Endline Evaluation of School for For Change Project Rwanda

Save the Children

End Line Evaluation Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context of the evaluation

Rwanda has made impressive progress in improving access to education achieving primary net enrolment rate now stands at 97.4 for girls compared to 96.3% for boys[1] contrary to the past years where families less valued girl's education. Still, significant challenges remain in ensuring that children acquire even basic literacy skills universally. UNICEF (2018) indicated that violence against children is a fundamental violation of their rights. In Rwanda, 5 in 10 girls and 6 in 10 boys experience at least one form of violence – sexual, physical or emotional – before age 18.

Children are most often abused by those they know: parents, neighbours, teachers or friends. The perception survey to parents and caregivers on corporal punishment in primary schools of Rwanda proved that such punishment leads to child abuse among 30% of children surveyed, and denial of child rights for 28% of children (Ganira Khavugwi Lilian, 2019). Other perceptions, which were minimal, included the use of corporal punishment by parents to disciplining a child (2%) and only 36% parents ascertained it has positive discipline impact on children, 2% of parents knock a child's head while 2% of them pull child's ears. In addition, this perception survey informed that children are punished with psychological abuse, including being beaten with slaps or sticks, and humiliated at home.

It has been noted, through the 2015 global school health survey, that violence against children is tolerated by adults and however it threatens children's well-being. The same report showed Child violence hinders psychosocial development, academic performance, self-worth and self-esteem. Fifty percent of sexual assaults worldwide are committed against girls under the age of 16, and an estimated 1.8 million children are exposed to commercial sexual exploitation and images of child abuse.

As a result, children can experience immediate physical injury, psychological harm, and long-term debilitating physical conditions. This can lead to the possibility of early pregnancy and consequent lower education levels and lifetime health care costs and loss in quality of life. Worst is that the 2017 UNESCO report "Violence and Bullying at School – The Global Situation Report" states that school violence and bullying cause children to miss school, states that it causes them to get lower grades and drop out of school.

Evaluation methodology and purpose

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the School for Change (SFC)endline evaluation. This evaluation took the form of a post-post intervention study implemented as a part of the project's monitoring and evaluation plan, using a mixed-method design which solicited responses from children, parents and caregivers, and community leaders, using the same tools designed from the baseline evaluation in 2019 and adapted following the cancelation of the Randomized Controlled Trial. The evaluation presents findings in responses to four evaluation questions including:

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[1] MIGEPROF, women empowerment, https://www.migeprof.gov.rw/gender-promotion , Retrieved 2nd March 2022

1. Did Schools for Change improve child protection and reduce violence against children in schools?
2. Did Schools for Change improve learning outcomes for children?
3. If so, how did Schools for Change improve learning outcomes (e.g. reduced absenteeism and increased punctuality, improved referral mechanisms)? And
4. How effective is Schools for Change and affects the participation in community reading club?

Findings and Discussion

557 learners were surveyed and interviewed from the implementation areas (i.e. Nyarugenge, Burera, Kirehe and Gatsibo districts). The scope of the end line evaluation did not cover the controlled sectors, only treatment sectors were considered within treatment districts (Burero and Gatsibo) because, during COVID-19, the intervention was scaled up nationwide and affected the evaluation's original settings. Out of the 289 learners, a slightly higher percentage of respondents were girls than boys. On the other hand,3.23% of the learners interviewed were learners with disabilities.

School Level Learning Environment

Through project monitoring, parents confirmed that doing domestic chores help children learn what to do to care for themselves, a home, and a family. When children contribute to family life, parents ascertained that this helps them feel competent and responsible. Note, the project interventions have been designed to create community and household conducive environment in effort to fight against domestic tasks that impede children's schooling, leisure time, or development. End line evaluation findings indicate that 15.98% and 27.47% of children are more likely to participate in household chores and agriculture-related activities for family belonging, respectively. The remaining percentage of 1.62% of children give care to the elderly and/or sick/disabled family members.

The results from the end line showed that the following best practices determine greater chance of boosting the home literacy environment including: 86% of interviewed learners have seen a caregiver read, 82.94% of learners confirmed that caregiver reads to the child at home and 80.43% of learners reporting increased availability of non-textbook reading materials at home, Kirehe district showed a high percentage of children who do self-reading practice notably 98.6% of boys, and 97.5% of girls. Followed by Nyarugenge district where both children, girls and boys, participated in self-reading equally at the rate of 94.2%, each. In addition, girls in Gatsibo district perform better than boys in self-reading, 97.3% and 93.2%, respectively. However, girls in Burera district showed a self-reading practice lesser among girls (88.3%) than that of boys (91.7%) across the district.

Violence against Children

The endline evaluation found out that students who have experienced any form of violence at school reduced from 30% at baseline to 27.83% The students reported their safety varied from home, community and school, and the end line evaluation showed an increase of 5% compared to the baseline evaluation (78%) in the community. Moreover, 78%; students who were feeling safe at school slightly increased at 87% from 80% at the baseline evaluation and there is an increase of 10% from 76% at baseline among the students reported to feel safe at home than before the project. This is noteworthy, considering the higher prevalence of all forms of physical violence as a form of punishment observed during the baseline assessment across the districts of the interventions.

Positive discipline practices in schools and positive parenting at homes

In an effort to improve program implementation, and to provide a more holistic approach to working with parents/caregivers and teachers of children, SC embarked on a Positive Discipline approach in schools and Positive Parenting at homes through the implementation of the School for Change Project that includes a focus on both early learning, stimulation and play to improve learner's relationship. Some of these include proximity between the interacting partners, eye contact, physical contact, one partner's responsiveness to the other partner, and the length and frequency of the interactions. The endline found out that more than 96% of students reported agreement with all questions relating to school motivation and enjoyment. It has been reported, at the Focus Group Discussion, that student motivation and constructive parent/caregivers-student relationships have improved and that constructive teacher-student relationships improved too.

Reading club's participation

Regarding the reading club's participation, see Figure 22, students have significantly heard about the reading clubs, from 28%, baseline indication to 52.2% at the endline evaluation. **The findings imply significant progress compared to the baseline in relation to increased participation to reading club in communities. However, there is still need to increase the awareness of the reading practice,** which can allow the learners to discover the existence of the clubs. Although most students report that they frequently attend the reading club twice a week, 32.3%, as per the standard of practices of these reading clubs. Moreover, 26.8% of learners reported attending reading clubs three days and more a week and 29.55% of learners attended reading clubs once a week.

Correlation with the goal of the project

While the goal of School for Change Project is to strengthen child protection systems in schools and communities for improved learning outcomes for children, the endline recorded the improved literacy practices within schools and communities increased and changed the literacy outcomes significantly by 12.5%, while the students who ever faced the violence surprisingly declined in literacy outcomes by 10.9%. The project contributed to ensuring the safety or improving safe environment for children to learn 12.5% at the endline by enhancing child protection in teaching and child caring within communities of support.

Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has put school activities on hold, which required the project to adopt adaptative strategies to curb the surge. Hence, literacy activities have been delivered through radio in effort to help children have chance to learn and educate parents on protecting children during the Covid-19 lockdown. As result, the literacy programme on radio reached 89.05% of students (88.73% girls and 89.38%, boys) who have heard or read literacy-related messages at home during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

Recommendations

- **To districts of interventions**, it is recommended to consciously implement strategies for ongoing programmes that work in contextually-sensitive ways to counter attitudes and practices, making it harder for children to communicate experiences of violence. This could be done through working community-based CP work force including friends of family (IZU) that have been capacitated on the VAC prevention, identification and referral.

- **To Districts and non-state actors**: Sensitize community members through existing community for a like the parents' evening forum, community meetings, monthly communal work and children to use existing referrals mechanism in place for VAC reporting.

- **To Districts of interventions via social protection directorate and sector education inspectorate**. Extend the training coverage to parents/caregivers on positive parenting practices so to reduce VAC at family/community level. This could be done through the use of positive discipline training facilitators (Trainer of trainers) to reach control sectors that were not covered during the implementation

  - Strengthening the home-based mentoring support visit by IZU and other community workforce (i.e. mentorship and identifying family and children at risks due to family conflicts for early preventive measures

  - Strengthening community-based child protection systems to provide improved access to services for boys and girls that have experienced VAC

- **To Districts of interventions**. Strengthen violence-free-homes messaging through the local Radios and community awareness campaigns to protect children from not only experiencing violence, but from breaking the silence about violence cases.

- **To Districts of interventions**. Promoting awareness among CP workforce and local authorities about child protection systems

- **To Districts of interventions via social protection directorate and sector education inspectorate**. Take time, listening and discuss children concern that causes aggression and other anti-social behavior that are associated with PHP

- **To Districts of interventions**. Strengthening PDET activities, including the provision of mentorship to teachers to apply PD in their classes and continue supporting peer learning cycle initiative across all schools for continued experience sharing among themselves.

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School for Change Project in Rwanda

The 2017 UNESCO report on "School Violence and Bullying – Global Status Report" states that school violence and bullying results in: (1) children to miss school (2) children have lower grades and (3) children drop out. School violence and bullying has a clear negative impact on the educational quality and outcomes as well as harming the physical, mental and emotional health of children and thus has a negative effect on learning. The effects of violence against children go beyond the level of individual children and affect families and the country in general.

Failing to protect children from violence generates huge costs in the form of lost productivity, and response related costs. Moreover, public investments in education will only yield returns when children complete the education cycle with meaningful learning outcomes and become productive citizens and can thereby break out of poverty. Save the Children implemented an integrated child protection and literacy interventions in prevention and response to violence in order to improve children's learning. Hence, the project aims to create safe child friendly schools and communities where children can be safe, achieve their potential as learners and pave the way for a better future.

Source: https://bit.ly/3eyOCb4

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Rwanda has made impressive progress in improving access to education achieving primary net enrolment rate now stands at 97.4 for girls compared to 96.3% for boys[2] contrary to the past years where families less valued girl's education. Still, significant challenges remain in ensuring that children acquire even basic literacy skills universally. According to EDC (2017), 50% of P1 students, 26% of P2 students, and 14% of P3 students finished the school year without ability to read even a single word in Kinyarwanda[3]. While recent efforts have seen the number of literate P1 and P2 students increase by 10% over the past couple years, more work needs to be done both in school and within the community to ensure even more children can acquire literacy skills necessary to support lifelong learning.

The 2015 global school health survey showed that violence against children is tolerated by adults, a threat to children's well-being[4]. The Violence-Free Schools (VFS)[5] study in 2017 commissioned by UNICEF revealed that violence in schools is common and that there is a lack of awareness on positive parenting and teaching; and that Child Protection (CP) system in schools are inadequate.

On global perspective, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 highlights the negative impact of violence and instability on economic and social development. In addition, children who participated in the Positive Discipline (PD) pilot project implemented by SC in 2015 reflected that violence in school contributes to school dropout while non-violent approaches encourage regular school attendance. The same findings were confirmed by the impact evaluation of the Literacy Boost Project concluded by SC in 2016 that highlighted the negative effect of emotional and psychological violence on child development and learning.

Fifty per cent (50%) of sexual assaults worldwide are committed against girls under 16 years, with an estimated 1.8 million children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and child abuse images[6]. As a result, children may experience immediate physical injuries, psychological harm and long-term debilitating physical conditions. This may result in lifelong healthcare costs and loss of quality of life[7] , alongside the possibility of early pregnancy and related lower levels of education. This, in turn, may lead to labour absenteeism and productivity decline at work due to health-related problems. However, underreporting of incidence of sexual exploitation renders it difficult to direct timely and adequate support to victims.

These results indicate that the global costs of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children are significant. In the lower estimate scenario, the global costs amount to 2% of global GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and in the highest scenario, it goes up to 8% of global GDP. It is important to

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[2] MIGEPROF, women empowerment, https://www.migeprof.gov.rw/gender-promotion , Retrieved 2nd March 2022
[3] EDC, "National Fluency and Mathematics Assessment of Rwandan Schools: Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative (L3) Endline Report," (Washington, DC: Education Development Center (EDC), 2017).
[4] Global school-based student health survey, 2015
[5] https://www.unicef.org/media/83206/file/Violence-Against-Children-ToC.pdf
[6] UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) (2011) 'Girls and Young Women: Year of Youth Fact Sheet'. New York: UNFPA.
[7] CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) (2014) 'Injury Prevention and Control'. Atlanta, GA: CDC.

highlight that a varied set of assumptions is made when making such estimations. Violence against children has several costs, such as health costs, social services, and judicial expenditures[8].

In the Keynote of Marta Santos, called upon, in 2014, joint effort to prevent and respond to violence against children through Cambodia responsiveness plan against child violence[9]. The 2017 UNESCO report on "School Violence and Bullying – Global Status Report" states that school violence and bullying result in children

> *"Protecting children from violence is essential if we are to realise the vision of the Sustainable Development Agenda of a world free from fear and violence for all children,"* said Marta Santos PaisThe Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC)

missing schools, having lower grades, and dropping out[10]. In addition, school violence and bullying have a clear negative impact on educational quality and outcomes and harm children's physical, mental, and emotional health, thus harming learning.

In Rwanda, children continued to be exposed to various forms of violence, for example, the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS, 2015) found that 32.6% girls and 29.2% boys aged 15 to 19 years had experienced physical or sexual violence[11]. The situation is exacerbated by weak child protection systems and reporting mechanisms. The effects of violence against children are many, go beyond the level of individual children, and can affect families and the country in general. Failing to protect children from violence generates huge costs to the government, children and their families in the form of lost productivity and preventative and response-related costs. Violence, especially sexual violence against girls, is associated with increased rates of early pregnancy, school dropout, irregular school attendance, and reduced performance. In addition, girls affected by or exposed to violence often set up new poorer families, perpetuating the poverty cycle.

Children continue to be exposed to violence in Rwanda's schools, homes and communities. As a result, many children experience abuse, particularly of a sexual nature. Children perceive corporal punishment as the most common abuse they face; an issue acknowledged particularly acute for girls growing up in rural sectors. Children are punished by being slapped or beaten with implements like sticks and psychological abuse, including humiliation in the home.

In effort to address all those forms of violence against children, IKEA Foundation supported the School for Change project between 2018-2021 taking place in four districts in Rwanda. This project delivered **integrated child protection and literacy interventions** to prevent and respond to violence **to improve children's learning**. The project aims to **create safe child friendly schools and communities where children** can be safe, achieve their **potential as learners and pave** the way for a better future. The project is focusing on four Outcomes as shown in Figure 1.

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[8] The costs and economic impact of violence against children by Paola Pereznieto, Andres Montes, Lara Langston and Solveig Routier, September 2014
[9] http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/
[10] 2017 UNESCO, report on "School Violence and Bullying – Global Status Report"
[11] 'Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey' 2014-15.

Figure 1. School for Change project overall goals, outcomes and results

Goal: Create safe child friendly schools and communities where children can be safe, achieve their potential as learners and pave the way for a better future.

OUTCOME 1
Schools ensure a safe environment for children to learn

OUTCOME 2
Local Child Protection systems are strengthened to prevent and respond to Violence against Children (VAC)

OUTCOME 3
Improved literacy practices within schools and communities

1.1 Teachers apply positive discipline in everyday' teaching (PDET)
1.2 School stakeholders and personnel actively support CP in schools
1.3 Children in schools, through children's clubs, are aware of VAC and CP reporting mechanism and confident to use these
1.4 CP reporting mechanism in schools is in place and functional

2.1 Parents apply positive discipline practices in their homes and communities
2.2 National children's forums (sector level) actively support and encourage community children to utilise CP reporting and referral mechanism
2.3 IZU's are made aware of their roles and responsibilities in CP,
2.4 Sector level CP workforce are made aware of VAC, CP and supported to define roles and responsibilities and supported to develop referral mechanism
2.5 District level CP workforce are made aware of VAC, CP and supported to define roles and responsibilities

3.1 Reading clubs in place in the community for children to practice reading
3.2 Clubs equipped with age appropriate reading material with CP messages
3.3 School leaders (**SEO, Head teachers, Director of studies, SGAC**) supporting teachers to improve literacy (**Use of books**)

CHAPTER 2. PROJECT CONTEXT

The 2015 global school health survey showed that **violence against children** is tolerated by adults and a threat to children's well-being. In addition, the Violence Free Schools (VFS) study in 2016 revealed that violence in schools is common and that there is a **lack of awareness on positive parenting and teaching**. That **Child Protection (CP) systems in schools are inadequate**.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-16 highlights **the negative impact of violence and instability on economic and social development**. Hence, Children who participated in the Positive Discipline (PD) pilot project implemented by SC in 2015 reflected that **violence in school contributes to school dropout while non-violent approaches encourage attendance**. The same findings were confirmed by the **impact evaluation of the Literacy Boost Project** concluded by SC in 2016 which highlighted the negative effect of emotional and psychological violence on child development and learning. For example, in Rwanda, in Kirehe, Burera and Nyarugenge districts, school dropout rates were 7.8, 6.2 and 7.5 per cent respectively in 2015, compared to 5.7 percent at national level. Also, school repetition rates in those 3 districts were 18.7, 17.5 and 10.9 per cent in the same year.

> Around the world, over 200 million children cannot read, write or count properly. Based on evidence of successful interventions, Save the Children proposed a programme to improve literacy and safety for over 160,000 children at school and in communities in Indonesia and Rwanda.
>
> The project integrated the two interventions in the same geographical locations in Indonesia and Rwanda to maximize the result for children and demonstrate a new model that can be adopted by governments to ensure that children thrive in safe environments.

However, **research shows that one extra year of schooling increases an individual's earnings** by up to 10%. In addition, each additional year of schooling raises average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 0.37% (Global Partnership for Education). Focussing on school-children aged 6-12 years, Save the Children designed the project intending to address violence and literacy in schools and communities to ensure children stay in school, learn to their full potential and have a better future. The program aims at protecting children from all forms of violence and abuse in schools, homes and community settings. Hence children are the core beneficiaries of the project. Child-led school activities was to foster child rights and children's participation. In Rwanda, SC study found that in Burera, Kirehe and Nyarugenge district, 44%, 61% and 42%, respectively, of children reported having experienced some form of physical violence in the previous month.

Girls and boys benefited from an empowered system strengthening care and protection within their schools, peer groups, communities, homes, and districts. Various forms of violence affect boys and girls differently; for example, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) affect girls wider. Often culture doesn't encourage children to report nor to speak about violence. SC aims to be more gender transformative in our programming by addressing the root causes and social norms that lead to gender discrimination and gender equality issues for girls and women. This was done and monitored by the SC gender equality marker that all projects must implement (gender mainstreaming). Parents also benefited from positive discipline in everyday parenting (PDEP) interventions. At the same time, we continue to work with women/mothers, and we also propose to focus more significantly on men and fathers in promoting care and protection in the home and community.

2.1 Project Development Objectives

The overall objective of the Schools for Change (SFC) project is to strengthen child protection systems in schools and communities for improved learning outcomes for children. The project helps children in Rwanda learn to read and write in safe, child-friendly schools and supportive communities. The Schools for Change program builds on Save the Children Rwanda's long-standing Positive Discipline program in Rwanda. The IKEA Foundation funds the project implemented by Save the Children and aims to create safe, child-friendly schools and communities where children can be safe, achieve their potential as learners, and pave the way for a better future.

Previous studies suggest that Schools for Change reduce PHP. Similar Positive Discipline project in Burera District found that PHP incidences during the past week reduced from 37.4% at baseline to 14.5% at endline. In addition, there is an association between feeling safe at school and learning outcomes. The 2011 Upper Primary Early Grade Reading Assessment in Rwanda found a statistically significant association between reading ability and feeling safe at school: 84.9% of good readers felt safe at school compared to 62.3% of non-readers (RTI International, 2012). However, they have limited existing evidence on the causal relationship between child protection programs in school and children's learning. And, no evidence on the effect of child protection projects alongside other literacy programs (e.g. Mureke Dusome).

Figure 2. Theory of change for the School for Change
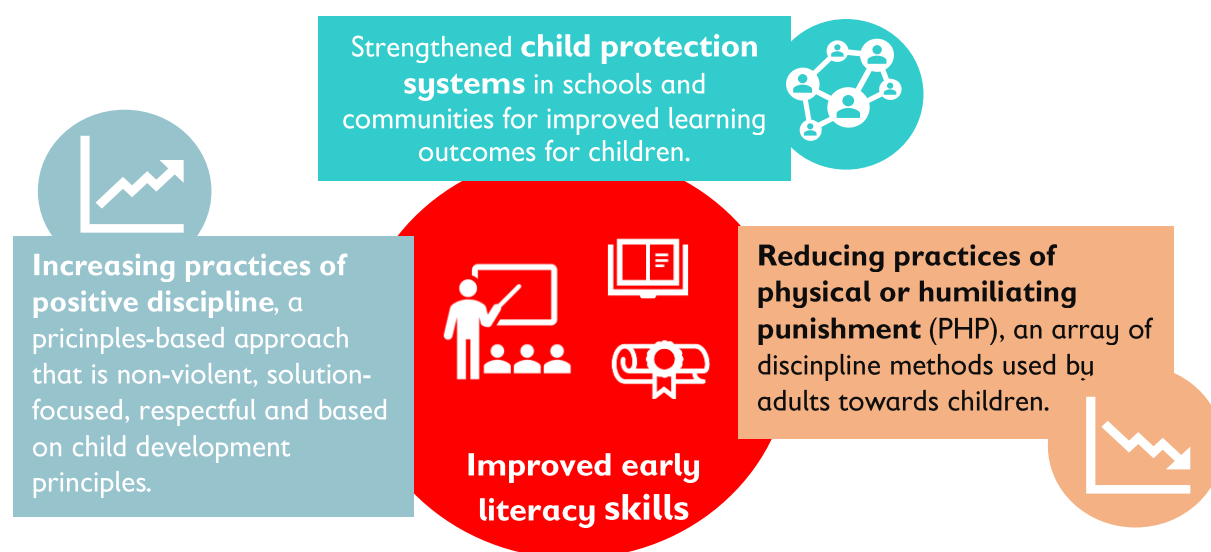
Save the Children-Rwanda implemented the SFC project in four districts (Burera, Nyarugenge, Kirehe and Gatsibo). In these districts, the project strengthened the Child Protection (CP) workforce at district and sector level (i.e. built the capacity of teachers and parents on positive discipline practices) and worked with school general assembly committees. During the end line evaluation, the Save the Children research team evaluated the factors associated with the positive learning outcomes, how they have been employed in the different districts, and how targeted populations have been impacted. Save the Children also seeks to take stock of project strategies and techniques that did not work well as expected, understand the reasons behind and what can be done differently in the future.

2.2 Project Components

The overall objective of the Schools for Change project was to strengthen child protection systems in schools and communities for improved learning outcomes for children. The project helped children in Rwanda learn to read and write in safe, child-friendly schools and supportive communities. The Schools for Change program built on Save the Children Rwanda's long-standing Positive Discipline program in Rwanda. The project was funded by the IKEA Foundation and implemented by Save the Children.

This evaluation focused on implementing Schools for Change in Gatsibo and Burera Districts in Rwanda. However, the Schools for Change program covered two additional districts not covered by the trial: Nyarugenge and Kirehe.

The Schools for Change intervention in this trial consists of the following main components:

- Teacher training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching (PDET)
- Parent training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP)
- Provision of books with child protection content to existing community reading clubs
- Community literacy volunteer (those who lead reading clubs) training on Positive Discipline
- Developing and improving child protection referral mechanisms, including:
  - Strengthening referral mechanisms in schools and communities
  - Raising awareness about child protection referral mechanisms in schools and communities and improving the protection of children from violence.

Teacher Training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching: The PDET training covered all primary school teachers from Primary 1 to Primary 6 (including those schools with both primary and secondary level). Each teacher received the full PDET package of training. In addition, the PDET training employed a training of trainers' approach. Save the Children facilitators trained a few teachers per school, who trained all other primary level teachers in the school within the firsft year of the study (2019).

Parent Training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting: The PDEP training employed a trainer's approach. Save the Children facilitators trained a group of parents, who cascade the training to other parents in the community. The training occurred in close collaboration with local leaders.

Provision of books with child protection content to existing reading clubs: Schools for Change are commissioning children's books with child protection content for reading clubs (described in more detail below) affiliated with treatment schools. Schools for Change provided these books in treatment communities only. No books are provided to schools. Schools for Change expect these books to take around one year to publish and distribute.

Community literacy volunteer training: Schools for Change also trained the reading clubs' community literacy volunteers (reading club facilitators). This training covered a similar curriculum to the PDET training for teachers and the same trainers who train the teachers delivered this training.

CHAPTER 3. ABOUT THE ENDLINE EVALUATION

3.1 Objective of the Evaluation

From the project inception, the randomized control trial (RCT[12]) approach proposed to compare schools under targeted districts and evaluate the expected outcomes, in which the baseline evaluation findings were based on. However, the endline evaluation did not use RCT as planned but relied on the formative evaluation conducted by SC-Rwanda. Between March-August 2020, SC research and project team decided to withdraw in RCT and stop it earlier than planned when the team found that the adaptation noised the trial on COVID-19 that affected control district and there's no important difference between experimental and control interventions. Therefore, the endline evaluation for the project to comprehensively evaluate outcomes of project interventions and changes compared to the baseline indicators. The evaluation relied on the following research questions:

1. Did Schools for Change improve child protection and reduce violence against children in schools?
2. Did Schools for Change improve learning outcomes for children?
3. If so, how did Schools for Change lead to improvements in learning outcomes (e.g. **reduced absenteeism and increased punctuality**, improved referral mechanisms)?
4. How effective is Schools for Change and affect participation in community reading club?

3.2 Evaluation Methodology

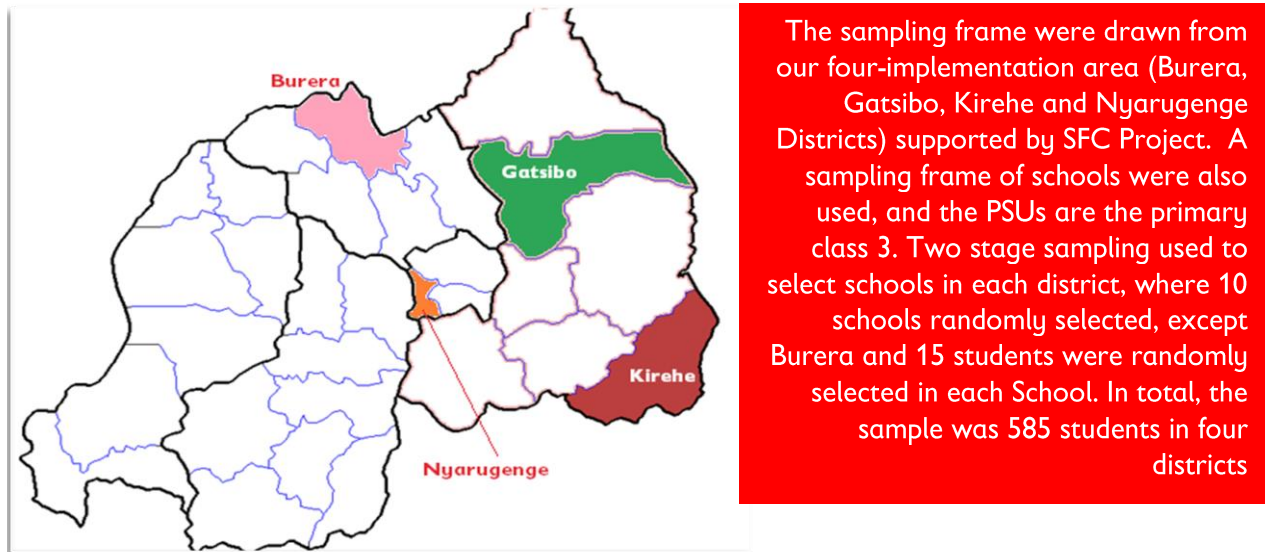### Data collection and Target population

The research team evaluated four districts (39 sectors) – Gatsibo, Kirehe, Burera and Nyarugenge – **covering all public primary schools**. The choice of districts has been based on SC ongoing **Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) project**, with which the proposed project created synergies. For example, in Burera, Kirehe and Nyarugenge districts, 43.7%, 61.4%, and 42% of children, respectively, reported having experienced some form of physical violence the previous month. This is significantly higher than the national averages. In addition, the target districts include rural and urban settings, enabling SC to test and tailor the approach to both contexts.

Sampling Frame for the study

The primary sampling frame for the study was based on the primary schools-2019 in Rwanda. The primary sampling units (PSUs) were districts under the catchment area (Burera, Gatsibo, Kirehe and Nyarugenge Districts) supported by SFC Project. A sampling frame of schools were also used, and the PSUs are the primary class 3. The sample was selected in two stages: at the area (school) and classroom level. At the school level, schools were selected randomly using Stata software. The sampling rates were determined separately for each stratum (school) and sample units (classroom) at the class level. It was systematically selected with a random starting number in each stratum using the list of all classrooms established at the school level.

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[12] The experimental form of impact evaluation in which the population receiving the programme or policy intervention is chosen at random from the eligible population, and a control group is also chosen at random from the same eligible population

Figure 3. Sample allocation and implementation area

The sampling frame were drawn from our four-implementation area (Burera, Gatsibo, Kirehe and Nyarugenge Districts) supported by SFC Project. A sampling frame of schools were also used, and the PSUs are the primary class 3. Two stage sampling used to select schools in each district, where 10 schools randomly selected, except Burera and 15 students were randomly selected in each School. In total, the sample was 585 students in four districts

3.3 Data analysis methods and analytical framework

Three principles were adhered to for analyzing collected data, and interpreting data to respond to evaluation questions:

- The SFC logical framework (outcomes and indicators) was used to anchor the analysis, enabling evaluation of the extent to which outcomes have been achieved, in terms of progress or otherwise against baseline data.
- Analysis for each evaluation question aimed to draw on both quantitative and qualitative data, to more meaningfully describe and explain findings.
- As far as available data allowed, findings for each evaluation question were informed by analyzing triangulated data from all of the tools, contextualized to Rwanda, and analysis aims to be gender- and disability-sensitive.

Data was transferred to Stata v17 for cleaning from Kobocollect. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using Stata v17, where relevant, and further manual analysis of quantitative data in MS-Excel and qualitative data provided was conducted by the consultant. In addition, qualitative data was reviewed manually to record and explore themes, for triangulation, and to provide observations for further interpretation of quantitative findings.

Moreover, all possible data was analyzed, compared between target Districts, and allowed within the baseline survey data. In doing so, qualitative data was analyzed alongside a matrix of responses from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Quantitative data was analyzed based on descriptive and comparative analysis methods. This was, integrated and analyzed by each outcome.

- **Descriptive statistical analysis**: For this comparison, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether the results were statistically significant across project and control schools.
- **Comparative analysis**: To measure project interventions that contributed to the first three outcomes, the evaluation team compared findings to the baseline survey of 2019.

To evaluate outcomes of the project, the team then measured results of the project's intervention by comparing quantitative data between baseline and endline evaluation.

- **Qualitative analysis**: The qualitative survey analysis consisted of a text-based analysis of KII and FGD. The interview transcripts provided information on the current situation and were analyzed using cause-and-effect and inductive reasoning.

3.4 Limitations and constraints during the evaluation

Several limitations were experienced while developing the evaluation framework and implementation it along the data collection and analysis. These limitations include:

- Due to the adaptation on the needs of COVID-19 interventions. RCT was cancelled while it was supposed to be employed over the intervention, including the endline evaluation. Therefore, comparable questions were compared from the survey data
- The evaluation took place in late 2021. During this time, the evaluation team worked within numerous constraints and setbacks, including the prolonged closure of schools and poor access to children/students, limited opportunities for public gatherings and a working environment that was constrained owing to concerns with COVID-19.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Characteristics of the respondents

The endline evaluation surveyed and interviewed 557 learners from the implementation areas (i.e. Nyarugenge, Burera, Kirehe and Gatsibo districts). The scope of the endline evaluation also covers control districts because, during COVID-19, the intervention was scaled up nationwide and affected the evaluation's original settings. The evaluation was conducted to 284 girls (51%) against 273 boys (49%). The mean age was 9.97 years for all learners, with girls were younger on average (9.84 years) than boys were (10.12 years). On the other hand, 3.23% of the learners interviewed were learners with disabilities. By project size, the evaluation covered 27.11% of respondents from Kirehe district, 26.57% from Gatsibo, 24.78% from Nyarugenge and 21.54% from the Burera District (Refer to table 1). Worth to note,47.04% of learners interviewed had repeated a grade in school.

Table 1. Children's socio-demographic background characteristics

Characteristics	Girls	Boys	Total
Children interviewed	284 (51%)	273 (49%)	557
Age of the children	9.84 years	10.12 years	9.97 years
District			
Nyarugenge	69 (50%)	69 (50%)	138 (24.78%)
Burera	60 (50%)	60 (50%)	120 (21.54%)
Kirehe	80 (53%)	71 (47%)	151 (27.11%)
Gatsibo	75 (50.7%)	73 (49.3%)	148 (26.57%)
Disability Status	14(4.93%)	4(1.47%)	18(3.23%)
Ever repeated	127 (44.7%)	135 (49.5%)	262 (47.04%)

Overall, about 3.23% of students report a disability, and there's a difference in disability prevalence between boys (1.47%) and girls (4.93%). Same as the baseline findings, the endline evaluation used same methodology to assess the disability status among learners using the **Washington Group Questions**, which ask respondents if they have difficulty with various types of everyday tasks (e.g. walking, reading, concentrating or remembering), and the results might indicate the presence of a disability. These questions are not direct measures of disability. The indicator for disability used in this analysis is the percentage of students reporting "**a lot of difficulties**" or "**cannot do at all**" on any of the domains assessed. This is the indicator recommended by the working group (Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 2019).

4.2 School Level Environment

From the SFC project, an ideal school environment embraces the idea that all students have a safe learning environment (i.e. home, community and schools) to read. In addition, SFC aimed to promote a school-level environment that attracts knowledgeable teachers, care about student learning, and adapt the teaching and learning materials to meet the needs of their learners. Hence, the section discusses some of the factors affecting school level environment.
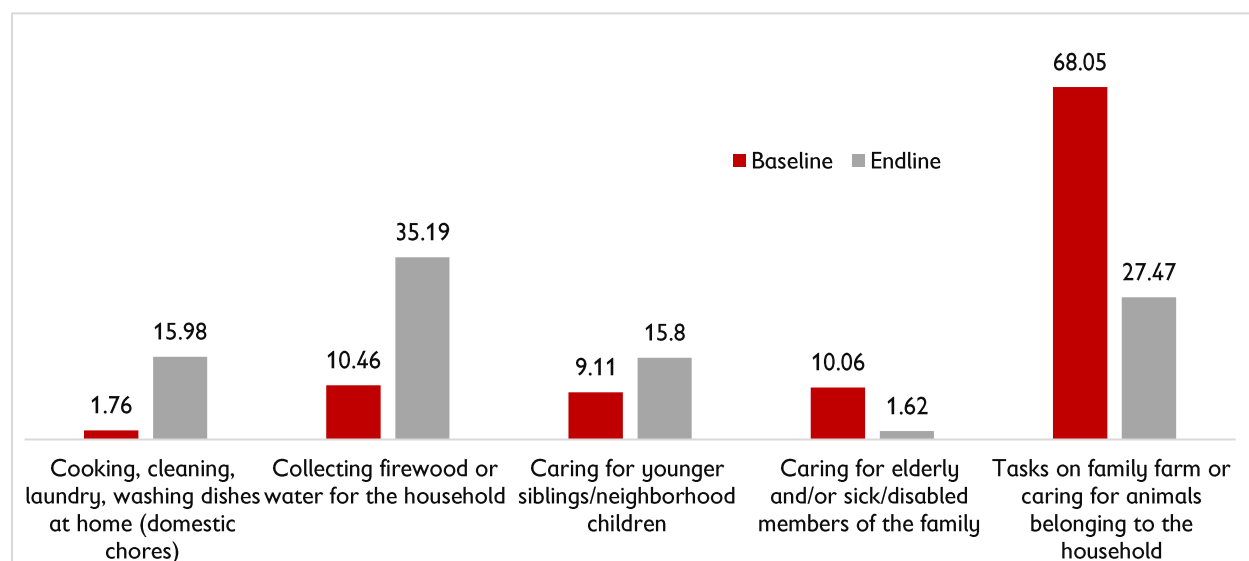
4.2.1 *Household chores*

Child labour, according to the definition of the ILO, excludes children who perform household chores. Engagement in household chores may constitute an important aspect of work and family socialization. However, excessive involvement in household chores (e.g., maintenance of the household or family member care) may impede children's schooling, leisure time, or development.

Doing chores helps children learn what to do to care for themselves[13], a home and a family. Being involved in chores also gives children the experience of relationship skills like communicating, negotiating, cooperating and working as a team. When children contribute to family life, it helps them feel competent and responsible[14].

Compared to the baseline, learners reported, at the endline, the involvement in the household chores mainly collecting firewood or water for the household, cooking, cleaning, laundry, washing dishes at home. Most interestingly, , the endline indicated a significant decrease in tasks on family farm or caring for animals belonging to the household (Refer more on figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Comparison of learners reported their involvement in household chores

Endline evaluation findings indicate that children are more likely to participate in household chores and agriculture-related activities for family belonging. For example, figure 5 shows that collecting firewood or water for the household dominates other household chores, 35.19% (51%, girls and 49%, boys), and 27.47% for tasks on the family farm or caring for animals belonging to the household (31.4%, girls and

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[13] White EM, DeBoer MD, Scharf RJ. Associations Between Household Chores and Childhood Self-Competency. J Dev Behav Pediatr. 2019 Apr;40(3):176-182.
[14] Putnick DL, Bornstein MH. Is Child Labor a Barrier to School Enrollment in Low- and Middle-Income Countries? Int J Educ Dev. 2015 Mar 1;41:112-120.

68.6%, boys). In addition, 15.98% of total children and 15.80% of children participated in cooking, cleaning, laundry, washing dishes at home (domestic chores) (75.3%, girls and 24.7%, boys), and caring for younger siblings/neighborhood children, respectively. The remaining percentage of children give care to the elderly and/or sick/disabled members of the family (44.4%, girls and 55.6%, boys).

Figure 5. Learners reported their involvement in household chores by gender at the endline
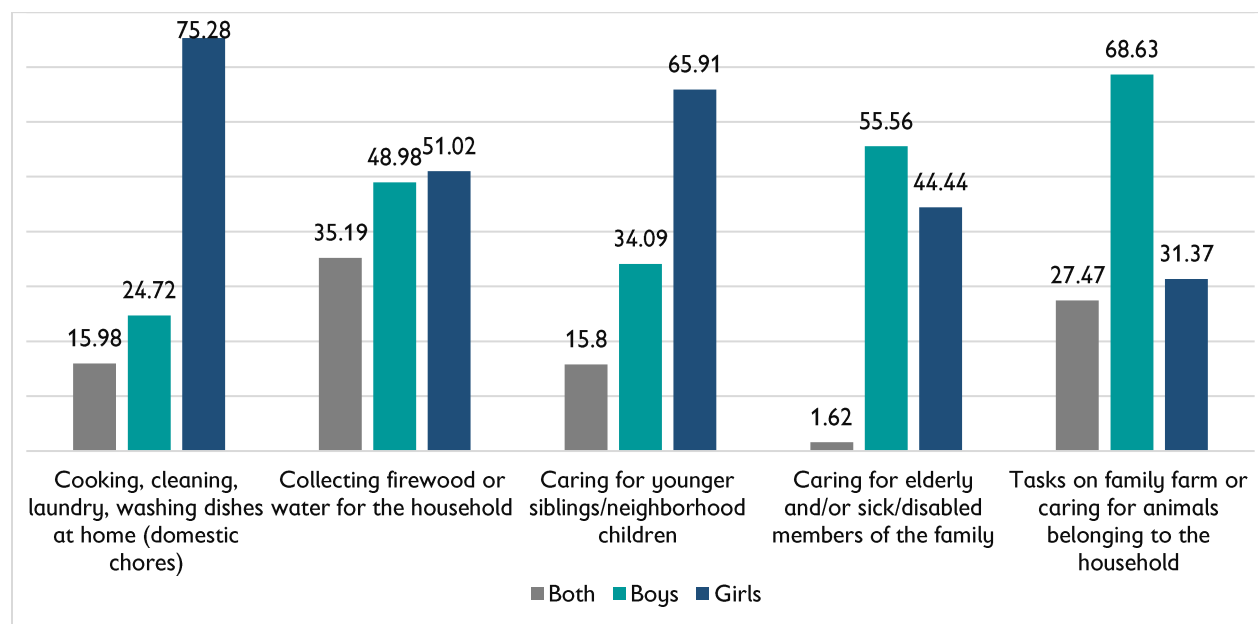
4.2.2 Practices of reading and literacy

The literacy concept within the home environment under this project was to engage parents/caregivers and teachers in supporting learners to actively use any occasion to practically read any available material and increase their confidence in reading /or performing any related reading opportunity. The home literacy environment plays a vital role in children's competencies . In particular, the early home literacy environment (HLE) consists of all literacy resources and interactions in a family.

Home literacy environment (HLE) refers to literacy activities or the availability of literacy resources at home which can be used to facilitate children's literacy development (Puglisi, Hulme, Hamilton, & Snowling, 2017). HLE plays a vital role in children's complex cognitive and academic performance development (Van Bergen, Zuijen, Bishop, & Jong, 2017). Past studies confirm the importance of HLE to the cultivation of children's reading abilities (e.g., Liu, Georgiou, & Manolitsis, 2018). In addition, empirical research shows that four key HLE factors contribute to children's reading development.

During the evaluation, we included access to reading materials at home, seeing family members read, and having family members who read to students - strongly predicts reading achievement for early primary school students (Friedlander, Gasanct & Goldenberg. 2014).

Throughout this evaluation, we assessed three features of home literacy environment based on student reporting: availability of non-textbook reading materials at home, having seen a caregiver read (a measure of value placed on literacy in the household), and whether the caregiver reads to the child at home.

These features of the home literacy environment were common, but not ubiquitous among the study population. Figure 6 shows the percentage of students reporting each factor by gender.


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The results from the endline showed that feature of the home literacy environment marked to be a factor contributing to the expected results. For example, 86% of interviewed learners have seen a caregiver read (86.4%, boys and 85.6%, girls), 82.94% of learners confirmed that caregiver reads to the child at home (81.7%, boys and 84.2%, girls) and availability of non-textbook reading materials at home, 80.43% (79.5%, boys and 81.3%, girls). Figure 7 portrayed the changes from baseline, where there's an increase in each feature presented. This indicates that the project contributed remarkably in favor of rooting the reading culture within the household and creating learners' influence to self-practice the reading at home.

Figure 6. Features of the home literacy environment by gender
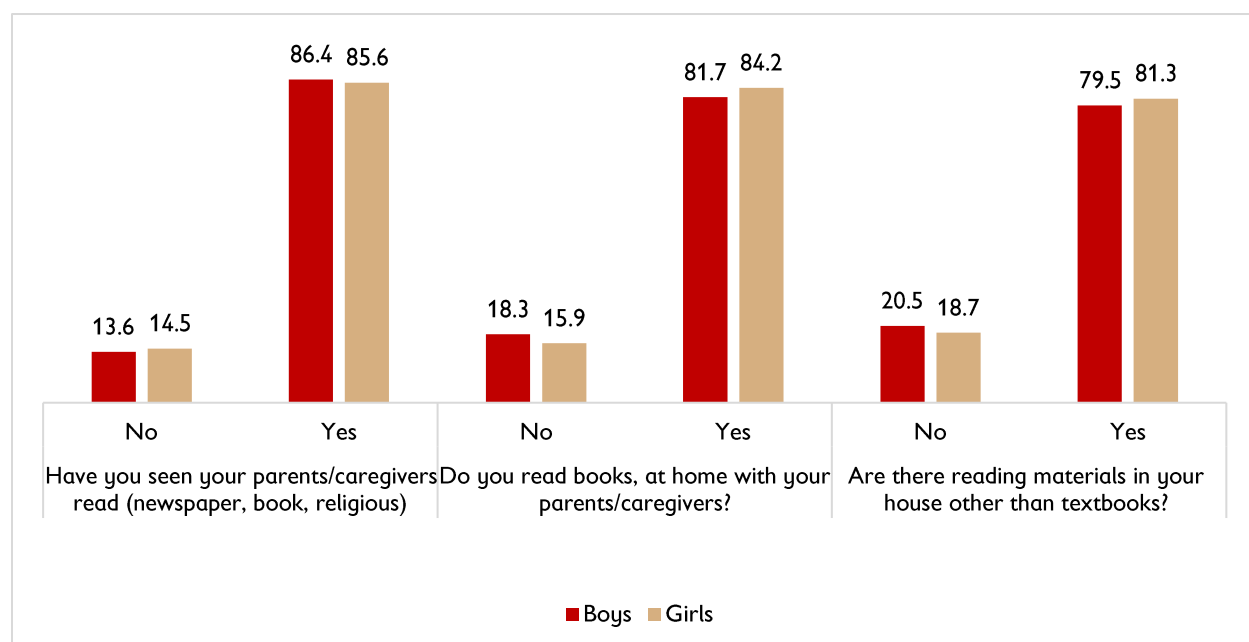
There is extensive literature in which researchers support the positive contributions of parent-child book reading (PCBR) practices and experiences to early child development, especially language and literacy development(Manz et al., 2010; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). In addition, during early childhood is also a strong predictor of children's brain development (Mustard, 2006) and later academic achievement(McElvany & Artelt, 2009).

**Figure 7.** Change in features of literacy practices environment
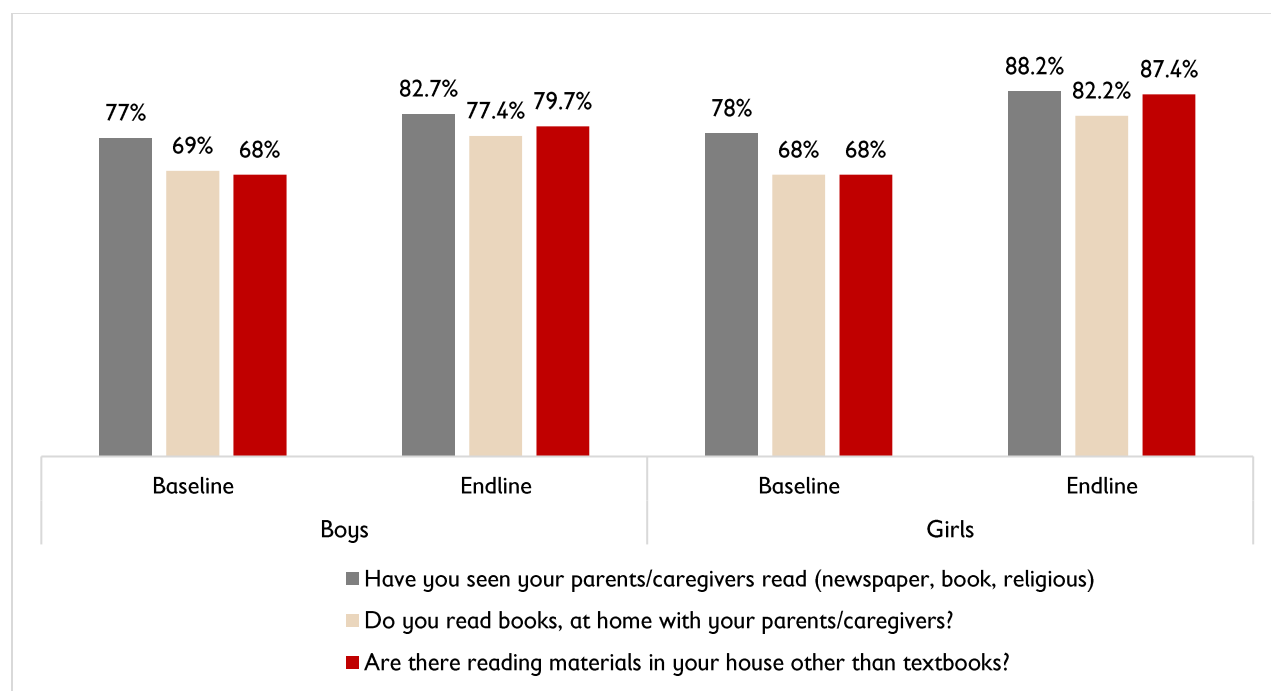
4.2.3 Self-reading practice among learners

The self-reading practice among learners in the endline evaluation carry a high weight as it plays a proxy of learning outcome in absence of EGRA from the baseline evaluation. **In relation to the overall score of self-reading practice at home by district and gender, 94.6% do reading practice, among which 93.3% were students who reported to have repeated a grade compared 95.9% who did not repeat any grade).** Kirehe district showed a high percentage of children do self-practice (boys, 98.6% and 97.5%, girls), followed by Nyarugenge district, both children girls and boys participated in self-reading equally, 94.2%, each. In addition, girls in Gatsibo perform better than boys; 97.3% and 93.2%, respectively. However, girls in Burera district have a self-reading practice lower across all districts than their fellow boys being 88.3% and 91.7%, respectively.

> ## 94.6%
> **Self- reading practice**

The results did not show any significance at the .05 level between girls and boys in self-reading practice while at home. Similarly, Kifer[15] hypothesized, "there will be no significant difference between boys and girls in the relationships between successful and unsuccessful school achievement and their perceptions of themselves and their abilities". However, other studies tend to state that females score higher in certain areas of reading. Additionally, it is not surprising that the girls and boys interchangeably perform in self-reading due to the gender inclusion in Rwanda.

Figure 8. Percentage of children's self-reading practice by district and gender

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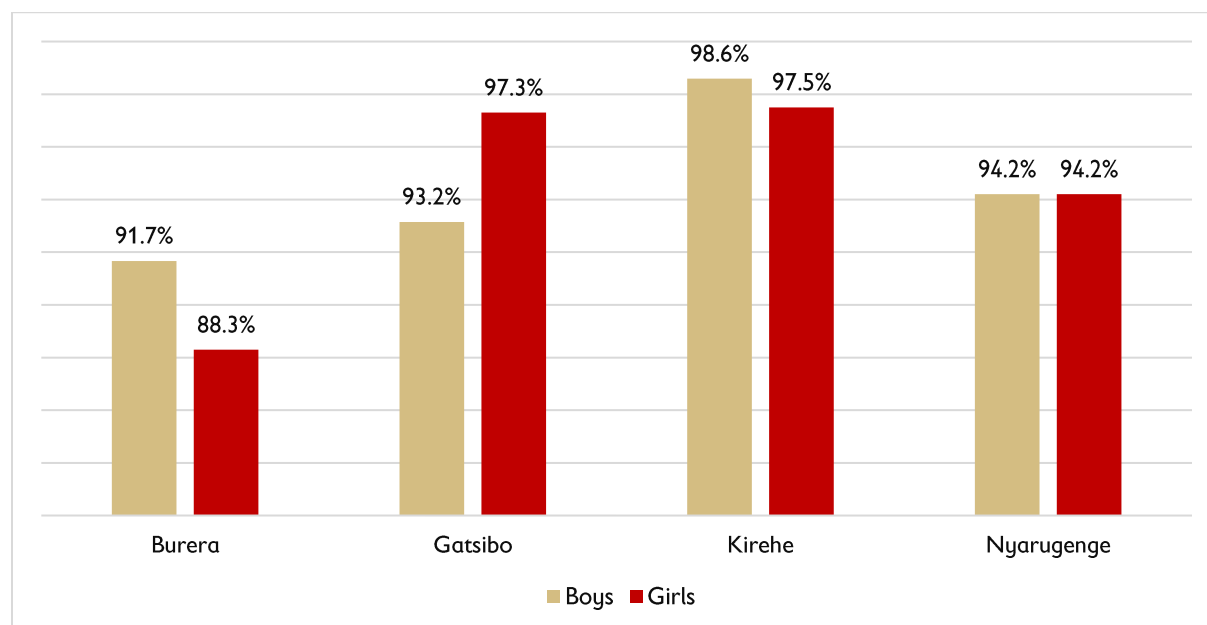
[15] Kifer, E. (1973). The effects of school achievement on the affective traits of the learner. Annual meeting of the American educational research association.

On the question related to "During a typical week, how often do you practice reading on your own at HOME (not including textbooks or notebooks)?",the overall score showed that **93.89%** of the children who participate in self-reading practices and 4.31% of children did not read at all when they are at home and girls are likely not read and no significant difference with their counterpart boys, 54.17% of girls and boys, 45.83%. **Within school weekdays, 87.61% of children can read at their own at least a day.**

Table 2. Frequency of self-reading practices at home

Frequency	Gender		Disability		Repeated a grade		Total
	Boys	Girls	CwDs	Not	No	Yes	
Never	**45.83**	**54.17**	**0**	**100**	37.5	62.5	**4.31**
7 days	44.23	55.77	1.92	98.08	53.85	46.15	9.34
6 days	44.44	55.56	7.41	92.59	55.56	44.44	4.85
5 days	57.81	42.19	1.56	98.44	53.13	46.88	11.49
4 days	49.12	50.88	5.26	94.74	61.4	38.6	10.23
3 days	51.43	48.57	3.57	96.43	50.71	49.29	25.13
2 days	48.65	51.35	2.03	97.97	53.38	46.62	26.57
1 days	40	60	8.57	91.43	45.71	54.29	6.28
Don't know	40	60	0	100	80	20	1.8

### 4.2.4 Class punctuality and absenteeism

As described in Baseline evaluation, punctuality and regular attendance are essential for uplifting learning outcomes among the students in the school. Maybe due to problems or excessive absenteeism and/or delay may result in poor performance. This can lead to repeating a grade if no action is taken to the lack of punctuality and irregular attendance. **Compared to the baseline, there were a jump in each category, from 54.98% in regular attendance to 64% at the endline evaluation** (see figure 9)**.**

**Figure 9.** Comparison of baseline and endline on school absenteeism
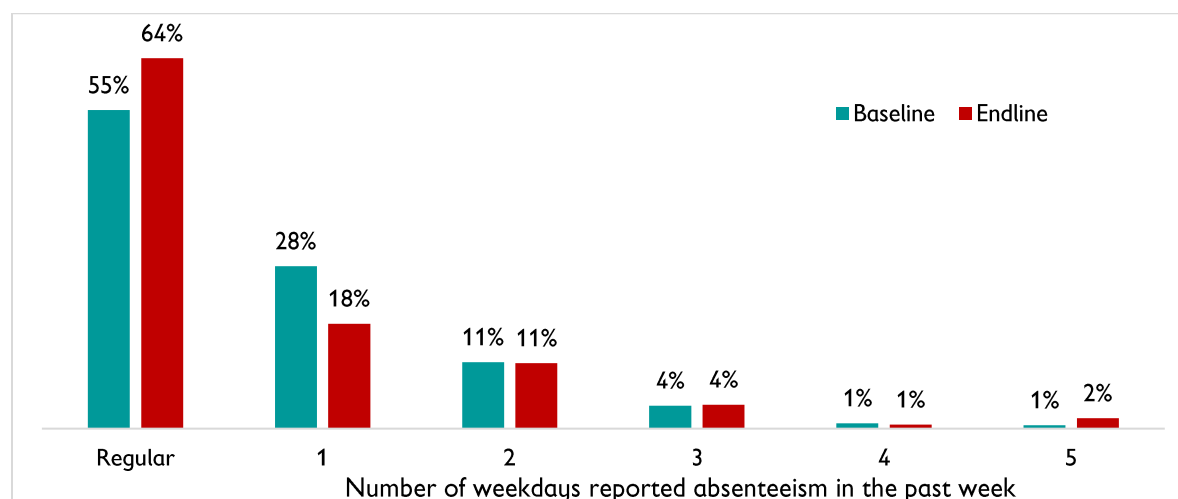
The figure 10 shows a change in students' punctuality from 34.32% to 53.5% at the endline evaluation

Figure 10. Percentage of student who reported punctuality in the past week
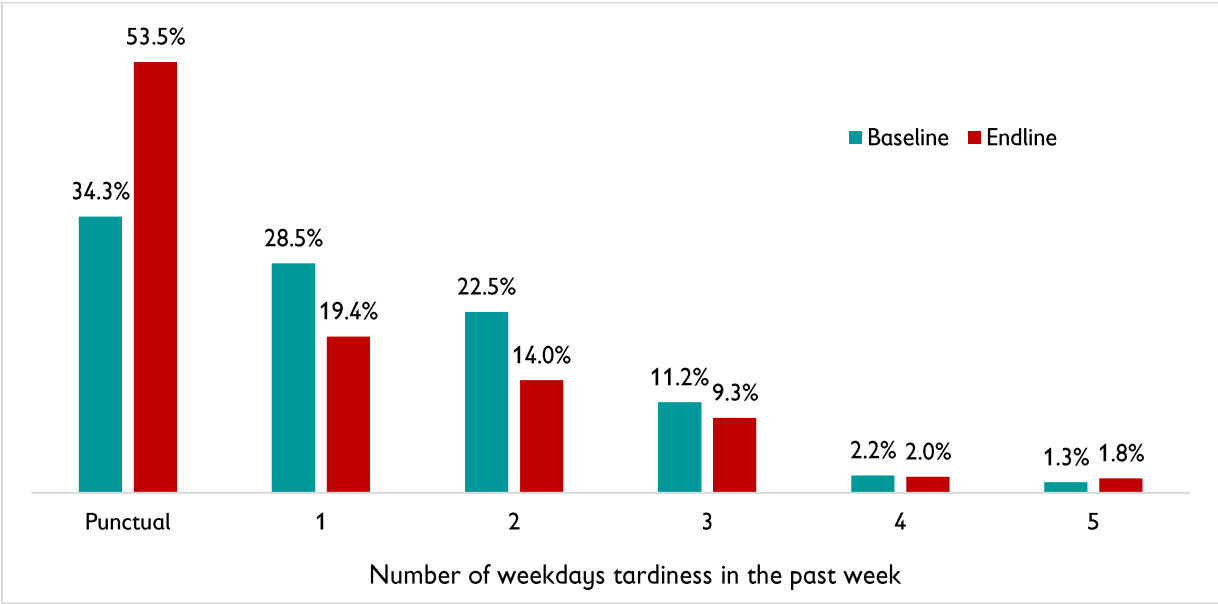
Teachers observed applying some of the positive discipline practices in their classrooms in 202. The percentage of teachers applying positive discipline has increased from 75% at the baseline to 78% for the end line evaluation, which indicates an increase of 3%. From the classroom observations conducted in 2021, it indicates that 78% of teachers observed apply positive discipline in their classrooms compared to 22% who are still developing trying to apply some of the positive discipline practices.

Figure 11. Teachers' application of Positive Discipline practices in classrooms
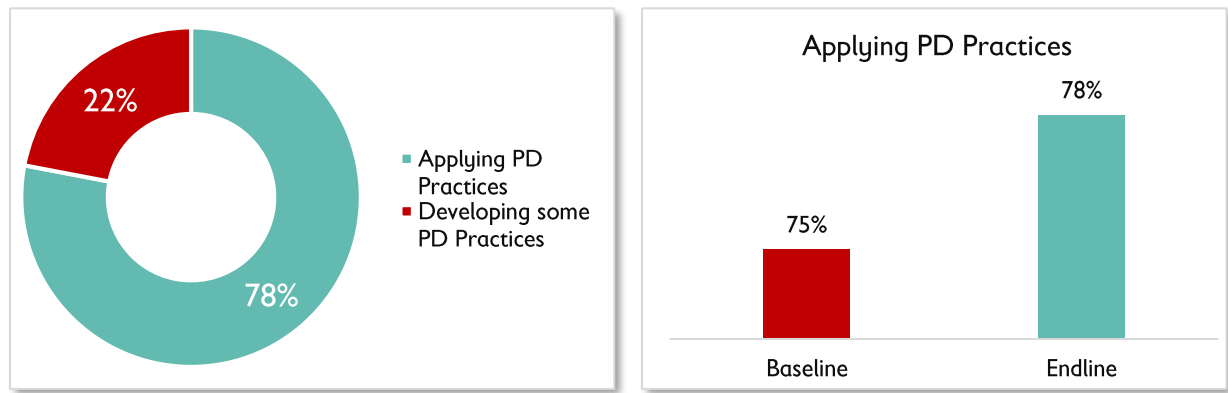
Some of the identified practices includes; supporting students when they are facing challenges in the classrooms, teachers interacting with the learners, recognizing students' weakness, efforts and successes, teacher develops a good relationship with learners in their class. Additionally, teachers call their learners by their names, appreciates students when they do well and not discriminate some learners in class based on gender, age and disabilities.

It is noted that percentage of male and female applying some of the positive discipline practices is equally the same, that is 80% and 77% for male and female respectively.

Figure 12. Applying Positive Disciple by gender
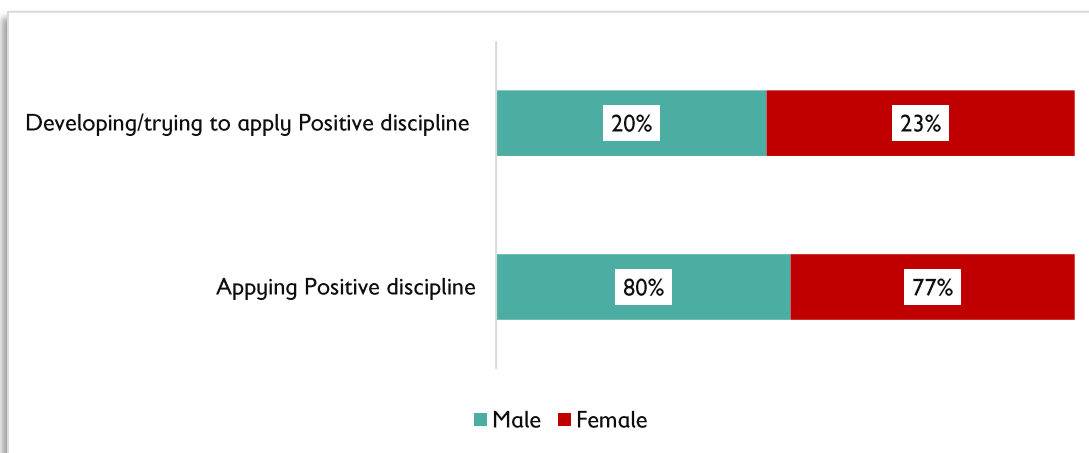
4.3 Violence against Children

Most violence against children involve at least one of six main types of child violence that occur at different stages in a child's development. For example, bullying is unwanted aggressive behaviour by another child or group of children who are neither siblings nor in a romantic relationship with the victim. Violence against children has lifelong impacts on health and well-being of children, families, communities, and nations. For example, exposure to violence at an early age can impair brain development and damage other parts of the nervous system and the reproductive, respiratory and immune systems, with lifelong consequences. In addition, children exposed to violence and other adversities are substantially more likely to smoke, misuse alcohol and drugs, and engage in high-risk sexual behaviour. They also have higher anxiety, depression, other mental health problems and suicide.

4.3.1 Violence at school

The endline evaluation found out that students who have experienced any form of violence at school stand at 27.83% from 30% (baseline survey). This implies that children within project implementation area face violence in their schools. Hence, among of them report to experience any violence in and around the school may be attributed to peer-to-peer violence; within the same age group. For example, because 27.83% of the students still face violence at school, one in three students has experienced violence (i.e. bullying), and a similar percentage was involved in a physical fight.

**27.83%** Ever faced/experienced any form of violence at school in the last month

Figure 13. Students reporting ever faced/experienced any violence at school
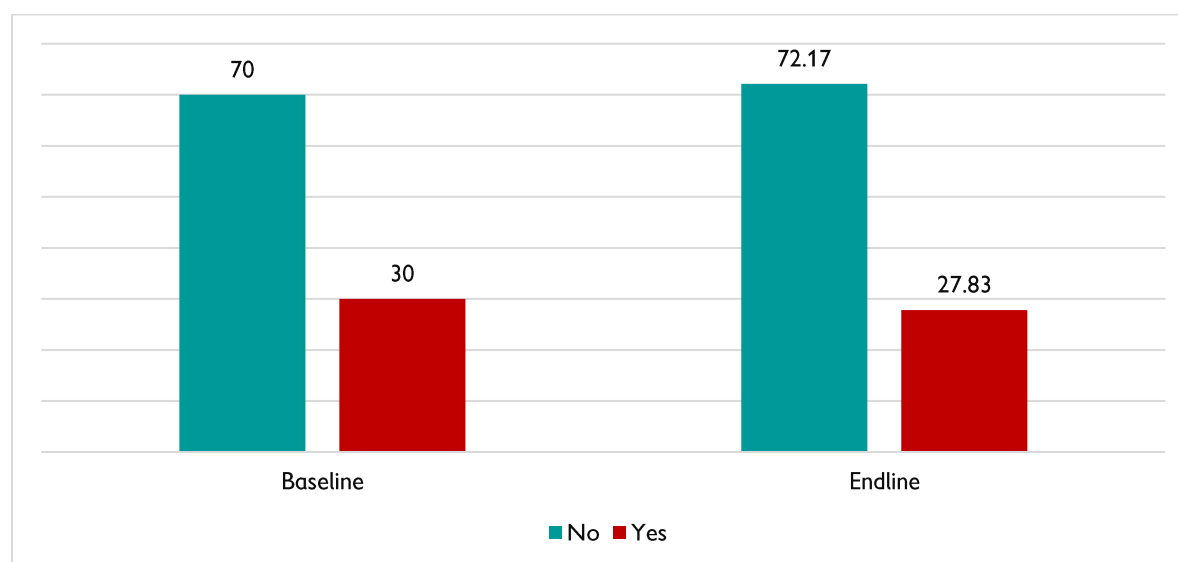
4.3.2 Children perceptions on feeling safe

The students reported their safety varied from home, community and school: the end line evaluation showed an increase of 5% compared to the baseline evaluation in the communities of project interventions from 78 % at baseline to 83% in the endline evaluation. In addition, students who were feeling safe at school slightly increased at 87% from 80% at the baseline evaluation and there is an increase of 10% (from 76 % at baseline to 86% in the endline evaluation) among the students reported to feel safe at home. **The intervention showed that feeling unsafe or exposed to violence in school, at home or in the community undermines academic achievement.** The affected outcomes span the full range of students' experience and performance in school, from feelings of connectedness to their school to classroom engagement to grades to test scores to attainment.

Figure 14. Students feeling safe (%)
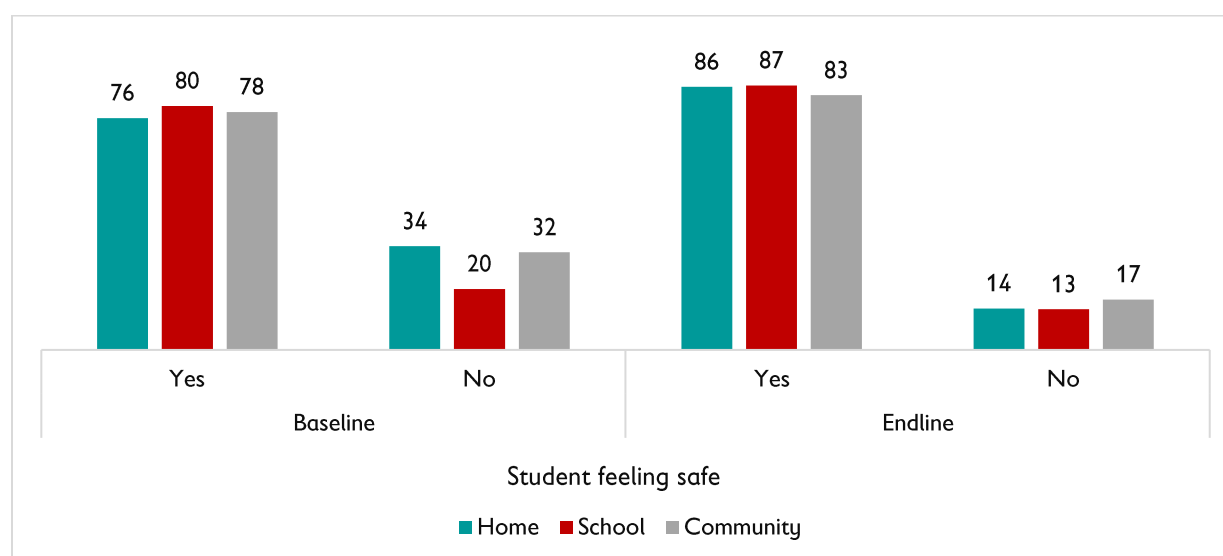
This implies that violent people have a certain power level over other community members. This has a negative effect on teachers because they always have to be on guard about what their learners might do to them at school. The safety of learners, as well as that of educators, can no longer be guaranteed in our schools. School violence presents educators with many challenges and is now a threat to teaching as a profession.

Smith notes the following: "**Securing the school premises and being strict about who is admitted to the school grounds is a practical way of solving the problem that demands practical solutions**". According to Singh's (2006) study on the effects of violence on educators, the main causes of violence in schools were academic tension, lack of consequences for poor behaviour, and violence modelled by society. Factors such as low educational ambition are also associated with violence in adolescence. Violence at school like beating, slapping, hitting you with an object, calling you bad names, shouting at you, insulting etc.

4.3.3 Physical and humiliating punishments (PHP)

The prevalence of PHP is assessed by asking students if any of the items in an established PHP list have occurred in the past week "*at school for you or for someone in your class*", which we interpret as a measure of the prevalence of PHP in the classroom. If the answer is yes, investigators ask if you got "at school", which we interpret as a measure of the prevalence of individual student experience with PHP. As with the PHP, comparing the two sets of questions reveals whether students are less inclined to report events that have happened to them. Additionally, for any PHP that a student has personally experienced, students reported whether the PHP was committed by another student, teacher, or someone else at the school.

Children in intervention districts continue to experience some physical punishment, as the reported physical punishment has significantly decreased from the very high levels observed during the SFC baseline evaluation. Children in these districts continue to experience some physical punishment, although reported physical punishment has significantly increased from the very high levels observed during the SFC baseline assessment. For example, figure 15 showed that there was a significant proportion of students experienced physical violence, from 34.48% at baseline to 65.97% at the endline, despite that there was an increased proportion of students who did not have a punishment, 29.57% (baseline) to 27.6% (endline). This indicates that they never resort to physically punishing children as a form of discipline. This is noteworthy, considering the higher prevalence of all forms of physical violence as a form of punishment observed during the baseline assessment in these districts.

Figure 15. Physical humiliating punishment comparing baseline and endline
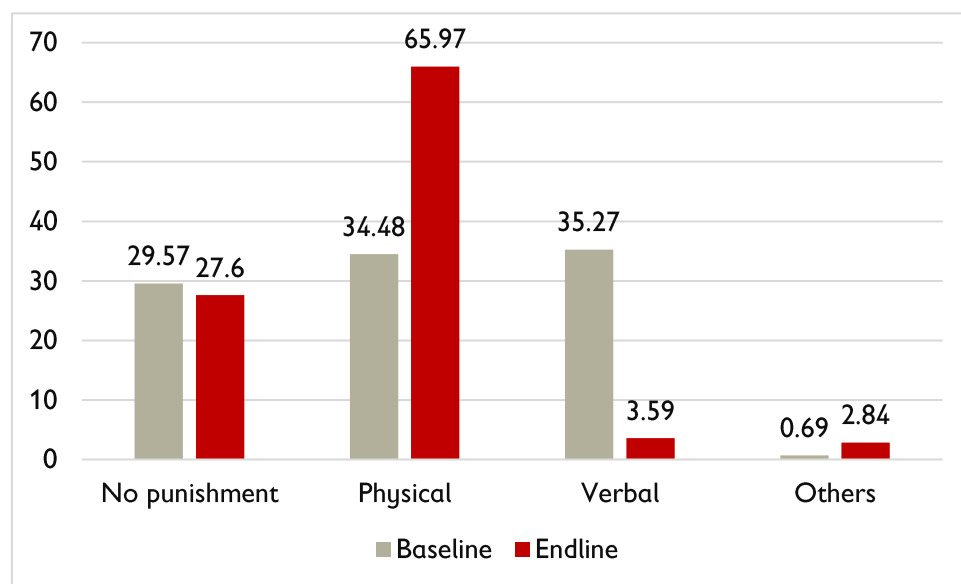

The baseline assessment found that verbal abuse and violence are almost normalized as a discipline for children in districts surveyed. This has changed to a large degree, and during the survey conducted for the endline evaluation, far fewer parents and caregivers indicated ever shouting, threatening, cursing at

children as forms of punishments. However, shouting, yelling or screaming at a child stands out as an exception and indicates that they still use this form of verbal violence in disciplining children.

Overall, during the endline evaluation, the prevalence of PHP is 27.6% at school, 66% of these reported having experienced physical punishment from 43% of children reported experiencing at least type of PHP at school at the baseline evaluation. Hence, 72.4% of the students never resort from the teachers/parents to physically punishing children as a form of discipline. This is noteworthy, considering the higher prevalence of all forms of physical violence as a form of punishment observed during the baseline assessment in the districts of the interventions.

Figure 16. PHP Levels by District
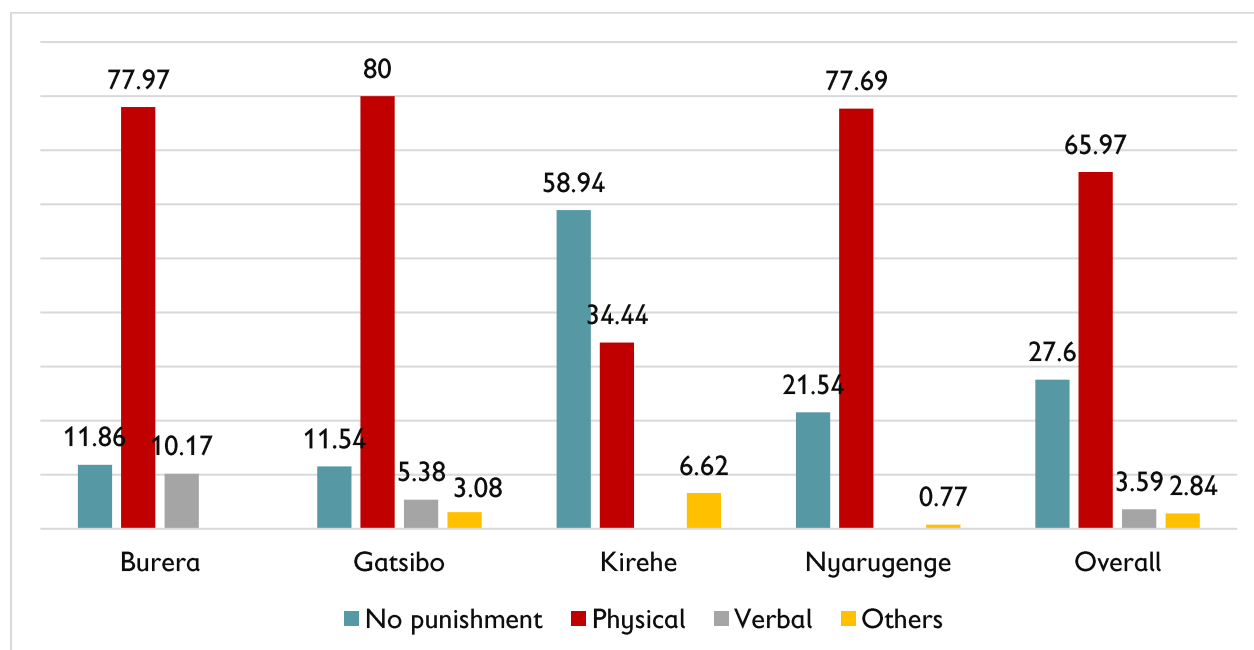
4.3.4 Referral mechanism

The violence against children (VAC) reporting/ referral mechanism and knowledge have increased significantly, at the endline, compared to the baseline where the students reported a significant increase from 42.5% (baseline) to 77.7% (endline), baseline to end line evaluation, respectively. Respecting the intervention location of the intervention, Gatsibo have dominated other districts in PHP reporting; 81.76%, Nyarugenge, 78.26%, Burera, 75.8% and Kirehe with 74.8%. Hence, this change for children who had improved their understanding of how to report a PHP concern reveals the importance of ending community violence. And referral mechanism should be momentum as it ensures a positive outcome in managing services within the community. In particular, effective referral systems are necessary to support effective case management by skilled service providers responding to complex individual child or family vulnerabilities (Platt et al., 2020; Rubenstein & Stark, 2017).

Figure 17: Referral mechanism on the violence
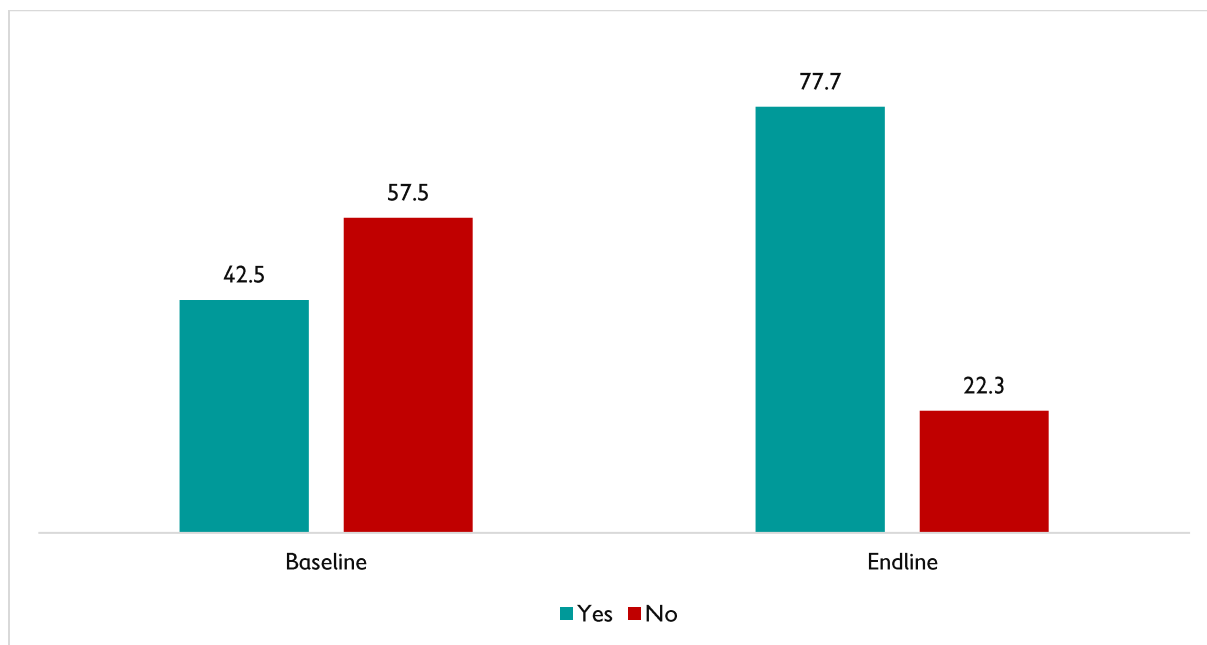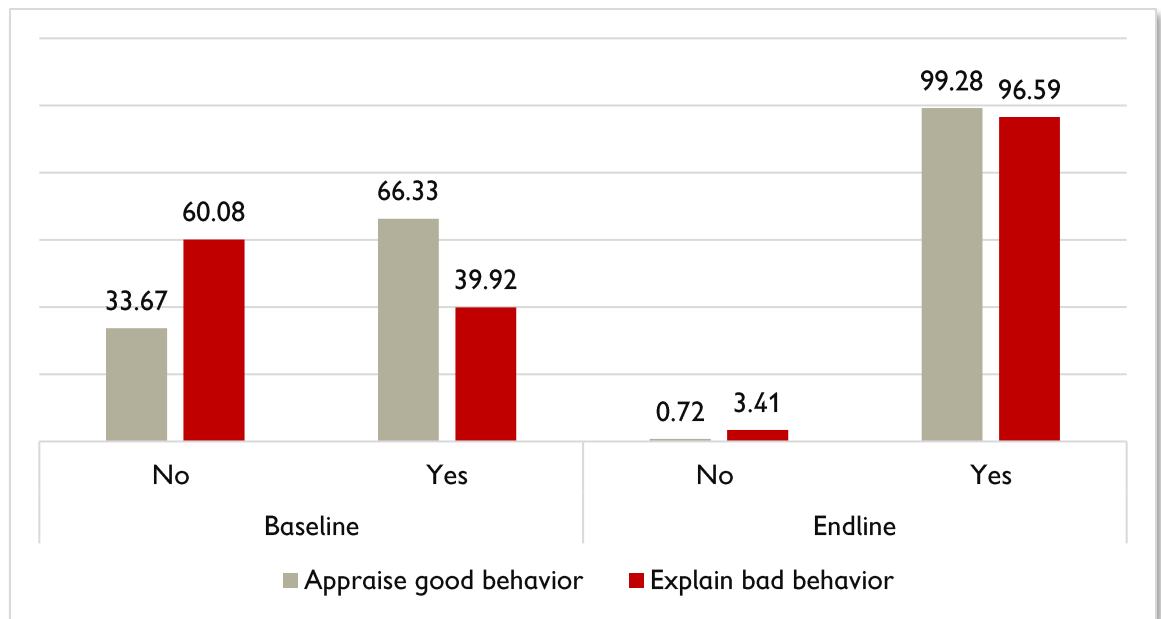
4.3.5 Positive discipline

Similarly to the baseline evaluation, the prevalence of Positive Discipline (PD) was assessed by asking students if any of a setlist of PD practices happened in the past week, before the endline survey "at school to you or anyone in your class". This provides a measure of the prevalence of teacher practices in the classroom. If a student replies in the affirmative, enumerators ask if these practices happened "at school to you". Again, this measures the prevalence of students' individual experiences with PD.

Figure 18: Prevalence of Positive Discipline for Teachers' Practices
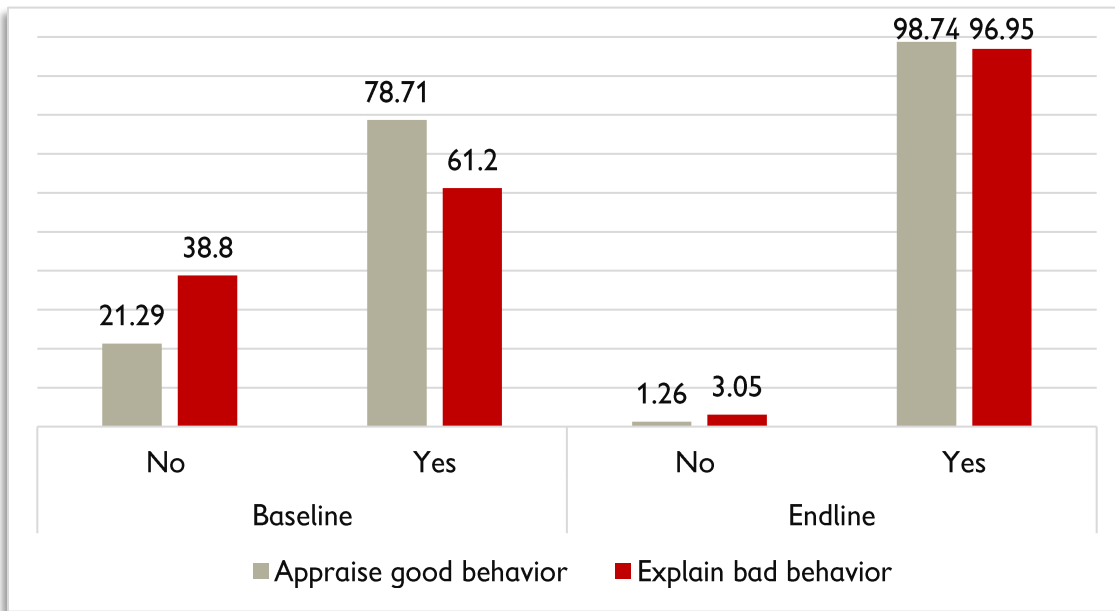
The two different sets of questions are also useful to assess whether there is a misalignment in students' answers depending on their own experience, compared to a more general classroom situation. The list of practices included the following: "your teachers praise you when you do something the right way" and "if you do something wrong, your teachers explain why what you did was wrong". Positive Discipline practices among teachers had significantly increased in the endline evaluation compared to the baseline values (Refer to Figure 18).

Figure 19: Proportion (%) of Positive Discipline Practices among Parents

Positive Discipline practices in the classroom setting

Teachers provide pads to girls at school during the menstruation period; also, teachers gain patience and become so supportive to students at school. In addition, teachers gained listening skills and have gained the ability to know students in good or bad moods. And teachers are no longer call students bad names. Also, teachers help students reconcile instead of punishing them as they did before PDET (positive discipline in everyday teaching) training. In addition, students consider their teachers as their parents; therefore, they have no fear to share anything with teachers.

Positive Discipline in everyday parenting

Parents are active now to pay school fees for their children. No punishments; instead, they talk to children, and Teachers found out PDET traumatized children were not using PDET due to emotional and physical abuse. Also, parents have invested in child-parent interraction and invloved in reading practices after getting PDET training, *teachers created suggestion boxes for students to express their ideas privately and created confidentiality among students and teachers.* The school became a safe place for students/children; it's like a second home for children where their teachers can solve their problems at school. Comfortability and Politeness increased for the students due to PDET, and Child abuse has been reduced after PDET training.

Key Messages from teachers and parents/caregivers on PD

Success stories on PD

- After receiving the training on positive discipline, we visited community meetings and taught them about positive discipline and importance in child education outcome. We also taught them to avoid family conflicts that can led to poor performance of a child at school.
- We encouraged families with children who drop out of school to go back to school.
- Attitude of parents changed towards their children where by parents don't punish children they discuss with them and apply positive discipline approaches

- After the training parents are no longer shout to children or call them bad names.
- Parents are no longer punish children instead they discuss with children.
- After the training parents have been treating children with love, care and support. After being trained on a positive discipline in every day parenting (PDEP), children are protected from trauma/harrm

## 4.4 Positive parenting practices in schools and homes

To improve program implementation and provide a more holistic approach to working with parents/caregivers and teachers of children, SC embarked on a Positive Parenting approach in the School for Change that focuses on both early learning, stimulation, and play to improve learner's relationship. In literature, studies proved that the relationships between individuals are reciprocal, whether the relationship is between parent and child but also a moral obligation from caregiver side define deep interactions(Barfoot *et al.*, 2017; Duncan *et al.*, 2009; Hudson & Rapee, 2001; Kirkorian *et al.*, 2009).

Each relationship begins with the first interaction and continues to grow if the interaction is satisfactory for both parties. In addition, the interaction can be verbal or non-verbal interaction, and several factors influence the relationship. Some of these include proximity between the interacting partners, eye contact, physical contact, one partner's responsiveness to the other partner, and the length and frequency of the interactions.

4.4.1 Child - parents/caregivers relationship

Student motivation and constructive parent/caregivers-student relationships have, reportedly, improved along the implementation of the project. , More than 90% of children report to have a relationship for instance, spend time with caregivers/parents and discuss with them regarding the mistake made instead of punishing the child immediately (see Figure 20). And nearly all (95%) students report agreeing or strongly agreeing with all statements related to their relationship with caregivers or parents too

Figure 20: Child-parents/caregivers relationship
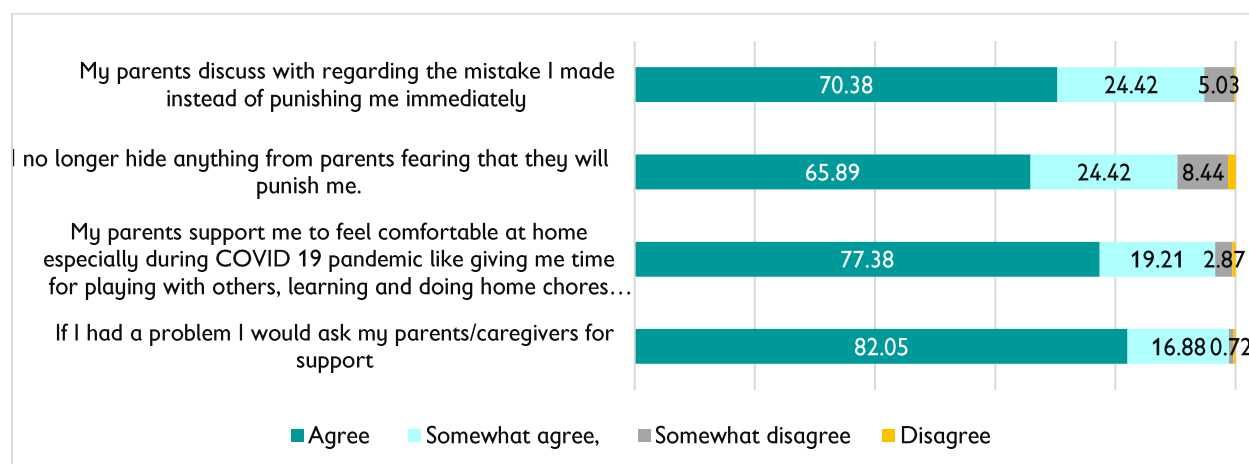
4.4.2. Teacher – child relationship

More than 96% of students reported agreement with all questions relating to school motivation and enjoyment (see Figure 21). In addition, nearly all (96%) students report agreeing or strongly agreeing with all statements related to their relationship with teachers. It was noticed that the positive perception of student-teacher relationships is particularly notable given teachers' low incidence in PHP . As reported in the baseline report, there are no significant differences in responses to questions about student-teacher relationships between students who have and have not experienced PHP.

Figure 21: Teacher-child relationship
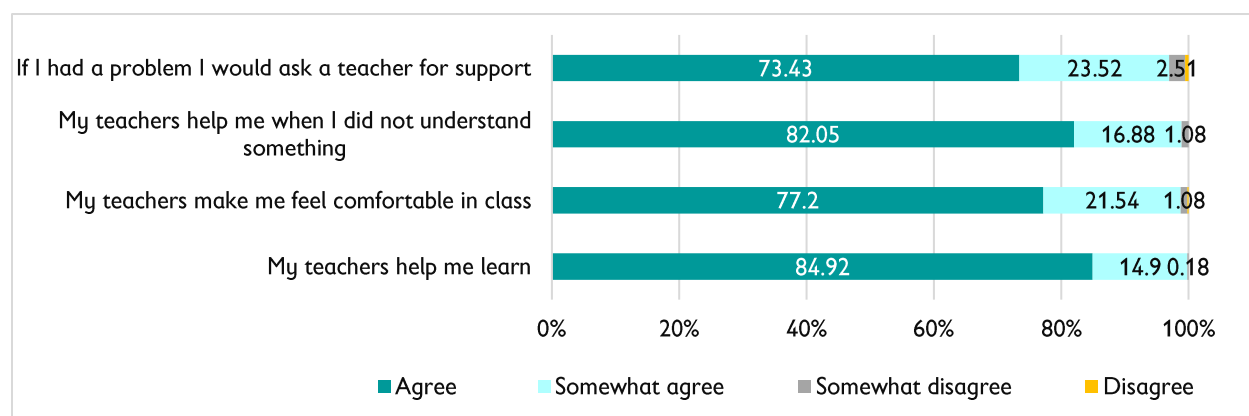
Parenting style as the students in the family perceive it is clearly associated with their learning abilities and their chance of engaging in socially "risky" behaviors. Different studies have examined the association between parenting approaches and behavior from different perspectives, "though students who are living with only one parent or who are poor do not succeed to the same degree as their counterparts with two parents or higher incomes, they still are positively impacted by an authoritative parenting style (i.e. which can result in having violence at home)"(Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Steinberg et al., 1992).

The techniques used in Positive Discipline have been shown to impact children's learning abilities positively and self-reading practices increased among children. In addition, student's sense of connectedness with teachers or "sense of community" in school was associated with positive social and learning outcomes. As above, there is a strong correlation with a student's perception of being "connected" and the sense of "home" with learning and social well-being. The findings showed that a sense of community among teachers may be an "important precursor to the development of a sense of community among students." Not surprisingly, modeling appropriate relationships among the teacher seems to support students in developing appropriate interpersonal relationships.

4.5 Participation to reading club'

Regarding reading club's participation, see Figure 22, students have significantly heard about the reading clubs, from 28% at baseline to 52.2% at the endline evaluation. **The findings imply a significant progress compared to the baseline on participating to reading club. However, there is still needed to increase the awareness on the reading practices** which can allow the learners to discover the existence of the clubs.

Figure 22: Reading clubs participation (%)
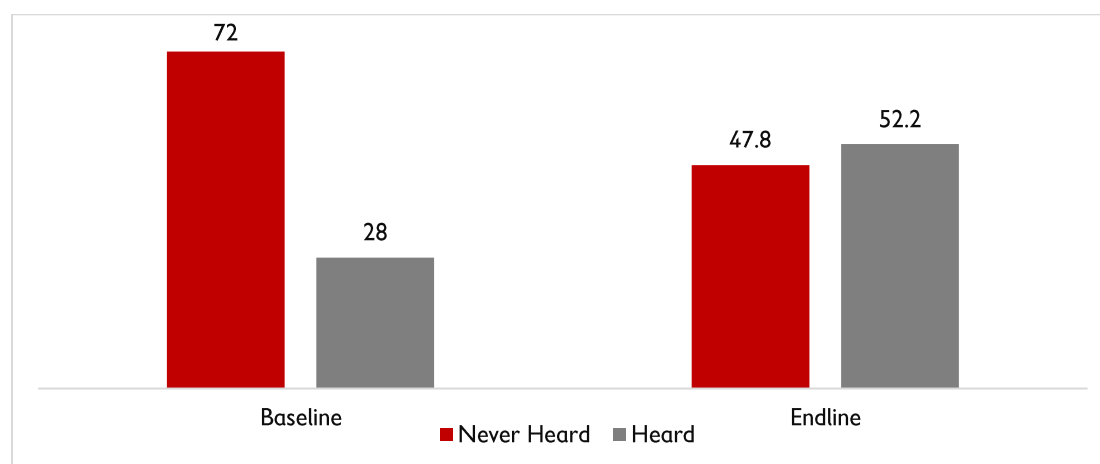
Although most students report that they frequently attend the reading club twice a week, 32.3%, as per the standard of practices. Moreover, 26.8% learners reported to attend reading clubs in three days and more in a week and 29.55% learners attended reading clubs once a week. However, 11.34% of them did not attend reading clubs.

**Figure 23:** Children's frequency attendance to reading club
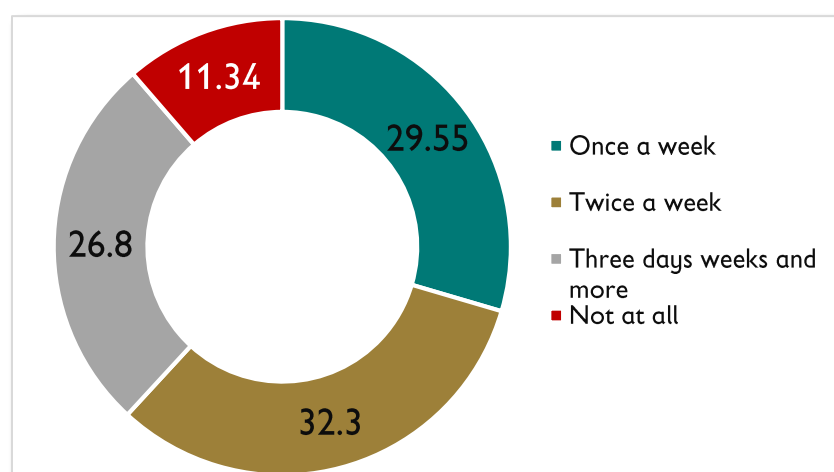
4.6 Correlation between key outcomes

Literacy outcomes

The end-line evaluation of learning outcomes does not follow the literacy and numeracy scores analysis model as in the previous evaluation points using EGRA. This is considering the results might be compromised by the prolonged school closures and adaptations of COVID-19 that has impacted the implementation area. Moreover, by the end-line, the Districts beneficiaries of the project only included the baseline school grade 3, who promoted in the grade 4 before the end-line commenced. This group has the maximum years and minimum criteria to examine the learning outcome as EGRA/EGMA of SFC intervention exposure.

In light of these contextual factors, the learning outcome for end-line evaluation was revised, where the research team, project team as well as the SCI member have mutually agreed to shift the focus of learning outcome to observing any positive changes in the perception of students regarding their learning performance since March 2020. According to students in the endline, the improved literacy practices within schools and communities increased and changed the literacy outcomes significantly by 12.5%, while the students who ever faced the violence affected them significantly and negatively the literacy outcomes by 10.9% and surprisingly, ensuring the safety or improving safe environment for children to learn in the endline showed a positive trend in change but not significant.

Figure 24: Correlation of the outcomes and goal of the intervention
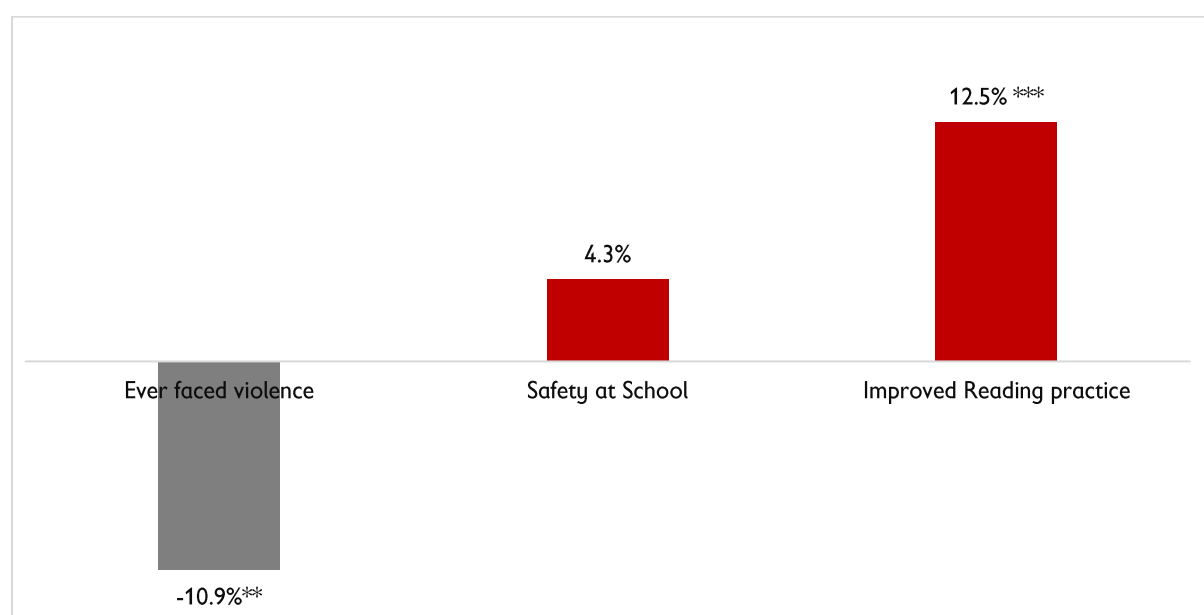
*** p<0.001, **p<0.05 and *p<0.1

CHAPTER 5: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN LEARNING SITUATION

The endline survey composed of a series of questions to assess the impact of COVID-19 on children learning situation i.e. experience of – disturbed sleep, feeling worried, fear of hearing bad news, constantly checking the news, feeling anxious, feeling helpless, crying for no reason, feeling isolated/lonely, and feeling trapped. A score, based on a scale of frequency of these experiences, was built.
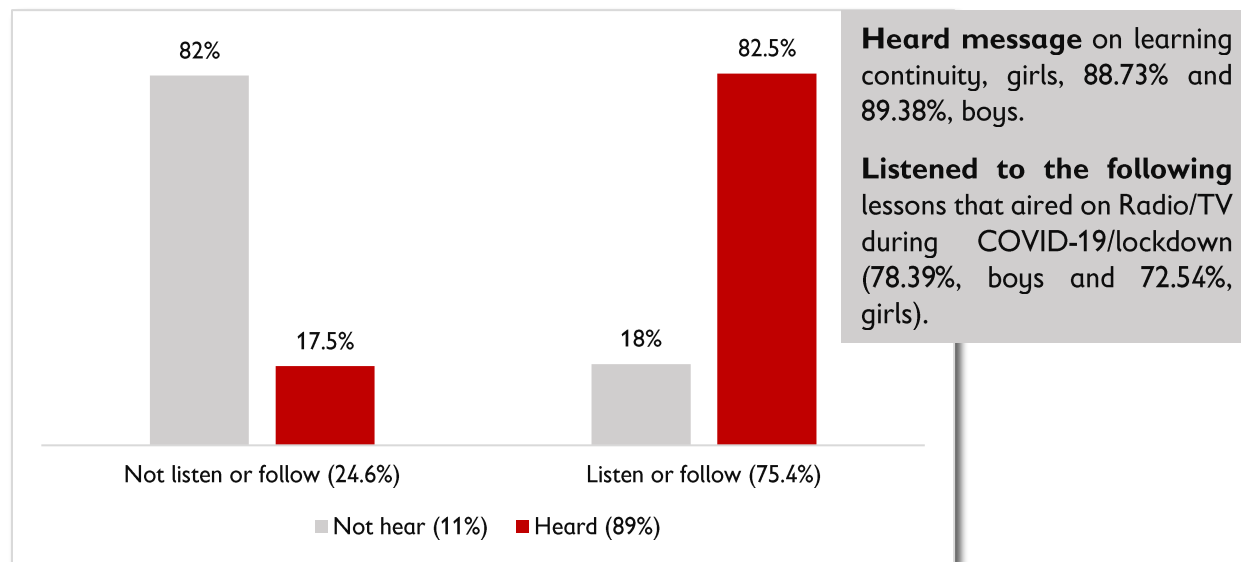
5.1 Radio programming on learning continuity

In the lockdown, 89.05% of students (88.73% girls and 89.38%, boys) have heard or read literacy-related messages on how they can continue to learn, read, and write at home. In addition, 82.5% of children heard or read literacy and learning messages, and 75.4% of children (78.39%, boys and 72.54%, girls) got them through a radio/TV during COVID-19 lockdown.

The adaptation on COVID-19 situation and Save the Children/ Rwanda CO response using SFC resources has designed the programmes with more interactive components to capture learners' attention. Hence, during the aired program, children protection, including violence against children, was integrated into the learning agenda and continuously updated. The results can be associated with the findings related to the parent-children relationship (see Figure25).

**Figure 25:** Children to hear or read literacy and learning messages

Heard message on learning continuity, girls, 88.73% and 89.38%, boys.

Listened to the following lessons that aired on Radio/TV during COVID-19/lockdown (78.39%, boys and 72.54%, girls).

5.2 Child protection and violence during lockdown

During the lockdown, Figure 26 reveals that 19.39% of children experienced violence COVID-19, and they reported that there's a referral or reporting mechanism in place, 80.79%(see Figure 27).

Figure 26: Experienced violence during COVID-19 lockdown
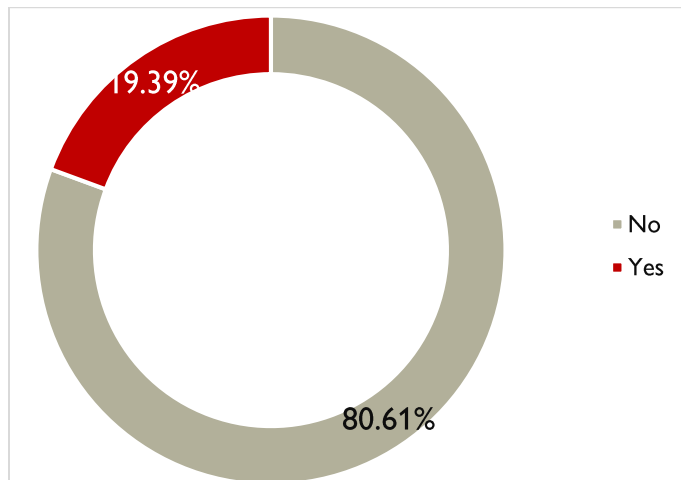
Have you ever experienced any form of violence at home by parents since last month like beating, slapping, calling you bad names, kneeling etc during COVID-19/lockdown?

Figure 27: Knowledge of reporting mechanism related to violence
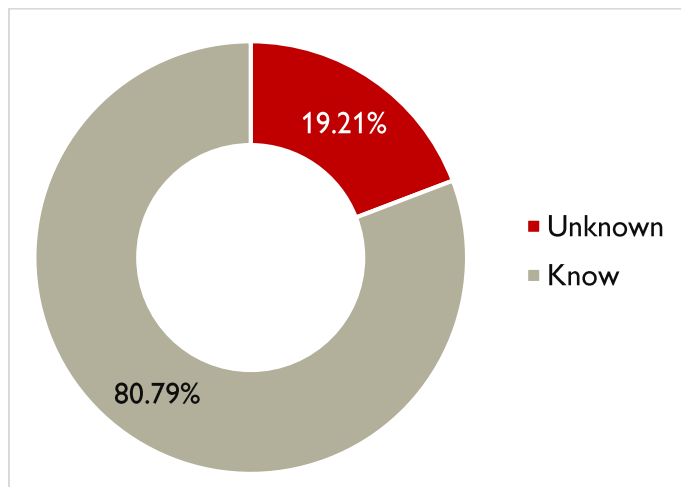
Is there any child protection referral/reporting mechanism in your community during COVID-19/lockdown?

CHAPTER 6: LESSON LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Overall rating of the project

The project's main objective was to strengthen Child Protection systems in schools and communities to improve children's learning outcomes.

- The project has initiated VAC reporting mechanisms in schools, this helped children to know different types of violence exist in schools and where to report such cases through this process cases of VAC has reduced from 30% of children experiencing VAC cases during the baseline to 27% at the end line.
- Since the start of the project, it has reached 4640 teachers (2284 Male, and 2356 Female) within the 4 districts of interventions with PDET (Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching) training, after the training, the project conducted the teacher's mentorship sessions to support them improving their practices. Through this process,78% of teachers mentored changed their teaching practices by applying different positive discipline techniques compared to 75% observed applying during the baseline.
- The project has also built the capacity of identified parents in positive Discipline in everyday parenting to support in sensitization on how to engage and interact with their children using positive parenting practices though this process the project reached 258 Male and 242 females in Gatsibo District. as a result, children interviewed during the endline survey reported that their parents hold regular discuss with them about the mistakes made instead of immediate punishments, this has also been reflected by the parents. "*Sometimes children are unhappy and says that if I make a mistake, they will beat me up and start to behave negatively, this has changed because we have made our children friends and they feel free to engage us in discussions*". A female parent from Gatsibo District.
- Due to covid-19 pandemic, the project adapted the intervention approach with respect to the nature of the pandemic, in this regard the project managed to support adapt some of activities as a way to continue reaching out the project beneficiaries. The project developed and delivered PD messages that target parents, children, teachers and local leaders to continue applying PD during the lockdown, this was conducted through radio programs to reach the groups during COVID-19.

5.2 Conclusion

End line evaluation findings indicate that children are more likely to participate in household chores, including agriculture-related activities for family belonging. For example, collecting firewood or water for the household dominates other household chores, 35.19% (51%, girls and 49%, boys), and 27.47% for tasks on the family farm or caring for animals belonging to the household (31.4%, girls and 68.6%, boys).

In addition, 15.98% and 15.80% of children participated in cooking, cleaning, laundry, washing dishes at home (domestic chores) (75.3%, girls and 24.7%, boys), and caring for younger siblings/neighbourhood children, respectively. The End line evaluation indicated that the most chores among females includes; domestic chores, collecting firewood or water, and caring for younger children; for males, it includes; caring for the elderly and sick and people with Disabilities and tasks on the farm or caring for animals.

The practice of reading includes; access to reading materials at home, seeing family members read, and having family members who read to students - strongly predicts the reading achievement for early primary school students home literacy environment; 86% of interviewed learners have seen a caregiver read (86.4%, boys and 85.6%, girls), 82.94% of learners confirmed that caregiver reads to the child at home (81.7%, boys and 84.2%, girls) and availability of non-textbook reading materials at home, 80.43% (79.5%, boys and 81.3%, girls). Eighty three percent of children reported using verbal reporting, 33% use the available toll-free lines for different institutions include police, Rwanda Investigation Bureau and Isange one stop centre etc., 4% report to the nearest police station, 2% use short messages, 7% use other mechanisms like reporting through the local leaders' mobile lines.

5.3 Lessons learnt

1. It was learned that PDET facilitators (teachers and sector education inspectors) who cascaded positive discipline to the teachers through training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching (PDET) and mentorship session to build their capacity on PD practices are key to sustain the legacy of SFC project over its completion and may be re-used by the government to replicate and scale up PDET learning into other schools and across the country

2. The introduction of teachers learning circles was initiated to allow teachers get an opportunity to share ideas on the best ways by applying the Positive Discipline in their classes and hence contributing to the positive teacher-child relationship.

3. Involvement of existing government-led CP workforce structures in reporting and addressing VAC issues reduced the level of violence from 30% to 27%.

Adaptations in the children's survey to capture the correlations on the impact of COVID-19 visa a vis children's learning outcomes (adding part of measuring children's culture of learning/reading around home instead of measuring children's reading skills only where we shall expand by asking more details on the extent of the learning activities done at home while schools were closed ((e.g. if they listened to any radio programs, the frequency etc.).

5.4 Recommendations

- **To districts of interventions**, it is recommended to consciously implement strategies for ongoing programmes that work in contextually-sensitive ways to counter attitudes and practices, making it harder for children to communicate experiences of violence. This could be done through working community-based CP work force including friends of family (IZU) that have been capacitated on the VAC prevention, identification and referral.

- **To Districts and non-state actors**: Sensitize community members through existing community for a like the parents' evening forum, community meetings, monthly communal work and children to use existing referrals mechanism in place for VAC reporting.

- **To Districts of interventions via social protection directorate and sector education inspectorate**. Extend the training coverage to parents/caregivers on positive parenting practices so to reduce VAC at family/community level. This could be done through the use of positive discipline training facilitators (Trainer of trainers) to reach control sectors that were not covered during the implementation

  - Strengthening the home-based mentoring support visit by IZU and other community workforce (i.e. mentorship and identifying family and children at risks due to family conflicts for early preventive measures

  - Strengthening community-based child protection systems to provide improved access to services for boys and girls that have experienced VAC

- **To Districts of interventions**. Strengthen violence-free-homes messaging through the local Radios and community awareness campaigns to protect children from not only experiencing violence, but from breaking the silence about violence cases.

- **To Districts of interventions**. Promoting awareness among CP workforce and local authorities about child protection systems

- **To Districts of interventions via social protection directorate and sector education inspectorate**. Take time, listening and discuss children concern that causes aggression and other anti-social behavior that are associated with PHP

- **To Districts of interventions**. Strengthening PDET activities, including the provision of mentorship to teachers to apply PD in their classes and continue supporting peer learning cycle initiative across all schools for continued experience sharing among themselves.

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Figure 28. Learners reported their involvement in household chores by age category during Endline
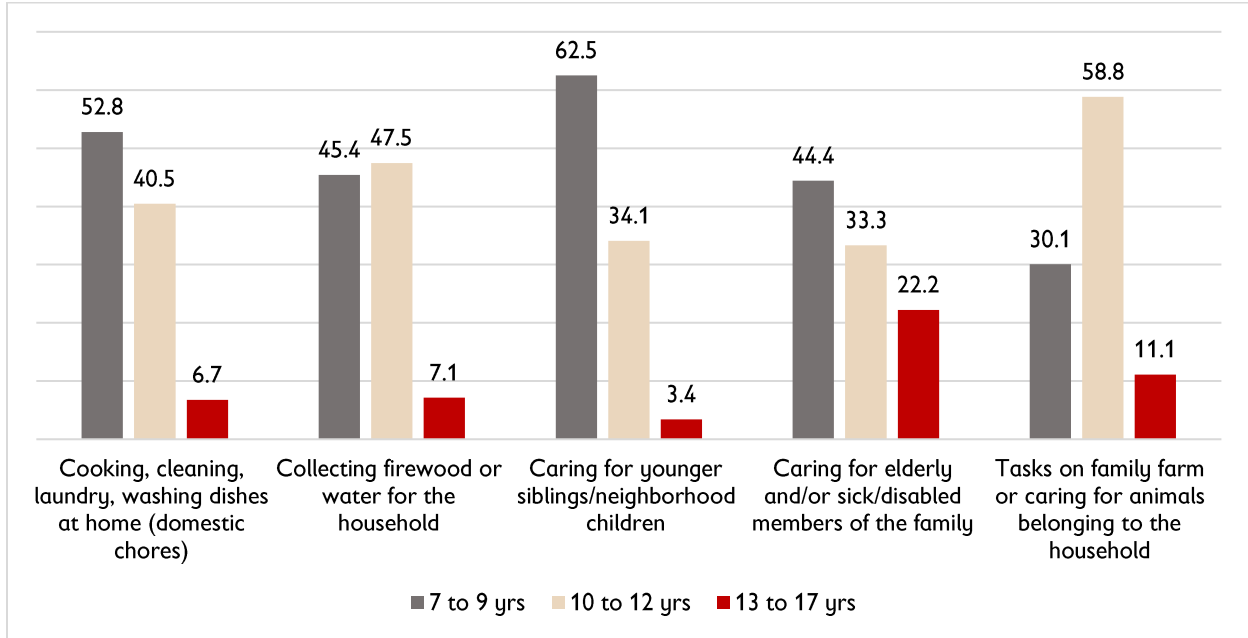

Figure 29. Percentage of student who reported regular attendance by household chores
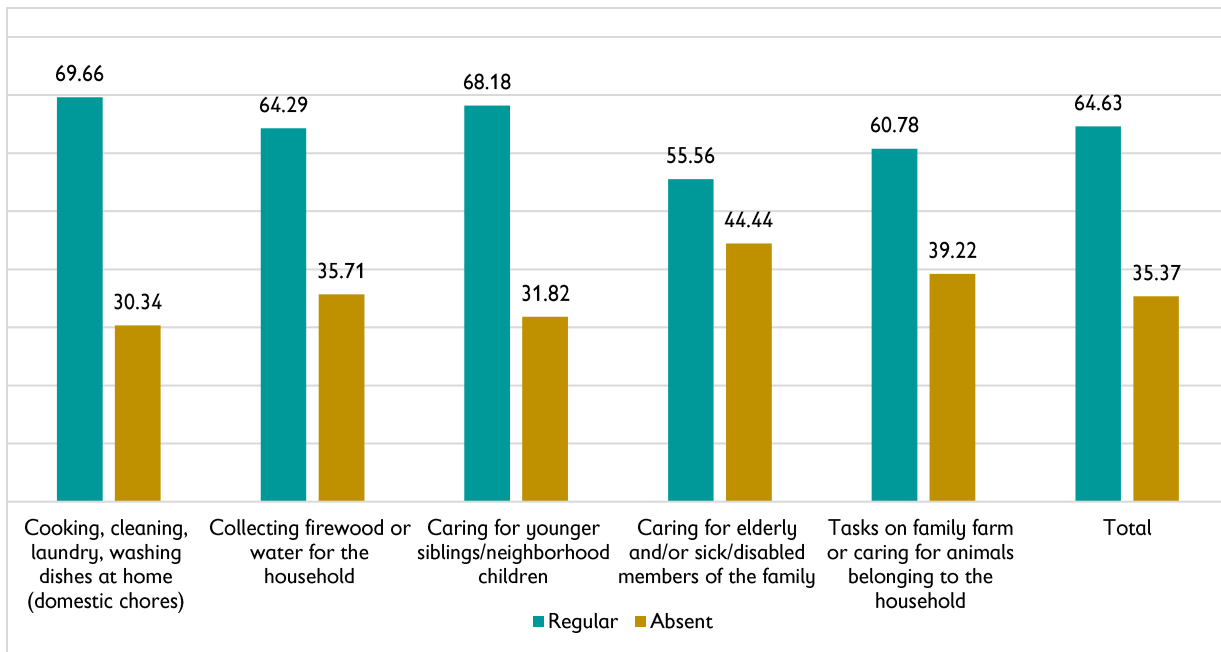
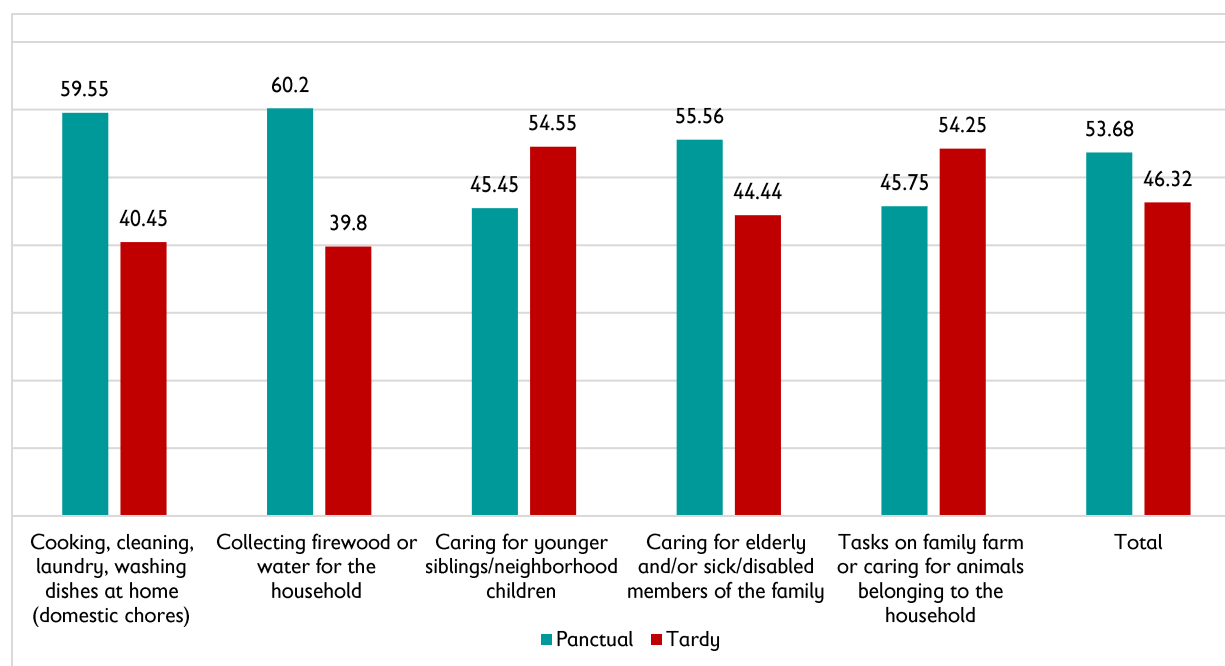**Figure 30.** Percentage of student who reported punctuality by household chores

Table 3. Prevalence of PHP experience by types, gender, disability at school

	Baseline			Endline		
	Overall	Boys	Girls	Overall	Boys	Girls
None of these	19.38	19.76	18.95	26.28	48.2	51.8
Punched or kicked	45.08	47.72	42.08	0.38	100	0
Spanked/smacked	33.54	32.18	35.08	0.95	20	80
Slapped	33.14	35.33	30.66	1.51	50	50
Hit you with an object	50.63	48.49	53.06	42.72	47.35	52.65
Pulled ears or hair	33.94	34.38	33.45	0.76	25	75
Forced you to stand, sit or kneel	43.44	43.97	42.83	17.77	52.13	47.87
Shook you	18.05	19.52	16.37	0	0	0
Physically punished	24.01	25.46	22.37	1.51	50	50
Forced you to stand in the heat	43.44	43.97	42.83	0.38	50	50
Shouted, yelled or screamed	22.23	22.45	21.98	1.13	33.33	66.67
Insulted you by calling you dumb	32.77	31.42	34.29	0.95	40	60
Ignored	17.79	17.18	18.48	0.19	100	0
Embarrassed or shamed	19.37	19.43	19.29	0.95	60	40
Upset, humiliated or scared	22.7	23.25	22.09	0.38	100	0
Other	1.54	1.38	1.71	2.84	53.33	46.67