BACKGROUND PAPER

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE: EVIDENCE FROM ETHIOPIA, INDIA, PERU AND VIETNAM

Kirrily Pells
UCL Institute of Education, UK

Virginia Morrow
University of Oxford/Young Lives, UK

KNOW VIOLENCE IN CHILDHOOD
A Global Learning Initiative

Young Lives
An International Study of Childhood Poverty

`

Suggested Citation:

Pells, K. and V. Morrow. 2017. "Children's Experiences of Violence: Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam". Background paper. Ending Violence in Childhood Global Report 2017. Know Violence in Childhood. New Delhi, India.

ENDING VIOLENCE IN CHILDHOOD GLOBAL REPORT 2017

BACKGROUND PAPER

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE: EVIDENCE FROM ETHIOPIA, INDIA, PERU AND VIETNAM

Kirrily Pells
UCL Institute of Education, UK

Virginia Morrow
University of Oxford/Young Lives, UK

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Globally, increasing efforts in policy, programming and advocacy are focussed on eliminating all forms of violence against children. While children are central to these initiatives, we rarely hear the views of those most affected, children themselves (Leach, 2006: 1129). Previous research has documented how violence makes children afraid, upset, not want to go to school, run away from home and so on (see for example, Beazley et al., 2006). Qualitative research offers a powerful way to explore what children say about the various forms of violence they experience, how and why violence manifests in their lives and generates an in-depth understanding not only of the emotional impact of violence, but also how children respond (Overlien and Hyden, 2009). Children's views and experiences over time also offer insights into why and how change happens (Parkes, 2015). This in turn may enable better understanding of how to prevent violence affecting children, and how to support children who do experience violence.

However, there are significant gaps in research on children's experiences from the Global South. There has been a particular focus on extreme situations, such as conflict and crises (Boyden and de Berry, 2004; Hart, 2008; Pells, 2011a; Seymour, 2012) or severe forms of violence, such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (Boyden, Pankhurst, and Tafere, 2013) and sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, particularly in relation to girls (Bania, 2009; Le Mat, 2016; Ouis, 2009). Typically, research has explored the experiences of "at-risk" groups of children, such as child soldiers, street connected children and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) (Cheney, 2007; Kovats-Bernat, 2006; Shepler, 2014, Wessells, 2006). While such research provides important evidence on the ways in which children navigate violent contexts, what is often missing is the everyday, routinised, taken-for-granted and often hidden forms of violence affecting children (Parkes, 2015; Wells et al., 2014). One exception has been work on violence in schools, including corporal punishment in the home and school (Breen et al., 2015; Horton, 2016; Mampane et al., 2014; Murali Proctor, 2015; Twum-Danso Imoh, 2013). Overall, what emerges from this growing literature is the need to better understand the interconnections between the individual, collective and structural roots of violence, which combine to affect different children in diverse ways (Korbin, 2003; Omolo, 2014). Parkes (2015: 4) emphasises the need to attend to violence not just as "acts of physical, sexual and emotional force, but to the everyday interactions that surround these acts, and to their roots in "structural violence of inequitable and unjust socio-economic and political systems and institutions." Violence is therefore always linked to other vectors of inequality, such as gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality and so on (Parkes, 2015: 6).

In addition, there is also a lack of longitudinal data. Following the same children over time enables the exploration of how children's experiences of and responses to violence change with age and how past experiences shape later experiences, outcomes and trajectories. This brief paper highlights some of Young Lives key findings on violence affecting children, exploring what children say about violence, how it affects them, and the key themes that emerges from a systematic analysis of the children's accounts.

About Young Lives

Young Lives is a unique 15-year longitudinal study of children growing up in poverty in Ethiopia, India (in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru and Vietnam. Young Lives research combines survey and qualitative methods, focussed on the causes and consequences of childhood poverty for children's well-being (see Appendix for further details of Young Lives and methods). Young Lives is not a dedicated violence prevalence study. Therefore, it is notable that children's experiences of violence emerged as widespread in Young Lives qualitative research and a matter of grave concern to children themselves. In this brief paper, we explore selected themes that have emerged from Young Lives published papers (see references): 1. the ways in which children experience multiple forms of violence occur across different settings; 2. how children's experiences of and responses to violence are shaped by age and gender; 3. how violence reflects and reinforces discriminatory social and gender norms 4. how violence is a manifestation of a lack of rights and is widely normalised; and finally, 5. how poverty is a driver of violence affecting children.

Children Experience Multiple Forms of Violence Across Different Settings

Research has often focussed on specific types of violence, or violence occurring in specific places or settings. However, what emerges from children's accounts are the interconnections between experiences of different types of violence, such as corporal punishment and bullying between peers, and between experiences of violence in different settings, such as the home and school.

Violence is part of everyday life for many children in their homes, schools and communities, such as on the way to school, or while working. Corporal punishment is widely used by teachers in schools in all four study countries. For example, among children aged eight: over half in Peru and Vietnam, three quarters in Ethiopia and over nine in ten in India reported witnessing a teacher administering corporal punishment in the last week (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Children's self-reports of teachers' use of physical punishment in the past week at ages 8 and 15 (2009)
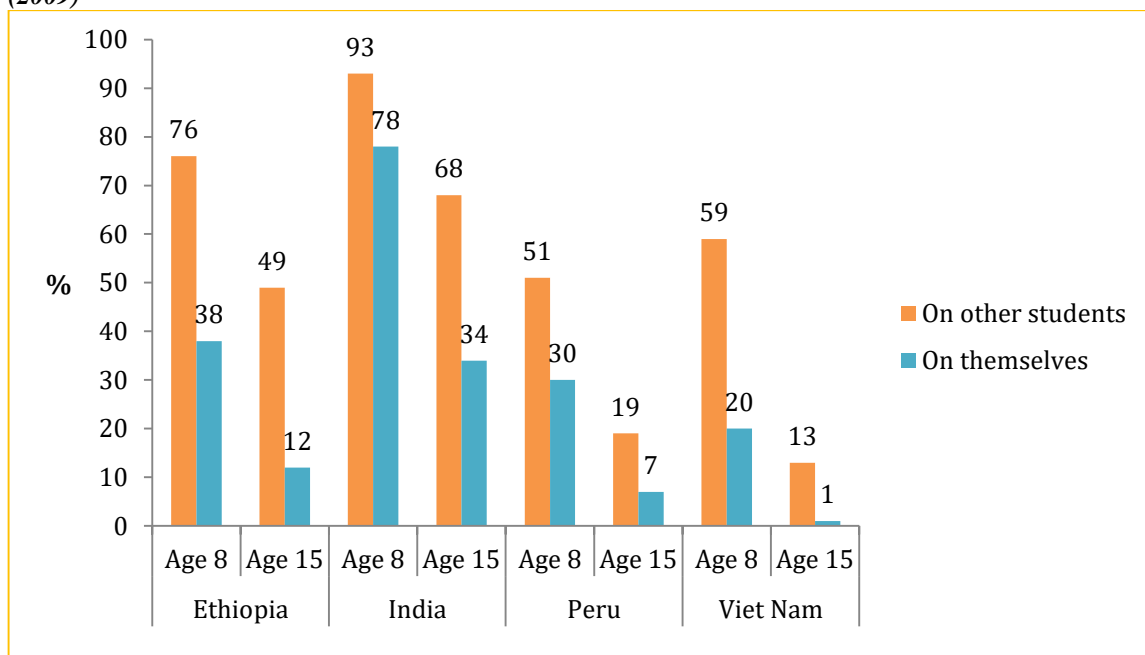
Source: Portela and Pells, 2015: 18

At age 15, over a third of girls and a quarter of boys in Peru and 11 percent of girls and 15 percent of boys in Vietnam reported being physically hurt by a family member. Children also experienced violence within the wider community, particularly in Peru (Pells and Woodhead, 2014: 68-69).[1]

---

[1] 'Stranger' is translated as 'unknown person' in the local languages. However, it is possible that different interpretations of 'stranger' exist in different cultures. For example, 'strangers' may not be people who are completely unknown, but outside the family and immediate social networks.

`

Figure 2: Fifteen year-olds reporting being physically hurt by a family member or stranger (%)

		Girls	Boys
Physically hurt by family member	Peru	36	27
	Vietnam	12	15
Physically hurt by stranger	Peru	14	27
	Vietnam	3	12

In all four countries, many children described being hit by parents and teachers, as well as experiencing fighting or bullying between peers. Within schools, bullying is often part of a wider violent environment, where harsh disciplinary practices such as corporal punishment serve to normalise violence. Violence is the foremost reason children give for disliking school. Students fighting, teachers beating, teachers discriminating against pupils, pupils teasing or bullying, and/or teachers shouting are reported as key problems in schools for 53 percent of the children in Vietnam, 42 percent in Ethiopia, 38 percent in Peru and 26 percent in India (at age 8) (Ogando Portela and Pells, 2015: 19-20).

The use of corporal punishment by teachers and violent behaviour between peers are linked as children describe how they use similar practices in interacting with peers. In Peru, children justified the use of physical violence against peers using the same argument made by teachers in relation to corporal punishment, namely the need to teach a lesson and change behaviour (Rojas, 2011). This is illustrated in the following extract from a group discussion:

> *Diego: Killing people is wrong.*
> *Interviewer: And lynching them?*
> *Peter: Maybe a little whipping will do.*
> *Interviewer: You share his opinion?*
> *Javier: Yes, I'd beat him up, but not kill him.*
> *Felipe: Almost kill him.*
> *Peter: Leave him agonising. (ibid)*

Children also describe how experiencing violence in one setting increases the risk of experiencing violence in another. Corporal punishment at school means that children may be further punished at home by parents. In India for example, a 9-year-old boy explained:

> *I do not like my school, since the teachers beat me badly. They beat with a stick on my back, even if we are sitting and talking.*
> *Researcher: Do you not complain to your parents?*
> *Boy: No, because they only beat because we must study well. My mother will thrash me very hard, if she knows I am not answering in class (Morrow and Singh, 2014).*

Similarly, in Peru, José said: They hit me, my mom or my teacher. The teacher hits me if I do not do my homework; my mom does it if don't take care of my brothers or if I get bad grades. Urban boy, age 13, San Román, 2014 (Guerrero and Rojas, 2016). In other circumstances, experiencing violence in the home renders children vulnerable to violence in other situations, such as having to work, as illustrated by the case of Ravi below.

Summary

- Violence is a part of everyday life for many children at home, school, in the community and while working.

- Violence was more likely to be reported within the home, than inflicted by strangers.

- Despite formal prohibition, corporal punishment is common within schools in the four countries. This shapes cultures of violence within schools.

Children's Experiences of and Responses to Violence are Shaped by Age and Gender

At younger ages children describe being more vulnerable to physical punishment from teachers and caregivers, particularly during what is sometimes termed 'middle childhood' between 8 and 12 years old. For example, in India, one child explained how in the first grade (age about six years), the teacher used to beat very little, but in second grade: '*they beat so that we learn and we are becoming big, but it hurts'* (Morrow and Singh, 2014)**.** Likewise, in Ethiopia, Getu, an 11-year-old boy, said he was not punished when he was *'a small child'*, but now he '*might be beaten and insulted'* if he refused to obey his caregivers (Pankhurst, Negussie and Mulugeta, 2016). Kassaye, aged 17, said '*it has been long since I was beaten. Now, they just insult me'*. Figure 1 above illustrates how in school younger children are at greater risk of corporal punishment than adolescents, with the incidence of corporal punishment at age 8 more than double the rate reported by 15 year olds, in all four countries. Whereas boys are significantly more likely to experience corporal punishment than girls, girls often describe experiencing other forms of humiliating treatment (Portela and Pells, 2015). As the mother of a 15-year-old girl, Santhi (India) explained, when describing her daughter's school:

> '*It is good. [The teachers] try to remove the fear from the students by constantly talking to them, … teaching them how to behave. But when they are not able to do well, … they get a scolding'.* When asked whether 15 years are beaten by teachers, Santhi's mother said: '*not exactly beating. They say some harsh words…. Usually they don't beat girls. They are all grown-up children. They will not tolerate scoldings, let alone thrashings'* (Morrow and Singh, 2015: 79).

As children become older, other forms of violence become more common in their accounts, including domestic violence between parents, concerns over safety in public spaces and bullying between peers. At age 15 whereas boys are at greater risk than girls of being physically and verbally bullied and girls are more likely to be bullied by measures aimed to ridicule, humiliate or socially exclude (Pells, Ogando Portela and Espinoza Revollo, 2016a) (see section 3).

How children construct, experience and navigate violence changes with age across the early life course. This encompasses not just changes in the nature of violence which children may be at risk of, or actual experience of violence, but also children's understandings and interpretations of what constitutes violence. In other words, what is considered unacceptable at one point in the life course later becomes normalised and vice versa. The following case from India illustrates changing responses to domestic violence over time (Morrow and Singh, 2016):

Ravi, a Scheduled Caste boy from rural Andhra Pradesh, had stopped going to school age 9 to work as a bonded labourer to pay off family debt. At age 12, he said: "*When my Mum and Dad fight I feel very bad. When my Dad beats my Mum we go to try to stop him. Me and my brother go.*" He was adamant aged 12 that in the future he would not beat his own wife like his father beat his mother. When he was 13 he described having left work as he was beaten by his employer. He was also beaten at home by his father. When interviewed for the third time, aged 16, Ravi no longer mentioned domestic violence between his parents. However, he described how he was drawn into fighting his brother-in-law who was hitting his sister, to protect his sister and her son. Caught up in the violence, he said:

> "*She [his sister] told me not get involved and to go inside. He pulled me out and started hitting my sister. I had to free her.*"

By age 20 Ravi was married and his wife was 4 months pregnant. He wanted to take care of his wife but said:

> "*she [his wife] gets a beating…I hit her when she tells anything…she won't keep quiet [after the quarrel], she keeps muttering to herself…she just nags, I get angry.*"

Ravi's case shows age and gender norms in relation to domestic violence intersect but also change over time. Violence in the form of fights and family quarrels, ran through Ravi's childhood accounts. His father's drinking led to domestic violence. The family's poverty led to Ravi taking on the family debt at an early age, but his employer beat him and treated him badly. He took action, by leaving the village, and found other work, as a response to how he had been treated. He also fought with his brother-in-law, to try to protect his sister. At the age of 12, he had said he would not hit his wife in the future, as a response to witnessing his father hitting his mother. But he readily admitted, 7 years later, to hitting his wife. The key message from Ravi's account is that gender norms – in the form of dominant masculinity – intersect with poverty, indebtedness, and age from middle childhood to

young adulthood generating a cycle of violence towards women as well as reinforcing and connecting to cycles of violence toward children. Thus, violence affecting women is linked to violence against children, and gender inequalities and masculinities are a root of both.

However, in other cases while children accept violence as normal when they were younger, as they become older they start to raise questions (Morrow and Singh, 2016):

Shanmuka Priya described several forms of violence over the years. She said she hit other children to try to protect herself and her younger brother; in 2010 she talked about being beaten by teachers for being late and for not understanding the lessons, adding that teachers also beat children for being dirty. She said she was beaten by her parents if she cried or asked for money. She also said male teachers beat children more than female teachers. In 2014, she said she thought primary school teachers hit the children because the teachers were 'from the village' and did not know it's a crime to 'mishandle' children, whereas high school teachers were from further afield and are aware that the government would punish them if they beat the children:

Those who are from the village feel that they can beat us because nobody would care. But those who come from other places are afraid of our background. ...I like the teachers who come from far...We've good teachers and they teach well. They don't beat us. They are jovial with us; they let us play during playtime. We have PET (Physical Education Teachers) and Drawing teachers now. It has changed like that, the environment is nice and cool in this place.

Children are typically positioned as victims in research on violence. While not ignoring the profound impact of violence on lives, children's accounts reveal a more complex picture of how they respond to violence. Children's responses can be categorized as follows: They seemingly do nothing (or cry); complain; seek help individually; seek help as a group (rather than individually) which may be a safer way to respond, depending on the problem; avoidance - running away, leaving an abusive employer, refusing to go to school; and intervening: children (especially boys) may try to physically stop violence, sometimes using violence themselves against the instigators or adopt more indirect strategies to try and help.

These responses are illustrated by findings from research on domestic violence in Vietnam. Younger children described how they often distanced themselves from the violence physically, such as hiding away or going to another house, whereas older children tended to have more developed strategies, including helping their mothers. Adolescent boys intervened directly to try and protect their mother from abuse, whereas adolescent girls adopted indirect strategies, such as earning money to give to their mothers and so reducing her dependence on her husband (Pells, Wilson, and Nguyen, 2015). Children also described the positive role that friendships and school can play in supporting difficult home environments. However, children who felt different or stigmatised on account of their home situation struggled to learn and in some cases leave school (Pells, Wilson, and Nguyen, 2015). For example, Nga lives in the town of Da Nang in Vietnam. When she was 15, Nga did not pass the exam

to progress onto higher secondary school and so she went to a continuing education centre, but because of fighting between students as well as not feeling that her studies were progressing, she decided to "*stay at home to help out my parents*." Since Nga left school, she has been staying up late and going to the bar where her father drinks*: "I go wake him up and tell him to come home."* In this way she protected her mother by being the one to let her father back into the house when he was drunk. Nga also worked at her mother's café and gave her earnings to her mother. Nga explained that she had not had many school friends but instead socialised with "*a few good children who had to quit school because of their family situation*." This group of friends supported one another "*because their situation is just as difficult as mine*", including giving money (Pells, Wilson, and Nguyen, 2015).

In contrast, in rural Ethiopia, Biritu (aged 15), described domestic violence between her parents. She received support from an older brother, which enabled her to continue at school despite ongoing domestic violence at home. She stayed with her brother in town as she believed the school there is a better quality. She described how on Saturdays there are *"makeup class[es] arranged by clever students. "They help us with various subjects. Sometimes teachers also come and teach us."* It also meant she could escape the ongoing domestic violence, as her father was repeatedly drunk and then beat her mother. Not only did her brother help her with school materials and studying English, but it is also socially unacceptable for a young woman to live alone: *"If girls live alone, gradually things will change and bad things begin to happen. Considering my case and brother's, it is very advantageous that we are living together. Our life is decent".*

These case studies illustrate how experiences of violence are often cumulative, with impacts children's lives over time, shaping not only their wellbeing but also their trajectories through schooling and to adulthood. This is particularly pronounced in the case of schooling. Children frequently describe not wanting to go to school because of fear of being beaten: in India, a mother of a 9-year-old explained how "my daughter was small, she was frightened, and said she will not go to school". Violence at school undermines children's learning. At age 8 corporal punishment is negatively associated with children's maths scores, in all four countries, even after controlling for a range of child and household characteristics and when comparing children in the same community. The results also remain significant in Ethiopia, India and Vietnam after controlling for previous performance in maths at age 5. These negative effects persist when examining children's test scores at age 12. In India, Peru and Vietnam corporal punishment experienced at age 8 is negatively associated with maths scores at age 12 (Ogando Portela and Pells, 2015).

Summary

- Corporal punishment in schools is a common experience for children in 'middle childhood' (between about 8 and 12 years), particularly for boys.

- The types of violence experienced vary by age and gender, with boys reporting physical violence, whereas girls report emotional violence and gender-based violence.

- Children often experience both violence at school and violence in the home. Children are not only victims of violence, they seek strategies to combat it and to protect victimised family members.
- Violence undermines children's wellbeing, engagement with schooling and learning.

Violence Reflects and Reinforces Discriminatory Social and Gender Norms

Violence affecting children takes place in the context of other discriminatory norms, particularly in relation to gender and caste or ethnicity. Girls' and boys' differential experiences and responses to violence are linked with notions of masculinity and femininity, especially in relation to physical punishment. This varies cross-culturally, but in India, for example, norms relating to femininity mean that girls are required to be docile and submissive, must not be 'naughty', while constructions of masculinity may mean that boys are supposed to be able to accept physical punishment and withstand pain (Morrow and Singh, 2014). In Vietnam, powerful patriarchal norms mean that men are entitled to discipline other household members, and this frames young people's understandings of violence as an appropriate mechanism for educating and controlling younger children and women. Girls often experience forms of violence which reflect unequal gender norms (Vu, 2016). In Peru, girls receive less frequent physical punishment than boys, reinforcing gender stereotypes that see men as strong, able to accept and endure pain – boys 'never show a submissive attitude while being physically punished; rather they strive to appear resilient and to hide pain' (Rojas, 2011).

In India, boys are more likely to be physically punished than girls (Morrow and Singh, 2016):

> *Vinay, a Scheduled Tribe boy aged 15, complained that his teacher 'beat one student very badly because he did not get good marks in an exam… other girls got less marks but he left them without punishment, but this boy got punished. The boy got 33 out of 100 but another girl got 8 marks but she did not get any punishment'.*

In Ethiopia, boys were more likely to report instances of corporal punishment at home, while girls reported insults and harassment by boys in their communities. There were differences in seeking help, linked to gender norms in different cultural contexts. For example, whereas boys in Peru were much less likely to seek support when facing difficulties, in India, girls were much less likely to seek support.

Violence from teachers was replicated by children in forms of violent bullying, with the use of violence justified as teaching a lesson, enforcing conformity with harmful gender norms to establish masculine identities for boys. As a headteacher in Peru said - (Rojas, 2011) *"Boys have to be treated more roughly, while girls are more delicate and quiet. They cannot be disciplined in the same way.'*

Once past puberty, older girls reported experiencing harassment from boys, especially in India (often termed 'eve-teasing', see Morrow and Singh, 2016) and in Ethiopia (Pells et al., 2016a). When

interviewed at age 12, Haftey had described boys harassing her on the way home from school and explained: "We cannot study because we always worry about the boys' threat. We are frightened always." Later, when 17, Haftey described her relief at having moved closer to her school: "In the past, when I was in the village, children were beating us, waiting for us along the road to our school, but here thanks to God there is no one that beats me." Likewise, in India, Harika, living in rural Andhra Pradesh, described the difficulties that girls faced in the journey to and from school and the fear of bullying and harassment from boys. This has led to some girls dropping out of school and for others it has caused difficulties in studying (Pells et al., 2016a). She explained:

Earlier we used to be in school [doing homework] but now no one stays back after school... we all decided now in 10th class we return home fast. ... [there are only four of us left] so we don't stay back... The [neighbouring village] girls used to come. They used to be there until their bus came at 6pm... Now they ... don't come to school...They used to be in the school until the bus came. Big boys used to come and sit there, at the school... Because other boys come to the school, so they [the girls] don't come now.

In Ethiopia and India, girls described fear of using the toilets, which are often not gender-segregated and so the girls feel unsafe and concerned about bullying and harassment from boys (Pells, 2011b: 10). This is particularly problematic during menstruation, leading to girls being absent each month:

We do not have bathrooms there. They have started but the construction is not yet completed and I don't like that aspect in the school. It is very difficult for us, particularly girls, and those who come from neighbouring villages. During the monthly cycles it is more difficult, so some girls don't come to school on those days. (Rural girl, aged 15, Andhra Pradesh)

Ethnicity/caste is not straightforward to tease out of the Young Lives qualitative data. Children do not necessarily explicitly self-identify as from an ethnic group, particularly those children living in relatively homogenous communities and in Ethiopia the open discussion of ethnicity is very sensitive. However, we can surmise that in India, caste may be a factor in the following two examples, where teachers are of a higher caste than the children they teach. Verbal abuse from teachers were also described by boys aged 9–10 at a government school, in 2010 (Morrow and Singh, 2014):

They abuse us, and use foul language: 'You look like bullocks and donkeys – the herdsman is better than you.' This makes us very sad.

Chandani, age 12, from a Scheduled Tribe community, described how the physics teacher insulted the children (Morrow and Singh, 2016):

[He] always used to tell that ours are "dumb-heads, your head is full of shit and if that is removed, then you will able to study. God has given all promises to you but not education",

like that he scolds us. He teaches us about space. But he beats severely. ... In 2nd year, he beat one senior boy. He bled from the ear.
Interviewer: Did he beat you too?
Chandani: No, ... but he threatens... he says that "by tomorrow, by this time, I will be here, be careful, if you don't solve the problems, then your back will be torn off".

In Vietnam, children from ethnic minority groups reported being bullied because of being poor and from an ethnic minority group (Pells et al., 2016). This contributes to children dropping out of school.

Y Thinh is 16 years old and from the Cham H'roi minority ethnic group in Vietnam. At the end of seventh grade he got into many fights with other children who bullied him because of his ethnicity. Y Thinh said that another boy 'mocked me for being "an ethnic"' and then 'punched me with his fist'. He could not endure the continued bullying and added, 'I couldn't digest the lessons. So I felt tired of learning.' He left school and worked on the family farm.

Summary

- In schools boys were more likely to say they were physically beaten than girls. Gender norms may preclude boys seeking support when they are affected by violence. When teachers normalise violence, it becomes replicated by pupils.

- Domestic violence and gender-based violence was reported as a way in which existing patriarchal norms are normalised and maintained. Girls frequently reported fear of name calling, harassment and concerns over personal safety (e.g. on the way to school or in shared toilets).

- Children from ethnic minorities or other marginalised social groups report experiencing violence in schools because of their status.

- Violence consistently undermined access to school– for girls who felt unsafe to go to school or unable to study there; or for children from marginalised minority groups victimised for their ethnicity. Violence is a channel replicating existing discriminatory norms.

Violence is a Manifestation of a Lack of Respect for Rights and is Widely Normalized

Children have low social status and use of violent discipline is widely accepted and normalised, and seen as supportive of children's learning and development. In Peru, Jose said: "*If we are punished it is because we deserve it, because we have done something wrong.*" (José, 13, urban Peru) (Guerrero and Rojas, 2016). In some cases, children and caregivers perceived that corporal punishment by teachers was an acceptable way of shaping children's behaviour and values. The mother of a 9-year-

`

old boy, India, said: *Nowadays, the teachers don't beat the students. ... but it should be necessary sometimes to keep them in control. So we ourselves ask them to be strict with the students (*Morrow and Singh, 2014*).* While children frequently reported how they did not like violence, this does not mean that they always oppose it, which illustrates how deeply engrained violence frequently is within societies. In Ethiopia, children expressed a sense that the punishment and beating from their parents was 'for their own good' (Pankhurst, Negussie, and Mulugeta, 2016). Habib, an 11-year-old boy from Addis Ababa, said "*I feel that it [beating] is good for me*." Tufa, a 14 year old boy, had been beaten because the cattle he was herding strayed. He said "*I did not feel sorry for being beaten because I knew it was my fault*." In India, Triveni, aged 19, described a family quarrel in which she was badly beaten by her grandmother. She said people tell her*: 'she raised you, doesn't she have the right to scold you?'*

In India, older siblings are often responsible for disciplining younger siblings (Morrow and Singh, 2016): Sarada's younger siblings did not attend school but worked as debt-bonded labourers. Despite being taught that teachers should not beat children, Sarada said she and her older sister beat their younger sister:

> *...at work she keeps threatening the owners that she will leave in the afternoon and the sun gets hot, and she won't be working any more after the debt is cleared. Everybody says that she is a stubborn girl .... There is a slight change in her this month after we all scolded her. I even hit her on the head with a small bucket.*

Powerful 'intergenerational' dynamics operate, and violent practices may be reinforced (or challenged) over time. For example, in Peru**,** cycles of violence *may be* transmitted inter-generationally in the context of wider societal acceptance and normalisation of violence. Parents who themselves experienced violence in their childhoods may use violence as a way of controlling their children's behaviour (Guerrero and Rojas, 2016). One mother described how the whip her father had used on her had been passed down to her to use on her own children:

> *Interviewer: And... Do you scare your children [with the possibility of hitting them]?*
> *Isabel's mother: Yes I pull out my [whip] and they run. [Laughs]*
> *Interviewer: They got scared?*
> *Isabel's mother: I scared them but I also hit them too.*
> *Interviewer: With the whip?*
> *Isabel's mother: Yes (...)*
> *Interviewer: Do you have one?*
> *Isabel's mother: Yes*
> *Interviewer: Where did you buy it?*
> *Isabel's mother: I didn't. It is from my father.*
> *Interviewer: Your dad gave you the whip?*
> *Isabel's mother: Yes, it was his whip.*

Interviewer: And when you were a child did he hit you with the whip?
Isabel's mother: Oh yes.
(Urban mother, San Román, 2014)

Summary

- Children frequently experience violence in ways which would be considered unacceptable for adults to experience.

- Children sometimes subscribe to the view that violence is part of how children should be brought up and disciplined given the widespread normalisation of violence, while still often being upset and distressed by act of violence.

- Corporal punishment within the home is still often seen as a private concern for the family and seen as part of the right way to bring up children.

Poverty is a Driver of Violence Affecting Children

Violence research often focusses on personal and interpersonal factors, and on specific settings or forms of violence (such as corporal punishment in schools, gender-based violence, child maltreatment at home and so on) with the effect that poverty is often overlooked as a factor. What emerges from analysis of children's accounts in Young Lives research are the ways in which violence is inextricably linked with structural and other contextual factors, such as poverty, inequality, ethnicity and community gender norms. Children's accounts of violence are set against a backdrop of lack of resources – from overcrowded classrooms, to lack of social protection measures that mean children's work is needed for family survival, lack of family resources to pay for school fees, exercise books, uniforms, and so on. Poverty puts great strain on relationships – in families, schools and communities.

Overall, Young Lives has found that poorer students and children from other disadvantaged groups tend to be disproportionately affected by corporal punishment and bullying (Morrow and Singh, 2014; Ogando Portela and Pells, 2015; Pells et al., 2016a&b). Structural disadvantages arising from poverty and inequity underpin discrimination that may put particular groups of children at risk of multiple intersecting forms of violence, but the form these markers of difference take are context-specific.

For example, financial hardship leads to stress on families, resulting in alcoholism or domestic violence; children need to work, and this may expose them to violence from employers, or they struggle with the challenges of balancing working and schooling; parental absence or long hours working mean that children are needed to do domestic or farm work, and are disciplined when they fail to undertake their tasks adequately, as the following examples show.

`

Poverty underpins the need for children to work, especially in small-scale subsistence agriculture, and children are needed especially at peak seasonal times of year. Often they miss school to work, but are physically punished when they do return to school (Morrow and Singh, 2015). Ranadeep, aged 13, explained how he missed school for family-based agricultural work, but when he went back to school, he was beaten: *'They hit us because I didn't go to school for one month, and … I missed [the lessons].*

In Peru, rural children described how as they gained responsibilities in the fields they became more likely to be hit, as the following examples illustrates (Guerrero and Rojas, 2016).

Interviewer: And what happens if you don't harvest?
Fabricio: We won't have potatoes.
Interviewer: Do you like to go to the fields?
Fabricio: Yes.
Interviewer: And your father, what happens if you don't want to go?
Fabricio: He hits me.
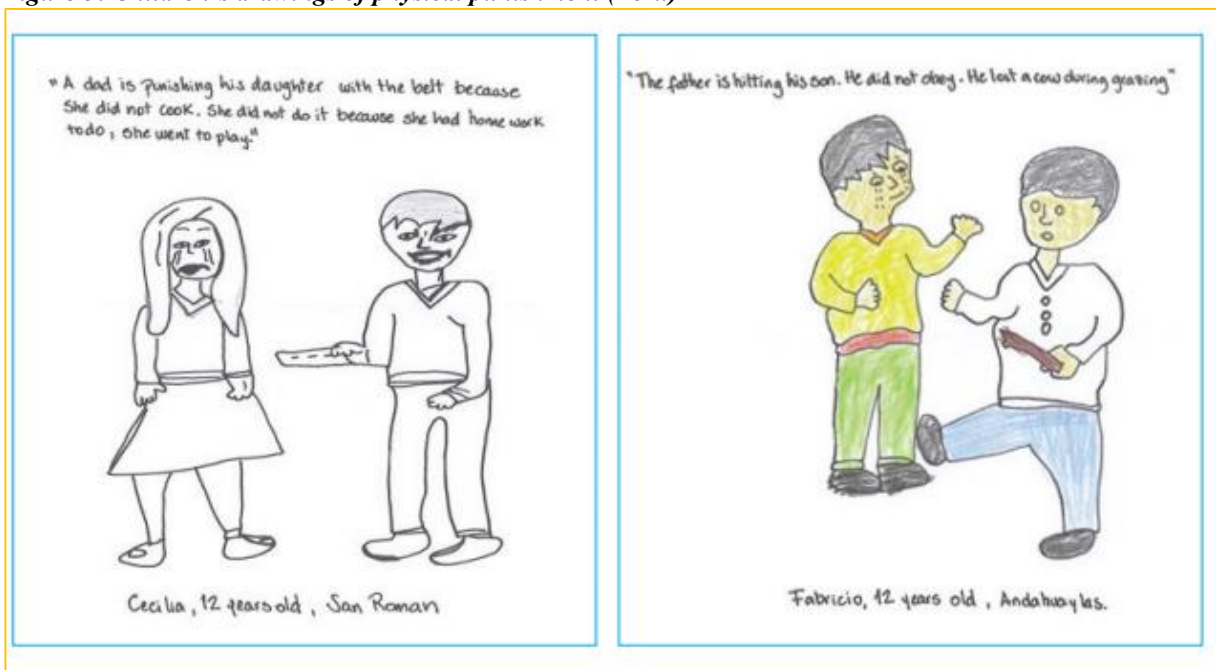*Interviewer: With what?*
Fabricio: San Martín [whip].
Interviewer: What do you think about that? Is it right or wrong?
Fabricio: Wrong.
Interviewer: Why?
Fabricio: Because I cry. (Rural boy, age 13, Andahuaylas, 2014).

Figure 3: Children's drawings of physical punishment (Peru)

Source: Guerrero and Rojas, 2016: 27

Poor children are more likely to be subjected to corporal punishment in schools. Lack of materials for school meant that children are punished by teachers: as a boy, aged 7, India, said: *"If we don't get [buy and bring] notebooks, then teachers will beat us."* A mother of a 7 year old girl in India said the only thing her daughter said about school was that her teacher beat her:

> *'She studies well, ... but when there is no uniform and when we delay the fee payments then she will not go, she refuses to go, and she hides behind that wall… and says 'sir will beat me, they will beat me'. (Morrow and Singh, 2014)*

Poverty featured heavily, both explicitly and implicitly, as a key factor in children's accounts of being bullied, particularly in Ethiopia and India. Children described verbal bullying that made direct reference to their impoverished circumstances, whether through name calling and insults such as *'child of a destitute'* or through making fun of the poor quality of their clothing or their lack of shoes (Pells et al., 2016b).

In Ethiopia, clothes serve as an indicator of children's economic status and attract insults to the extent that children missed school rather than be bullied (Pells et al., 2016a). For instance, 12 yearold Kebenga, described being absent from school for three days because of not having clothes after having faced insults from his peers on a previous occasion:

> *I went to school barefoot because my shoes were torn apart. Then students laughed at me, and some of them insulted me calling me a "poor boy". It was last year. I informed my parents of the problem I faced and they bought me new shoes the next day.*

This sense of being stigmatised can affect children's experiences of schooling and well-being:

> Bereket, who lives in a slum area in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, described missing school from five to seven days a month when he worked washing cars. Bereket is an orphan who lives with his grandmother. She feels angry when he is absent from school, but he does not listen to her. Bereket said: '*Learning enables you to have a vast knowledge and it helps you to think good things, and that makes me happy. But I hate sitting in a classroom where there are many students. It is hard for me to sit in a classroom for long hours.*' He added: '*When the students come wearing better clothes, I don't like to feel inferior to them, so it is a must for me to work hard [earning money] to change my situation.'* (Pells, Dornan and Portela, 2013)

Children's interactions, including bullying, therefore do not take place in a vacuum but may be shaped by wider inequalities that discriminate against certain groups. For example, in India, children recounted how teachers beat children who were 'dirty' or irregular in attending school. Children adopted and used similar expressions, stating that they wanted to beat children who were not in school to teach them a lesson.

Summary

- The understandable focus on personal and interpersonal factors in driving violence against children can mask the role played by poverty.

- Poverty increases stresses and strains, including on relationships in families, schools and communities. Poor children are the most likely to report corporal punishment and bullying.

- The lack of clothes and school materials, caused by poverty can result in bullying and violence within the school from peers and from teachers. Poverty can also lead to children missing school to work, and then also being physically punished for having done so.

Conclusions

Violence in the lives of many children is pervasive, often routinised and normalised. Children's accounts reveal the multiple factors that shape their experiences of and responses to violence and the interconnections between types of violence and the multiple settings in which violence occurs. Forms of violence, such as emotional abuse, may be just as upsetting for children, and are often overlooked and under-researched. Children's experiences and responses change with age and are shaped by social inequalities related to gender and the discrimination and disadvantage experienced by other marginalised social groups. The distress caused by violence impacts negatively upon children, particularly in terms of their emotional well-being and also in relation to schooling. This is not to say that children are passive victims, rather, children actively make meaning of their experiences and develop strategies for responding to violence. However, these are constrained by the economic, social and cultural contexts in which children are living.

References

Bania, D. 2009. "'AIDS is rape!' gender and sexuality in children's responses to HIV and AIDS." *Social Science and Medicine* 69(4): 596-603.

Barnett, I., P. Ariana, S. Petrou, M. E. Penny, T.D. Le, S. Galab, T. Woldehanna, J. A. Escobal, E. Plugge, and J. Boyden. 2012. "Cohort Profile: The Young Lives Study". *International Journal of Epidemiology* 42(3): 701-08.

Beazley, H., S. Bessell, J. Ennew, and R. Waterson. 2006. "What Children Say? Results of comparative research on the physical and emotional punishment of children in South East Asia and the Pacific." Stockholm: Save the Children.

Boyden, J., and J. De Berry (Eds.) 2004. *Children and youth on the front line*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Boyden, J., and J. Ennew. 1997. *Children in Focus: A manual for participatory research with children*. Sweden: Save the Children.

Boyden, J., A. Pankhurst, and Y. Tafere. 2013. "Harmful Traditional Practices and Child Protection: Contested Understandings and Practices of Female Child Marriage and Circumcision in Ethiopia." Working paper 93. Oxford: Young Lives.

Breen, A., K. Daniels, and M. Tomlinson. 2015. "Children's experiences of corporal punishment: a qualitative study in an urban township of South Africa." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 48: 131-139.

Bryman, A. 2004. *Social Research Methods,* 2E. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cheney, K.E. 2007. *Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clacherty, G., D. Donald, and A. Clacherty. 2005. *Zambian Children's Experience of Corporal and Humiliating Punishment. A Quantitative and Qualitative Survey.* Summary Report. Arcadia, Sweden: Save the Children.

Denzin, N. K., and Y. S. Lincoln. 2005. 'Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 3E.Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Christensen, P., and A. James. (Eds.) 2017. *Researching children: perspectives and practices* 3E. London: Routledge.

Crivello, G., V. Morrow, and E. Wilson. 2013. "Young Lives Longitudinal Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers." Technical Note 26. Oxford: Young Lives.

Frazer, S., et al. (Eds.) *Doing research with children and young people*. Open University Press.

Greene, S., and D. Hogan. (Eds.) 2005. *Researching children's experiences*. Sage.

Guerrero, G., and V. Rojas. 2016. "Understanding Children's Experiences of Violence in Peru: evidence from Young Lives." Young Lives/UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti. Working paper WP-2016-17. Florence: UNICEF.

Hart, J. 2008. *Years of Conflict: Adolescence, Political Violence and Displacement*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Horton, P. 2016. "'Portraying monsters: framing school bullying through a macro lens'". *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 37(2): 204-214.

Korbin, J. E. 2003. "Children, Childhoods and Violence". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 431-46.

Kovats-Bernat, J. C. 2006. *Sleeping Rough in Port-au-Prince: An Ethnography of Street Children and Violence in Haiti.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Le Mat, M. 2016. "'Sexual violence is not good for our country's development'. Students' interpretations of sexual violence in a secondary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia." *Gender and Education* 28(4): 562-580.

Leach, F. 2006. "Researching gender violence in schools: methodological and ethical considerations." *World Development* 34(6): 1129-1147.

Locke, C., and P. Lloyd-Sherlock. 2011. "Linked lives, subjectivities and shifting contexts: critical reflections from development studies on qualitative life course methodologies." *Development and Change* 42(4).

Mampane, R., L. Ebersohn, A. Cherrington, and M. Moen. 2014. "Adolescents' views on the power of violence in a rural school in South Africa." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49(6): 733-745.

Morrow, V. 2009. "The ethics of social research with children and families in Young Lives: practical experiences." Working Paper No. 53. Oxford: Young Lives.

Morrow, V., and R. Singh. 2014. "Corporal punishment in schools in Andhra Pradesh, India: children's

_____. 2015. "Children's and parents' perceptions of corporal punishment in schools in Andhra Pradesh, India" in J. Parkes ed. *Gender Violence in Poverty Contexts: The Educational Challenge*. Abingdon: Routledge.

_____. 2016. "Understanding Children's Experiences of Violence in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India: evidence from Young Lives." Young Lives/UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti Working paper WP-2016-19. Florence: UNICEF.

Murali Proctor, L. 2015. "'Boys must be beaten': corporal punishment, gender, and age in New Delhi schools." *Landscapes of Violence* 3(3), Art 3.

Neale, B., and J. J. Flowerdew. 2003. "Time, texture and childhood: the contours of longitudinal qualitative research". *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 6(3).

Ogando Portela, M. J., and K. Pells. 2015. "Corporal Punishment in Schools: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam." Office of Research- Innocenti Discussion Paper No. 2015-02. Florence: UNICEF.

Omolo, A. 2014. *Violence Against Children in Kenya: An Ecological Model of Risk Factors and Consequences, Responses and Projects.* Waxmann Verlag GmbH.

Ouis, P. 2009. "Honourable traditions? Honour violence, early marriage and sexual abuse of teenage girls in Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Yemen." *International Journal of Children Rights* 17(3): 445-474.

Overlein, C., and M. Hyden. 2009. "Children's actions when experiencing domestic violence." *Childhood: A Journal of Global Child Research* 16(4): 479-96.

Pankhurst, A, N. Negussie, and E. Mulugeta. 2016. "Understanding Children's experiences of violence in Ethiopia: evidence from Young Lives." Young Lives/UNICEF OoR Working paper WP-2016-25. Florence: UNICEF.

Parkes, J. (Ed.) 2015. *Gender violence in poverty contexts: The educational challenge.* London: Routledge.

Pells, K. 2011. ""Keep going despite everything": legacies of genocide for Rwanda's children and youth." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 31(9/10): 594-606.

_____. 2011b. "Poverty and Gender Inequalities: Evidence from Young Lives." Young Lives Policy Paper 3. Oxford: Young Lives.

Pells, K., P. Dornan, and M. J. Ogando. 2013. *Growing up with the promise of the MDGs: Children's Hopes for the Future of Development.* Save the Children and Young Lives.

Pells, K., E. Wilson, and T. T. H. Nguyen. 2015. "Gender violence in the home and childhoods in Vietnam" in Jenny Parkes (ed.), *Gender Violence in Poverty Contexts: The Educational Challenge.* London: Routledge.

Pells, K., M. J. Ogando Portela, and P. E. Revollo. 2016a. "Experiences of Peer Bullying among Adolescents and Associated Effects on Young Adult Outcomes: Longitudinal Evidence from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam." Office of Research-Innocenti Discussion Paper 2016-03. Florence: UNICEF.

_____. 2016b. "Poverty and inequity: multi-country evidence on the structural drivers of bullying" in M. S. Pais, (ed.), *Ending the Torment: Tackling Bullying from the Schoolyard to Cyberspace.* New York: United Nations.

Pells, K., E. Wilson, and T. T. H. Nguyen. 2015. "Gender violence in the home and childhoods in Vietnam" in J. Parkes (ed.), *Gender Violence in Poverty Contexts: The Educational Challenge*. Abingdon: Routledge.

_____. 2016. "Negotiating agency in cases of intimate partner violence in Vietnam." *Global Public Health* 11(1-2): 34-47.

Pells, K., and M. Woodhead. 2014. *Changing Children's Lives: Risks and Opportunities*. Oxford: Young Lives.

Punch, S. 2001. "Multiple methods and research relations with young people in rural Bolivia" in M. Limb and C. Dwyer eds, *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers*. London: Arnold.

Rojas, V. 2011. "'I'd rather be hit with a stick… Grades are sacred': Students' Perceptions of Discipline and Authority in a Public High School in Peru." Working paper 70. Oxford: Young Lives.

Seymour, C. 2012. "Ambiguous Agencies: Coping and survival in eastern DRC." Children's Geographies 10(4): 373-384.

Shepler, S. 2014. *Childhood Deployed: Remaking Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone.* New York: New York University Press.

Thomson, R. 2007. "The qualitative longitudinal case history: practical, methodological and ethical reflection." *Social Policy and Society* 6(4): 571-582.

Twum-Danso Imoh, A. 2013. "Children's Perceptions of Physical Punishment in Ghana and the Implications for Children's Rights." *Childhood: A Journal of Global Child Research* 20(4): 472-486.

Vu Thi Thanh Huong. 2016. "Understanding Children's Experiences of Violence in Vietnam: evidence from Young Lives." YL/UNICEF OoR Working paper WP-2016-26.

Wells, K., E. Burman, H. Montgomery, and A. Watson. 2014. *Childhood, Youth and Violence in Global Contexts: Research and Practice in Dialogue*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wessells, M. 2006. *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.