection, as well as health and well-being. It was encouraging to see that the vast majority of young people interviewed at schools had heard of Soul City (80.9%) and Childline (59%) (see Figure 50). Awareness of both services was highest in urban areas (Soul City: 86.5%, Childline: 74.8%), followed by metropolitan areas (Soul City: 81.8%, Childline: 73.7%) and then rural areas (Soul City: 78.8%, Childline: 51.6%).

Awareness of Soul City was highest among the grade 11s and 12s (83.9% and 83.8% respectively), and lowest among the Grade 8s interviewed (77.4%). A similar trend was observed for knowledge of Childline, which was highest among the Grade 11s and 12s (67.7% and 63.8% respectively), and lowest among the Grade 8s (54.3%).

Both grade and location were significant variables in awareness of the two services, while the sex of the respondents was not significant. Of those who had ever heard of the Soul City programmes, 6.7% had belonged to a Soul Buddyz club, 92.9% had watched Soul Buddyz on television and 79.9% had friends who had watched Soul Buddyz on television. Three per cent of the learners who were familiar with Childline had ever contacted the organisation after hearing about it on television (53%) or from people at school (37.8%). See Figure 50.

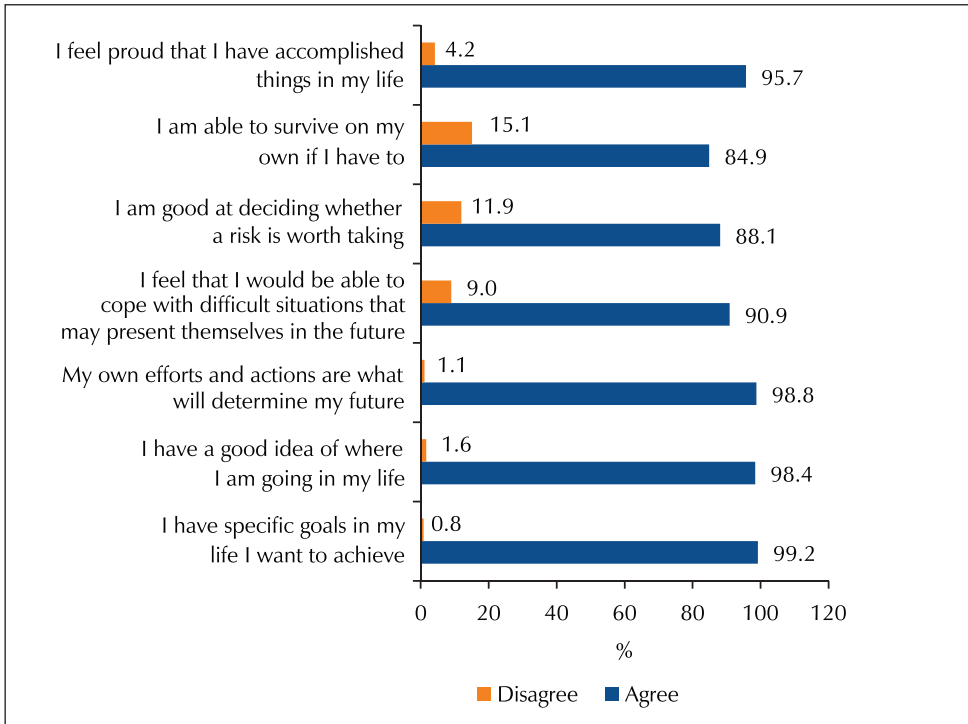
Figure 50: Knowledge of Childline and Soul City programmes and services (%)



VIEW OF THE FUTURE

The study also posed questions to learners to gauge how they felt about their future. On a positive note, the results showed that learners generally felt optimistic about their future. Nine out of ten learners reported having specific goals in their life that they would like to achieve (99.2%), while a similar percentage claimed to have a good idea of where they are headed in life (98.4%). These attitudes were attested to by the percentage of learners who indicated a desire to go to university or technikon following high school (75.4% strongly agreed, 23.5% agreed), who reported that academic success at school was important to them (71.2% strongly agreed, 28.6% agreed) and who claimed to work really hard at school (60.8% strongly agreed, 38.3% agreed). In addition, 98.8% asserted that their own efforts will determine their future and 90.9% stated

Figure 51: View of the future (%)



positively that they would be able to cope with difficult situations that may present themselves in the future. See Figure 51.

Eight out of ten scholars agreed that they were good at deciding whether a risk was worth taking (88.1%), and a similar percentage confidently stated that they would be able to survive on their own if they had to (84.9%). The positive self-worth and sense of agency demonstrated by the learners was captured in the 95.7% of learners who reported feeling proud about certain things they have managed to accomplish in life. See Figure 51.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this chapter show the far-reaching consequences of violence occurring at schools. Victims of school violence suffer from embarrassment, shame, fear, anxiety, self-blame and anger, which ultimately affects their ability to concentrate at school, at times resulting in absenteeism. The effects of violence extend even beyond this and also influence how young people think about violence.

Exposure to violence conveys the message that violent and aggressive behaviours are permissible ways of interacting with others, whether to resolve problems or to assert dominance over others – a message that is clearly reinforced

in the other social spaces that young people occupy (that is, their homes and broader communities). This scenario perpetuates violence among young people since the line between being a victim and a perpetrator of violence is often blurred. However, despite the pervasiveness of violence, most learners were found to demonstrate a positive self-concept – an important protective factor for young people. This provides a key intervention area for violence prevention.

Conclusions and recommendations

The report has presented the findings of the second sweep of the National School Violence Study conducted in 2012. The first sweep was conducted in 2008. Violence at and associated with schools continues to be common across South Africa, and the impact on learners is becoming increasingly evident. Equally evident is the association between violence at schools and violence experienced and witnessed in the home and community – a characteristic that lends credence to the need for a whole-school approach that is embedded in a socio-ecological model of violence prevention.⁵⁴

A number of points emerge strongly from the study and inform many of the detailed recommendations. These points include the following:

- Levels of violence at and associated with schools have remained relatively constant from 2008, with no dramatic increase. With the exception of threats of violence, incidents are fractionally higher for assaults and sexual assaults, as well as for incidents of property theft. Both robbery and threats of violence are slightly lower than those recorded in 2008. The most noticeable difference and exception to the general trend is in Gauteng province, where rates of theft, sexual assault and threats of violence have decreased dramatically, although actual assaults and robbery show a slight increase. The age of learners is insignificant in predicting victimisation. Similarly, there is little variation by gender in the experiences of learners, with the exception of sexual violence, where girl learners are significantly more likely to experience sexual violence than boys. However, in cases of threats of violence, assaults and robbery, there is no statistically significant difference between the experiences of boy and girl learners.

- Despite no clear increase in levels of violence, the rates still translate to just over one million secondary school learners who have experienced violence at or associated with school. In a country where school completion is relatively low, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that school-related violence is a factor contributing to non-completion. This is particularly important when considering that attachment to school and completion of schooling is a significant protective factor keeping young people from violence.
- As in 2008, the classroom is frequently cited as the site where much of the violence takes place. While other areas, such as toilets and playgrounds, speak as much to environmental design factors as management and governance, classrooms as a place of violence reflect purely on educators' capacity, engagement and presence. This also relates to another key finding of educators as perpetrators of violence against learners, which is reflected in the fact that more than one in four principals reported cases against educators for violence or verbal abuse.
- A very clear relationship exists between bullying and other forms of violence, particularly criminal victimisation. Learners who are bullied at school are more susceptible to criminal victimisation and more serious forms of violence. This is particularly significant in light of the strong relationship that exists between experiences of violence and the risk of engaging in, or perpetrating, violence.
- Cyber bullying and other forms of online violence are common, but not yet as prevalent as other forms of violence. A strong relationship exists between experiences of online violence and offline victimisation, suggesting a continuum of online and offline violence that has implications for the prevention of both.⁵⁵
- Fear of violence at school can be as harmful as primary victimisation and personal experiences of violence, causing learners to drop out or avoid school, or to lose concentration in the classroom. Equally, fear of violence can be as harmful in developing healthy pro-social relationships as actual victimisation. Levels of fear of violence at school were slightly higher than those recorded in 2008, with more than one in ten learners saying they were scared of particular places within the school premises (most commonly toilets and open grounds or spaces). Fear among educators was significantly higher, with almost one in three educators reporting that they had ever felt unsafe on school grounds. Educators' perceptions of fear among learners were actually higher than those recorded by the learners themselves, with one in four educators reporting that they believed learners felt unsafe on school premises. The findings suggest that fear of violence on school premises is greater among adults than among learners. This could be explained in part by adults' greater appreciation of the

risks and consequences of violence. These findings are important in terms of creating environments in which educators can concentrate on teaching rather than worrying about their own or their learners' safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of steps have already been initiated by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), many of which reflect the recommendations made in the 2008 NSVS, and some of which pre-dated that study. In particular, the DBE has provided the framework for a whole-school approach – a strategy advocated for in the 2008 study, and one which is recommended by the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children (*see text box*) as a fundamental element in achieving a safe school. The Department has just embarked upon an initiative to formalise this into a National School Safety Framework.

With this in mind, and emanating from the data presented herein, a number of recommendations are provided for all those involved in education in South Africa.

- Following on from whole-school approach advocated by the DBE, the School Safety Framework, now under development by the DBE should be prioritised. It should include a roll-out and implementation plan, together with an implementation and progress monitoring plan for all provinces. Once training has been provided on the implementation of the framework, provinces, districts and schools should be held accountable for the implementation of the strategy at an individual school level.
- In the implementation of the framework, learners must be given a voice to express where at school they feel safe or unsafe, and what their primary safety concerns are. Similarly, adequate reporting mechanisms and response systems need to be developed at the school level to respond to learners' concerns and reports of violence.
- Related to the above, a performance management system that includes effective school

The Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children recommends six elements, drawing on international experience and best-practice, which are required in order to reduce and potentially end violence at schools:

- Develop holistic, whole-school strategies.
- Partner with children.
- Provide support for teachers and staff.
- Change attitudes and work with social norms.
- Secure children's legal protection.
- Consolidate data and research.

Source: Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children, *Tackling Violence in Schools: A Global Perspective. Bridging the Gap between Standards and Practice*, 2012.

POSSIBLE STANDARDISED INDICATORS

- Violence-related deaths at school
- Incidents of victimisation at school
- Prevalence of victimisation at school
- Threats and injuries with weapons on school property
- Teachers threatened with injury or physically attacked by learners
- Learner reports of gangs at school
- Learner reports of the availability of drugs at school
- Learner reports of the availability of alcohol at school
- Bullying at school and cyber bullying anywhere
- Student reports of hate-related verbal/physical attacks
- Teacher reports of school conditions
- Learners carrying weapons on school property and anywhere
- Learner use of alcohol at school
- Learner use of drugs at school
- Learner perceptions of personal safety at school and away from school
- Learner reports of avoiding school activities or specific places in school

Source: Adapted from the Robers S, Zhang J, and Truman J, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*. Washington DC: National Center for Education Statistics, US Department of Education and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, 2010.

management and safety should be implemented for all school principals and educators, and both should be held accountable for safety within the classroom and the school environment. While school infrastructure remains a challenge in some provinces, particularly in rural areas, effective classroom management is dependent more on the knowledge, skills and capacity of educators than on the physical infrastructure.

- Where physical infrastructure is related to safety concerns, such areas should be prioritised. While there is no direct correlation between safety and physical infrastructure (some schools with little or no infrastructure experience the lowest levels of violence when managed effectively) certain environmental factors do serve to increase the risk of violence. Where environmental design factors are prioritised, these should be integrated with more developmental approaches to violence prevention at schools.
- An evidence base of what works in violence prevention in South African schools should be developed. While the prevention agenda in South Africa more broadly is characterised by a paucity of information on what works and what does not, this is particularly so for school-based violence. An adequate base of evidence is required in order to take informed decisions on where and how to invest resources into prevention. A number of good and promising programmes exist throughout the country, but there is little rigorous evaluation and even less dissemination of successes and lessons learned.

- Related to this, an adequate and reliable set of school safety indicators should be developed, against which progress on a national and provincial level can be monitored yearly. The indicators should address issues related to safety, including victimisation, bullying, fear of violence and self-reported perpetration of violence (*see text box*). A simple data collection tool and system should be developed alongside this, which will allow for data to be collected to inform these indicators on an on-going basis. The collection of regular data should be considered mandatory at all levels – local, provincial and national.
- Both the short- and long-term impact of school safety interventions initiated by any level of government should be assessed prior to roll-out. Relating to the need for an evidence-based approach (discussed above), the potential for unintended consequences, which may often be harmful in the long term, should be assessed. Many popular short-term interventions that feed the need to be seen to be responding decisively to violence, and which may superficially and in the short-term improve feelings of safety, have been shown to actually increase the risk of violence in the long term, increase the number of children in contact with the law, and subsequently reinforce rather than prevent criminal and anti-social behaviour in the long term. In many such interventions, risk factors are in fact exacerbated and protective factors are reduced. Examples of this include armed police officers located at schools or random police-led searches and drug testing at schools.⁵⁶ The desire to address the fear of violence and to create perceptions of safety needs to be balanced with longer-term, effective and proven violence-prevention measures.
- The planning and implementation of school safety plans and strategies should be integrated into local development and safety plans, ensuring partnerships with other relevant local stakeholders, with clear lines of responsibilities and accountability defined.
- Prevention measures to address new or emerging forms of violence, such as cyber bullying, should be implemented across all schools. While the literature on cyber bullying is relatively new, there is sufficient evidence that targeted cyber bullying prevention measures which are integrated into broader bullying and violence prevention measures are the most effective. This approach should therefore form an integral part of a school safety strategy that serves to decrease risky online behaviour rather than just focusing on increasing awareness of knowledge.⁵⁷ Educators should receive training on identifying the warning signs of cyber bullying and on how to deal with it when it happens. Similarly, educators should be trained to identify those learners who are likely to, or do, offer support to peers who may be bullied, and encourage such behaviour. The implementation of a whole-school approach to violence prevention in itself requires the commitment and

awareness of all school staff to change the organisational response of the school to bullying.⁵⁸ Where new policies, such as a school policy on ICT use and online safety, are required, these should be formulated as a matter of urgency and should be agreed upon and committed to by educators, learners and parents.

- School-based interventions should place additional emphasis on generating awareness that violence and bullying is not the norm, is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. Peers can provide powerful emotional support to victims of bullying and violence, and through a common intolerance for violent acts can significantly reduce levels of violence within the school environment.

Considerable attention has been paid to the matter of school violence over the past five years. However, many of the approaches and interventions adopted by provinces and schools have been disjointed and piecemeal at best, and may, at worst, generate negative unintended consequences in the medium to long term. This is reflected in the mixed findings in school violence trends across and within provinces.

While there is clearly a policy shift towards a standardised approach and framework, the degree to which this is likely to achieve success is largely contingent on the willingness of provinces, districts and individual schools to ensure that interventions fall within the standardised approach and framework, as well as their willingness to be held accountable for safety.

Finally, making a real impact on school violence and achieving safe school environments is only likely to happen when school safety is integrated as a fundamental component of local safety strategies, and when the role and commitment of all stakeholders – beyond just schools – is recognised and secured in working towards local level community safety strategies.

Appendix

SELECTED ACTIVITIES FACILITATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION TOWARDS SCHOOL SAFETY

The ministers of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the South African Police Service signed a Collaborative Partnership Protocol on 11 April 2011. The partnership is an acknowledgement that the prevention of crime and violence is a shared mandate between the two departments.

The strategic objective of the Collaborative Partnership Protocol is to create safe, caring and child-friendly schools, where quality teaching and learning can take place, and further to address incidences of crime and violence in a holistic and integrated manner. The focus of the partnership is on the development and support for the implementation of school-based crime prevention programmes to:

- Strengthen safe school committees in addressing crime and violence in schools as part of its mandate
- Allow police officers to assume an active role as a member of the safe school committee
- Link all schools to local police stations
- Raise awareness among children regarding crime and violence, and its impact on individuals, families and education
- Mobilise communities to take ownership of schools
- Encourage the establishment of reporting systems at schools.

The abovementioned commitments are to be implemented over time, and currently approximately 15,772 schools have been linked to local police stations.

Training manuals for provincial and district officials, principals, school management teams, school governing bodies, teachers and learners have been developed to address bullying in schools. The roll-out of this training commences in March 2013. Specific effort will be made to include schools for learners with special needs in this training, which will be implemented by provinces.

The DBE is in the process of developing a School Safety Framework, in collaboration with identified partners. The framework intends to guide schools in terms of establishing safe, caring and welcoming schools that support quality education.

DBE/UNICEF GIRLS' EDUCATION MOVEMENT/BOYS' EDUCATION MOVEMENT

BACKGROUND

The DBE, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is implementing a schools programme called Girls' Education Movement, Boys' Education Movement (GEM/BEM), which provides a platform for learners to work together in identifying social challenges and coming up with solutions to these challenges. Learners and clubs receive support in the form of leadership training, organising events and workshops, and using various guidelines in implementing their programmes. GEM/BEM provides a good platform for the DBE since it is an organisation- and learner-driven programme to communicate with learners and is a structured way to highlight problems.

GEM/BEM is a school-based movement comprising clubs, which are voluntarily established by learners. The main goal of the clubs is to play an active role in enhancing quality education by eliminating barriers to education for vulnerable children.

The clubs provide a platform where learners can acquire hands-on leadership skills, play an active role in addressing learner needs (such as the provision of, or organising, career guidance exhibitions), and educate their peers on any relevant social issues. The clubs also focus on building the capacity of learners, providing a platform for the broader education sector with their pool of resources, and allowing learners to contribute positively to policy development. The following activities took place during 2010/11:

GEM/BEM CLUB REGISTRATION DRIVE

A national database was established, which lists all clubs, their contacts, the location of the schools and the number of club members. There are currently just more than 700 registered clubs.

GEM/BEM BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

This campaign was aimed at popularising the movement and its programmes. It was held from January to March 2011 and reached some 3,000 learners in 21 districts across South Africa.

GEM/BEM DISTRICT CAREER EXPO

GEM/BEM club members frequently requested access to material that would assist them with career selection and information regarding tertiary institutions. In response to this, district career expos were held in Mpumalanga (6 July 2012) Enhlazeni (Masithake), Limpopo (9 July 2012) Capricorn, and the Free State (13 July 2012) Fezile Dabi (Sedibathuto). The expos aimed to:

- Expose learners from grades 9–11 to career guidance experts and materials
- Allow learners to pose questions to the departments of Basic Education and Higher Education, as well as other stakeholders, about career mapping
- Inform young people when to apply for acceptance at tertiary institutions and for financial assistance
- Allow for the drop-off of documents with peer educators and schools for the benefit of other learners.

GEM/BEM members have been involved in some exciting events:

PARALYMPICS IN LONDON

In July 2012, the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority sponsored five GEM/BEM learners from Limpopo, Gauteng, the Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape to attend the London Paralympics and to be part of the Olympic career and vocational guidance programme.

CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN DURBAN (COP 17)

GEM/BEM members participated in this international conference, which was hosted by South Africa. Learners were taught how to take small steps to combat global warming and to keep their environments safe.

RADIO YOUTH NETWORK

This platform gives young people the skills and tools to make their voices heard

and to engage in dialogue about important community issues with their peers. The Children's Radio Foundation creates innovative media content made for and by children, and connects a generation of young leaders who can contribute to individual and collective social change. GEM/BEM members are linked to their community radio stations, where they receive practical training.

VISIT TO KENYA

MTV Base Foundation and UNICEF sponsored some GEM/BEM members to represent South Africa at a learning programme in Kenya. The aim was to highlight the social challenges facing the youth in the continent, focusing more on how radio can be utilised effectively to address some of these issues. Learners were taught how to make up a story arch and how to keep the attention of the audience through radio.

ALWAYS KEEPING GIRLS IN SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

The Always Keeping Girls in School campaign was launched at Diepsloot Secondary School. Its main aims are to empower female learners and to keep them in school through providing them with puberty education, access to educational resources and motivation to stay in school. The programme has so far reached 28,000 girls in South Africa and Kenya.

GEM/BEM JAMBOREE APPLY NOW CAMPAIGN

The GEM/BEM Jamboree Apply Now campaign responds to a deliverable in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement to provide subject choice and career guidance advice to learners. Through the jamborees, learners are exposed to a wide range of information pertaining to future careers, and are able to link selected subjects to future careers in innovative ways. The initial phase of the campaign was conducted in Mpumalanga and the Free State. The objectives of the campaign are to:

- Provide information on relevant subject choices available to aid learners in making the right career choice
- Inform learners about other tertiary education opportunities besides university
- Provide educators with relevant career guidance material for dissemination to learners
- Address the skills shortage by encouraging learners to choose science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects.

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