RESEARCH INTO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS IN KOSOVO
REPORT

Research into Violence against Children in Schools in Kosovo

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

**CoE** Council of Europe  
**CFK** Constitutional Framework of Kosovo  
**CRC** Convention on the Rights of the Child  
**CSW** Centre for Social Work  
**DSW** Department for Social Welfare  
**DVIS** Domestic Violence & Investigation Section  
**EU** European Union  
**FYRoM** Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
**GI** Governmental Institution  
**ILO** International Labor Organization  
**IO** International Organizations  
**IOM** International Office of Migration  
**KFOR** Kosovo Force (International Peacekeeping)  
**MEST** Ministry of Education, Science & Technology  
**MLSW** Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare  
**NGO** Non-governmental Organisation  
**OGG** Office of Good Governance (within OPM)  
**OHCHR** Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
**OI** Ombudsperson Institute in Kosovo  
**OPM** Office of the Prime Minister  
**OSCE** Organization for Security & Cooperation in Europe  
**PISG** Provisional Institutions of Self-Government  
**SRSG** Special Representative of the Secretary General (of the UN)  
**TPIU** Trafficking & Prostitution Investigation Unit  
**UNDP** United Nations Development Program  
**UNICEF** United Nations Children’s Fund  
**UNMIK** United Nations Mission in Kosovo  
**VAAU** Victims Advocacy & Assistance Unit  
**WHO** World Health Organisation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Introduction & Background

This report presents the research project ‘Violence against Children in Schools in Kosovo’ (2005). It is part of the UN Global Survey on Violence against children. The purpose of the research was to investigate the nature and scope of violence against children in schools in Kosovo and to gain a better understanding of the problem for effective prevention and response.

Kosovo’s recent history has been turbulent with large flows of population, both regionally and from rural to urban areas. These flows have affected education negatively, with many urban schools now overcrowded and rural schools closing. There is a shortage of qualified teachers. While primary schooling is almost universal, there are relatively high drop-out rates at secondary levels, particularly for girls and in minority communities.

The socio-economic situation in Kosovo is also difficult and could be one of the underlying contributing factors to violence issues. There is evidence that violence against children is increasing in particular, issues of prostitution and trafficking have been the subjects of research. Many social and environmental factors, which are thought to contribute to the development of violent behaviours, are present in Kosovo, plus there is a high level of political uncertainty.

This study identified corporal punishment and peer violence as key behaviours to investigate, although other violent behaviours are explored as well. The study included a desk survey, research questionnaires with children and teachers, and interviews and focus group discussions with children, teachers and parents.

Methodology

Data was drawn from a wide cross-section of schools and the study promoted the direct involvement of children and young people, as well as teachers, parents and other stakeholders in the research process. All stages of the study were conducted in an ethical manner.

A Rapid Assessment and Response approach was used for the study. This is a pragmatic, speedy method of gathering data, specifically with policy and interventions in mind. The methods for gathering primary information included a desk survey, questionnaires (Quantitative Survey), in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (Qualitative Survey) and discussions with specialists in Kosovo.

The multidisciplinary research team contacted 680 children and 120 teachers for the questionnaire survey, while 40 in-depth interviews and 20 focus group discussions were conducted. Respondents were divided into four groups: children aged 6 – 10, children aged 11 – 18, teachers and parents. Further classifications were made to account for gender, ethnicity and rural/urban location.

Specifically the research looked at how respondents defined violent behaviour, what their experiences of violent behaviour had been, how widespread such behaviour is, what the causes of violent behaviour might be, who the victims and perpetrators are and where victims can go for help.

The data was transcribed, or coded, and analysed by the Research Company in preparation for reporting by the Research Consultant. The preliminary report was presented to UNICEF and the Academic Advisor for input before the final report was prepared.

Desk Survey

The desk survey revealed the complexities of the political situation in Kosovo, looking at UNMIK, the PISG and internal and local organisations, all stakeholders with interests in the research topic.

There are provisions to deal with violence against children in all relevant legal and policy frameworks. However, there is a lack of harmonization with international children’s rights standards and weakness in the implementation of laws and policies. Generally, the government in Kosovo recognizes child abuse, exploitation and accepts that violence against children is an area for concern. However, the complexity of governmental structures makes it difficult to determine accountability. Many participants from institutions and the civil society sector shared the view that a review of child protection legislation is necessary.

It was difficult to obtain concrete information on how relevant institutions are addressing
the issue of violence in schools. Government representatives who responded to the research project’s request for information tended to offer non-specific information. This is possibly because there is generally a dearth of current statistics or coordinated data collection on the phenomenon of violence against children. According to the Police and Municipal CSWs, there is underreporting of violence against children.

Examination of previous research showed that other studies had touched on areas related to the current study, such as Child Labour or Trafficking, but none which had looked directly at Violence against Children in Schools.

The degree of support for victims of violence appears to be rather limited. There are two telephone help-lines operating full time and a small number of shelters offering temporary refuge. There appears to be little alternative for children but to return to their home environment once a crisis has passed.

Findings

Many younger children were unable to define violence. Older children had a clearer idea of what it could be and included physical and emotional violence in their definitions. Teachers were largely unable to define violence when asked individually, although focus group discussions produced a generalised definition.

The most significant finding is that corporal punishment is still an accepted practice in both homes and schools. Many children had experienced or witnessed violence in or around school. Violence seems to be very much normalized by society. Many respondents sought to rationalise the presence of violence. Children expressed the belief that they ‘deserve’ punishment (often physical) for misbehaviour or academic failure. Teachers and parents characterized violence as necessary so that children would learn or behave appropriately. There seems to be a widespread belief that, “there is no other way”.

Children generally reported that people close to them were the perpetrators of violence, with teachers or peers as the most common perpetrators within the school environment and parents, siblings and peers the perpetrators elsewhere. Children who lived some distance from school were fearful of travelling because of the threat of peer violence and teachers reported this as a key problem for children. There was a widespread perception by children that boys were more at risk of physical violence than were girls, while girls were thought to be more often subjected to verbal or emotional abuse. Teachers believed that violence committed by teachers towards children was quite rare and limited to verbal abuse, while parents were aware of cases of child abuse by teachers in schools.

Social or economic deprivation was cited as an underlying cause of violence. Poor families were seen as probably uneducated and therefore violent. Some parents suggested that some of the abuse was due to teachers not being trained in the use of the ‘new teaching methodologies’. The media was cited as contributing to the rise in violence in society in general.

There are few concrete measures to address violence against children in schools. There is also a tendency to ignore the problem rather than seek help, possibly through fear of exacerbating the situation or because victims do not trust the designated authorities. Some teachers acknowledged that the children had no one to turn to for help or support.

The issue of prevention was characterised by a lack of understanding and maybe a lack of willingness to acknowledge and deal with the problem. Children saw awareness-raising, harsh punishment and teacher training as possible routes to improvement. Teachers had few ideas about solutions, while parents wanted to rely on the teachers to do a professional job, which would include protecting children. This puts a weight of responsibility on the teachers, a task for which they are not yet adequately trained

Recommendations

For national political actors:
- Ensure political, legal and institutional practices meet the minimum standards for human rights.
- Establish good lines of communication with European countries, in which interventions to address the problem of school violence are being developed and evaluated.

For policy makers and policy implementers in the areas of education, social work and health:
- Create a central body of multi-disciplinary specialists to deal with the issue of violence against children.
- Establish effective strategies to prevent violence against children.
- Educate parents, children, teachers and other relevant professionals on minimum standards for human rights (e.g., the UN Convention on the Rights of the
Child), thereby equipping individuals and organizations with the skills to better recognise and prevent violence against children.

- Offer targeted training to professionals who may be involved in cases of violence against children. This group would include police officers, social workers, teachers and support staff in shelters and safe-houses.
- Create a central register of violence in schools to monitor incidence rates and to evaluate the impact of good practice.
- Undertake systematic evaluations of current procedures that address the consequences of violence against children with an emphasis upon the well-being of the victim.
- Monitor and evaluate interventions that protect children and promote non-violence.
- Determine, systematically and regularly, the extent of violence against children.
- Involve the media in raising awareness and changing public perceptions about the level and extent of violence against children.

For educational authorities and actors at national, regional & municipal levels:

- Train teachers in a range of methods for counteracting school violence.
- Train teachers to deal with issues of personal, social and health education in the classroom.
- Train municipal child rights coordinators and municipal gender advisors in issues related to violence against children.
- Develop school-based training initiatives in a range of peer support methods.
- Develop whole-school policies to counteract violence and actively promote non-violence.
- Specific actions aiming at the involvement of parents in the prevention and training activities and also activities involving the community as a whole.

For social welfare authorities:

- Provide appropriate support for victims.
- Develop different types of minimum standards required in the shelters/support centres for victims.
- Provision of supervision for specialists working with the victims or their relatives.

Also to widen the mentioned concept of

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1 See Annex 1 for suggestions
INTRODUCTION
This report presents the research project, “Violence against Children in Schools in Kosovo” (2005). The four-month project was initiated by the UNICEF office in Kosovo and implemented by CARE International in Kosovo in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). It also forms part of the United Nations’ Global Survey on Violence against Children, led by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro.

The aim of the Global Survey is to provide an in-depth global picture of the problem of violence against children and to make clear recommendations for the improvement of legislation, policy and programmes relating to the prevention of and responses to the issue. The aim of the research in Kosovo was to investigate the nature and scope of violence against children in schools in Kosovo and to gain a better understanding of the problem for effective prevention, intervention and response. Both projects are fully guided by international human rights treaties, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the jurisprudence of its Committee and other human rights treaty bodies.

While the Global Survey explores violence against children in many and varied contexts, the Kosovo study, for reasons of time and limited resources, focuses on violence in and around mainstream schools. It is the first comprehensive research on the subject and as such, it is predicted that the results and findings, as well as the study itself, will serve as a means of informing the education authorities at central and municipal level of the current situation. The research process itself, in combination with the current report, is also an awareness-raising tool, enabling children, parents, teachers and educational policy-makers to reflect on and advocate for policies and practices which will lead to violence-free education. Further, the research highlights gaps in existing knowledge and seeks to move forward new or neglected issues which may benefit from further research.

The project was monitored by a Consultative Task-force (CTF) based within MEST. Members of the CTF were drawn from ministries, and international and non-governmental organizations engaged in the sector of Education and Child welfare. Further consultation was organized as part of the Global Survey. Kosovo delegates attended the regional consultation meeting in Slovenia in July 2005 and were able to compare concepts, issues and the research process with colleagues from Europe and Central Asia. It is interesting and important to note that children were invited to participate in this regional meeting.

For more information see: www.violencestudy.org


The consultation took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 5-7 July 2005. The office of UNICEF in Pristina organized Kosovo’s participation. Three representatives attended: the Permanent Secretary of MEST (representing both the governmental structures and the partner institution of the research project in Kosovo), a representative from the local NGO “Qesheu-Smile”, and an accompanying child delegate (selected and prepared by Save the Children, one of the organizers of the regional consultation).
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY IN KOSOVO
It can be argued that schools represent a microcosm of the society in which they find themselves. This section of the report presents a general overview of the current situation in Kosovo, setting the scene for the study and providing context for the reader unfamiliar with the province. To this end, Box 1 provides some statistical data.

Kosovo’s recent history has been turbulent, with massive movements of population both during and after the hostilities in 1999. The conflict displaced upwards of 800,000 Kosovo Albanians (mainly to FYRoM and Albania). A further 500,000 people were internally displaced within Kosovo. With the end of hostilities in June 1999, most Kosovo Albanians returned but approximately 242,000 non-Albanians left. Many of these are now registered in Serbia as displaced persons, while others are in Montenegro. By early 2004, a little more than three percent of the displaced minority populations had returned to Kosovo. Those who have returned, or who remained after the conflict, continue to live in enclaves with limited freedom of movement and access to services. All this movement and the accompanying conflict and hardship on all sides necessarily disrupted schooling for many children in all communities. The conflict also afforded many children a first hand view or experience of violence.

There has been, and still is, a flow of population to urban areas, which has increased the demand on already stretched resources. With housing destroyed and agriculture mainly at subsistence levels, many Albanians have moved to larger towns in search of work, especially with international organizations. This has had considerable impact on schools. Some urban schools operate with up to four shifts a day, leading to a reduction of contact hours for each child. Meanwhile some rural schools are closing as pupil numbers fall. This reduces access to education for those who remain. Not only are pupils moving, there is a shortage of qualified teachers, especially in rural areas or minority communities.

The socio-economic situation and the issue of poverty is one of the most influential factors connected to the underlying causes of violence. Findings from the Situational analysis of Education in Kosovo report by UNICEF (2004) indicate that Kosovo is facing severe economic problems that are likely to become worse in the short-term. The economic situation affects women, youth and children in particular. There are very high rates of unemployment among young people (71.6 per cent for those aged 16-24) and women (63 per cent), while the rate of long-term unemployment is even higher (83.1 per cent). According to the Kosovo - Country brief 2004 issued by Save the Children, many families continue to live in damaged or partially reconstructed homes. Similarly, many schools remain in a bad state of repair and lack basic equipment such as books, heating and sufficient furniture.

While primary schooling (albeit often in shifts) is almost universal in Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian communities, just 75 per cent of Kosovo Albanians are enrolled in secondary school, compared with 86 per cent of Kosovo Serbs. Among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population, a quarter of children do not go to primary school and only 30 per cent are enrolled in secondary school. Girls, more than boys, tend not to be enrolled. Reasons given for dropping out of school are mainly financial, in terms of both the cost of being in school and the loss of potential income when older children cannot be economically active.

Direct forms of violence against children are becoming more evident in Kosovo communities. Prostitution is increasing, as is trafficking. Save the Children found that more than 200 children have been abandoned in Kosovo hospitals since 1999, rejected possibly because their mothers may be young, unmarried or rejected by their communities and homeless.

At this point, it is interesting to relate the socio-economic context of Kosovo to the broader field of research on violence. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified a number of

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5 Main source: Original sources: RINVEST Labour Market Survey 2002 and the key indicators of the Labour Market 2001-2002, ILO (2002); Other relevant sources include the Statistical Office of Kosovo (2004), Demographic and Health Survey in Kosovo

## Kosovo in Numbers

The following information is taken from the UNDP Human Development Report, 2004. There has been no comprehensive census in Kosovo since 1981.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>10,887 km² (comparable with Jamaica, Lebanon or Qatar)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>2 million (approximately)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic mix</td>
<td>87% K-Albanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% K-Serb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.8% Roma, Ashkali &amp; Egyptian (RAE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2% Bosniak, Turkish, Gorani &amp; others (reported as ‘others’ by UNDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density</td>
<td>200 / km² (one of the highest in Europe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population</td>
<td>30 – 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Population</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Population</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Population</td>
<td>50% (under the age of 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth figures</td>
<td>41,827 babies born in 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size*</td>
<td>Average 6.8 members, 2.3 children, in K-Albanian families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average 4.3 members, 1 child, in K-Serbian families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average 7.2 members, 2.5 children, in K-RAE families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average 7.0 members, 2.3 children, in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average 5.6 members, 1.8 children, in urban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>57% in K-Albanian population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47% in K-Serb population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68% in K-RAE population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural – 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban – 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy rates</td>
<td>5.9% in K-Albanian population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5% in K-Serb population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.5% in K-RAE population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural – 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban – 5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*21% of households are made up of two or more families.*

Factors which are thought to contribute to the development of violent behaviour.

Individual factors such as:
- knowledge, attitudes, thoughts about violence, and skill deficits, such as poorly developed communication skills
- drug and alcohol use

Factors which stem from the family such as:
- having witnessed or been victimized by interpersonal violence
- access to firearms and other weapons
- lack of parental affection and support
- exposure to violence in the home
- physical punishment and child abuse
- having parents or siblings involved in
I.ii Defining the Research Area

As mentioned earlier, the Kosovo study reported here focused on violence in day schools or mainstream schools. Although children may be victims of violence in their homes or in their communities, many experience violence in the school context. This negatively affects their self-esteem and compromises their academic achievement and their development. A range of behaviours can be defined as acts of violence (see Box 2). Of particular interest when preparing this study were issues of Corporal Punishment and Bullying.

Corporal Punishment

According to observations by NGOs in Kosovo, corporal punishment still takes place in schools. Although it is thought to be decreasing compared to previous years, many parents, teachers and carers, specialists working in the sphere of children's welfare and even children themselves still believe it is “for the children's own good” or sometimes “necessary.” Thus, violence is normalized and not talked about. Being silent and excusing the acts of violence is also supported by the patriarchal family and society model, still very much present in the Balkans. Children and women occupy low positions in the rigid hierarchy of power in a patriarchal system. Dependency may teach a way of survival (by being silent) which may perpetuate the failure to recognize violence (Tomov, 1996).

Bullying

Bullying, which comprises both physical and psychological violence, also exists in schools in Kosovo, as it does in the school environment in most cultures. The Global Survey found that the most prevalent type of school violence is peer bullying. It is particularly important that this study examined incidences of bullying, since there is no term or concept in most Balkan cultures specifically to describe bullying. Problems without names have little chance of being discussed.

At present, there are few institutions or centres where individuals may seek support or report incidences of violence. Furthermore, while there are almost no specialists who can offer professional support, those closest to the children, their parents, do not always possess

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Environmental factors such as:
- socio-economic inequity, urbanization, and overcrowding
- rapid economic development with high levels of unemployment among young people
- media influences
- social norms supporting violent behaviour
- availability of weapons
- post-conflict situation

It is evident from the recent history and current social upheaval in Kosovo that many of the above factors are present. Further, it is important to bear in mind that ethnic tension and conflict have been features of the region for many years. It is understandable that years of ethnic and political tensions may well have affected society, family models and relations and thus the understanding of and attitudes to violence, frustration and aggression. In addition to the foregoing, there are political factors which affect the social and economic situation, not least of which is the unresolved issue of the ‘status’ of Kosovo. Institutions are weak, heavily politicised along party lines and tend to operate in a top-down fashion. The transfer of power from international to local institutions is an ongoing process facing many difficulties. This is discussed in more detail in section IV later in this report. At the same time, donor assistance is reducing and local and international investment in local enterprises is scarce. As the WHO suggests in the report quoted above, “the causes of violence are complicated and varied.” This overview of the situation in Kosovo has illustrated some of the complexities involved.

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7 Before 1989 Kosovo enjoyed a large measure of self-government and autonomy, which enabled the development of local institutions and a strong Kosovo Albanian identity. In 1989 these trends were halted with the re-imposition of direct rule from Belgrade. Kosovo Albanians were excluded from the administration and the police force. Schools were either closed or the use of the Serbian curriculum was forced. Access to medical services was limited. In response, the Kosovo Albanian community developed the so-called “parallel system”, funded through an informal taxation. This system provided basic health and education services to the Albanian community. It also effectively disenfranchised the majority population who took no further part in the official structures of government. This institutional vacuum remains a problem today. Since 1999 the positions have been reversed to an extent. Today health, education and social welfare responsibilities for Kosovo Serbians mostly remain under the administrative and financial control of Belgrade, although teachers and healthcare professionals also receive a salary from the Kosovo budget. (Situational Analysis of Children and Women in Kosovo, UNICEF Kosovo, February 2004)

8 For example, the Center for Protection of Women and Children; Kosovo Center for Torture Victims.

9 There is a wide literature on the subject of bullying. The bibliography contains a number of useful references.
the necessary skills or understanding to support their children if they are in need. It was therefore important that this study also develop recommendations for future actions which will address the prevention of and support for victims of violence in schools. Any initiatives must take into account what the community and individuals believe violence to be and to move forward from that position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier.” (Article 1, Convention on the Rights of the Child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who has reached the age of eighteen years (Kosovo Provisional Criminal Code)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…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, mal-development or deprivation” (WHO, 2002, World Report on Violence and Health).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence against children</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.” (WHO, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who has been a subject of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Abuse</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust and power”. (WHO, Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention in 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence in schools and education settings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This includes violent and humiliating discipline, physical, emotional, and sexual violence and harassment, and bullying in special schools and mainstream schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; tell lies or spread false rumours about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; and other hurtful things like that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we talk about bullying, these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend him or herself. We also call it bullying, when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way.

But we don’t call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight. (Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, 1996)
I.iii Objectives of the Study & Research Design

After consultation with the regional team of the Global Survey, and with the local Consultative Task Force, it was agreed that the research study would provide the following:

- A review of the legislative and policy frameworks applicable to violence in different settings: on the streets and within families, institutions, and specifically in school.
- An analysis of the characteristics and forms of violence that might be happening in school, including violence against children, violence among children, bullying, and sexual violence.
- An analysis of the level of violence in schools in Kosovo, disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, rural/urban location, and type of school.
- A survey of teachers’, parents’ and children’s views on and experiences of violence in school.
- A selection of strategies and recommendations aimed at effectively preventing and combating violence against children in school, outlining steps and action to be taken for effective prevention, intervention, and recovery.

These objectives led to the following Research Design:

- Developing an overall methodological framework\(^\text{10}\) and research instruments. These included a Rapid Assessment Survey, which would provide a large quantity of data and semi-structured interview schedules and focus group discussion schedules, which would provide deeper, qualitative data.
- Training of interviewers and piloting of research instruments.
- Gathering data, ranging from a detailed desk-survey of current legislation and policies, through to Kosovo-wide completion of questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Research subjects included children, parents, teachers.
- Meeting with selected representatives of Governmental Institutions, International and Non-governmental organizations (IOs and NGOs) and Media representatives to explore issues raised by the Global Survey’s Questionnaire to Governments on the topic of violence against children.
- Analysing the data from all the above and placing it within a framework of existing research not only in Kosovo and the region, but also within an international context.
- Proposing ways of addressing the problem of violence in schools, based on the findings of the research study.

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10 Section II has an overview of the Methodology. For more information see the Methodology for conducting a rapid assessment concerning the situation of violence against children in schools in Kosovo. The document is available at the UNICEF Office in Kosovo.
II.i Aims and Objectives

As previously stated, the purpose of the research was to investigate the nature and scope of violence against children in schools in Kosovo and to gain a better understanding of the problem for effective prevention and response. Data was drawn from a wide cross-section of schools and the study promoted the direct involvement of children and young people, as well as teachers, parents and other stakeholders in the research process. All stages of the study were conducted in an ethical manner. The study included:

1. A general review of the legislative and policy framework applicable to violence in different settings: on the streets and within families, institutions, and specifically in school.

2. An analysis of the characteristics and multiple forms of violence that might be happening in school, including violence against children, violence among children, bullying and sexual violence.

3. An analysis of figures on the magnitude of violence in schools in Kosovo, with disaggregated information by age, sex, ethnicity, rural/urban location and type of school.

4. The presentation of teachers’, parents’ and children’s own views and experiences on violence in school.

5. A description of clear strategies and recommendations aimed at effectively preventing and combating violence against children in school, outlining steps and appropriate action to be taken for effective prevention, intervention, and recovery.

II.ii The Research Team

A multidisciplinary team of specialists (Research Team) was formed and one of the joint responsibilities of the team was to develop a Methodology for conducting a Rapid Assessment & Response (RAR) research. The Research Team consisted of the following specialists:

- Technical consultant/coordinator, who had the overall responsibility of conducting the study, in close collaboration with UNICEF, MEST and the Consultative Task Force (CTF). The technical consultant was also responsible for undertaking the desk review; collaboratively designing the research tools, support and supervising the progress of the research, presenting the main findings to stakeholders, and producing the final report
- Prism Research Company, which conducted the field research and administered the surveys, dealing with the technical part of the research
- Research Assistant, who supported the Technical Coordinator with translation, field arrangements, logistics and obtaining of data
- Academic Advisor, who was involved in three phases of the project: design of the research methodology and analysis of the data, as well as commenting the final report

II.iii Methods of gathering data

The Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR) Approach

The RAR approach to research has certain features that distinguish it from conventional social science and public health surveillance. These features make it appropriate to the current research project. The key features of the approach include:

- Speed - A typical RAR is completed within 8-12 weeks.
- Practical relevance to interventions
- Strengthening local response to
interventions by involving local stakeholders

- Multiple methods and data sources
- Inductive approach – interacting, critically examining and responding to data as it is collected.
- Multi-level analysis – taking into account the social, cultural, religious, political and historical context of the research
- Reliability, validity and triangulation – through using a variety of methods an cross-checking data among them.

To achieve the project’s aims, and in line with the RAR approach, a combination of methods for gathering primary information and assessment of the situation were used:

- Quantitative survey - questionnaires
- Qualitative survey – in-depth interviews and focus group discussions
- Discussion meetings with specialists
- Desk survey

The specific **Research Questions** we set out to answer were:

1. What is perceived as violent behaviour?
2a. What types of violence are experienced in and around schools?
2b. How common or widespread is the violence experienced?
3. What are the causes of violence?
4. Are there any ‘typical’ victims and perpetrators who might form high-risk groups, if so, who are they?
5. Where or to whom can people go for help in cases of experiencing or witnessing violence?
6. How can violence be prevented?

All questions on all data gathering instruments aimed at providing information to these questions in addition to adding to the general picture created by the overall research aims. Three questionnaires were developed for this part of the study.

- Semi-standardized group inquiry with younger school students (aged 6-10 years); the method of assessment is mainly that of a structured interview because of the age of the participants
- Questionnaire for older school children aged 11-18 years
- Questionnaire for teachers

A variety of question types was used. These elicited different types of responses which required different analysis:

- Closed questions in which the options for responses were pre-formulated in the questionnaire. There were several kinds of closed questions
  - those for which only one response is possible,
  - those for which more than one response is possible and
  - those for which a response is required on each line.

- Semi-closed questions, where the answers were pre-formulated in the questionnaire and the

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**The Quantitative Study**

**Table 1. Organization of Quantitative Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of research</th>
<th>June / July 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Faced-to-face interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Questionnaires were developed by the Technical Co-ordinator and Prism Research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Children, 6-18 years old Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>Children 680 Teachers 120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant’s perspective. Since from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant’s eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. Thus, the results of qualitative research cannot be generalized to population, and they can only be use as an indicator for participants’ (individuals participating in the study) opinions, attitudes, views etc.

Closed or semi-closed questions were pre-coded for data-input, with the ‘Other’ category containing all responses that could not be put into the pre-coded ones and, where appropriate being analyzed separately. Open questions allow respondents to express their thoughts freely and in their own words, and as fully as they consider suitable. The open questions were used to obtain an understanding of the attitudes and level of awareness about violence against children.

**The Qualitative Study**

Qualitative research is characterized by its aim of obtaining in-depth understandings of the meanings and definitions of a situation, as perceived by informants, rather than the production of a quantitative ‘measurement’ of their characteristics or behaviour. One of the major reasons for doing qualitative research is to become more experienced with the phenomenon being studied.

The problem of violence, and in particular violence against children in schools, is very sensitive. It can have deep psychological and cultural roots. Further, the research is taking place in Kosovo, which has specific problems of its own, being a post-conflict area with multi-ethnic characteristics. Taking a qualitative, as well as a quantitative approach allowed a deeper exploration of some of these issues.

Two methods were used to obtain data: in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). With these methods we gained a more comprehensive insight into opinions and attitudes, reasons, motivations of the respondents about the issue being researched. In total, 40 in-depth interviews and 20 focus group discussions were conducted.

The results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. Since from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant’s eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. Thus, the results of qualitative research cannot be generalized to population, and they can only be use as an indicator for participants’ (individuals participating in the study) opinions, attitudes, views etc.

**Ethics**

In view of the sensitive nature of the research topic, it was particularly important to pay attention to ethical issues. Thus, each respondent was supplied with general information about the study as a whole, as well as a consent form before the beginning of each individual questionnaire. For the younger children, or those who may have had developmental difficulties the information was read to them and explained. In particular, it was essential to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents.

Before the fieldwork began, an agreement was made with MEST to inform all its regional structures and schools taking part in the study about the nature of the study, so that all parents or legal guardians of the children could be informed. It was also possible that the interviews and discussions might provoke an emotional response, or that respondents might want to seek information or support concerning the problem of violence. With this in mind, interviewers were able to offer contact information for existing programmes, telephone help-lines and centres in Kosovo working on the problem of violence.

**II.iv Demographic characteristics of participants**

**Younger children (6-10 years)**
Approximately 250 children aged 6 to 10 years participated in the quantitative and qualitative components of the research. Around 130 were Albanian, 70 were Serbian and 50 were from different ethnic groups including Roma, Ashkali, Turk, Bosnian and Egyptian (hereafter referred to as children from non-Serb minorities). There were approximately 130 boys and 120 girls with an equal mix of participants from urban and rural areas. Approximately half of the children (mostly children of Albanian and minority groups) lived in families with five to six people in each household. Around 75 per cent of the children reported that their fathers were employed with 34 per cent stating that their mothers were employed. In urban areas, around 85 per cent of participants’ fathers and 45 per cent of mothers were...
employed; in rural areas, the numbers decreased to around 20 per cent for both.

**Older children (11-18 years)**
Approximately 450 older children took part in the quantitative research and 28 were interviewed individually. Approximately 240 participants were from Albanian majority areas, 130 from Serbian and 110 from other ethnic minority areas. There were eight focus groups for this age group, each with approximately nine participants. The numbers of boys and girls were about equal numbers, as was the split between urban and rural. As with the younger children, many (42.4 per cent) lived in families with five to six per household. The pattern of parental employment reflected that of the younger children with 77 per cent of fathers and 30 per cent of mothers employed.

**Teachers**
120 teachers participated in the quantitative research, 60 of which were teaching in ethnic Albanian majority areas, 30 in Serbian, and 30 in other ethnic minority areas (most of the teachers in these areas were either Turks or Bosniaks). Six focus group discussions were held. Approximately 40 respondents taught children in the age group 6-10 years and 80 taught the age group 11-18 years. Around 42% of teachers were 46 years old or older and most had been working as teachers for between 6 and 15 years. There were approximately equal numbers of female and male teachers.

**Parents**
Six focus group discussions were conducted with parents. Two focus groups were conducted in ethnic Serb majority areas, two in Albanian areas and two in other ethnic minority areas, with one from each conducted in an urban and a rural area. There were approximately 10 participants in each focus group. A meeting (i.e., not a focus group) was held with the Gorani community, in which parents participated.

### II.v Fieldwork

**Recruitment and organization of the fieldwork**
Thirty interviewers were engaged in the research: 25 in Albanian ethnic majority areas and 5 in Serb ethnic majority areas. No interviewer was allocated more than 25 questionnaires. All interviewers worked in pairs; female interviewers interviewed female respondents, and male interviewers interviewed male respondents. Interviewers were then grouped so that one coordinator could supervise 5-6 pairs of interviewers.

**Training**
All of the regional coordinators and interviewers participated in a one full day training session, either in Pristina or in Zubin Potok. In addition to learning in detail about the project, all interviewers were taken through the questionnaires or the interview schedules, role-played interviews and were given guidance on directive and non-directive probing techniques.

**Pilot Study**
During training, each interviewer completed at least one test interview. These interviews formed the pilot study for the questionnaires and interview schedules. Based on information gained from the direct observation of interviews, and feedback from the pilot study, the final version or field version of the questionnaires were created.

**Data Collection**
Interviewers had detailed sampling plans to guide them in selecting respondents. This ensured that sampling was random and fitted the demographic profile required for the research. As it was the end of the school year, only the primary school children were contacted in their school environment. Secondary school children were selected in non-school environments using a snowball method.

Younger children (from 6-10) and teachers were interviewed and the questionnaire was completed by the interviewer. The older children (from 11-18) completed the questionnaire themselves, with the interviewer on-hand to provide assistance if necessary. Teachers were generally present while the questionnaire was being administered, although they were not allowed to influence a child’s responses. The teachers’ presence was considered necessary in order to provide for a safe surrounding for the child, as they were facing the interviewers for the first time. No serious problems were encountered in the contact with the children.

Throughout the fieldwork phase, meetings were held between the Technical Coordinator, the manager of the research from Prism, and the interviewers so that work could be discussed and improved on an ongoing basis. Fieldwork was also supervised by the Technical Coordinator and representatives from UNICEF. In these cases feedback could be given. Both fieldwork phases

14 For more information see Methodology for conducting a rapid assessment concerning the situation of violence against children in schools in Kosovo. The document is available at the UNICEF Office in Kosovo.
were conducted in June and July, 2005, with the quantitative questionnaire survey starting first, since it had to cover more respondents.

**Problems in the fieldwork**

While it was possible to interview younger children during the school year, and therefore conduct the research within the school, it was more problematic to ‘catch’ the secondary school children, whose school year had finished before the fieldwork. In certain cases interviewers had to walk long distances and make a large number of contacts in different households in order to identify a child that they needed to interview. As there was a required quota of respondents for each group, interviewers sometimes had difficulties finding a child that would suit their sample.

**II.vi Analysis and reporting**

The primary analysis of information from the quantitative survey was made by the research company using SPSS software. For the qualitative research, the research company prepared, coded and analysed the transcripts. The data was presented in a full report in English containing results, description of the methodology, detailed findings, and conclusions.

Based on the data report, an initial report was prepared by the Technical Coordinator in collaboration with the Research Company. This was presented first to the CTF for discussion and comments and then to the leading partner, UNICEF in Kosovo and the Academic Advisor. Feedback from this round of consultations led to the final report of the study.

**Validity of the study**

A study is considered valid if its instruments actually measure what they claim to measure, and if there are no logical errors in drawing conclusions from the data. Bearing in mind that the Prism Research Company conducting this research, took into account best practice as far as methodology rules and principles, under the supervision of the Technical Coordinator of the study and the lead agency, we feel justified in claiming that this research achieves a satisfactory level of validity.

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Prism Research, in accordance with ESOMAR and AAPOR rules and regulations is obliged to abide standards appointed by ESOMAR and AAPOR. For more information visit: www.esomar.org and www.aapor.org
The aim of this part of the research was to find out what policies, actions and action plans are in place or in preparation which may inform the research or, perhaps more importantly, its recommendations.

Information was obtained through individual meetings or group discussions with representatives of Governmental institutions, UNMIK structures, International and Non-governmental organizations, representatives from different types of media, as well as existing documents and reports. An important starting point was the creation of a questionnaire, based on that sent to governments as part of the Global survey. The questionnaire was distributed mainly to the governmental and UNMIK representatives. Additionally, everyone contacted was asked to share any relevant reports, researches and documents produced by their organization or institution.

It proved quite difficult to obtain concrete information on the issue of violence against children, and even more difficult to obtain information which focused on school settlements, particularly in the case of official (governmental) structures. There appears to be very little statistical data available and very little evaluation of programmes which have been implemented. It is not easy to say whether this is because the data does not exist or because it is not shared. NGOs and International organizations seemed to share information amongst themselves and the Children’s Rights Forum initiative described below is an example of good practice in this area. Despite this, it became clear during meetings and discussions that very few organisations were thoroughly informed about what their partners are doing.

Information in this part of the report is structured as following:

- Institutions Responsible for Child Protection & Related Legislation
- Policies, Plans and Strategies
- International & Non-Governmental Organizations
- Research on the subject of Violence against Children
- Support/Rehabilitation programmes currently in place

III.i Institutions Responsible for Child Protection & Related Legislation

**The United Nations & PISG Administrative Structures**

Since the end of the conflict in June 1999, Kosovo has been under the administration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK), in accordance with Chapter 7 of the UN Security Council, Resolution 1244. UNMIK is partnered with the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). KFOR, the peacekeeping forces, operate independently under the same resolution.

UNMIK is also mandated to transfer administrative powers to locally controlled governmental structures as they develop. Since March 2002, the transfer of competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) of Kosovo has been proceeding. However, in line with the UN mandate and the Constitutional Framework, certain competencies are ‘reserved’ and remain in the hands of the SRSG. These include elements of the Police and Justice Pillar: external relations, law enforcement and correctional measures and justice. In terms of combating violence in society, the Police and Justice systems have an important role to play.

**International Human Rights and the Constitutional Framework of Kosovo**

Because Kosovo is not legally a country, it cannot sign up to international human rights instruments designed to protect children from violence, in

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16 As part of the Global Survey, a questionnaire was circulated to Governments in March 2004. By February 2005, 87 Governments had responded, providing information on national legal, institutional and policy frameworks in place to address violence against children. The responses are available on the OOHCHR web site (From: UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/2005/75, 8 March 2005).

17 Part of (the former) Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo is bordered by Albania, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. After the failure of the Rambouillet talks held in February 1999, NATO intervened to prevent a repeat of the situations witnessed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia earlier in the decade. (Information from Situational Analysis of Children and Women in Kosovo, UNICEF Kosovo, February 2004)

18 More information about UNMIK is available at http://www.unmikonline.org
particular, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). However, UNMIK and the PISG are incorporating human rights into legislation, mainly through the Constitutional Framework of Kosovo19.

The main instruments informing new legislation are:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is guided by four main principles: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. Article 19.1 requires signatories to develop measures to protect children while in the care of responsible adults, such as parents, or those who stand in place of parents. The same Article also obliges signatories to undertake protective measures such as identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment.
- Council of Europe (CoE) resolutions and documents pertaining to child protection and violence against children20. Of particular interest to the current study are resolutions outlawing corporal punishment, defining parents’ and teachers’ responsibilities, and promoting democratic schools without violence.

In theory at least, by this linking of the CFK to international conventions, children are constitutionally protected in the areas of:

- separation from parents following abuse and neglect21
- provision of alternative forms of care
- protection of children from harmful traditional practices
- school discipline
- child labour
- sexual exploitation
- trafficking
- torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- rehabilitative care for victims of violence.

The CFK also sets in place protection and rights for minority language users, which is relevant to minority communities, especially in the field of education.

**Domestic Legislation**

The Kosovo Provisional Criminal Code and the Provisional Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo are the two main legal instruments that cover violence against children. These codes are similar to those in place in European countries. (See Box 3) However, there is no specific legislation dealing with violence in schools. “Disciplinary measures” are mentioned but what exactly is meant by this is not specified; neither are the boundaries of such measures. It is not clear how corporal punishment is addressed and there are no specific articles prohibiting it.

Other relevant statutes would include:

- Law on Primary and Secondary Education, Kosovo Assembly Law No. 202/2, promulgated UNMIK/REG/2002/19
- Law on Gender Equity in Kosovo, Kosovo Assembly, Law No. 2004/2, promulgated UNMIK/REG/2004/32
- Law on Marriage and Family relations (1984)
- Law against Discrimination, Kosovo Assembly Law No. 2000/3, promulgated UNMIK/REG/2004/32
- Regulation on the prohibition of trafficking in persons in Kosovo, UNMIK/REG/2001/4
- Regulation on protection against International Child Abduction, UNMIK/ REG/2004/29
- Regulation on protection against Domestic Violence, UNMIK/REG/2003/12
- Regulation on prohibition against incitement to national, racial, religious or ethnic hatred, discord or intolerance, UNMIK/REG/2000/4
- UNMIK Regulations concerning witnesses of crime.

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21 These items are Articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child
While international security and peacekeeping are in the hands of KFOR all other police, security and justice systems are dealt with by:

1. UNMIK Police (an international police operation)
2. The Kosovo Police Service (KPS), which functions under the authority of the SRSG and under the supervision of UNMIK Police
3. The Department of Justice

The Police are responsible for investigating any type of violence against children. There are different divisions and departments responsible for particular types of case.

In cases of domestic violence, especially involving children, the Domestic Violence Investigation Section (DVIS) works with the Victim’s Advocate and Assistance Unit (VAAU), which is part of the Ministry of Justice, and with the Centres for Social Work (CSW), which are part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. In addition to the VAAU which helps victims of all ages, the Penal Management Division deals with offenders, including young offenders, who are given custodial or non-custodial sentences.

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### Box 3. The Criminal Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Criminal Code* - Offences &amp; Punishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light Bodily harm (Article 153)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievous Bodily harm (Article 154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Offences against Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape of a child under 16 years (Article 193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault of a child under 16 years (Article 195)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse of a person under 16 years (Article 198**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistreatment in Exercising Duties (Article 164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to Protect Children (Article 214)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching (Article 164)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Fine or prison up to three years
- Prison - six months to five years
- Prison - five to twenty years
- Prison - from five to ten years
- Prison - from one to ten years
- An official who, in the exercise of his duties, mistreats, intimidates or insults another person, shall be punished by imprisonment (3 months - 3 years) and if the acts are against a child, the imprisonment is from 1 - 5 five years.
- A responsible person on duty in a body or institution for protection, education or vocational training of children, exercises his or her duties an obviously irresponsible manner, thereby severely impairing the health or development of a child shall be punished by a fine or by imprisonment of up to three years.
- Any direct or indirect contact, where there is no penetration, between the body of a person with any part of the body of another person or with an object.

**Other Articles relevant to this study:**
- Coercion (Article 160)
- Threat (Article 161)
- Pornography (Articles 202, 203)
- Mistreatment or Abandoning a child (Article 211)** This article includes only adoptive parent, guardian or another person exercising parental authority (not teachers).

* Information taken from The Kosovo Provisional Criminal Code: UNMIK Reg. 2003/25/Date: 6 July 2003

**Article 198, Point 6 specifies measures if the violator is a teacher, a health care professional or one responsible for the upbringing of the child.

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Information about the role of the police and justice systems comes from meetings held with representatives of the UNMIK Domestic Violence Investigation Section (DVIS) and the Gender advisor within UNMIK Police. These people and a representative of KPS took part in one of our round-table meetings on the subject of violence in schools.
In cases of trafficking, the Trafficking in Human Beings Section (THBS) within UNMIK Police is mainly involved and there are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for these cases. The Regional Crime Squad (RCS) investigates more serious cases involving domestic relationships, such as murder or rape. The RCS also investigates violence and sexual offences against children where no domestic relationship exists.

In terms of training, the Primary Investigators have attended the Investigator’s course and the Advanced Domestic Violence Investigator’s course at the KPS Police Academy.

**Box 4. Procedures for investigation of violence against children**

**The Police** respond to a report and start an investigation.

**The Investigator** passes the case to a Prosecutor. In cases of violence in school or in domestic cases involving children, two primary investigators are assigned. They liaise with Domestic Violence Coordinators who may issue Interim Protection Orders.

**The Prosecutor** is responsible for the case and gives further instructions to the investigator; (it is decided who should be questioned, what evidence is necessary etc) **The Prosecutor hands the case to court** for judgment.

**III.ii Policies, Plans and Strategies**

The responsibility for child protection and welfare policies is currently distributed among various ministries and departments of the PISG, units within UNMIK and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Within each separate structure, there are officers or positions that deal with children’s rights and protection, or with gender issues. At local level, 28 municipalities have nominated Children’s Rights Coordinators.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) has a Department for Social Welfare (DSW). In accordance with the Law on Family and Marriage Relations establishes the principle of “Guardianship authority”, making the CSWs responsible for children without parental care.

The DSW, with the support of UNICEF, has developed a Child Protection Manual mainly for the use of the CSWs. The manual defines different types of violence and child abuse, recognizing the need for specific responses that would be required depending on individual cases. The manual also contains guidance for other institutions and authorities such as the Police, healthcare professionals and teachers. Similarly, the Victim Advocacy Introductory Manual, prepared by the OSCE in 2001, offers guidelines for those working with victims of crime. It has sections which deal with children and adolescents.

With the support of UNICEF the MLSW has developed a database to be used by the central and municipal level (MLSW and the CSWs) for gathering and categorizing all the data of cases assisted by the Centres. The database can be interrogated for specific aspects of violence against children. The development and implementation of the database will be a big step, when one considers the limited and scattered information available so far.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) has a key role to play in the issue of violence against children in schools, as is evidenced by their support of this research study. The Permanent Secretary of MEST participated in the regional consultation meeting for the Global UN study on violence and signed the Ljubljana agreement which aims to prevent violence against children.

MEST inspection officers, authorized by the Law on Inspection, are tasked with examining cases of violence in and around schools. The Education Staff Training Unit within MEST is

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23 The Standard Operating Procedures outline the procedures for assisting a trafficked person, from identification to the point when the person is accompanied to a shelter, in order to ensure the coordination of the activities of different actors (Source: Trafficking in Children in Kosovo/UNICEF 2004). The SOPs for International victims were signed in December 2004. Draft SOPs for domestic (ie: Kosovar victims) were first drafted in June 2001 but had not been signed at the time of writing.

responsible for drafting plans, regulations and criteria for educational staff, and identifying training needs of teachers. It co-operates with the Planning and Program Unit and the Standards Evaluation Unit. Currently MEST is working closely with the Kosovo Education Centre on a program for human rights education. MEST is also developing a ten-year working plan, which is expected to include specific curriculum modules connected to the issue of violence against children and human rights education.

The MEST Office of Inspection has also created and approved *The Ethics Code for Teachers*. This documents the roles and responsibilities of teachers. It specifies how teachers should behave when dealing with pupils and that it is a teacher’s duty to respect children’s rights according to the Law of Education and the CRC. However, the Code also states that the teacher (in the first person) agrees to,

> “Engage in discipline and work in full responsibility, because I’m aware that my attitude can be taken as example from the pupils and others people from different parts of community”

However, neither the Law on Education nor the Ethics code defines “discipline” and “disciplinary measures”. Recently, the MEST has issued an Administrative Instruction on Suspension and Disciplinary measures against teachers and other staff members in educational institutions (MEST 40/2005). This Administrative Instruction defines procedures and criteria for initiating disciplinary measures against teachers and other staff members in schools.

The **Department of Youth**, which is part of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, concentrates its activities in the areas of child labour, children with limited skills and special needs, and child victims of abuse, including trafficking. There is a focal point for Child Protection within the Department. The Department is represented on a working group that is developing systems for monitoring and combating the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children.

Working with youth organizations, the Department implements projects to help children who live on the streets, children who have dropped-out of school and victims of the worst forms of child labour. One of the main aims is strengthening the capacity of the youth organizations and their networking. It also co-operates with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in an anti-trafficking project.

- The **Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)** has a unit which deals with human rights, equal opportunities, gender issues and children's rights as part of its Office of Good Governance (OGG). This unit compile and review legislation, monitoring the activities of Ministries and providing recommendations to the Prime Minister.

At the time of the research study, the OPM, supported by UNICEF, was conducting an assessment of progress on general measures of implementation of the CRC in Kosovo.

**Strategic Plan for the Municipalities 2005 - 2010**

In an attempt to draw together the strands of the various areas of municipal responsibility, a Strategic Plan was drawn up, to cover the period 2005 – 2010. It identifies a number of particular issues regarding violence. It posits a relationship between the problem of violence against children and that of child labour. This is considered particularly common in rural areas where children are often expected to take part in hard forms of labour to support the family or community. Another difficult area is the issue of children with special needs. Social attitudes towards such children are problematic; in many cases, children with special needs are hidden away and do not attend school or receive appropriate medical care. The Strategic Plan acknowledges that understanding the nature and prevalence of violence in families is complicated, and that clear strategies, mechanisms and resources within the Centres for Social Work (CSW) are necessary.

The **Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo (OI)** is an independent institution which addresses disputes concerning alleged human rights violations or abuse of authority by the Interim Civil Administration or any central or local institution in Kosovo25 (‘school’ or ‘family’ may be considered an institution in some cases). If informed about a situation or action that may involve a human rights violation, the OI may initiate investigations in the absence of an individual complaint (these are termed “ex-officio investigations”). The institution’s competencies also involve the monitoring of policies and laws adopted by the authorities to ensure that they respect human rights standards and the requirements of good governance.

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25 Sources: 1. Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo, Published by the OI in Kosovo, Editor: Ibrahim Arslan, Pristina, 2005; 2. Quarterly Information Sheet, January–March 2005, OI in Kosovo; Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government, Chapter 10; 3. Meeting with Mr. Sc. Anfi, Lawyer Investigator, CRT, OI in Kosovo held on 28.06.2005, as well as information obtained from the round-table discussion on the issue of VAC, held on 02 August 2005
The OI has three special teams working within its structures to improve the protection of human rights concerning certain categories of more vulnerable people. One of these is the Children’s Rights Team (CRT), created in March 2004, with UNICEF support. The CRT conducts investigations into general issues around violations of children’s rights, as well as dealing with individual complaints from children or those representing children. Typical cases have included custody cases, investigations into ill-treatment of children, reunification of families, provision of health services.

**Box 5. Specific Cases 1**

**Specific Cases**

The Children’s Right Team, after noticing an article in the newspaper, “Lajm Ekskluzive” brought to the attention of MEST, the case of a child being ill-treated by a teacher. At the time of this research, the case was being investigated by the MEST. The Ombudsperson Institution is also investigating the provision of school books to children. These are supposed to be provided free up to the 5th grade, but it was discovered that due to lack of budget, text books are provided to a limited number of children considered as social cases.

**III.iii International and Non-governmental Organizations**

In addition to official structures, there are many international and non-governmental organisations present in Kosovo. These organisations often provide financial and technical support, in addition to providing opportunities for advocacy in the area of Civil Society.

**UNICEF in Kosovo** has mainly been involved in advocacy and the prevention of violence. Prevention work has been mainly capacity building, for example with MLSW, MEST & Ombudsperson Institution. Legal assistance has been mainly in the areas of domestic violence, trafficking regulations and the juvenile justice code.

The **OHCHR** has contributed to improving human rights protection in particular by ensuring that human rights issues are properly considered in legislation promulgated by UNMIK.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has been promoting healthy school environment programmes, including training of teachers in the area of teaching methods, reproductive and mental health and environmental issues.

**CARE International** has been engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly children’s rights. Activities include capacity building of social workers, teachers and health professionals as well as encouraging preventative measures through awareness raising activities and campaigns against violence, discrimination, and abuse.

**Save the Children UK** has focussed on education, children’s rights and protection and emergency preparedness. It has also provided capacity building training for social workers to help them communicate with children and to recognize child abuse.

**Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** has developed capacity in the area of student drop-out of school (especially girls), as well as working on the issue of anti-trafficking. As an example of good practice, it points to its support in establishing Parent-Teacher Councils and Parent - Teacher Associations at the municipal level, a project it undertook with UNICEF.

The **OSCE** has cooperated with many of the above organisations as well as working on its own projects, such as supporting the Police Training Academy. A main area of interest has been violence against women, particularly domestic violence, as well as dating violence. The OSCE also supports and trains youth groups and NGOs.

The **International Labor Organization (ILO)** has focused mainly on child labour, including trafficking, which is widespread throughout Eastern Europe. It works on the capacity building of specialists, as well as awareness raising among different target groups. A priority area is formulating action plans to combat the problem of the worst forms of child labour, as well as creating monitoring systems.

The **Kosovo Children’s Rights Forum**

With an eye to improving the communication among interested NGOs, the Kosovo Children’s Rights Forum was founded in 2003. At the time of writing, the following organisations had signed a Memorandum of Understanding: CARE International, Catholic Relief Services,
Save the Children, World Vision International, Every Child, Kosovo Education Centre, Handikos, Qeshu-Smile, the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights and ASTRA. UNICEF and the Finnish Human Rights Programme are special parties to the memorandum, in the role of observing organizations.

One of the main aims of the Forum is to cooperate in lobbying and advocacy of issues related to children's rights. This is the reason the Memorandum defines its “strategic relationship in establishing an advocacy organization, “Kosovo Children’s Rights Forum” and in operating mutually agreed projects for the children in Kosovo on behalf of their rights”

The Forum offers an opportunity to share information about member organizations’ programs. This enables the organizations to offer better coordinated interventions. Representatives from Governmental Institutions and/or the media are invited to participate in some sessions. The Forum has supported the municipal efforts to establish Children's Rights Co-ordinators. The forum has different working groups: legislation; advocacy and children’s rights; and support to Municipal Child Rights Coordinators.

Active local NGOs
The Desk Survey also explored other local non-governmental organisations which are active in the field of child protection. These NGO's form an important aspect of the developing civil society of Kosovo.

The Centre for Protection of Women and Children (CPWC) operates in most of Kosovo and is active in all areas of combating violence, including trafficking in human beings. Their activities include prevention and capacity building programmes; protection and rehabilitation of victims by providing shelter, psychological, medical, social and legal assistance and support for victims; advocacy work on issues connected to the human rights of victims.

Box 6. Specific cases 2

Specific Case
The CPWC reports the case of a 17 year old girl whose teacher undermined and insulted her, in a tendentious manner, using highly inappropriate language during the class. The teacher also flagrantly graded her with much lower grades than her work merited.

The Centre encouraged her to speak of the problem with her parents and with other teachers at school and, with their help, to get in touch with the professor in question, and explore the reasons for his behaviour.

The Kosovo Education Centre (KEC) is implementing a three-year programme promoting human and children's rights. This includes capacity building with teachers and other professionals (including governmental representatives), as well as awareness-raising. Their programme includes working and researching on the issue of violence against children in schools, while part of the programme includes the preparation of a Children’s rights strategy.

III.iv Research

UNICEF is one of the most active agencies in Kosovo in conducting research in the sphere of child welfare in general, though the current research initiated by UNICEF is the first one specifically to look at the issue of violence against children and more concretely within the school environment, some other studies done by UNICEF in Kosovo, contain relevant information. Listed below are the relevant reports produced by UNICEF, together with Governmental partners, independent consultants and with the involvement of local organizations:

- Gender review in education in Kosovo, April 2003, with MEST and the Statistical Office of Kosovo (SOK)
- Education of Minority children in Kosovo, January 2004
- Situational analysis of Education in Kosovo, January 2004
- Situational analysis of Children and Women in Kosovo, February 2004
- Trafficking in Children in Kosovo, June 2004
- Youth in Kosovo, June 2004
- Child Labour in Kosovo: A Study on Working Children, June 2004
- Research on Gender-based Violence, “Young people's perceptions on Gender-based Violence”, December 2004, with the UNMIK Office of Gender Affairs
- Domestic violence research, (unpublished report), 2004 with KODI, Kosovo Research and Documentation Institute

For the June 2004, Youth in Kosovo, UNICEF report some 600 young people aged 9 - 25 years were surveyed and violence was one of the factors investigated. Although around half of the respondents claimed that violence happened frequently, none admitted to having experienced
it personally. Violence, in the family, at school or in the street was not viewed as a major health risk factor.

From the same study, most young people found teachers had quite authoritarian conduct. At the same time, influence and personal authority were attributed to family ties or relationship to the “boss” or the leader.

The views of parents and family members were sought on many issues, and it was evident that taboos still surrounded important subjects such as sexuality, drugs or pregnancy.

The main conclusions and recommendations, which inform the current study were:
- A lack of “youth-friendly” services
- Health care professionals not sufficiently trusted and trained
- Increase the pace of reform in the education system by getting the community involved
- Professionals speak about children’s rights, the bad effects of drugs and alcohol, but have not really had enough space to consider the issue of violence, which is so basic and usually lies at the bottom of things.
- “The voice of young people should be heard in their families, in their school, in their community and in their society”

Two studies have been conducted on the issue of ill-treatment of children covering 800 pupils and 200 teachers. The first, the results of which were ready in November 2003, was part of a project implemented by Save the Children in Kosovo as part of the organization’s assessment in the field of children’s rights. The research was done in partnership with three Kosovo NGOs: “Qeshu-Smile”, based in Pristina, “Committee for Protection of Children’s Rights” (KMDF), based in Skenderaj/Srbica, and “Mothers close to mothers and children – Nani,” based in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

The partnering organizations of the research and project used the following definition of ill-treatment, “Illicitreatment is: to treat a person with violence or cruelty, neglect or arrogance (Physical and psychological ill-treatment).”

The internal report prepared by Save the Children points out that the actions of the PISG in responding to the CRC are still in their first stage and a lot more has to be done (especially taking into account Article 19 of the Convention). The report also identified a number of problems that were significant at that time:
- High drop out of school by RAE children
- High drop out rate by children with special needs,
- High drop out rate by girls
- Poor teaching methodologies especially in rural areas
- Lack of drinkable water in 80 per cent of schools
- Child labour as a factor in poor performance or non-attendance

The background to the research also considers the information from the OSCE February 2003
report, in which it was found that social workers or other professionals such as teachers, lawyers or health specialists, failed in many cases to address properly the best interests of the child.

Examples of statements made by children, of relevance to the present research are:

“When teachers call me offending names, the other children laugh and then they call me that also with those and other bad names”

“I have thought about abandoning school because of the mistreatment from other pupils and the principal”

### III.v Support Programmes

#### Help-lines

Two help-lines are run by the Department of Justice – one working on problems related to domestic violence and the other on human trafficking. They operate 24 hours.

The “Telephone Help-line” is a similar service operated by the Kosovo Association of Psychology Students (www.koaps.org). It offers emotional support and active listening, accepting phone calls about any matter considered by the caller to be important. The Kosovo Post Office (PTK) is involved in supporting the programme by the provision of a toll-free number, as well as some other funding. At the time of this research, the help-line was operating in the evenings/ nights, from 18:00 to 02:00 (a.m.). It hopes to function as a 24-hour service eventually. IOM will be involved in training some of the volunteer team (approximately 30 volunteers) and will use one of the telephone lines to provide support in the specific area of trafficking in human beings.

#### Shelters and Support Centres

The information provided below is in brief and it should be noted it excludes some of the shelters and support programmes specifically focused on working with victims of human trafficking (such as programmes provided by the Department of Justice or the IOM). Sheltering and rehabilitation programmes are mainly run by:

- Centres for social work (CSWs)
- Hope and Homes
- Centre for protection of Women and Children (CPWC)
- Centre for Victims of Torture
- Shelters for women victims of violence run by local women’s NGOs

**Hope and Homes** operate two shelters and are financially supported by Hope and Homes International, MLSW, IOM, the OSCE, and the Department of Justice among others. Their shelters target children from 03 to 18 years old. There are two shelters, one in Pristina and one in Prizren. Clients may stay in the shelters for approximately 6 months. Each shelter accommodates 10-12 people and there could be up to 5 people included in the “semi-independent living programme” (see below). Most people placed in the shelter are aged 13 – 16 years and most are illiterate. The clients are mainly victims of domestic violence. **Hope and Homes** follow-up their cases for around two years. Visiting specialists, teachers and psychologists, work with the victims. The shelters also provide training opportunities, such as hairdressing or computer training.

The second programme, already mentioned above, is the “Semi-independent living” programme (2005-2007), funded by the Department of Justice, the OSCE and Norwegian Church Aid. It is a complementary programme for the clients in the shelters. It includes “life-skills” courses and the training programmes are adapted to the individual needs of the clients.

Cases are usually referred to Hope and Homes through the social workers from the CSWs, the help-lines run by the Department of Justice, the Police and sometimes also through family members and/or friends. Hope and Homes takes care of the child while the CSW works mainly with the parents.

### III.vi Summary and Conclusions of the Desk Survey

This desk review was undertaken to provide an overview of existing legislation and policies that impact on violence against children, especially focusing the school environments in Kosovo. It provides a summary of the major institutions and organizations involved in preventing violence against children, their main actions and planned interventions, as well as describing existing strategies for dealing with the problem. It also reviews available research and perceptions of the issue. It provides preliminary information for the survey and as such, it is not intended to be a definitive or exhaustive review of the subject or the region.

Research undertaken by UNICEF in other regions also indicates that overall, there is a lack of information available on violence against children, not to mention violence in schools. Clearly, the issue of violence is a very sensitive issue in any society and access to information remains a challenge. As the author of the East
Asia and Pacific Regional Assessment on Violence against Children states:

*One obvious stumbling block in research on violence against children is the lack of comprehensive and systematic data collection, reporting and monitoring systems. Data on child abuse, exploitation and maltreatment – when at all collected and recorded – is scattered among various government departments, local welfare authorities, hospitals, police officials and voluntary organizations. The ways of recording data on children also tends to vary between these institutions, making comparisons and analysis more difficult. Hopefully, the UN Global Study on Violence will also bring some clarity in concepts relating to violence and child abuse, which could benefit the design of more standardized data collection, and monitoring methods relating to child abuse. 30*

This situation makes it difficult to make any definitive statements on violence against children, especially in schools. However, it is possible to note the following from the desk survey, either from the data supplied or the discussions held:

- Generally, the government in Kosovo recognizes child abuse, exploitation and violence against children as an area for concern. However, current governmental structures are complex, making it difficult to determine accountability.

- No statistical information was provided by the governmental structures. In fact, it was difficult obtaining any concrete information in terms of how relevant institutions are addressing the issue of violence in schools. Very few representatives of Governmental institutions replied to the questionnaire and those who did reply gave non-specific information.

- Even when information is available, there is generally a dearth of current statistics or coordinated data collection on the phenomenon of violence against children. This lack of information and data hampers the ability to assess the situation and ultimately to make suitable recommendations.

- There are provisions to deal with violence against children in all national legal and policy frameworks, including a MEST regulation on corporal punishment and violence in schools. However, there is a lack of harmonization with international child rights standards and weakness in the implementation of laws and policies

- Many participants from institutions and the civil society sector shared the view that a review of child protection legislation is necessary.

- According to the Police and Municipal CSWs, there is underreporting of violence against children

- Some actors expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the various programmes being implemented, especially by some of the governmental bodies.

- The Ombudsperson/CRT was concerned about the length of time it takes the courts to deal with cases brought before them as this makes the upholding of rights more difficult and reflects a lack of capacity in the justice system.

- Representatives of the media expressed concern about the level of communication between the media and the government; claiming cases and issues are “hushed-up” and stay between the victims, the police and the governmental institutions. Journalists appear to believe that the government is not interested in having the media involved in social issues.

30 Regional Assessment: Violence against Children in East Asia and the Pacific Region (2003), UNICEF
RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS
This section of the report presents the main findings of the research carried out with children, teachers and parents. For detailed information on the methodology, sample and investigated regions, please refer to the specific document\(^3\), or the summary of the methodological framework presented in the previous section.

A summary of the main findings is given first, with details of specific results and a commentary following. Both sections are presented as responses to the stated research questions:

1. What is perceived as violent behaviour?
2a. What types of violence are experienced in and around schools?
2b. How common or widespread is the violence experienced?
3. What are the causes of violence?
4. Are there any ‘typical’ victims and perpetrators who might form high-risk groups, if so, who are they?
5. Where or to whom can people go for help in cases of experiencing or witnessing violence?
6. How can violence be prevented?

### IV. Summary of Main findings

#### 1. Defining violence

Many younger children were unable to define violence. Those who could do so typically associated it with physical assault. Older children also spoke of physical violence, but added emotional violence, which they said could take many forms. Older children appear to be particularly affected by injustice and they found it hard to cope with insults, bullying and humiliation.

Teachers were largely unable to define violence when asked individually, although from focus group discussions a generalised definition did emerge. They also differentiated between physical and psychological violence. Parents made the same distinction.

#### 2. Experience & Extent of violence

The most significant finding is that corporal punishment is still an accepted practice in both homes and schools. A worryingly large number of children had experienced or witnessed violence in or around school. Children generally reported that people close to them were perpetrators of the violence against them, with teachers or peers as the most common perpetrators within the school environment. Parents, siblings, as well as peers from the neighbourhood were also reported as being perpetrators. In particular, children who lived some distance from school were fearful of travelling because of the threat of peer violence.

Teachers believed that violence committed by teachers towards children was quite rare and limited to verbal abuse. They did however, believe that violence is common in schools and that violence had risen in their community in recent years. They also believed that fear of violence on the street or while travelling to school was widespread amongst young people. For their part, some parents were aware of cases of child abuse by teachers in schools. This ranged from intimidation to physical violence. Parents also said that domestic violence was common in their environment. It seems that violence is very much normalized by the society.

#### 3. Perceived causes of violence.

The degree to which violence has become part of the educational culture is illustrated by the extent to which many respondents sought to rationalise its presence. Many young children said that it is sometimes understandable if parents or teachers use violence if “the children are bad”, they misbehave or they haven’t done their studies properly, while about half of the older age group suggested that ‘improper behaviour in school’ or ‘disrespecting orders’ prompted violence [by the teacher]. Teachers and parents similarly characterized violence as necessary so that children would learn or behave appropriately. There seems to be a widespread belief that, “there is no other way”.

While violence was seen as a necessary last resort, parents suggested that some of the abuse was due to teachers not being properly trained in the use of the ‘new teaching methodologies’. Social or economic deprivation was also cited as

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\(^3\) Methodology for conducting a rapid assessment concerning the situation of violence against children in schools in Kosovo. The document is available at the UNICEF Office in Kosovo
a cause of violence by both teachers and parents, while teachers included the media as a possible contributing factor.

4. **High-Risk or Vulnerable Children**

There was a widespread perception by both younger and older children that boys were more at risk of physical violence than were girls, while girls were thought to be more often subject to verbal or emotional abuse. Children also believed that unacceptable classroom behaviour attracts violent punishment. Teachers believed that children who behaved improperly or came from disadvantageous conditions were more likely to experience violence.

5. **Seeking support**

The main findings in this area suggest a degree of dissonance or a lack of options. There are few, if any, concrete measures to address violence against children in schools. There is also a tendency to ignore the problem, not seeking support at all, possibly through fear of exacerbating the situation or because they do not trust the designated authorities. Although the findings suggested that violence was perpetrated by peers, teachers and family members, the majority of respondents in all categories suggested turning to a teacher or a parent (in particular the mother) for help in case of violence. Older children reported that they would also turn to friends, while teachers looked for guidance from the school management. Some teachers acknowledged that the children had no one to turn to for help or support.

6. **Preventing violence**

The issue of prevention is characterised by a lack of understanding and maybe a lack of willingness to really acknowledge and deal with the problem.

While children see awareness-raising, harsh punishment and teacher training as possible routes to improvement, the teachers seem to have few ideas about what to do, while parents want to rely on the teachers to do a professional job, which would include protecting children. This puts a weight of responsibility on the teachers, a task for which they are not yet adequately trained.

**IV.ii Detailed Findings and Commentary**

Each research question is here covered in detail. The Rapid Assessment data provides statistical information, which is supported by details and quotes from the interview and focus group data.

1. **Defining violence**

It is important to note that many respondents found it difficult to define violence as a concept, with many teachers and older children showing a rather simple understanding, usually defining violence solely as physical or sexual violence. This is a cause for concern given that there have been teacher training programmes to raise teachers’ awareness of and capacity to deal with human rights issues.

1.1 **Defining violence - Younger children (6-10)**

As previously discussed, a definition of violence was only attempted during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Children were asked, “Was there a time when someone was being violent to you, behaved really badly with you?” Approximately 30 per cent of children (with more from urban than rural areas) responded to this question in the affirmative.

A large number of children were unable to define violence. Those who provided definitions associated violence with physical assault. Many of the children mentioned that in some cases violence is necessary, such as when children misbehave or when they do not obey their parents or teachers.

*Violence is when parents hit you.* (IDI, Serbian, 8 years old, Female)

*Violence is when somebody beats you up without a reason, even if you haven’t done anything bad.* (IDI, Albanian, 7 years old, Male)

*I don’t know what the word violence means.* (Ashkali, 10 years old, Female)

*Violence is when a teacher beats the students, and when the teacher asks the children if they have learned a lesson and if they didn’t, she puts them a bad grade, she fails them. When you haven’t learned the lesson the teacher can ask you more questions and they don’t need to use violence. Violence is also when the parents beat their children or when a friend beats you up. Saying to others bad words and calling them with bad names is also violence.* (IDI, Albanian, 10 years old, Female)

*Maltreatment is when somebody teases me, hits me, and prohibits me to go somewhere.* (IDI, Serbian, 9 years old, Male)

1.2 **Defining violence - Older children (11-18)**

In the questionnaire survey, 21.5 per cent of children in this age group described violence as forms of mistreatment, while 20.8 per cent further defined it as not only physical, but psychological and emotional. In addition, the
terms “mistreatment” or explaining violence as a “violation of children’s rights” were offered, although without any further explanations. There was a sense that these responses had been learned but not necessarily understood. It could be said that respondents of this age were trying to be much more “socially acceptable” and present their “knowledge” about the issue.

During focus group discussions and interviews, violence was described as the violation of someone’s rights, abuse of any type, or having a negative effect on someone’s personality. Children in this age group could generally differentiate between specific forms of violence. Although many associated the term with physical or more visible forms of violence, they were also aware of emotional abuse or violence, which they said could take many forms. Children in this age group appeared to be particularly affected by injustice and expressed difficulties in coping with insults, bullying and humiliation.

**Violence can be physical, for example when somebody attacks somebody else, hits them or beats them, but I think that there are other kinds of violence as well, for example when teachers are unfair in grading or behave unfairly, when they insult you, this can be violence as well. Also when somebody puts pressure on you and is hard on you.** (IDI, Albanian, 14 years old, Female)

**Violence is physical, when somebody beats you, physically maltreat you, when they tell you bad words, when they maltreat you, offend you.** (IDI, Bosniak, 14 years old, Female)

When asked which kinds of violence worried them most, 64.9 per cent replied that they were worried about sexual violence, 57.6 per cent were afraid of physical violence and a similar number (52.1 per cent) mentioned criminal violence. About a third of respondents (34.4 per cent) said they were afraid of domestic violence.

### 1.3 Defining violence - Teachers

When asked what they thought violence was, 27.1 per cent of teachers gave incomplete or tangential answers on the questionnaire. It appears that a greater emphasis may need to be placed on teacher awareness of human rights and violence against children, in addition to other sensitive areas such as gender roles or attitudes to issues surrounding sexuality. However, 22.6 per cent of respondents attempted to define violence while 31.5 per cent of them condemned violence and said it should be stopped.

Of those teachers who responded, a large majority (98 per cent) included physical acts such as hitting, pushing or slapping somebody. Sexually harassing somebody, threatening or blackmailing someone was also included by 93 per cent of respondents. Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of respondents thought that violence

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**Figure 1. The kinds of violence against children that worried teachers most**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>36.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence and assault</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence caused from revenge</td>
<td>8.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking in children</td>
<td>42.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal violence (e.g., theft)</td>
<td>9.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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43
included name-calling, insulting, mocking, or making fun of somebody, while 53 per cent thought that ignoring or neglecting somebody was also violence. Figure 1 presents teachers’ overall thoughts as to which forms of violence against children worried them most.

There were some significant in the responses from different groups of teachers. For example, 77 per cent of the Serbian teachers agreed that violence was calling someone bad names, making faces or making fun of somebody, compared with 57 per cent from other ethnic groups. Serbian teachers were also more concerned about domestic violence against children, with 49 per cent of respondents expressing concern on the issue compared with 30 per cent of Albanian teachers.

Differences were not only among ethnic groups, but also between rural and urban respondents. It appears that teachers in urban settings are more concerned about the issue of violence in general as is illustrated by Table 2.

**1.4 Defining violence – Teachers & Older children compared**

The questionnaire survey conducted with teachers and older children asked, “Do you think it is violence when…”? As can be seen from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Urban teachers - Rural teachers concerns about violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about bullying (Violence that includes name calling, making faces or making fun of someone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about physical violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about sexual violence &amp; abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about child trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about emotional abuse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Teachers’ and older children’s definitions of violence**

![Graph showing definitions of violence](image)
Figure 2 (below), the level of agreement between the two groups was quite high, although both groups found it difficult to define violence in any detail. Teachers and children agreed closely in the areas of physical and sexual violence, with the widest difference of opinion being that teachers were more likely to consider ignoring a child to be a form of violence than were the children.

Many respondents in these groups, mentioned “mistreatment” or “violation of human or children’s rights” to define violence. It was unclear what was meant by mistreatment, for example, as no further explanations were provided, suggesting that respondents were simply repeating terms and phrases that they had learned. It may be that whatever medium (e.g., teacher training, curriculum based modules) had provided respondents with these terms was not effective in providing the deeper understanding required to tackle such issues.

1.5 Defining violence – Parents
The parents with whom we spoke differentiated between physical and psychological violence. While physical violence was defined as the infliction of pain or physical harm on a person, emotional violence was said to include different forms of intimidation such as threats, insults, humiliation or blackmail. Some parents said that domestic violence was common in their environment.

Violence is everything you force a person to do, and that has negative consequences for that person. (FGD, Albanian)

There are two kinds of violence, physical and psychological violence. (FGD, Serbian)

2. Experience & Extent of violence
There is clear evidence from all respondent groups that violence occurs at school including physical punishment by teachers. This is an important finding as it is indicative of the existence of a situation which must be addressed in order for education in Kosovo to meet acceptable standards and provide a safe place where children can learn.

Responses to this part of the research are presented, as far as possible, in terms of what kinds of violence are experienced, where it is experienced, and who are the perpetrators. Given the nature of the research it is not always easy to separate these aspects from one another. As Figure 3 below shows, younger children were more likely than older children to report being afraid to go to school because they thought that they might be beaten because of bad grades. In contrast, more older children than younger children said that they were afraid to go to school because of the long distance that they had to travel. The detailed presentation of findings on the following pages expands on these fears and explores the basis for their existence.

Figure 3. Reasons cited for being afraid to go to school

- You might get bad grades and get beaten because of that
- There are bad people front of the shool yard that might hurt you
- Of the long distance you have to go to school from your house
- Someone will do something bad to you on the way
2.1 Younger Children (Age 6-10)

When asked if they had personal experience of violence, 29 per cent of the younger children responded in the affirmative. There were no differences between boys and girls, but more respondents from urban areas (36 per cent) said that they were victims of violence compared to those from rural areas (21 per cent).

When asked to give an example of violence in schools, most children talked of fighting between students, with 46 per cent stating that children were from the same class and 41 per cent stating that perpetrators were from other classes. Eleven percent of respondents mentioned violence by teachers against children, with 18 per cent of respondents in rural areas and 4 per cent of children from urban areas citing this as an example of school violence.

There was also a fear of poor performance at school, which can cause further problems in communication with teachers and parents. This child of seven is already afraid of the consequences of his poor performance.

I am afraid that they are going to throw me out of the school, or that I am going to fail the class, and will have to repeat the same class again next year. (IDI, Albanian, 7 years old, Male)

Many children spoke at length of personal experiences of violent behaviour or of witnessing it. It became apparent that conflict situations, including violent behaviour, were often resolved with the involvement of adults when children sought their support or protection. It is worrying that many adults intervened with violence on such occasions, providing an inappropriate role model for children, who may behave similarly in future conflict situations.

The interviews also revealed a high incidence of domestic violence, which included both verbal and physical violence. It appears that parents usually subject children to physical violence if they behave inappropriately, thereby violating what are accepted as family rules, or when they do not fulfil their “duties”. The children found this type of punishment acceptable, saying they understood the link between their behaviour and parents’ reactions. In this way, violence is transmitted down the generations.

Children usually find themselves at home, in school or in the street as they transit between the two and other social activities, so it is not surprising that these three locations provide the setting for violent behaviour.

Although only 27 per cent of younger children mentioned spontaneously that the school was the place where violence happens mostly, when asked explicitly if they think the violence against the children happens at the school, 36 per cent of respondents answered in the affirmative and 52 per cent responded negatively. However, the majority of children (84 per cent) were not afraid to go to school. With respect to differences between different demographic groups, more Albanian children were more likely to find school a violent place than Serbian children.

Overall, the street was perceived as the most violent place, with approximately 75 per cent saying violence happened there, 27 per cent said the school was the scene of violent events and 12 per cent mentioned the home. However, there were important differences between ethnic groups as illustrated by Table 3.

Not surprisingly, given the problem of freedom of movement, respondents from Serb majority areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Where does violence happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence happens on the street</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian areas: 68 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian areas: 82 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence happens in school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian areas: 33 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian areas: 18 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence happens at home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian areas: 15 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian areas: 2 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
perceived the street as a more dangerous place, whereas in areas with an Albanian majority this was less often the case. Despite this perception of danger in the street, 70 per cent of respondents from Serb majority areas were not afraid to go to school, while 92 per cent of Albanian respondents expressed no fear of going to school. Girls were more afraid of being in the street than were boys (27 per cent compared with 21 per cent). Nevertheless, the fear of violence on the street was relatively low considering that this was the place deemed the most violent.

A key factor appears to be the distance the child lives from school. Children who lived near school did not appear to experience any problems on their way to or from school, nor were they afraid that something bad might happen in that period. In contrast, those children who lived further away from school felt unsafe when travelling to or from school because they had been exposed to violence, usually by other children their age.

In predominantly Albanian areas 13 per cent said that they felt afraid in their homes, while only 1 per cent of respondents from predominantly Serb areas were afraid at home. Over one third of respondents said that a parent was violent towards them, with 42 per cent of girls identifying parents as perpetrators compared with 27 per cent of boys. Sixteen percent experienced violence by school staff and 12 per cent said that the perpetrator was a schoolmate. Boys identified schoolmates as perpetrators more than they did parents. That being said, a rather telling comment came from the interview data:

*The school is not far way from my house, it’s 1km. I go there walking with my sisters and with my friends. Many times the older children that live here in the village teased me on my way to school.* (IDI, Ashkali, 10 years old, Female)

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Violence by teachers

Although school was generally seen as a place where children can play and socialize, most of the younger children interviewed believed that teacher violence was common in schools. Children said that teachers often punished them for various reasons including failing to fulfil school obligations and tasks, but also in an attempt to discipline the class. From the interview data, it appears that different teachers apply different forms of punishment ranging from verbal (usually addressing children in loud voice) to threats and physical punishment.

*When we don’t learn the lesson, the teacher beats us and tells us that if we don’t learn the lesson for the next time, he will beat us again and will put a bad mark as well, so we have to learn the lesson.* (IDI, Albanian, 7 years old, Male)

*When someone doesn’t do their homework or learn the lesson the teacher warns the child and also becomes angry with that child.* (IDI, Serbian, 8 years old, Female)

*When someone does something bad in class the teacher hits him. The stick hurts.* (IDI, Ashkali, 10 years old, Female)

Teachers apparently also employed violence to resolve conflict (verbal or physical) between children. Asked if a teacher had ever touched their peers in an inappropriate manner, 82 per cent of respondents answered negatively while 10 per cent of younger children did not respond. Disturbingly, 7 per cent said that, although rare, they had witnessed such events.

Violence by other children

Less than half of the younger children said other children had made fun of them. However, when asked about the experiences of other children, over half of the surveyed children had witnessed other children being made fun of or called names. Children also report being afraid of other children of their age who are violent and aggressive (physically stronger children, usually).

With regard to physical violence, 41 per cent of respondents said that children of the same age had hit them or used force, while 58 per cent of respondents said that they had never been ignored or neglected by other children. Thirteen percent of the surveyed children said they had at least sometimes been touched by other children, or kissed or had clothes removed by force.

Violence by parents

Almost 80 per cent of younger children said that their parents never called them bad names or made fun of them, 77 per cent percent said that their parents never hit them while 13 per cent said that this happened rarely. Two thirds of respondents did not feel a lack of attention from their parents with the same number of stating that their parents had never ignored them. Although 85 per cent of children said that their parents never kissed, touched of stripped off their
clothes by force, 4 per cent said this happened rarely and 1 per cent said that it happened sometimes. With regard to differences between demographic groups, all respondents who said that their parents kissed or touched them or undressed them by force were from predominantly Albanian areas. Of the respondents from predominantly Serbian areas, 22 per cent did not answer this question with the remainder saying that such events never happened.

### 2.2 Older children (Age 11-18)

As discussed in the description of the survey methodology, it was assumed that the older children might find it difficult to talk about personal experiences with violence. Therefore, we asked respondents about experiences their friends may have had. Some children did respond in terms of violence they had personally experienced. Table 4 offers an overview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Experienced by friend</th>
<th>Own experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse</td>
<td>55.6 per cent</td>
<td>50.6 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>38.2 per cent</td>
<td>27.3 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional abuse</td>
<td>27.6 per cent</td>
<td>18.5 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal violence</td>
<td>25.6 per cent</td>
<td>14.9 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of violence</td>
<td>25.2 per cent</td>
<td>17.3 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fear of violence is also rather common. Over half the older children (51.5 per cent) said they were prevented from travelling freely around Kosovo because they were afraid of violence. Many (42.8 per cent) were afraid of walking on the street, while 40.1 per cent were prevented from attending school because they feared the journey. This is a large number of young people potentially not receiving education.

It was evident from the interviews and focus group discussions that older children understand the damage violence causes, especially psychologically and emotionally. The following comments illustrate this point:

*The effects of violence depend on the type of violence that is being used. If there is domestic violence and the parents have misunderstandings with each other, their quarrels would have a very negative impact on the child, and it will effect their studying as well.* (IDI, Albanian, 18 years old, Male)

*Violence effects people very badly, and the feeling that everybody knows about it, could have an even more negative effect. And if somebody treats you bad, the others shouldn’t have prejudice towards you.* (IDI, Albanian, 16 years old, Female)

*When the children experience violence they get withdrawn and probably it’s hard for them. If nobody protects them they get withdrawn, they feel awful; it’s very hard for them.* (Bosniak, 14 years old, Female)

*Violence has a very negative impact on the children. The children that are victims of violence hide that and they withdraw from their friends.* (IDI, Serbian, 18 years old, Male)
Violence by teachers
While 78 per cent of respondents said that they themselves had never been verbally abused and 17 per cent said they had been verbally abused only rarely, 44 per cent said that children they knew had been called bad names or ridiculed by teachers. One in ten older children said teachers rarely physically abused them. Further, 61 per cent said that they never witnessed teachers slapping, pushing or otherwise physically abusing other children while just under a quarter of respondents said that such situations were rare. Fourteen percent of respondents believed that teachers have behaved badly with them on purpose.

It is encouraging that the majority of respondent felt that teachers generally respected them. While approximately 90 per cent of both Albanian and Serb respondents believed that their opinions were respected, only 67 per cent of respondents from other ethnic groups felt that way. It appears that members of other ethnic groups felt that their opinions were less respected than were those of Albanian or Serbian children.

In the interviews and focus groups, older children generally described their relationships with teachers as good and expressed positive opinions about school. This may suggest that teachers are less violent in their interactions with older than with younger children, especially when it comes to the use of physical violence.

Regarding the delicate area of sexual abuse of children by teachers, 91 per cent said teachers had never treated them that way. However, it is a concern that 6 per cent of respondents mentioned experiencing sexual abuse by teachers, albeit rarely.

Violence by other children
The most common form of peer violence is ridicule and name-calling, with about half the young people having experienced this. About a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) had been physically hurt by other children. Four out of five older children stated that most violent conflicts occur between children from different classes, indicating that rivalry between classes may be one source of violence in schools. Thirty nine percent of children stated that there was violence between children from the same class. Violence by children against teachers was mentioned by 4 per cent of respondents.

Other children were mentioned as perpetrators of sexual abuse by 11 per cent of respondents; again, cases were seen as happening rarely.

Violence by parents
While 20 per cent of children said they had been physically abused by their parents, 84 per cent said that their parents had never neglected or ignored them. Nine percent of children aged between 11 and 18 years reported having been touched by parents against their will. Slightly more respondents (12 per cent) said they knew children who had been sexually abused by parents, although it occurred rarely.

2.3 Teachers’ experiences of violence
Although many teachers could not recall specific cases of violence (see below), especially during the more personal research components such as focus groups, teachers nevertheless believed that violence against children in Kosovo schools is widespread. Given that responses were more forthcoming when the question was broadly asked in the more anonymous questionnaires, it is apparent that the issue of violence against children is a sensitive one. Respondents were more reluctant to discuss the issue when it was immediate and personal, and whether this was an indication of feelings of inadequacy or guilt is irrelevant, it indicates a level of dissonance which may need addressing.

When asked about their experience of violence against children, 82 per cent of teachers were unable to remember if the children they knew were involved in a violent incident in the previous month. Of the 17 per cent who did know of such incidents, 48 per cent said that the incident happened at the street, 35 per cent said it happened at school, and 9 per cent said it happened at the child’s home. Most of the teachers (74 per cent) thought the incidents could have been avoided. Figure 4 presents the aggregate results to the question “In your opinion, to what extent is violence against children in schools a widespread phenomenon in Kosovo?”
When disaggregated by ethnicity the figures reveal different perceptions of violence. Teachers living in predominantly Albanian areas were more likely to think that violence against children in Kosovo was hardly present (43 per cent) or not present at all (21 per cent), while those living in predominantly Serbian areas thought that violence was very present (59 per cent) or quite present (16 per cent). It appears that 64 per cent of teachers in Albanian areas do not see violence as a major problem, while 5 per cent of teachers in Serbian areas do see it as a significant problem. More teachers from predominantly Serb areas (82 per cent) than those from Albanian (31 per cent) thought that fear of violence prevents children from moving around Kosovo. Curiously, given that the Albanian communities probably have more freedom of movement than do the Serbian communities, 64 per cent of teachers from predominantly Albanian areas thought that violence prevented children from going to school or university, compared with 25 per cent from predominantly Serb areas.

Teachers tended to focus on violence out of school. Although respondents thought that family violence was one of the most worrying and common forms of violence against children, almost all teachers thought children faced more danger while they were outside the home. Almost half the teachers (49 per cent) thought that some students were afraid to go to school because they were afraid that somebody could harm them on their way to or from school or because their home was some distance from school (37 per cent). Sixty three percent of teachers considered that children felt least safe in the street, while one fifth of the teachers thought school was where children felt least safe. These responses reflect the views expressed by children. Teachers attribute this fear of the street to feelings remaining after the conflict.

When considering who was likely to be a perpetrator, teachers said that violence at school mainly happened among children, with 68 per cent stating that it mainly occurred among children from different classes and 41 per cent stating that it happened among children from the same class. Apart from that, 22 per cent of teachers thought that a fear of bad grades and punishment could make children feel afraid of school, 18 per cent thought that children were afraid of being hurt by other children and 13 per cent that people outside the school might hurt them in the school yard.

2.4 Parents’ experiences of violence

According to the parents who took part in focus group discussions, both physical and psychological violence occurs in families. Respondents believed that violence is committed by adults, usually parents. Some parents believed that some forms of violence are typical for families of specific socio-economic profiles – for example, that physical violence is more prevalent in poor families and that violence is rare in better-educated families. Here, economic status is equated with level of education. The following comment illustrates the apparent ‘educative value’ of physical punishment, providing the reason for it is explained.

*If the child did something wrong, the parents should tell them that what they did was wrong. But when they do something we do not approve, we slap them without explaining what that was the slap. This is wrong, because we get angry with something or somebody else, and we express this on our children.* (FGD, Albanian)

The form of violence used against a child was very much related to the child’s age. Physical punishments were more commonly used with younger children. Parents expressed the view that it was the only way to resolve problems. The type of violence used seems to differ according to the individual character of the parent. One mother indicated that her husband was more likely to verbally abuse their children:

*I am more patient than my husband, I can reach agreements with our children better than he does, because I spend much more time with them and they confess more to me than to him. My husband yells at them, he doesn’t understand them.* (FGD, Serbian)

3. Perceived causes of violence

The following sections are drawn mainly from the interview and focus group discussions, where comments were made when discussing other
points, which seemed to indicate a perception on the part of the speaker of some causal link. There is a commonly held belief that violence happens mostly in poorer families, which is indicative of an apparent lack of understanding of the issue in general.

3.1 Young children (Age 6-10)
Disturbingly, many children consider the violence of adults, either teachers or parents, against them or against children in general to be a consequence of the victim’s behaviour, and therefore deserved.

The parents hit their children as well, especially when they don’t behave properly or when they don’t study. (IDI, Albanian, 8 years old, Male)

The justification and normalization of violence is to some extent transferred from the home to school, because as with family violence, the children appeared to approve of or rationalize teacher violence in terms of student misbehaviour. From the questionnaire data, 52 per cent of young children said that punishment was due to children not behaving properly in class or at school. Thirty nine percent of respondents said that children were being hurt for not doing their homework or not studying.

It’s very bad to beat up the children, but the teacher hits only those that treat the other children bad. (IDI, Albanian, 8 years old, Male)

“If I deserved it, the teacher has the right to hit me, but if I didn’t deserve it, she doesn’t have the right.” (FGD, Albanian)

The only other cause of violence to emerge was in the area of peer violence, with 9 per cent of respondents saying that children from another neighbourhood, place or town were more likely to be hurt or teased than the others. Thus, social difference or ‘otherness’ is not fully accepted by children.

3.2 Older children (Age 11-18)
Older children reflected on the motivations of the perpetrators of violence at length. A number of possible causes were explored in the interviews and focus groups. Some respondents suggested that the psychological profile of perpetrators predisposed them for violent behaviour; others mentioned social factors contributing to violent behaviour, primarily the influence of violent families who might also be poor or poorly educated.

The reason why some young people get involved in violent acts is the friends with whom they spend time, but there are cases in which violence is a family tradition, their fathers and grandfathers were violent as well, but also the environment in which they live can have an impact. (IDI, Albanian, 18 years old, Male)

The children and young people get involved in violent acts because they lack the proper education from their families, because the education that you get from your parents affects your behaviour, and the teachers say that the way a child acts shows the way their parents have educated them. But there are cases when the families are excellent and very educated, but their children don’t behave properly because they have such personalities. Every family tries to educate their children so that they can be a good example for the community. (IDI, Albanian, 16 years old, Female)

Some young people get involved in violent acts if they envy someone who has achieved success, and when they are in a group they humiliate that person. (IDI, Serbian, 18 years old, Male)

Although they took a broader view of the causes of violence, the older children, in similar fashion to the younger ones, also said poor behaviour was a cause of teacher or school-staff violence. This despite the general comments of most children that they got on well with their teachers and that they were not subject to violence from teachers.

3.3 Teachers
For their part, teachers did not reflect or comment widely on the causes of violence. When considering the high risk groups many teachers thought that children get hurt because they behaved inappropriately at school, thus concurring with the views of the children.

3.4 Parents
In addition to a general acceptance of violence as a means to ensure ‘correct’ behaviour, illustrated elsewhere in the data, parents suggested that violence was either biologically or socially determined:

If the financial conditions would get better, violence would decrease. (FGD, Albanian)

It is in our biology to use violence against each other. (FGD, Serbian)
4. High-Risk or Vulnerable Groups

4.1 Younger children (Age 6-10)

When asked if some children get hurt more often than others in school, 40 per cent of younger children thought that not all children in school are equally at risk. Most children (70 per cent) said boys were more at risk, 11 per cent said girls were more at risk, and 19 per cent said that all children were equally at risk, with no gender differences evident in their responses. Just over half the younger children questioned (52 per cent) believed that older children are hurt more often, while 22 per cent said that younger children were at greater risk and 24 per cent believed that younger and older children were equally hurt.

Other than physical characteristics such as age or sex, children who seem to be at risk are those who misbehave, with 52 per cent of young respondents saying such children would be at risk; similarly, children not doing homework or studying appropriately were seen to be at risk by 39 per cent of respondents. Nine percent of younger children said that children were at greater risk when they came from another neighbourhood, place or town.

In interviews and focus group discussions with the younger children, the bullying of young children by older students was described as frequent in schools. It seems that successful students are frequently targets for assault by less successful students. Some mentioned that there are conflicts arising from differences in ethnicity.

Those that are older and they’re not strong - they fight with younger children so that they can show off in front of other people, that’s why they find as their victims unprotected and weaker children. (FGD, Serbian)

Usually the bad students tease the good ones, and then they go and tell the teacher, and the teacher beats them up and tells them not to tease the other children again. (IDI, Albanian, 7 years old, Male)

Children usually get hurt by older people. The older boys beat the weaker ones. (IDI, Serbian, 7 years old, Female)

Children that need most help are those that are hurt. (IDI, Roma, 6 years old, Male)

4.2 Older children (Age 11-18)

In general, more than half the older children (54 per cent) believed that some children were hurt more often at school than others, although the situation differed between schools in different ethnic areas. Sixty three percent of older children from Albanian majority areas, compared with 38 per cent of respondents from Serb majority areas, believed that there are some children who get hurt more often than others.

The belief that boys get hurt more often was expressed by 55 per cent of respondents, while 19 per cent believed that girls get hurt more often than boys and 19 per cent felt that boys and girls were at equal risk of violence. 60 per cent of boys and 49 per cent of girls believed that boys were hurt more in school. In terms of age differences, 36 per cent of respondents believed that older children were at greater risk, compared with 30 per cent who felt that younger children were hurt more and 23 per cent believing older and younger children were equally at risk.

In a similar pattern to the younger children, 51 per cent of older children believed that those who do not follow orders were at risk, while 48 per cent felt that those who misbehaved were at risk. Almost a quarter of the older children identified children with disabilities as being at risk, while 22 per cent suggested that those of low socio-economic status were also at risk. Children of different ethnicity were thought to be at risk by 17 per cent of respondents and 7 per cent thought those children favoured by teachers would be targeted [presumably by peers].

4.3 Teachers

Two fifths of teachers thought that some children get more hurt than others. Male teachers from predominantly Albanian areas were more likely than teachers from predominantly Serb areas or female teachers to believe that young children and boys were at greater risk of harm. One third of respondents felt that children who lived in grave economic and social circumstances or who came from less educated families were at greater risk, because “they do not listen to orders/guidance”, echoing the children’s beliefs about misbehaviour being a risk factor. In addition, approximately 20 per cent of teachers thought that children with “problems” or disabilities were at greater risk than other children. However, 40 per cent of female teachers compared with only 4 per cent of male teachers said that children with development problems were at greater risk.

When responses were disaggregated, 21 per cent of teachers from predominantly Serb areas believed that children of different (non-majority for the area) ethnic backgrounds were at risk. Only 6 per cent of teachers from predominantly Albanian areas thought that children of non-majority ethnicity were more at risk. Rural and urban teachers differed in their perception of
the socio-economic factors, with 50 per cent from rural areas and 29 per cent from urban areas suggesting that children living in poor socio-economic conditions were at greater risk of violence. However, opinions were reversed when considering behaviour, with 61 per cent of urban teachers compared with 31 per cent of rural teachers thinking that children who do not behave at school were at greater risk.

4.4 Parents
The main responses by parents on this issue seemed to support the findings with other groups, that misbehaviour puts children at risk, particularly from parents. Children who do not satisfy their parents’ “criteria” and violated rules of behaviour in their families are more exposed to violence. Some parents appeared to approve of violent measures, believing that in some situations violence is the only appropriate disciplinary measure, while others felt it was not the best way to deal with difficult situations:

- Violence is caused by mothers and fathers. (FGD, Albanian)
- Sometimes when you come home nervous you must beat your child, even if they are not guilty. The child has a different opinion, you have a different opinion, arguing begins and you must beat him. (FGD, Serbian)
- We should be close to children, communicate with them, caress them, and don’t differentiate between the girls and boys. (FGD, Albanian)

5. Support for victims of violence
A key finding with all children was the reluctance to report incidences of violence. In this way, violence becomes an accepted and unacknowledged part of school (and possibly wider) life with little or no action being taken to prevent it or to deal with its consequences.

5.1 Younger children (Age 6-10)
When asked at the questionnaire stage whether they would tell anyone about their experience of violence 80 per cent of younger children said that they would. Almost three quarters said that they would tell their parents, with 42 per cent stating they would talk to their mother and 31 per cent to their father, while 19 per cent would report the violence to their teacher and 6 per cent to a sibling. When asked about something bad happening at school, 85 per cent said that they would report it to a teacher, possibly because teachers would be the closest adults at the time of the incidence. However, 55 per cent stated that they would still call their parents and 6 per cent might call a police officer. Girls were more likely to report a violent incident to their parents than were boys (60 per cent compared with 50 per cent).

The data from the interviews tells a different story, with a number of children saying that they would hesitate to look for help if exposed to or witnessing violence. They believed it would not resolve the problem, and may even make it worse. There may be a perception that violence provokes violence and that, by involving other people, the person reporting an incident could become a victim of violence or be exposed to it again.

- The teacher doesn’t treat well those children who misbehave and those who don’t do their homework. He beats them up. When the teacher beats them up they don’t tell anyone about it, because they are afraid that it will happen again, only because they talked about it. (IDI, Albanian, 7 years old, Male)
- When I see that someone is beating another person I go and try to separate the fighting people. I have told the teacher when two boys were fighting, and she separated them and asked why was that happening. (IDI, Serbian, 9 years old, Male)

5.2 Older children (Age 11-18)
We asked older children to what extent institutions and groups could help children who are victims of violence, especially in schools. Fewer of the older children (51 per cent) said they would talk to anyone about being exposed to violence. Of those children who would look for help, most believed that families and friends could be of most assistance to children, followed by the police, teachers or other school staff and medical institutions. Religious organizations and the media were considered the least helpful. Table 5 illustrates the responses. However, some children said that they would be afraid to tell their parents if they were victims of violence from teachers or caretakers, as this, “would make our parents angry and they would in return beat us up; because being punished by the teacher means you have done something wrong”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Who would you turn to for help?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorities (police or other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at responses from different ethnic groups, children from Albanian majority areas appeared to be more prepared to approach a teacher than those in Serb majority areas (68 per cent vs. 20 per cent). Most Albanian children said they would first turn to teachers for help while teachers were only the fourth on the list of Serb children’s choices. Respondents from Serb majority areas relied more on friends and family members (brothers, sisters, parents). It appears that civil authorities enjoy more trust among Albanian children, with 14 per cent of respondents from Albanian majority areas compared to 4 per cent of respondents from Serb majority areas saying that they would look to the police for support.

There were significant differences in responses for different age groups within this set of respondents. Younger respondents more likely to turn to parents (85 per cent) while fewer older teenagers would turn to their parents (51.5 per cent) and a large proportion (25.9 per cent) would turn to their peers for help. When asked in focus groups how they would react if witnessing violent behaviour, most respondents said that they would attempt to prevent it. Younger respondents would turn to a trusted person for help and advice, usually parents or teachers. Older respondents would try to solve the problem on their own in a non-violent way, usually through conversation. Some respondents also said that they would turn to police for help.

5.3 Teachers
The largest proportion of teachers (32.2 per cent) said they would refer cases of violence to school authorities, followed by police, justice and civil authorities in general. According to teachers, if a teacher notices that a child had been exposed to violence, “the teacher should try to establish a close relationship with and provide assistance to that child.” Technically, teachers have a duty of care and should inform the school psychologist (known as a ‘pedagogue’) who should be able to provide professional assistance. Regrettably, there are currently no school pedagogues in the Albanian schools. The teachers stressed that it is of crucial importance to provide an abused child with maximal support and assistance and to involve other important individuals from the child’s environment, primarily close relatives, in that process. Respondents said that occasionally parents refuse to cooperate.

You can’t help them by yourself. You need to have help from the colleagues, parents, the community and some organization. (FGD, Minority)

Teachers also believed that children should talk to teachers, headmasters or pedagogues if they are victims or witnesses of school violence. However, some teachers said that the children felt they have no one to turn to in such situations.

The biggest problem is that they don’t have anyone to whom to turn. (FGD, Minority)

5.4 Parents
Most parents said that if they found that their children were victims of violence, they would take steps to prevent it. The first step would be to talk with the child about his/her experience. Next, the parents would turn to headmasters, teachers and school pedagogues for help.

6. Current strategies for preventing violence
Interestingly, although many adult respondents stated that violence is something that “should be stopped” or “shouldn’t happen,” they themselves commonly use it as a disciplinary measure. That many respondents (including victims) were able to rationalize or justify violence against children by adults, either as it is simply a part of life or necessary to instil good values or discipline children, is clear evidence that it is an issue that can only be effectively addressed if it is tackled on a community-wide basis.

6.1 Older children (Age 11-18)
Most of the young people we spoke to believed that not enough is done in their schools to prevent violence and that schools do not provide sufficient support for children who are exposed to violence. Proposals about how to make schools more efficient in addressing violence included, organizing debates about violence to inform children in an appealing way about all the relevant issues. Respondents also suggested that it would be necessary to work with teachers on the issue of violence, especially focusing on the attitudes of teachers, given that they are often perpetrators of violence.

Older children from Albanian majority areas felt that the police, telephone SOS lines, counselling groups and social service can be useful in solving this problem, more than did children from Serb majority areas. Respondents also considered the introduction of harsher penalties for perpetrators, stricter application of existing laws, training specialists and teachers, and creating social rehabilitation centres for children.
victims of violence would be the most effective in preventing violence.

Some responses indicated a lack of understanding of the complexity of the issue, albeit well-intentioned:

Violence could be prevented if parents prohibited some things to their children. The teachers should explain to the students what is right and what's wrong, and they should tell the students to repeat that until they have understood it completely. (IDI, Serbian, 18 years old, Male)

6.2 Teachers
In some respects, teachers’ responses were more fatalistic or even simplistic than those of children. Primarily, teachers believed that the schools (including school personnel) do not have the capacity to fully protect children. On concrete suggestion was to engage security agencies or police to protect schools and make them safe.

6.3 Parents
For their part, parents expressed the belief that the school employees are responsible for children under their control, including for their protection against violence. A degree of sympathy for the difficulty of the task was expressed:

I and the majority of the other parents should be satisfied with the way the school solves the issues with our children, since we as a family can’t always solve issues with two children, how could school do such thing when there are 500 students in a school. (FGD, Serbian)

Parents acknowledged that the problem should be tackled holistically, as a social problem with families and schools involved in the fight against violence. The respondents also believe that it is the parents’ responsibility to teach children “socially acceptable behaviour” and “assist them in adopting proper values and attitudes”. Further, they suggested that parents should spend more time with their children and give them more attention.

More contact with the child, and they will be more open. More contact between parents and children, and between teachers and children. (FGD, Albanian)

Concrete suggestions included the idea that plans and strategies for the prevention of violence should be developed at the school level together with the introduction of strict rules of conduct in schools for both children and school staff. Some parents mentioned examples of organized strategies against violence in some schools. Some parents suggested introducing religion classes, to assist children in adopting “propervalues”.

While most of the parents with whom we spoke said that it was inappropriate for teachers to resort to violence in order to discipline classes, some said that the use of violence in the teaching process was useful to “root out and correct improper behaviour” by children. While this view persists, it seems unlikely that any strategy for the prevention of violence would be successful.
RECOMMANDATIONS
It is clear from this research that violence against children in schools is a complex problem, with many underlying causes and, unfortunately, no simple solution. This research and the International Study will help direct the attention of the governmental bodies and civil society, acting as a catalyst for developing an organized and coordinated response, as well as stimulating the exchange of information which will help to create a more transparent and effective learning model.

It is clear that ways of addressing the attitudes concerning violence need to be explored. It is evident from this research that there are problems in defining violence against children in Kosovo. The findings illustrate that parents, teachers and the children themselves feel that, on occasion, violence against children (in the form of corporal punishment) is justified, a view that is in stark contrast with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This disparity is not one that can be remedied easily and requires, as a minimum, widespread education to modify community attitudes to violence. This can only be achieved with concerted political and legislative effort.

Furthermore, given that independent research (such as is described herein) is often the only major source of data, a central register of violence in schools could determine and monitor incidence rates, thereby providing information to support best practice in evidence-based intervention strategies. Such information would give an indication of the effectiveness of interventions and would indicate which communities and groups are in greatest need of intervention. Finally, any strategy or intervention to tackle violence against children, whether in school or at home, must necessarily take a community-wide approach by directly involving all stakeholders – teachers, parents, police, health professionals, community leaders and government representatives and, most importantly, the children themselves.

There needs to be a lobby for creating adequate legislation and instituting creative solutions to address the issues of violence against children in schools. Change is a long and difficult process, especially in regions such as this one, where there are many economic and social challenges, not least of which is the problem of rebuilding a society still struggling within itself in the aftermath of conflict.

Because of the complex nature of the political situation in Kosovo, there are many stakeholders who could be involved in introducing or implementing the necessary steps to reduce violence against children in schools. General points to consider would be to find ways of addressing the issue of violence against children and others in the wider society and linking this with the problem of violence against children in schools. Violence is a large issue and may well require further research into specific aspects, for example, looking at:

- Other institutions where violence takes place
- Violence within families
- The fostering and adopting of children
- Children from minority groups who may drop out of school
- Education for victims of trafficking
- Co-ordination of NGO programmes which provide training for all education professionals

The following specific recommendations are addressed to all stakeholders, with an attempt to narrow down the areas of responsibility where possible.

For national political actors:
- Ensure political, legal and institutional practices meet the minimum standards for human rights.
- Establish good lines of communication with European countries, in which interventions to address the problem of school violence are being developed and evaluated.

For policy makers and policy implementers in the areas of education, social work and health:
- Create a central body of multi-disciplinary specialists to deal with the issue of violence against children.
- Establish effective strategies to prevent violence against children.
- Educate parents, children, teachers and other relevant professionals on minimum standards for human rights (e.g., the UN Convention on the Rights of the
Child), thereby equipping individuals and organizations with the skills to better recognise and prevent violence against children.

- Offer targeted training to professionals who may be involved in cases of violence against children. This group would include police officers, social workers, teachers and support staff in shelters and safe-houses.

- Create a central register of violence in schools to monitor incidence rates and to evaluate the impact of good practice.

- Undertake systematic evaluations of current procedures that address the consequences of violence against children, with an emphasis upon the well-being of the victim.

- Monitor and evaluate interventions that protect children and promote non-violence.

- Determine, systematically and regularly, the extent of violence against children.

- Involve the media in raising awareness and changing public perceptions about the level and extent of violence against children.

For educational authorities and actors at national, regional & municipal levels:

- Train teachers in a range of methods for counteracting school violence.

- Train teachers to deal with issues of personal, social and health education in the classroom.

- Train municipal child rights coordinators and municipal gender advisors in issues related to violence against children.

- Develop school-based training initiatives in a range of peer support methods.

- Develop whole-school policies to counteract violence and actively promote non-violence.

- Specific actions aiming at the involvement of parents in the prevention and training activities and also activities involving the community as a whole.

For social welfare authorities:

- Provide appropriate support for victims.

- Develop different types of minimum standards required in the shelters/support centres for victims.

- Provision of supervision for specialists working with the victims or their relatives.

See Annex 1 for suggestions.


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OI (2005) *Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo*. Pristina: Ombudsperson Institution,


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UNICEF (_____) *Education of Minority children in Kosovo*. Pristina: UNICEF, Kosovo


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Internet links and resources:

http://europe-ca.violencestudy.org/backgroundpapers.html - Violence in Schools; Chapter from the Background paper prepared for the Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children for Europe and Central Asia (5 – 7 July 2005, Ljubljana, Slovenia) by Dominique Bodin, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, the Council of Europe, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, WHO and the NGO Advisory Panel, with the contribution of EC Daphne Programme to Combat Violence Against Children,
Young People and Women

http://www.violencestudy.org – The official Internet web site of the UN Global Study on Violence against Children

www.bullying.org – A comprehensive list of anti-bullying resources

http://www.ukobservatory.com – UK Observatory concerning violence

http://www.daphne-toolkit.org


http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/ - UN Millennium Goals

Web sites of Institutions and Organizations in Kosovo:
