




Violence Against Children in Schools (Africa in particular)

By

PIERRE JATTA



Presentation outline

- Introduction
 - Key Facts
 - Forms of VAC in schools
 - The Implication of VAC
 - How does VAC affect sustainable development
 - Mechanisms to address VAC
 - Role of Social Workers in addressing VAC in schools
- 

Objective

- To raise awareness on issues around VAC in school
- To highlight the key role social workers can play in minimizing the VAC



Introduction

- Every child has the right to go to school free from fear (art 28 UNCRC)
- Schools should provide quality, inclusive and safe education where children can learn, build friendships, and be empowered with critical skills that can support them to navigate the social situation. Schools are meant to put children on a path that is promising for their future. However, for many children across the globe school is where they experience violence varying from physical, sexual, emotional, and bullying.
- Despite the global campaign to end violence against children by UNICEF, children continue to face different forms of violence in schools

Key Facts

- Globally, half of the students aged 13-15-some 150 million reported experiencing peer-to-peer violence around schools
- Slightly more than 1 in 3 students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying and some proportion involve in physical fights
- Around 720 million school-age children live in countries where they are not fully protected by law from corporal punishment

Source UNICEF




Forms of Violence

- Physical violence (including corporal punishment)
- Sexual Violence (including harassment and abuse)
- Emotional violence
- Neglect (including bullying)



The implication of violence against Children

- Psychological and Emotional consequences (feeling rejection, trauma, fear, anxiety, low self-esteem)
 - Mental health problems (such as anxiety and depression)
 - Risky behaviors (substances abuse)
 - Behavioral and developmental consequences (conflict with the law, non-attendance at school)
 - Fatal or non-fatal injury (possibly leading to disability)
 - Health problems (sexually transmitted diseases)
- 

How does VAC affect sustainable development


- The global economic costs resulting from physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children are estimated to be as high as \$7trillion roughly 8% of global GDP annually (UNICEF)
- Undermines the social and economic development of communities and nations
- Increase public expenditure on child welfare





Mechanism to address VAG


At the school Level:

- Child protection policy and procedure
 - The policy should be popularized amongst students and teachers
 - There should be a referral mechanism
 - Focal point who is trained should be identified (preferably Social Worker)
- 



Mechanism to address VAG

At the community level:

- Establish child protection committees
 - Communities should be empowered through training on child protection
 - Government should post Social Workers at districts level to support communities
- 



Mechanism to address VAG

State Level

- Strengthen laws and policies
- Invest in prevention mechanisms such as sensitization, hotlines
- Strengthen the victim assistance mechanism
- Ensure the implementation of the law

Role of Social Workers in addressing VAG


- Empowering children about their rights and raising awareness on child protection issues
- Offering psychosocial support to victims
- Provide therapy for children
- Referral
- Teach positive behavioral parenting skills to both parents and teachers
- Coordinate the implementation of the Child protection policy and procedure in the school





Conclusion

The protection of children from all forms of violence and abuse requires a concerted effort by all and sundry to provide a quality response. However, the role of Social Workers in the whole protection frame is quite important therefore every school should employ social workers to support effective service delivery thus making the school environment home for children.

A photograph of a group of young children. In the foreground, a young girl with dark skin and hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing light blue denim overalls. Behind her, several other children are visible, though they are out of focus. The scene is lit with soft, natural light, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor setting. The overall mood is positive and joyful.

Thank you.