



Human Rights Advocates

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ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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I. Introduction

This report focuses on the weak institutional capacity and missing legal safeguards addressing school-related gender-based violence at local, national, and international levels. Violence against girls in schools is a pervasive, yet largely invisible problem around the world. Though individual states and the international community have already taken some action to address the problem by making statements denouncing school-related gender-based violence, reiterating commitments to address such violence, and even undertaking steps to produce manuals and guidelines on safe schools and best teaching practices, little work has actually been done to implement, follow-up, and evaluate past commitments. The objective of this report is to urge states and the international community to develop concrete and adequate monitoring, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms to hold states accountable for combating school-related gender-based violence and honoring past commitments regarding such violence.

This report generally recommends that individual states and the international community take the following measures to eliminate and prevent school-related gender-based violence: 1) request a 2016 follow up report to the 2006 and 2011 UN Studies on Violence Against Children that is written from a gendered perspective; 2) request that the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women dedicate parts of her country visits to school-related gender-based violence, include statistics and information on such violence in her follow up reports, and submit a thematic report on violence against girls in schools; and 3) urge states to adopt the UNICEF “Child Friendly School Model.”.

II. Background of the Problem

School-related gender based violence refers to “acts of sexual, physical or psychological violence inflicted on children in and around schools because of stereotypes and roles or norms attributed to or expected of them on the basis of their sex or gendered identity.”¹ This type of violence is perpetrated by teachers and students, and often manifests itself as sexual violence, bullying,² corporal punishment, threats, and intimidation.³ Plan Canada recognizes that systemic discrimination against women and girls is one of the underlying causes of poverty, and that school-related gender-based violence results in lower academic achievement, health risks, and perpetuation of cycles of violence and poverty across generations.⁴ Root-causes of school-related gender-based violence include social, cultural, and religious norms, reduced economic opportunities, discrimination and social marginalization, and most importantly, missing legal safeguards and weak institutional capacity.⁵

¹ “A Girl’s Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School,” Plan Canada (2012), 7.

² Bullying can include physical bullying and, in recent years, cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying typically takes place through the use of text messages, email, and social media, thus “extend[ing] fear, intimidation, and in some instances sexual violence well beyond school grounds.” “A Girl’s Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School,” Plan Canada (2012), 20.

³ Id., 14.

⁴ Id., 22.

⁵ Id., 23-26.

It is estimated that at least 246 million boys and girls suffer from school-related gender-based violence every year. Girls, in particular, are vulnerable to sexual harassment, rape, coercion, exploitation, and discrimination from teachers, staff, and peers.⁶ This type of violence has detrimental and cyclical effects on the realization of girls' right to education and to learn in a safe school environment since violence against girls not only presents a barrier to education, but lack of education promotes violence against girls.

A. International Standards

States' failure to adequately address school-related gender-based violence directly contravenes their respective obligations under international treaties. Specifically, Articles 19(1), 28, 34, 2, and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Articles 10 and 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Articles 24, 26, and 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Articles 13, 2, and 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights (ICESCR).

III. Past and Ongoing Efforts

Though entities at the international, national, and local levels have recognized school-related gender-based violence as a serious and pervasive problem, a concerted, sustainable, and systematic approach is needed. Such violence continues as a barrier to girls' right to education and has lasting effects on all aspects of society. This largely stems from the lack of data and statistics on instances of violence against girls, due to states' reluctance to investigate violence, as well as victims' fears associated with reporting such violence, particularly sexual violence. As a result, violence against girls in schools largely remains unrecognized and invisible. States and the international community, therefore, should take further steps to combat and prevent school-related gender-based violence.

A. International Efforts

1. UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children

In 2006, the United Nations, acting on the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, produced the "UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children," which was the first global report on the extent, causes, and effects of violence against children.⁷ The report was undertaken by an Independent Expert, appointed by the Secretary-General, and explored violence against children in five settings—the home and family; schools and educational settings; care and justice institutions; the work-place; and the community. The report also provided recommendations for action, including urging states and other stakeholders to: strengthen international, national, and local

⁶ *Id.*, 7 FN 3.

⁷ "World Report on Violence Against Children," United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children (2006).

commitments to end violence against children; prohibit all violence against children in national law; promote non-violent values and awareness raising; enhance the capacity of those who work with or for children; ensure accountability and end impunity; and to take a range of other actions to prevent violence against children and to respond to it effectively if it occurs.⁸

Five years later, the Special Representative on Violence against Children, also appointed by the Secretary-General, produced a follow-up report in 2011, which discussed progress since the 2006 report, as well as identified shortcomings in addressing and preventing violence against children.⁹ The 2011 report reiterated past recommendations, as well as provided additional recommendations that called on states to: provide recovery and social reintegration services; ensure the participation of children; create accessible and child-friendly reporting systems and services; address the gender dimension of violence against children; develop and implement systematic national data collection and research efforts; and strengthen international commitment by ratifying and implementing the CRC and its two Optional Protocols.¹⁰

Though the reports increase awareness and disseminate information on violence against children generally, the reports only briefly discuss violence in the school setting and hardly mention school-related gender-based violence. Thus, the UN Secretary-General should commission a study specifically focused on gender-based violence in the school setting. Because instances of such violence remain unnoticed, a dedicated study will contribute to international efforts to raise awareness and compile substantive data on instances of school-related gender-based violence.

Further, although the 2011 report called on states to establish confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms, implement anti-violence policies programs from a gender perspective, and improve data collection to compile statistics on violence against children, neither the Special Representative on Violence against Children nor the United Nations as a whole have implemented adequate follow-up procedures to monitor whether states have taken steps to address or implement these recommendations. In addition to encouraging states to develop their own framework for holding perpetrators of violence against children accountable, the United Nations should also establish an institutional framework at the international level to hold states accountable in furthering their respective commitments to combating and preventing violence against women, particularly gender-motivated violence in the school-setting.

2. UNICEF's Child Friendly School Model

UNICEF has also played an active role in improving the quality of basic education for children around the world, particularly through the UNICEF Child Friendly School model. This model takes a “multidimensional” and “holistic” approach in

⁸ “Five Years On: A global update on violence against children,” NGO Advisory Council for Follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children (2011), 1.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*, 4-5.

addressing quality education that is tailored to the child’s needs.¹¹ The Child Friendly School Manual, published by UNICEF in 2009, specifically looks to “how safe the schools are as places for learning and how completely they provide an overall gender-sensitive environment that is conducive to learning” as one indicator in a “packaged solution” for evaluating the quality of education in schools worldwide.¹²

UNICEF recommends that in child-friendly schools, attention should be given to three key elements—prediction, prevention, and preparedness—to protect the children entrusted to schools’ care in accordance with governments’ obligations under the CRC to facilitate children’s right to learn in a safe and secure environment.¹³ For example, UNICEF recommends constant supervision of the school and schoolyard and the implementation of security and emergency measures, such as constructing fences or implementing alarm systems, to protect children from “harmful outside influences, such as drug peddling, sexual harassment or physical violence.”¹⁴ Further, recognizing that violence can take place during the journey to and from school, UNICEF indicates that child-friendly schools usually identify safe ways for children to travel to school and back. For example, the Child Friendly School Manual recommends that where distance may be a problem, schools should organize school bus service or fare-exempt travel on public buses that go past the school.¹⁵ Additionally, in remote locations where children live long distances from school, child-friendly schools can work with the community to arrange for students to travel together or be accompanied by responsible adults.¹⁶

The Child Friendly School model also identifies violence against children as a serious problem in schools, particularly sexual violence and violence against girls as “hidden” forms of violence that need to be exposed.¹⁷ In order to address such violence, the Child Friendly School Manual discusses the need for “clear, transparently enforced policies and procedures and firm interventions to protect children from physical harm and verbal, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.”¹⁸ UNICEF recommends that schools educate parents and local communities to curb acquiescence to or tolerance of violence against children, that teachers and principals make it a point of listening to children’s concerns about violence in their lives (for example, by providing a box in classrooms where children can leave anonymous notes about violence at home or school), and that schools have procedures to ensure timely professional responses to disclosures or suspicions regarding harm to a child.¹⁹

¹¹ “Child Friendly School Manual,” UNICEF (2009), Ch. 1.2, p. 2.

¹² *Id.*, Ch. 1.2, p. 4.

¹³ *Id.*, Ch. 5.1, p. 1-2 (relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to children’s rights to healthy, safe, and protective environments include Articles 2, 19, 24, 28, 29, 37).

¹⁴ “Child Friendly School Manual,” UNICEF (2009), Ch. 5.2.2, p. 7.

¹⁵ *Id.*, Ch. 5.2.2, p. 7.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*, p. 9.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

Some states, such as the Philippines in 2009²⁰ and Thailand in 1998,²¹ have already adopted the UNICEF Child Friendly School model. However, other states should look to UNICEF and particularly incorporate the goals and recommendations of the 2009 Child Friendly School Manual in order to further their international obligations under relevant international treaties, and prevent and end school-related gender-based violence in their respective schools.

3. Other UN Efforts

Other UN agencies have also undertaken initiatives to address school-related gender-based violence; however such actions fall short of implementing mechanisms that hold states accountable to their international commitments. For example, at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Agreed Conclusions from the 55th Session in 2011 generally mentioned the importance of equal access to education as a way to address violence against women and girls, and called on states to implement measures to ensure girls' right to education.²² However, it is unclear as to whether states or the CSW have followed up on such commitments since there is no existing framework to hold states accountable.

UNESCO has also identified violence against women as a priority, as they are the lead UN agency to compile statistics related to sexual and gender-based violence, as well as gender and education. UNESCO is also the lead UN-agency for furthering education initiatives at the international level, as the Dakar Framework for Action, established at the World Education Forum in 2000, mandated UNESCO to coordinate the "Education for All" (EFA) initiative, which is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth, and adults. UNESCO works with governments, development agencies, civil society, and the private sector to reach the EFA goals. Additionally, UNESCO has conducted roundtables on school-related gender-based violence within the context of its EFA initiatives, published gender-sensitive reference materials to help teachers address such violence, and offers technical trainings on addressing and preventing violence at the request of member states.²³

B. State Efforts

Plan Canada, a Canadian NGO working primarily to end gender inequality and promote girls rights around the world, produced a report recommending a framework for government action to prevent and reduce school-related gender-based violence.²⁴ The

²⁰ "A Girl's Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School," Plan Canada (2012), 52.

²¹ "UNGEI in Action: 2000-2007," UN Girls Education Initiative (2007).

²² Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions from the 55th Session (2011), paras. 17, 21, 22.

²³ UNESCO has published two gender-sensitive reference materials to help teachers address school-related gender-based violence which include, "Stopping Violence in Schools: A Guide for Teachers," and "Promoting Gender Equality Through Textbooks."

²⁴ "A Girl's Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School," Plan Canada (2012), 39.

framework identifies eight key principles to inform the development and implementation of each state's action plan, which include: 1) comprehensive and integrated action; 2) effective legislation and regulation; 3) safe and effective reporting and response; 4) evidence-based policy; 5) well-trained, well-supported personnel; 6) partnership; 7) inclusiveness; and 8) participation.²⁵

Though several states have implemented policies or programs addressing school-related gender-based violence through legislation or safe school initiatives, the majority of states have not established an integrated or multi-sectoral plan to comprehensively address such violence. In addition to enacting laws and training programs to improve teachers' response to such violence, states should particularly focus efforts on collecting and maintaining credible data, as well as implementing accessible reporting mechanisms that keep track of gender-based violence in schools. The following country examples illustrate the need for integrating policies at all levels and sectors.

1. Punitive Measures

Several states have enacted punitive measures as a means to prevent and combat school-related gender-based violence. Enforcement of penal laws can provide effective prevention and response systems.²⁶

a. Criminal and penal laws

For example, Australia has primarily taken a penal approach in pursuing justice against those who perpetrate violence against children, as well as providing services to child survivors.²⁷ Additionally, the United Kingdom, as part of a multi-sectoral National Action Plan, has also committed to strengthening prosecution and investigation of sexual offenses against girls in school.²⁸ In the UK National Action Plan, to reduce sexual and sexist bullying in schools, the UK government committed itself to increasing the authority of head teachers to discipline students and maintain this discipline beyond school gates.²⁹ The Plan also committed the UK Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills to include bullying as one of four key areas of inspection in schools.³⁰ Alternatively, civil society organizations and the Office of the UN Human Rights Council have recommended that states, such as Jamaica, work on effective investigation and prosecution of all cases of gender-based violence.³¹

²⁵ *Id.*, 39.

²⁶ Management Systems International, "Are Schools Safe Havens for Children? Examining School-related Gender-based Violence," U.S. Agency for International Development (2008), 13-14.

²⁷ *Id.*, 51.

²⁸ *Id.*, 51 (citing United Kingdom, "Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan," (2011)).

²⁹ United Kingdom, "Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan," (2011), 9.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ A Girl's Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School," Plan Canada (2012), 54 FN 254 (citing UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Jamaica," A/HRC/16/14 (2011), paras. 99.26-99.29).

b. Strengthen Institutional Capacity to Combat Impunity of Perpetrators of Violence

States have also worked to strengthen institutional capacity, particularly in the police and law enforcement fields, to ensure children's rights. For example, Swaziland has not only established a government unit whose responsibilities include investigating acts of violence against children, but also child-friendly courts that protect children's rights in accordance with international conventions.³² The Jamaican government has similarly worked to restructure its police and judicial system to provide support services to victims and combat impunity for perpetrators to supplement legislation to address violence against children.³³ Further, the United Kingdom has established a multi-sector initiative, "Operation Encompass," which promotes partnerships between the police and schools, including support mechanisms for children who are victims of abuse.³⁴

In addition to strengthening police and judicial systems, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also recommends that states establish a commissioner devoted specifically to child rights. For example, although Australia has established strong legislative and penal responses to perpetrators of violence against children, the CRC Committee has expressed concern that Australia lacks a commissioner dedicated to child rights.³⁵

2. Prevention Mechanisms

Penal approaches alone, however, are not enough; primary prevention is critical.

a. Domestic legislation and national policies

States have primarily introduced legislation and national policies that specifically address children's protection against violence as a means to mitigate and prevent violence against girls in schools. For example, Australia has been successful in unifying its largely autonomous states and territories around two national documents that aim to protect and reduce violence against women and children by dedicating resources towards "primary prevention" of such violence.³⁶ Each of Australia's states and territories has ratified legislation in accordance with international commitments.³⁷ Additionally, some U.S. states have passed anti-bullying statutes, such as New Jersey. New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Statute³⁸ provides a model for similar domestic legislation aiming to combat violence in schools since the statute requires that all acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying be reported to the school principal, that the principal inform the parents or guardians of all students involved, and that the principal must initiate an investigation of

³² Id., 49-50.

³³ Id., 54.

³⁴ Id.

³⁵ Id., 51.

³⁶ Id.

³⁷ Id.

³⁸ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, New Jersey, Pub. L. 2010, Ch. 122 (January 5, 2011).

the incident within one school day of the report.³⁹ Schools are then required to submit reports on harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the public and the New Jersey Department of Education; the department uses this data to assign a grade to schools and to districts and the grade must be posted on the school district website.⁴⁰

Many other countries, however, have failed to actually implement such policies and laws, and thus present barriers to the full realization of domestic mechanisms aimed at combating school-related gender-based violence. For example, in 2011, Swaziland's lower house of Parliament passed the "Children's Protection and Welfare Bill" and the "Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill," which collectively extend the definition of rape to include young men and boys, establish a public register of sexual offenders, and prevent previous offenders from becoming teachers.⁴¹ However, Swaziland has yet to implement the "Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill," even though it has been over five years since the law was drafted.⁴² Additionally, Swaziland in 2011 introduced an Education Sector Policy, which incorporates formal guidance and counseling curricula that equip teachers and school administrators with tools to address students' age-specific vulnerabilities to prevent gender-based violence and HIV prevention.⁴³

The Philippines has historically enacted comprehensive legislation to protect women and children from violence. Since 1991, laws have prohibited all forms of violence and discrimination against children.⁴⁴ Since 1995, the government has explicitly banned sexual harassment and corporal punishment in schools.⁴⁵ However, the Philippines faces current challenges in fully implementing such laws primarily due to gaps in the justice system and government agencies failure to exercise due diligence in fulfilling their legal and international human rights obligations.⁴⁶

Jamaica has passed several laws to address violence in early childhood in accordance with its international commitments. For example, in 2004, the Jamaican legislature passed the "Child Care and Protection Act," which aims to strengthen the care and protection of children by introducing new standards for their treatment and establishing a reporting mechanism for instances of child abuse. In 2005, the Jamaican government also established the "Office of the Children Advocate" to promote the safety and best interests of the child, and to enforce children's rights by investigating complaints and acting in legal matters on their behalf. Further, in 2008, the Jamaican legislature passed additional laws to enhance mandatory reporting of child abuse and develop a Children's Registry.⁴⁷ However, despite Jamaica's strong political commitment to

³⁹ "Anti-Bullying," New Jersey Education Association, <http://www.njea.org/issues-and-political-action/anti-bullying> (accessed February 26, 2013).

⁴⁰ Id.

⁴¹ Id., 50.

⁴² Id.

⁴³ Id.

⁴⁴ Id., 52.

⁴⁵ Id.

⁴⁶ Id.

⁴⁷ Id., 54 (citing the "National Report of Jamaica on Millennium Development Goals for the UN Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review," (2009), 15).

addressing violence against children, civil society organizations and the Office of the UN Human Rights Council have expressed concern for the lack of legal implementation, such as the 2009 Sexual Offences Act.⁴⁸

b. Programs aimed at reducing violence against children and girls in schools

Providing counseling and support systems for students can make schools safer for children. For example, in Tanzania, the Tanzania-Netherlands Project to Support AIDS established a guardian program in which female teachers, selected by her colleagues, acted as guardians to female students.⁴⁹ It was reported that subsequent to being confronted with sexual violence or harassment, the presence of a guardian significantly increased the chances of female students asking for support from guardians or other female teachers.⁵⁰

Australia, in addition to implementing punitive measures for punishing perpetrators of violence after the fact, has also worked to implement gender-based violence prevention programs in schools across the country.⁵¹ In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments instituted a national framework for protecting children in Australia, which includes programs such as the “Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools,” school-based counseling services, and the development of school curricula to train teachers on positive teaching methods.⁵²

The Philippines, through its Department of Education, has taken many positive steps to develop implementation guidelines, teacher training, and national protection systems. The CRC Committee in 2007 reported that teachers were responsible of 50% of the cases of child abuse and, more specifically, reported that girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse by janitors, bus drivers, and administrators.⁵³ In response to this report, the Philippines, in a written reply to the CRC Committee in 2009, stated that they adopted a pilot program of the UNICEF Child Friendly School model with the focus to promote non discrimination, gender equality, and non-violence; support children to help develop a child-centered curriculum; provide safe and healthy school environments; and involve families and communities in projects that are beneficial to school children.⁵⁴ In a recent evaluation of this pilot program, Plan Philippines reports that the model is

⁴⁸ Id., 54 (citing UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Jamaica,” A/HRC/16/14 (2011), paras. 99.26-99.29).

⁴⁹ Management Systems International, “Are Schools Safe Havens for Children? Examining School-related Gender-based Violence,” U.S. Agency for International Development (2008), 17.

⁵⁰ Id.

⁵¹ Id., 51.

⁵² Id., 51 (citing Council of Australian Governments, “Protecting Children is Everyone’s Business: A National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009-2020,” (2009)).

⁵³ “Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention: Third and Fourth Periodic Reports of States Due in 2007,” CRC/C/PHL/3-4 (2009).

⁵⁴ Id., 49-50 (citing “Written Replies by the Government of the Philippines to the List of Issues (CRCC/PHL/Q/3-4) Prepared by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Connection with the Consideration of the Third and Fourth Periodic Reports of the Philippines (CRC/C/PHL/3-4),” CRC/C/PHL/Q/C-4/Add.1 (2009)).

working, as after directly interviewing school children, 92% of children report feeling that their school is “child friendly.”⁵⁵

c. Reporting mechanisms

The establishment of unbiased and accessible domestic reporting mechanisms is critical to maintaining credible statistics and data on instances of violence against girls in schools. Such reporting mechanisms can function within the larger departments of education, or can be located within schools. For example, some states such as Swaziland have developed confidential school reporting mechanisms as part of schools’ safe-school initiatives.⁵⁶ In Australia, local departments of education have taken steps to strengthen reporting mechanisms.⁵⁷

d. Community-based initiatives

Action at local levels will effectively supplement multi-sectoral and comprehensive strategies for combating and ending school-related gender-based violence. Plan Canada reports that “The Filipino experience affirms the end to complement a policy environment with long-term commitment to engaging whole communities in adopting new belief systems that encourage learning in violence-free spaces.”⁵⁸ Several civil society organizations have urged states such as Australia to strengthen its prevention strategies by engaging men to work towards reducing gender-based violence, and working with indigenous communities to implement solutions at the local and grassroot levels.⁵⁹ Additionally, Plan Canada reports that Swaziland’s “Together for Girls” initiative, which aims to eliminate violence against children at school, at home, and within the community is now working to support national surveys on causes and scale of violence in Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.⁶⁰

e. Other Partnerships

Government development agencies, in conjunction with private international partners, have worked together to achieve gender equality in education. From 2003-2008, DevTech, in conjunction with USAID, established the Safe Schools Program to create gender-safe environments for girls and boys, promote gender equality, and reduce school-related gender-based violence in schools in Malawi and Ghana.⁶¹ The Safe Schools Program used evidence-based, collaborative approaches to work with civil society and community-based organizations to develop training manuals and other

⁵⁵ “Toward a Child-Friendly Education Environment: A Baseline Study on Violence against Children in Public Schools,” Plan Philippines (2009).

⁵⁶ “A Girl’s Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School,” Plan Canada (2012), 49-50.

⁵⁷ *Id.*, 51.

⁵⁸ *Id.*, 52.

⁵⁹ *Id.*, 51.

⁶⁰ *Id.*, 49-50.

⁶¹ DevTech Systems, Inc., “Safe Schools Program,” U.S. Agency for International Development, <http://www.devtechsys.com/projects/details/safe-schools-program/> (accessed February 26, 2013).

country-specific materials to address school violence.⁶² Additionally, USAID, in conjunction with Management Systems International, have reported promising strategies used to engage communities in addressing such violence, including using community members, especially females, as classroom assistants and establishing community education committees.⁶³

C. Civil Society

Non-governmental organizations have also played a role in combating and preventing school-related gender-based violence by publishing reports and manuals on responding to and preventing violence against girls in schools. For example, the Canadian NGO, “Plan Canada,” published a comprehensive report in 2012 which provides an overview of school-related gender-based violence, instances of such violence, regional examples of initiatives to address school-related gender-based violence, and recommendations to address and prevent such violence at local, national, and international levels.⁶⁴

Other non-governmental organizations have taken community-based approaches to addressing violence against girls in schools. The Razia’s Ray of Hope Foundation, for example, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and children in Afghanistan through community-based education.⁶⁵ In March 2008, the Razia’s Ray of Hope Foundation established the Zabuli Education Center in Afghanistan, which provides free education to more than 300 Afghan girls who were previously denied educational opportunities.⁶⁶

IV. Recommendations for Action

Human Rights Advocates:

1. Welcomes the Secretary General’s Study on Violence Against Children in 2006⁶⁷ and its follow-up report in 2011,⁶⁸ and recommends that the next follow-up report for 2016 should be written from a gendered perspective to focus more on school-related gender-based violence to increase education efforts on the topic. The 2016 report should include:

⁶² Id.

⁶³ Management Systems International, “Are Schools Safe Havens for Children? Examining School-related Gender-based Violence,” U.S. Agency for International Development (2008), 17.

⁶⁴ “A Girl’s Right to Learn Without Fear: Working to End Gender-Based Violence at School,” Plan Canada (2012).

⁶⁵ “About the Foundation,” Razia’s Ray of Hope Foundation, <http://www.raziasrayofhope.org/about-the-foundation.html> (accessed February 26, 2013).

⁶⁶ Id.

⁶⁷ “World Report on Violence Against Children,” United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on Violence against Children (2006).

⁶⁸ “Five Years On: A global update on violence against children,” NGO Advisory Council for Follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children (2011).

- a. Suggestions for internationally recognized definitions of key terms such as “violence,” “gender-based violence,” and “school-related gender-based violence”;
 - b. A framework for holding the international community and states accountable by:
 - i. Developing indicators to compile uniform information and monitor instances of school-related gender based violence
 - ii. Establishing a reporting mechanism that requires states to periodically report on instances of school-related gender-based violence, measures states have implemented to combat and/or mitigate school-related gender-based violence, and any difficulties or successes in implementing such measures
2. Requests that the CSW make the following suggestions to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women:⁶⁹
- a. Dedicate parts of her country visits to school-related gender-based violence and include statistics and information in follow-up reports;
 - b. Submit an annual thematic report dedicated to school-related gender-based violence; and
 - c. Contribute to the Special Representative on Violence Against Children’s 2016 follow-up report.
3. Urges states to adopt the entire UNICEF “Child Friendly School Model” and report to the Secretary General on progress they have made on it.

⁶⁹ As part of her mandate, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has the authority to seek and receive information on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and to respond effectively to such information (A/HRC/RES/16/7 para. 3).