

Safe to learn

What do teachers think and do about violence in schools?



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SHORT SUMMARY

Teachers need training to prevent and address school violence

School violence occurs in all countries and affects a significant number of children and adolescents. Teachers are also adversely affected, with the violence impacting their motivation and teaching practice.

To help improve understanding of teachers' perspectives, around 35,000 teachers, 81% of whom were from Latin America, were surveyed for a UNESCO study as part of the Safe to Learn initiative to end violence in schools.

Almost half of the teachers surveyed say they received little or no training on school violence during their pre-service education, and more than two-thirds say that they have learned how to manage school violence through experience. Three in four teachers surveyed can identify physical and sexual violence yet are less likely to recognise some forms of psychological violence.

Even if the teachers surveyed can identify school violence, and four in five say it is their responsibility to create a safe learning environment, they do not always intervene. Four in five help victims, but only half engage with students who witness violence.



2 in 3
of teachers surveyed
manage school
violence through
experience and not
training.



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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

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Summary

This report presents the findings from research conducted during February and March 2020, during which time data were collected through an online global survey of 34,877 teachers from 147 countries and territories, and 16 focus group discussions with urban and rural teachers in Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand and Zambia.

The aim of the research was to find out how teachers view violence in schools, what they do to address it, and whether they think they have the necessary skills and support to help them prevent and respond to school violence. It is intended to increase awareness of teachers' perspectives and to encourage education policy-makers, teacher training institutions and school management to take action to ensure that teachers are well equipped to prevent and address school violence.

The views presented in this report do not reflect a representative sample of teachers across the world, as ten countries accounted for more than 90% of responses to the global survey and there was a significant difference in response rates between regions. Teachers from Central and South America accounted for 81% of all respondents. The findings should, therefore, be understood as being based on the responses of the teachers participating in the survey. The term 'teachers' used to present quantitative findings hereafter in this report should therefore read as 'teachers who responded to the survey'. Where findings are skewed by the preponderance of responses from Central and South America and vary from the findings from other regions, these differences are presented.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a unique and valuable insight into teachers' perceptions and practices concerning school violence. While most – four in five – teachers surveyed view it as their responsibility to ensure that students feel safe from all forms of violence in the classroom, there are still gaps in their readiness and capacity to do so. This is demonstrated by the following key findings:

- About one in four teachers do not recognise various forms of school violence, especially more subtle forms of psychological and sexual violence between students or those perpetrated by teachers.
- Almost all teachers say they take steps to identify students who are vulnerable to violence, but fewer than one third are aware of the most vulnerable groups.
- While most teachers say they use a wide range of strategies, mostly positive rather than punitive ones, to create and maintain a safe classroom environment, only half teach their students comprehensively on topics related to violence prevention.
- Although four in five teachers believe they have the skills required to address violence between students; only about half feel able to react immediately to stop bullying or impose immediate sanctions to perpetrators of violence in line with relevant rules and regulations.
- Additionally, only two in three teachers intervene with perpetrators and only half engage with bystanders of violence between students.
- Over half of the teachers feel that they do not receive adequate pre- or in-service training, and that they are not fully supported by school management for their actions to prevent and respond to violence in their schools.

These research findings call for improving, not only training, but also policy and institutional support for teachers to address the gaps in their ability to identify, prevent and address school violence in all its forms. Regional and local contexts influencing the nature, scope and consequences of school violence should be fully taken into account when determining what kind of training and support should be provided and how.

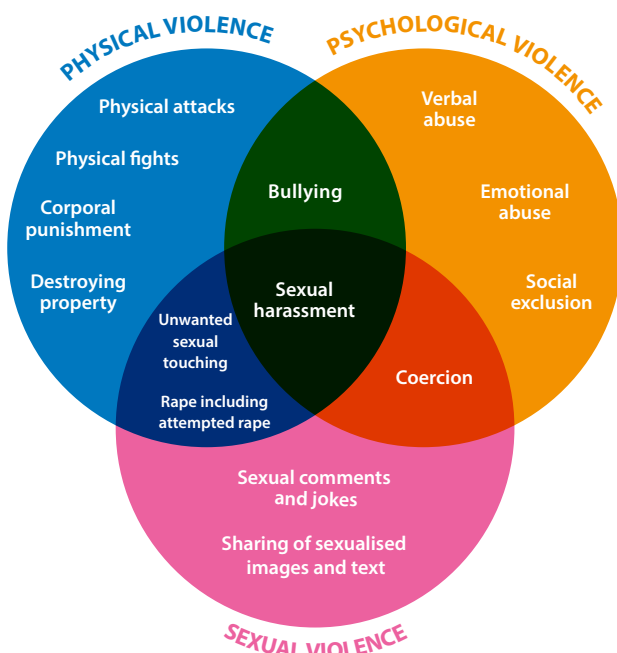
1. Introduction

1.1 What is school violence and why is it important to address it?

UNESCO defines school violence as school-related violent acts or threats that include physical violence, psychological violence and sexual violence. In most cases, violence is committed by a student's peers but, in some cases, the perpetrator¹ is a teacher. Corporal punishment perpetrated by teachers is a form of physical violence. As of June 2020, corporal punishment in schools was fully prohibited in 132 countries, but still not fully prohibited in 67 countries.²

Defining school violence

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of school violence



Source: Adapted from UNESCO, 2019, p.11.³



- Physical violence is any form of physical aggression intended to hurt, and includes physical attacks, physical fights, corporal punishment and physical bullying.
- Psychological violence includes verbal abuse, emotional abuse, social exclusion and psychological bullying.
- Sexual violence refers to completed or attempted non-consensual sexual acts, unwanted touching, sexual harassment, sexual comments and jokes, and sexual bullying.

School violence occurs in all countries and affects a significant number of children and adolescents. Global data show that more than one in three school students have been involved in a physical fight with another student; almost one in three is physically attacked at least once a year; and almost one in three students report being bullied by their peers at school in the previous month.³

School violence has a harmful effect on students' physical, mental and emotional health, on school attendance and participation and on academic achievement. It not only affects the students who are the targets of violence, but also the well-being and quality of education of other students. Eliminating school violence is, therefore, essential to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, 'safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.'

1 A perpetrator is the student or adult responsible for committing violence towards a student.

2 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. 2020. *Global progress towards prohibiting all corporal punishment: Last updated June 2020*. www.endcorporalpunishment.org.

3 UNESCO. 2019. *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483>

Why did we ask teachers what they think and do about school violence?

Teachers are instrumental in creating a safe and non-violent learning environment and in preventing and responding to violence in schools. They are often immediate witnesses to school violence and the first-in-line to intercede to stop violent behaviour. A solid understanding of teachers' perceptions and practices is essential to inform efforts to strengthen their role in violence prevention.

However, we know very little about what teachers think about school violence or what they do to address violence in schools, as most global data is based on surveys of students' experience of school violence. UNESCO commissioned this study to improve understanding of teachers' perspectives as part of the Safe to Learn initiative to end violence in schools.



Safe to Learn

Launched in 2019, Safe to Learn is a five-year global initiative that aims to end violence in schools.

The Safe to Learn Call to Action sets out the need to implement related policy and legislation; strengthen violence prevention and response at the school level; change social norms and behaviours; generate and use evidence, and invest resources effectively. As of December 2020, 15 countries endorsed the Call to Action: Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan and Uganda.

How was the information collected?

The findings in this report are based on data collected through a global online survey⁴ conducted during February and March 2020 and 16 focus group discussions with urban and rural teachers in Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand and Zambia. The global survey and the focus group discussions asked teachers:

- whether they consider certain behaviours⁵ – between students and committed by teachers against students – to be examples of physical, psychological or sexual violence, and how often these behaviours occur in their school — based on what they observe or hear about.
- how they manage challenging behaviour in the classroom; what they do to prevent and respond to school violence, and how they view corporal punishment.
- Whether they think it is their responsibility to address violence in the classroom; whether they think they have the skills to prevent and respond to violence; how well their training has prepared them to address school violence, and whether they think they receive adequate support from school leadership.

The survey generated responses from 34,877 teachers in 147 countries and territories – providing a unique and valuable insight into teachers' perceptions and practices concerning school violence. The findings reflect common themes that were clearly identifiable across regions and countries and are also consistent with the findings from other research and from global student surveys about school violence. Women made up 70% of the total respondents, which is, in general, consistent with the gender ratio of teachers globally.

The data upon which the findings are based have a number of limitations. Teachers responding to the survey were a self-selected sample and likely to have an interest in the topic of school violence, therefore the responses are not generalisable. The findings should therefore be understood as being

4 The survey was translated into the six UN languages (Arabic, English, French, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Spanish) and two additional languages (Burmese and Portuguese) to maximise response rates in all regions.

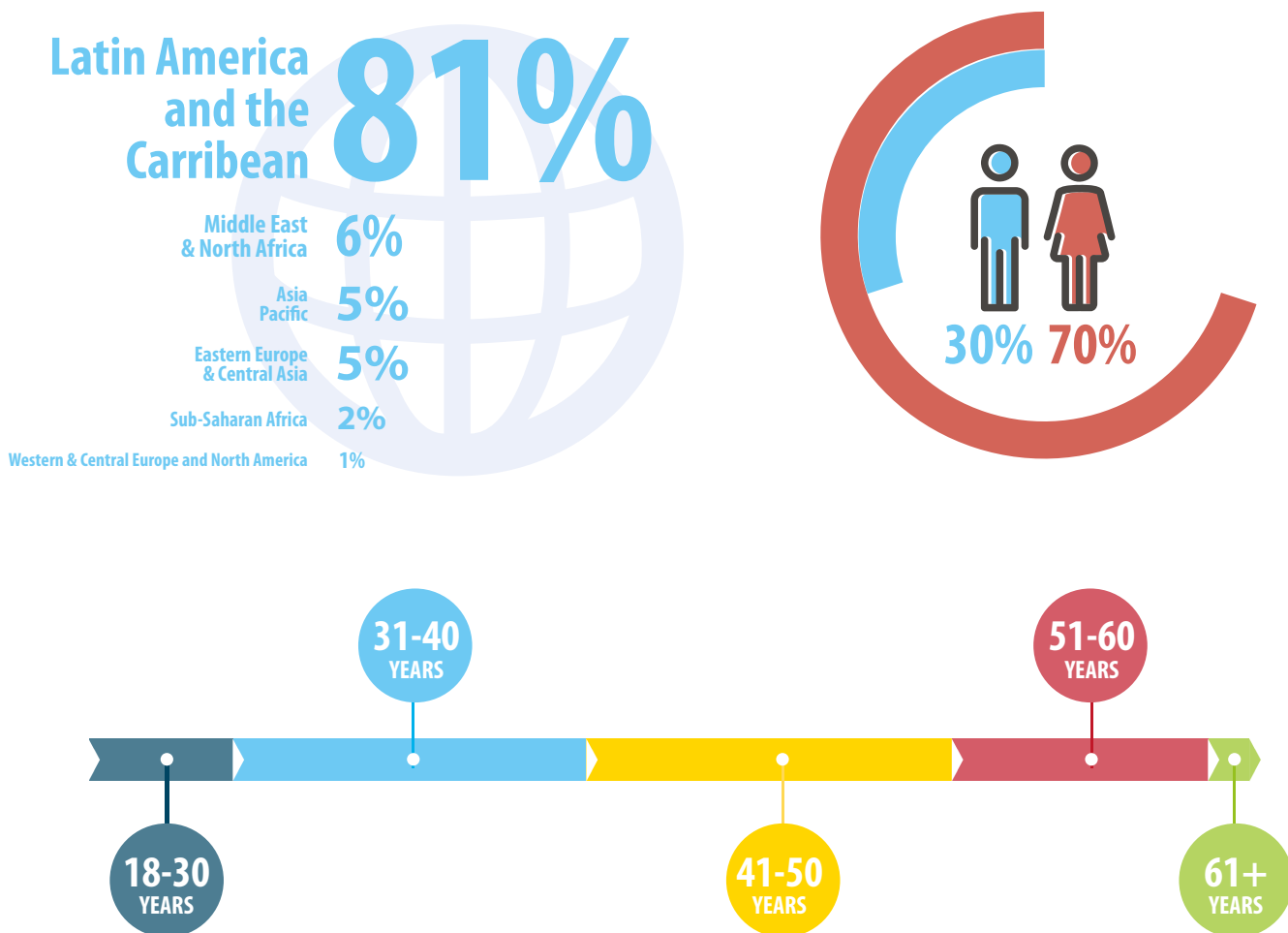
5 The behaviours included in the survey were drawn from international survey instruments and are recognised as different forms of violence in schools.

based on the responses of ‘teachers participating in the survey’ rather than being representative of all teachers. Ten countries accounted for more than 90% of responses. There was a significant difference in response rates between regions. Central and South America accounted for 81% of all respondents. Other regions most represented in the sample were the Middle East and North Africa (6% of the respondents), followed by Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (5% each). There were relatively few participants from the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, Western and Central Europe and North America. Global findings, therefore, may mostly reflect perspectives and practices in Central

and South America; findings for other regions should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively low response rates in those regions. Despite that, regional divergencies, if found significant, are highlighted. There were some clear socio-cultural differences in the perspectives of the majority of respondents from Central and South America and the minority of respondents from other regions. Finally, the findings are based on the subjective perceptions of teachers; it is also possible that bias towards what is socially acceptable may have influenced their responses to some questions, for example, about corporal punishment.

The findings should be understood as being based on the responses of ‘teachers participating in the study’ rather than being representative of all teachers. The term ‘teachers’ – used to present quantitative findings hereafter in this report – should therefore read as ‘teachers who responded to the survey’.

Figure 2. Information about respondents



2. Findings

2.1 Perceptions: What do teachers think about school violence?

What behaviours between students do teachers view as violent?

Most teachers surveyed have a clear understanding about what constitutes physical violence between students. Three in four respondents (about four in five from Central and South America and over half from other regions) consider threatening another student with a weapon, slapping another student in the face and hitting, shoving, kicking or striking another student to be examples of physical violence. However, one in five respondents do not identify these behaviours as physical violence. No significant differences were found in responses between male and female teachers or older and younger teachers. There were regional differences, with respondents in Western and Central Europe and North America most often agreeing – ranging from 83%–90% depending on the behaviour – and teachers in the Middle East and North Africa least often agreeing – 48%–52% – that the behaviours presented constituted violence.

Teachers surveyed are more likely to recognise more aggressive forms of sexual violence perpetrated by students as violence. Three in four respondents (over three in four in Central and South America and two in three in other regions) consider forced sex and making fun of another student with sexual jokes or comments to be forms of sexual violence. Fewer teachers – 74% for Central and South America and 57% for the rest, or 71% overall – see offering money or goods for sex as a form of sexual violence. Nearly four in five (78%) respondents in Central and South America view touching in a sexual way as violence, but only half (50%) among the remaining respondents share the same view. A significant minority of respondents – one in five overall and one in four in regions other than Central and South America – do not see these behaviours as sexual violence. No significant

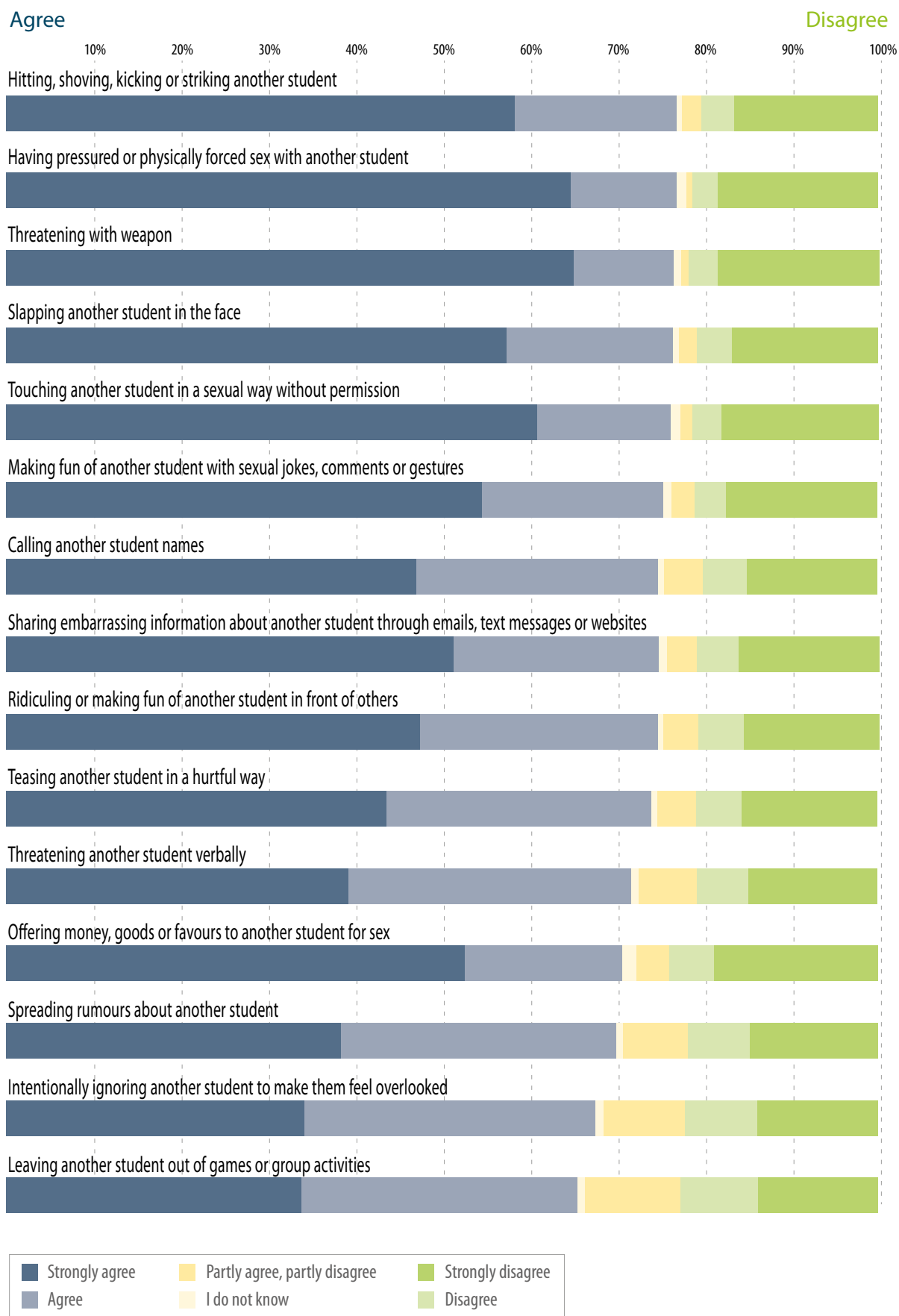
differences were found in responses between older and younger teachers. Among the teachers who responded in Eastern, Western and Central Europe and North America, over 90% view forced sex as sexual violence. In contrast, only 51% of the respondents in the Middle East and North Africa who responded to the survey agree that forced sex is sexual violence. Teacher responses also differed by gender and location – female respondents and urban respondents were more likely to consider all four behaviours as forms of sexual violence.

Teachers surveyed are less likely to recognise some forms of psychological violence between students than physical or sexual violence, and are more likely to identify more aggressive forms of psychological violence than more subtle abuse.

Respondents are most likely to view behaviours such as name calling, ridiculing and sharing embarrassing information about another student through emails, text messages or websites as psychological violence. They are less likely to identify behaviours such as teasing, verbal threats or spreading rumours as psychological violence. Respondents from Central and South America are more likely than those from other regions to view leaving a student out of activities and intentionally ignoring them as psychological violence. Respondents in Western and Central Europe and North America most often agree – ranging from 69%–87% depending on the behaviour – and respondents in the Middle East and North Africa least often agree – ranging from 44%–51% – that the behaviours presented constituted violence.

Female teachers surveyed are more likely to identify situations as violence but less likely to believe that these situations occur. These findings, which were found for physical, psychological and sexual violence, suggest that female teachers may be less likely to notice violence between students, but further research is needed to investigate this.

Figure 3. Teacher responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours that happen among students can be described as violence?’



How do teachers view violence towards students perpetrated by teachers?

Around three in four teachers surveyed have a clear understanding about behaviours that constitute physical violence perpetrated by teachers. Between 70% and 73% of respondents (73% and 75% in Central and South America and 57% and 67% for remaining regions) believe that a teacher who slaps a student in the face, hits, shoves, kicks or strikes a student or threatens a student with a weapon is committing an act of physical violence. But at least one in five respondents (23% of Central and South American respondents and around 30% of remaining respondents) do not regard these actions by teachers as violence. The proportion is higher in some regions – around half of teachers who responded from countries in the Middle East and North Africa and one-third in countries in the Asia-Pacific – do not agree that hitting, shoving, whipping or caning a student can be defined as physical violence. The views of participants in the focus groups in Zambia suggest that some teachers justify physical violence as necessary in some circumstances, for example, to maintain classroom discipline or correct student behaviour; it appears to be a more common practice and view in sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific than in other regions among the respondents who had taken such actions to maintain classroom order.

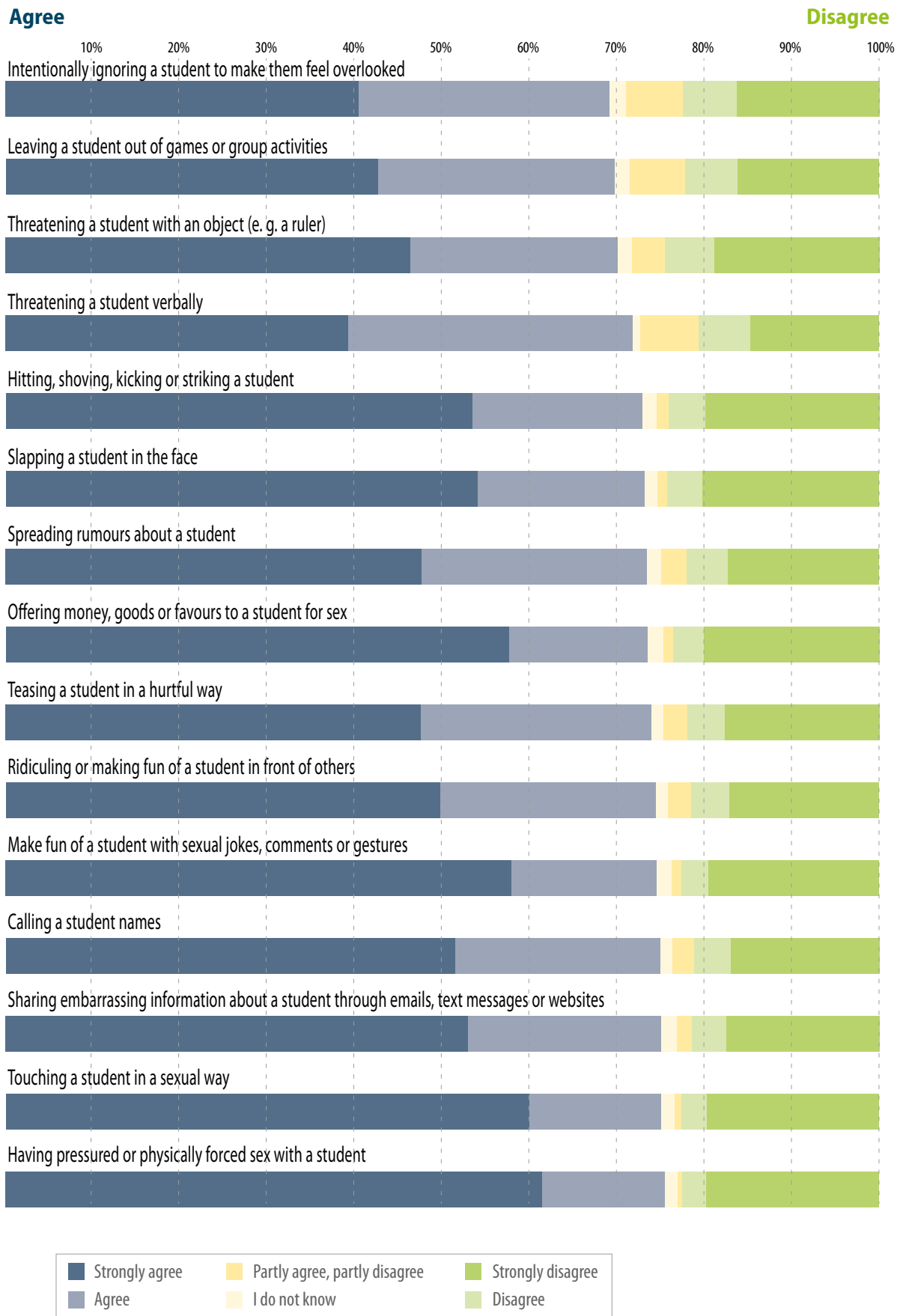
Teachers surveyed are less likely to identify the same behaviours as ‘physical violence’ when they are perpetrated by a teacher than when they are perpetrated by a student. Respondents are more likely to strongly disagree that actions constitute physical violence when they are committed by a teacher and more likely to strongly agree that the same actions constitute physical violence when they are committed by a student. This may suggest

that some teachers justify and normalise these actions as disciplinary measures to correct students’ misbehaviour.

Three in four teachers surveyed recognise behaviours that constitute sexual violence perpetrated by teachers. Over three in four Central and South American respondents; around seven in ten among the respondents from other regions; about three in four female respondents, and seven in ten male respondents, identified all four behaviours as sexual violence: forced sex, touching a student in a sexual way, making fun of a student with sexual jokes or comments, offering a student money, goods or favours for sex. But, overall, around one in five do not agree that teachers engaging in these behaviours are committing sexual violence. There are regional differences in views about teachers offering students money, goods or favours in exchange for sex – one in four respondents in Central and South America, two in five in the Middle East and North Africa and one in three in the Asia-Pacific strongly disagreed that this behaviour is a form of sexual violence.

Teachers surveyed do not identify some teacher behaviours as psychological violence. Overall, three in four respondents agree or strongly agree that if a teacher shares embarrassing information, spreads rumours about a student or ridicules or teases a student in a hurtful way, this can be described as psychological violence. They were less likely to view leaving a student out or intentionally ignoring them as psychological violence. However, overall, one in five respondents, or ranging from less than one in ten in Europe, about one in five in Central and South America, to about one in two in North Africa, do not consider any of these actions by teachers to constitute psychological violence.

Figure 4. Teacher responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours by a teacher should be described as violence?’



How often do teachers think that violence between students occurs in schools?

According to teachers surveyed, psychological violence is the most common form of violence between students. More than half of respondents say that, based on what they have seen or what has been reported to them, all forms of psychological violence – with the exception of sharing information through email, text and messages – occur in their schools often, occasionally or sometimes. However, a significant minority of respondents, ranging from 10% to 46% depending on the region, believe that psychological violence between students does not happen. Whether this is because they do not see it, it is not reported to them, or because it happens in their absence or outside school is unclear.

Verbal abuse and exclusion are the most common forms of psychological violence among students. More than two-thirds of respondents report that verbal threats, teasing in a hurtful way, name calling, intentionally ignoring another student and leaving another student out of games and activities occur often, occasionally or sometimes. Sharing information through email, text and messages is reported as less frequent and this may be because such behaviour is less visible to teachers.

Teachers surveyed report that physical violence between students is also common, in particular, hitting, shoving, kicking or striking another student. One in ten respondents say that, based on what they have seen or what has been reported

to them, this behaviour happens often, and almost two in three say that it happens occasionally or sometimes. This is consistent with global survey data⁶ that show a high prevalence of physical bullying and fights between students. Slapping another student in the face is perceived to occur less often, although two in five teachers report that it happens occasionally or sometimes. Overall, most respondents believe that threatening another student with a weapon never happens in their school, although this is not the case in all regions. For example, respondents in sub-Saharan Africa were less likely to say that threatening another student with a weapon never occurs.

Most teachers surveyed believe that sexual violence between students does not happen in their school. Four in five respondents say that, based on what they have seen or what has been reported to them, forced sex and offering money or goods in exchange for sex between students never happens in their school. Almost three quarters of respondents believe that touching in a sexual way without permission does not occur between students. Making fun of another student with sexual jokes, comments or gestures is thought to happen more often – two in five respondents think that this behaviour occurs often, occasionally or sometimes. This is consistent with global survey data⁷ that found that 11.2% of students who have been bullied reported sexual bullying, in particular being made fun of with sexual jokes, comments or gestures.

⁶ UNESCO. 2019. *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483>

⁷ Ibid.

How common is violence perpetrated by teachers?

Most teachers surveyed believe that teachers never perpetrate psychological violence towards students. However, the proportion varies depending on the behaviour in question. For example, one in four respondents say that teachers sometimes or occasionally threaten students verbally, or intentionally ignore students.

Almost all teachers surveyed report that physical violence perpetrated by teachers never occurs in their school. Overall, almost nine in ten respondents believe that teachers never hit, shove, whip or cane a student or slap a student in the face. Despite that, only fewer than half African and Caribbean teachers share the same perception. Other data sources suggest that, globally, the prevalence of physical violence perpetrated by teachers is low, although this is not the case in all regions.⁸ However, overall, one in six respondents to the survey report that teachers occasionally or sometimes threaten a student with an object and, in sub-Saharan Africa, three in five teachers say that this form of physical

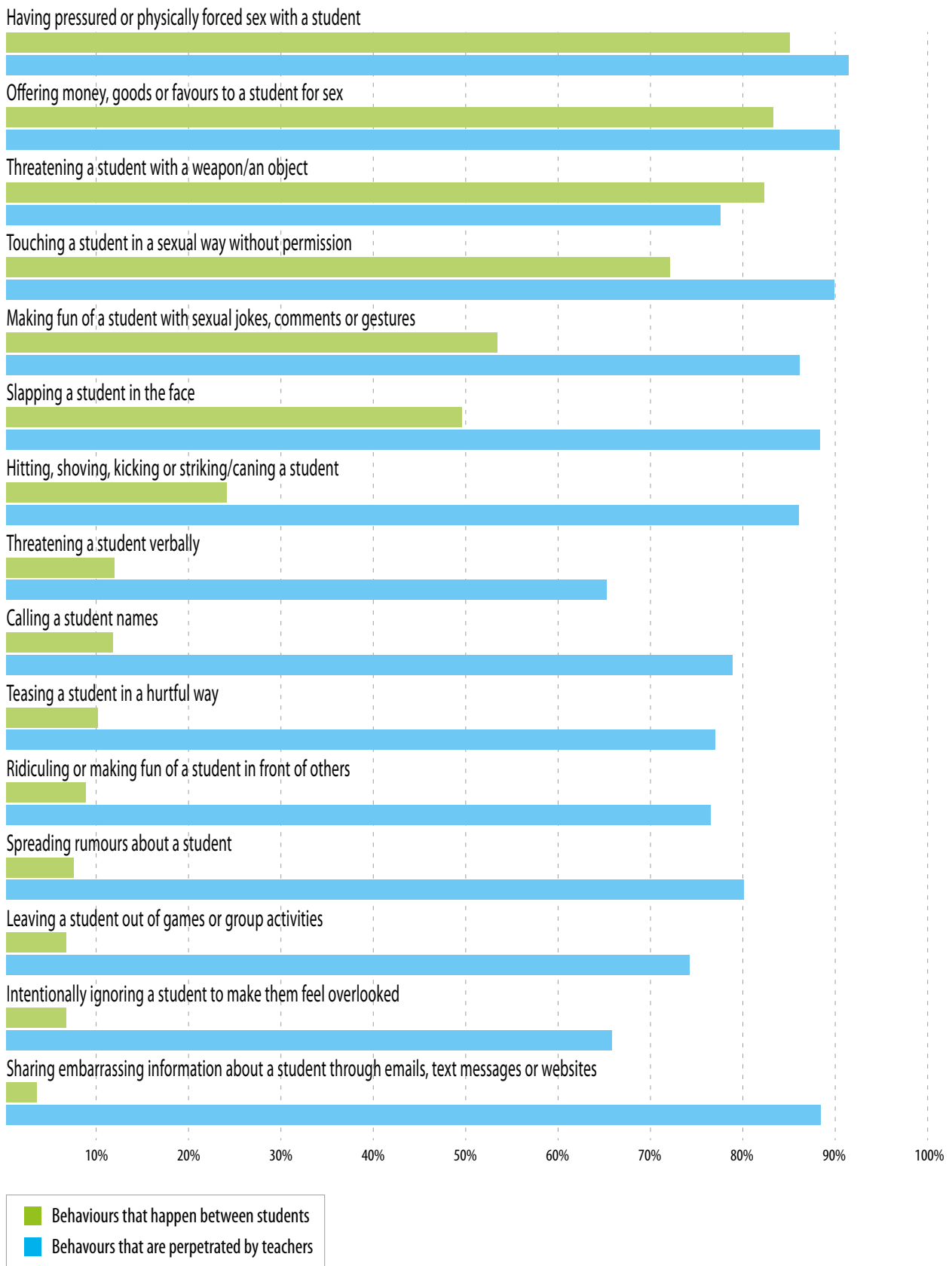
violence happens occasionally, sometimes or often. Participants in the focus groups in Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia report that teachers often carry sticks or canes to intimidate students.

Sexual violence perpetrated by teachers is believed to occur rarely. Almost all respondents believe that sexual violence perpetrated by a teacher never occurs in their school. Overall, around 90% of respondents believe this is the case for forced sex, touching in a sexual way and offering money, goods or favours; fewer than 3% say that these behaviours happen occasionally or sometimes. This is consistent with student-focused data from other sources that show that the prevalence of sexual violence towards students by teachers is reported as low.⁹ Teachers making fun of students with sexual jokes, comments or gestures in their school appears to be more common, with 7% of teachers (ranging from about 4% in Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia to 33% in Eastern and Southern Africa) reporting that this happens occasionally, sometimes or often.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Figure 5. Percentage of teachers surveyed who agreed that the following behaviours perpetrated by students or teachers never happened in their schools



The data presented in this section reveal that there are differences between regions in the way that the teachers surveyed perceive violence and its prevalence, whether it is violence between students or violence perpetrated by teachers. Respondents in the Middle East and North Africa are less likely to identify most forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence than teachers in Europe and the Americas. It is difficult to interpret and generalise these findings because the response rate from the Middle East and North Africa is relatively low: 6% of the total respondents. However, it is interesting to note that the Middle East and North Africa have the third highest and second highest prevalence of bullying in the world: 41% of students in the Middle East and 43% of students in North Africa report they were bullied in the past month. In comparison, the prevalence of students who said they experience bullying is much lower in the regions where teachers are able to identify different forms of bullying: 23% in Central America; 25% in Europe; 30% in South America and 32% in North America.

The prevalence of physical violence is also very high in both the Middle East and North Africa: North Africa has the highest proportion of students involved in physical fights in the world (46%) and the Middle East the second highest (43%).

The incapacity to identify most forms of violence between students in contexts where this violence is widespread could mean that it tends to be perceived as normal by society, including by teachers.

2.2 Practice: What do teachers do about school violence?

How do teachers deal with challenging behaviour in the classroom?

Positive classroom management is characterised by the following practices: discussion with students, positive relationships with students, clear rules and procedures about behaviour, making students responsible for their behaviour, teaching them social and emotional skills, and meeting with parents. These contribute to preventing anti-social behaviour, including violence, and to promoting pro-social behaviour.¹⁰ Punitive classroom management strategies include physical punishment, such as caning or hitting a student, verbal punishment, such as scolding, ridiculing or humiliating a student, and exclusion; these have been linked to negative effects, including alienation, disengagement from learning, and early drop out from school.¹¹

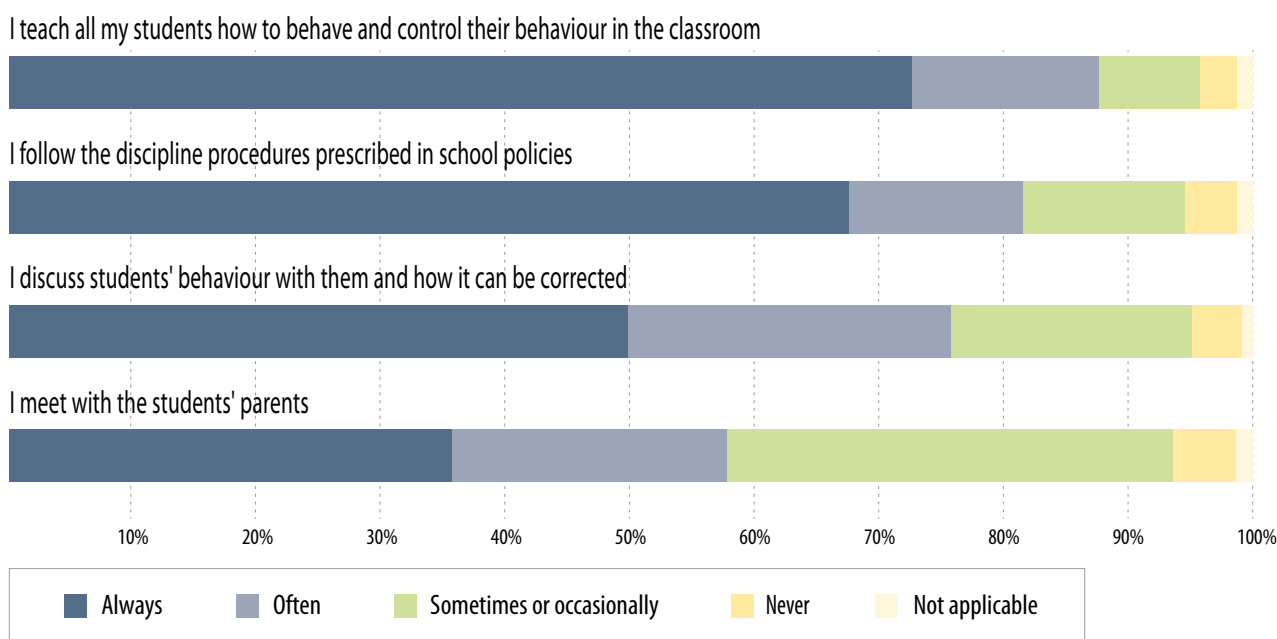
Most teachers surveyed say that they use positive strategies to manage behaviour. More than three-quarters of respondents report using positive strategies (focusing on prevention and support to enable positive student behaviour) including teaching students how to control their behaviour (88%), following school disciplinary procedures (82%), and talking to students about how to improve their behaviour (76%); around half (58%) say that they talk to students' parents. Respondents in Central and South America are more likely to report that they use these approaches than teachers in other regions. Case studies in countries that have reduced school violence and bullying suggest that improving teachers' skills in classroom management, including using positive discipline, is a critical success factor.¹²

10 Korpershoek, H. et al. 2016. A Meta-analysis of the effects of classroom management strategies and classroom management programs on students' academic, behavioral, emotional, and motivational outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(3), 643–680. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626799>

11 Ferrara et al. 2019. Physical, psychological and social impact of school violence on children. *Italian Journal of Pediatrics*, 45, 1-4. <https://ijponline.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13052-019-0669-z>

12 UNESCO. 2019. *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying*. Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483>

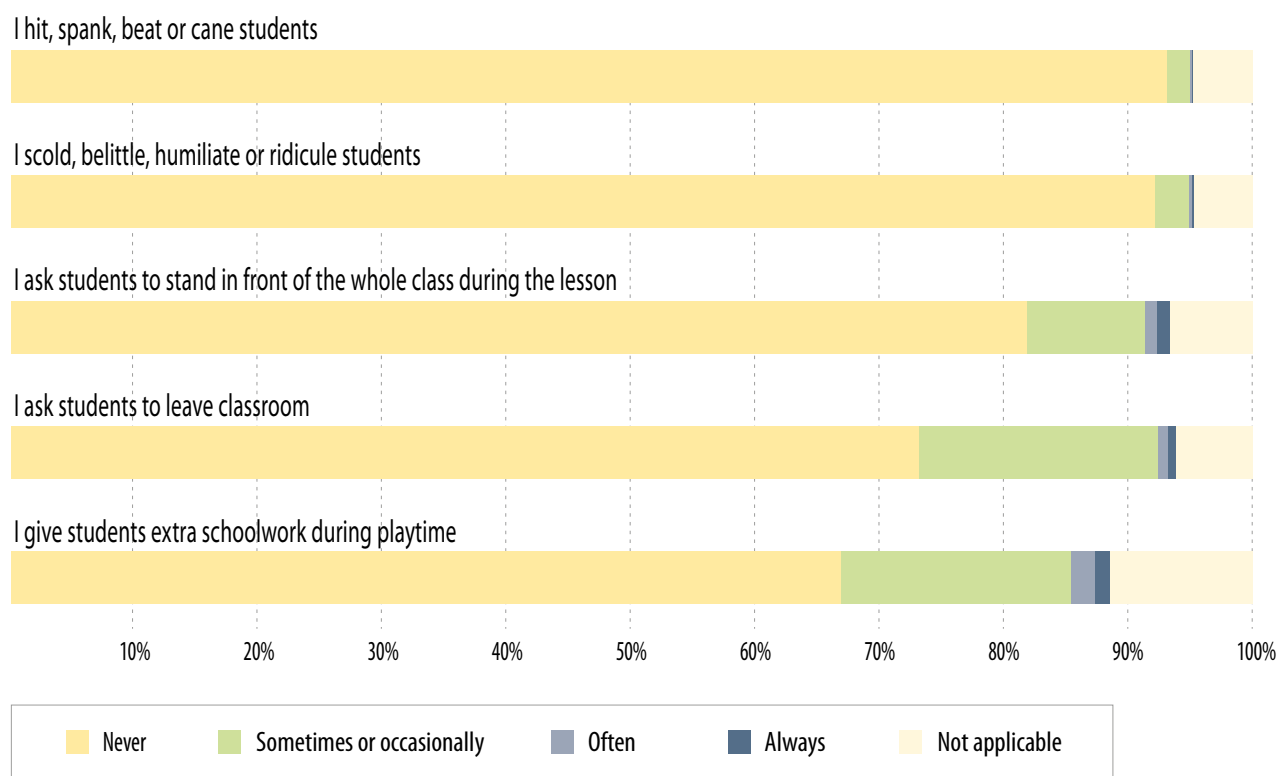
Figure 6. How often do teachers implement the following positive strategies to manage student behaviour?



Very few teachers surveyed report using punitive measures themselves to correct student behaviour. Fewer than 2% of teachers who responded to the survey¹³ say that they always or often use punitive measures (use of punishment to address misbehaviour and violence) such as physical punishment, scolding or humiliating students, or making them stand in front of the class during the lesson, although overall around one in five (around one-sixth of Central and South American respondents and one-third among respondents from other regions) report that they occasionally or sometimes punish students by giving them extra schoolwork during break times or asking them to leave the classroom. While no significant differences were found between male and female respondents,

younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to say that they use punitive measures, such as asking students to leave the classroom: 26% of those aged 18–30 reported using this strategy compared with 11% of those aged over 60. Survey responses about self-reported use of corporal punishment may have been influenced by what teachers think is socially acceptable and by the fact that corporal punishment is banned in schools in countries that were over-represented. Teachers participating in the focus group discussions in Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia were more likely to report and justify the use of punitive measures in order to maintain discipline in the classroom.

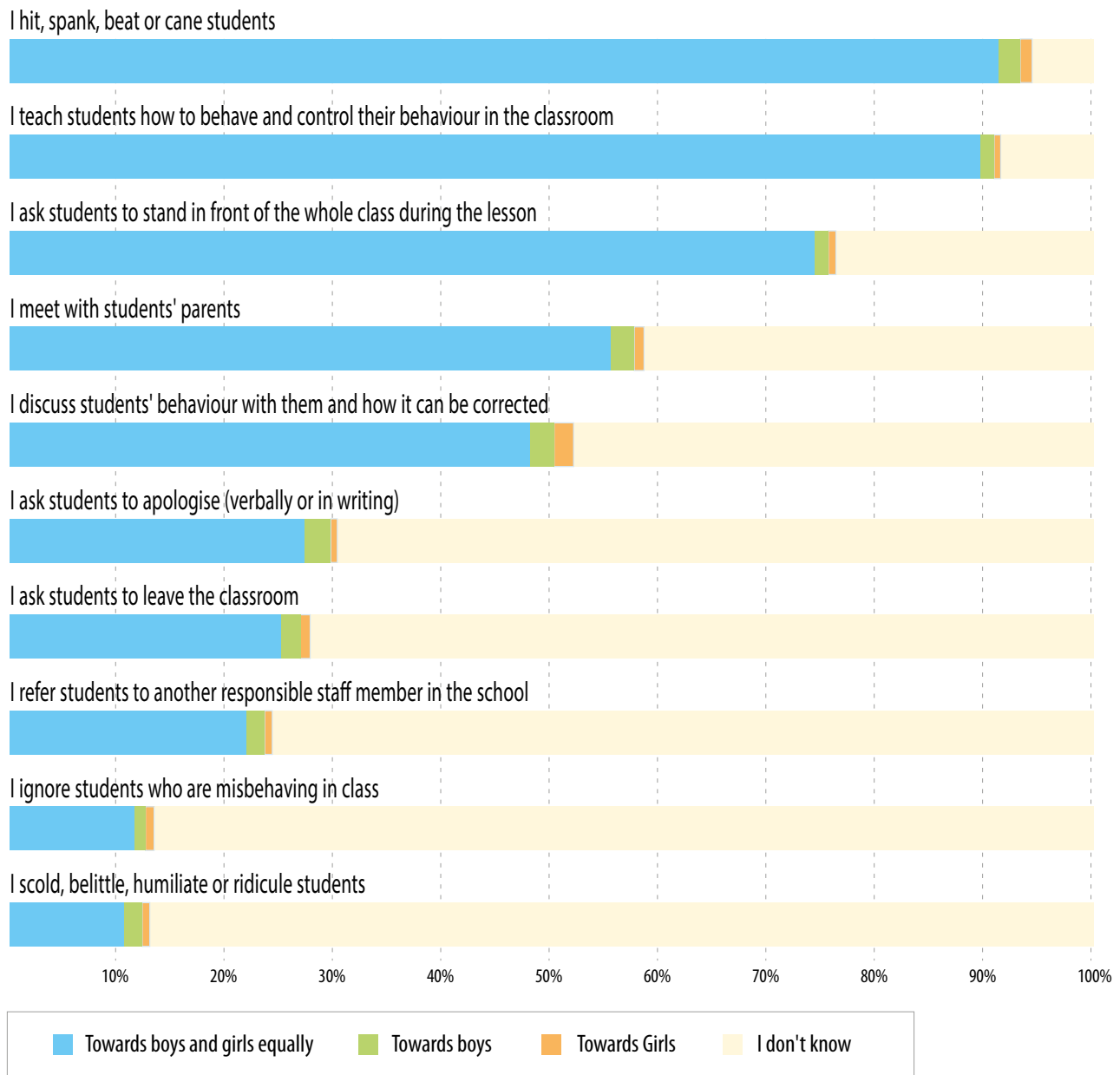
¹³ 42% of them are from among the respondents in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Middle East and North Africa who represents only 11% of the total sample.

Figure 7. How often do teachers take the following punitive measures to manage student behaviour?

One in two teachers surveyed say they always or often use different strategies to manage behaviour for or with boys and girls. Almost one-third of respondents overall (one in five in regions other than Central and South America) report that they always or often have different expectations of the behaviour of boys and girls, and this was slightly less likely to be the case among younger teachers. More than half of respondents overall (around one third in regions other than Central and South America) say they use different strategies to correct misbehaviour for or with boys and girls.

Differences in expectations and approaches to behaviour management were more pronounced among respondents in Central and South America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa. However, in response to a question about distinguishing between boys and girls when seeking to maintain order in the classroom, many teachers, with similar proportions of male and female respondents, reported that they do not treat boys and girls differently or that they do not know whether they do.

Figure 8. Teacher responses to the question “Towards which gender in the classroom are you more likely to take the following actions in order to maintain order?”



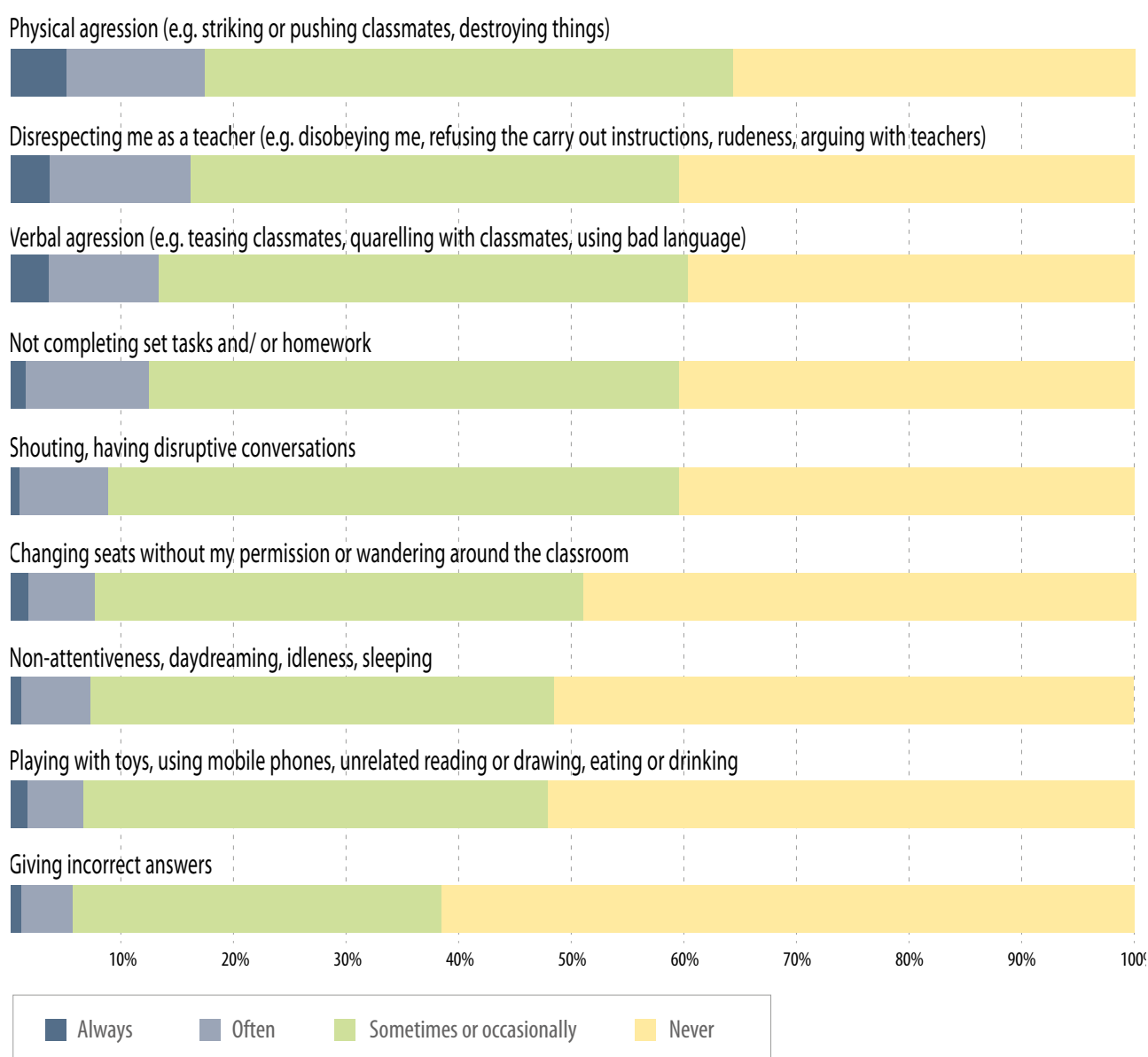
Most teachers surveyed think corporal punishment does not have a positive impact on student behaviour or performance. More than four in five respondents (nine in ten respondents in Central and South America) do not believe that corporal punishment improves student behaviour, respect for teachers or academic performance (Figure 9). There were some regional differences in responses, with respondents in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific more likely to believe that corporal punishment can have benefits.

However, a significant minority of teachers surveyed consider corporal punishment to be justified in certain situations. Although most respondents report that they themselves do not use corporal punishment, overall, one in seven (about one in twelve in Central and South America and one in five in other regions) think that corporal punishment is always or often justified when a student disrespects the teacher, uses physical or verbal aggression. About one in four respondents in Central and South America and more than half in

other regions think corporal punishment is always, often, occasionally or sometimes justified in these situations. More than half of respondents (more than one-fourth in Central and South America and more than two-thirds in other regions) also think corporal punishment is justified when a student shouts or has disruptive conversations. This may explain why some teachers appear less likely to identify the same behaviours as physical violence when they are perpetrated by a teacher than when

they are perpetrated by a student. Older teachers and teachers in urban areas who responded to the survey were less likely to believe that corporal punishment is justified. There were also regional differences, with the proportion of respondents who believe that physical punishment is always or often justified in response to physical aggression by students ranging from 7% in Central and South America, 15.3% in the Middle East and North Africa to 36% in sub-Saharan Africa.

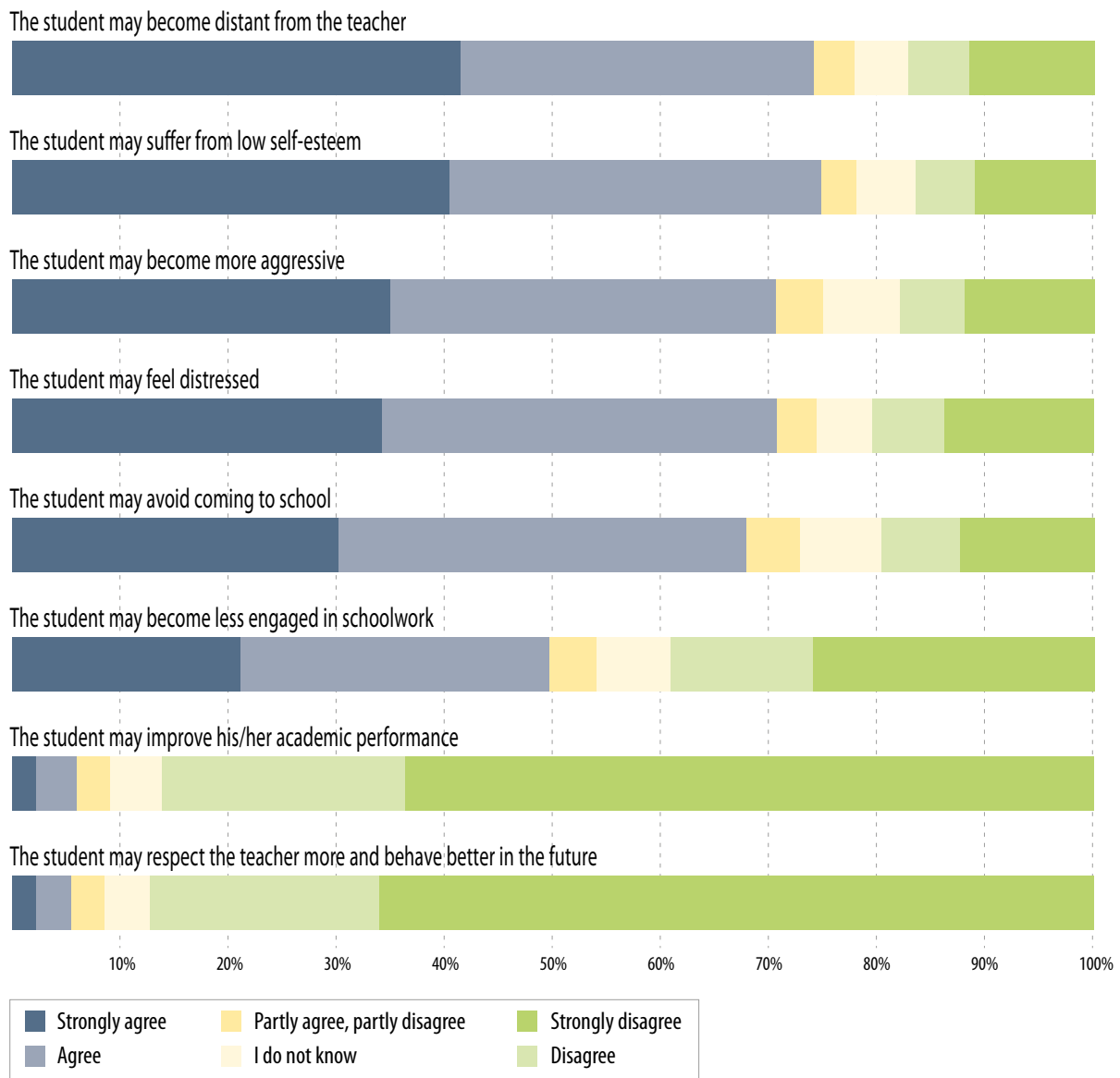
Figure 9. Teacher responses to the question ‘How often do the following student behaviours in your class justify hitting, spanking beating or caning students?’



Not all teachers surveyed are aware of the harmful effects of corporal punishment on students' well-being and learning. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of respondents agree that corporal punishment can have negative impacts on students, including distress, low self-esteem, aggressive behaviour, becoming distanced from the teacher or avoiding coming to school. However, around one in five respondents overall, with larger

proportions in the Middle East and North America, Central Asia and the Caribbean, do not agree that corporal punishment can have these consequences. Female respondents and older respondents are more likely than male respondents or younger respondents to recognise the negative psychological and academic impact of teacher violence as a whole, or corporal punishment specifically, towards students.

Figure 10. Teacher responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are potential consequences of teachers hitting, spanking, beating or caning students?'

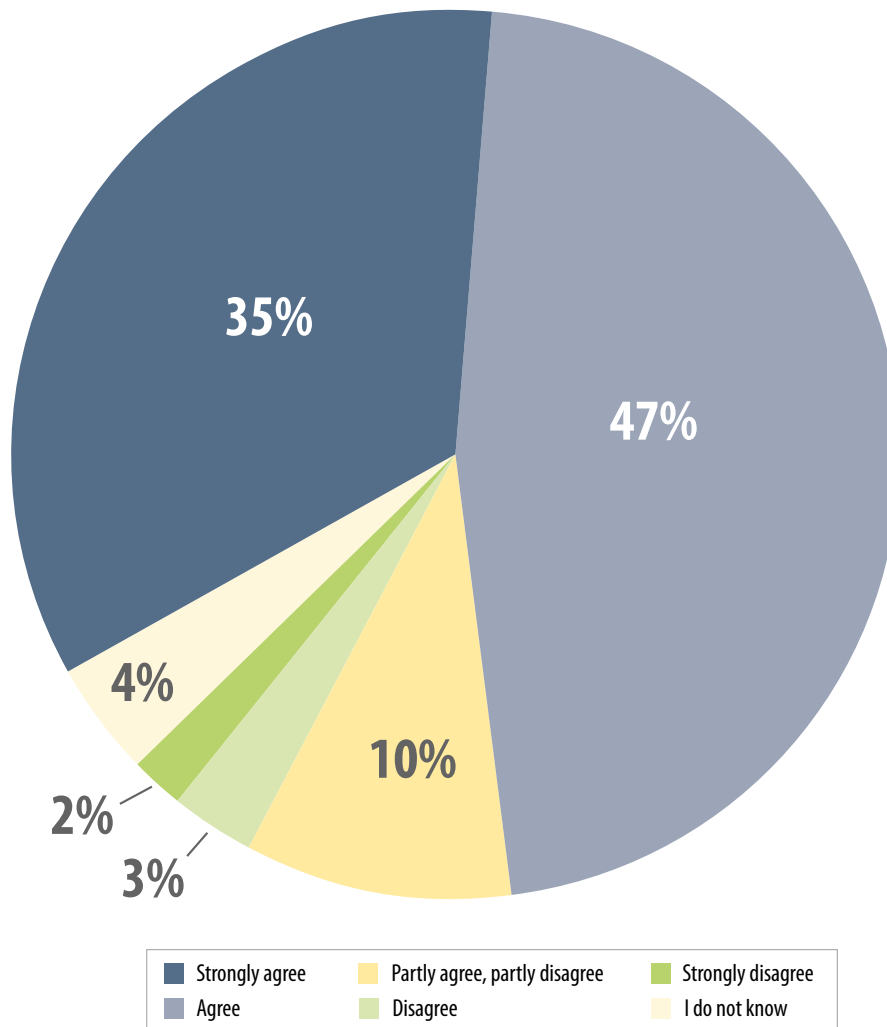


What do teachers do to prevent violence and create safe classrooms?

Four in five teachers surveyed think it is their responsibility to ensure that students feel safe in the classroom. The one in five respondents

who do not see it as their responsibility to create a safe learning environment either believe it is the responsibility of school management or school guidance staff or view violence as an issue to be addressed through school disciplinary procedures.

Figure 11. Teacher perceptions of the statement 'It is my responsibility to ensure that students feel safe from all forms of violence in my classroom', in %



Classroom teaching – on a range of issues – is the most common strategy used to prevent violence and create a safe classroom environment.

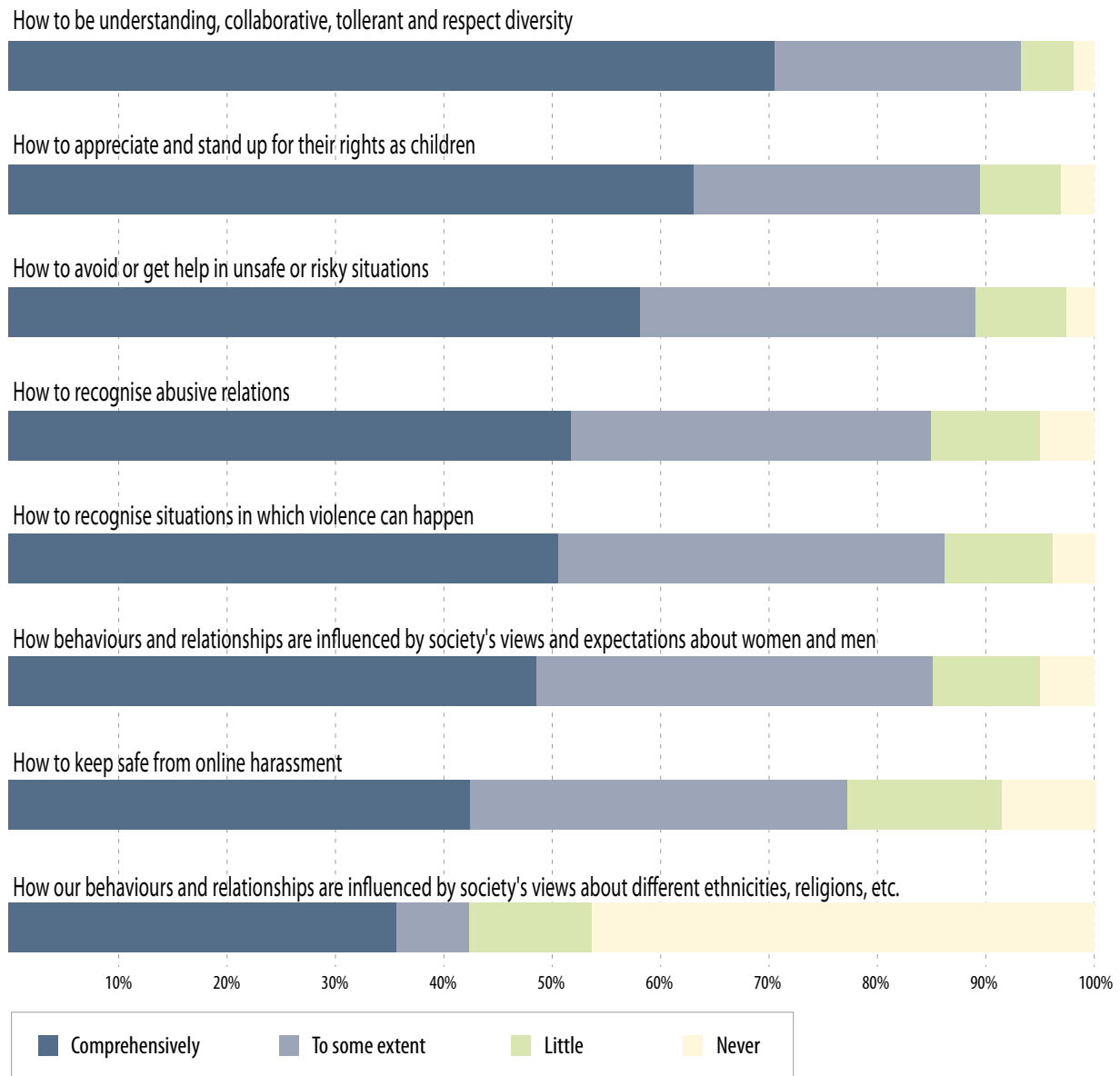
Teachers surveyed are most likely to say that they teach comprehensively about values, such as tolerance, inclusion and respect for diversity, standing up for your rights, and avoiding unsafe situations and abusive relationships, with a larger proportion of respondents from Central and South

America (ranging from 58% to 76% depending on the topics) than those from other regions (ranging from 20% to 46%) saying so. Teachers surveyed are less likely to report teaching students about how social norms influence behaviour and about cyber safety. Older respondents are more likely than younger respondents to teach comprehensively about violence prevention and social norms, and older respondents and female respondents are more

likely to say that they teach comprehensively about children’s rights. Respondents in pre-school and primary school are more likely to teach about values, rights, avoiding dangerous situations and abusive relationships than teachers of older students.

The findings suggest a decline in comprehensive teaching about violence-related issues as students get older, possibly because secondary school teachers are more focused on teaching their subjects.

Figure 12. Teacher responses to the question ‘To what extent have you ever taught your students about the following in your classes?’



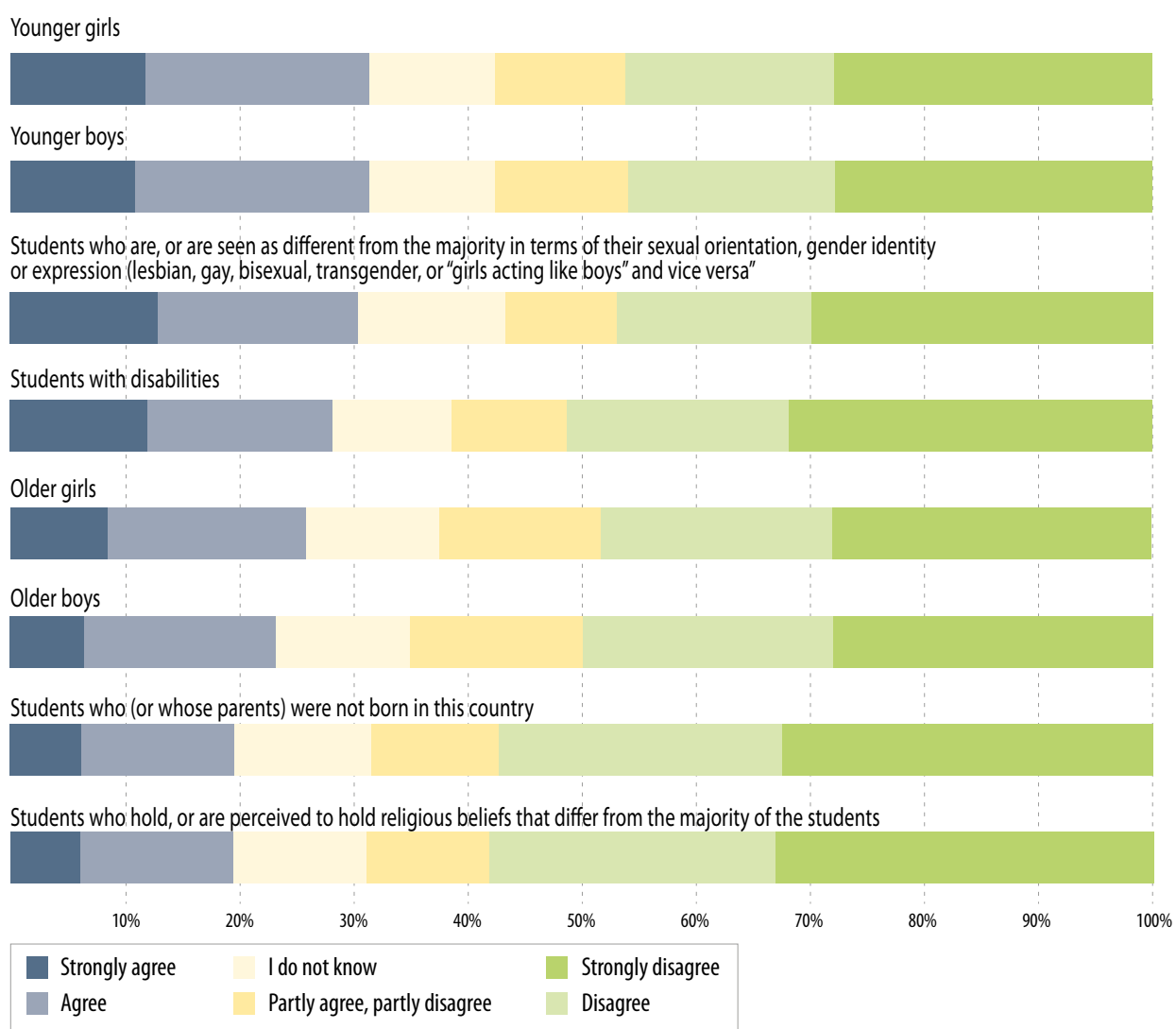
Almost all teachers surveyed take steps to identify students who are vulnerable to violence. Most respondents say they do this through classroom

observation and interaction with students, and around half through encouraging students to talk to them or through talking to students’ parents.

However, many teachers surveyed are unaware of which groups of students are more likely to be victims of violence. Despite global evidence,¹⁴ only one in three respondents think that younger students are more vulnerable to school violence, and fewer than one in three think that students with a different sexual orientation or identity and students with a disability are more at risk of violence. Respondents in sub-Saharan Africa were most likely to identify specific groups of students included in

the survey question, for example, students with different religious beliefs, students with a different sexual orientation, and students with disabilities as potential victims of violence. Respondents in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were least likely to agree that these groups of students are more likely to be potential victims of violence. Teachers participating in the focus groups in Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia identified girls as being at greater risk of sexual violence.

Figure 13. Teacher responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the victims of violence in your schools?’, in %



¹⁴ Global evidence, based on international surveys of school students, shows that students who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and those who do not conform to gender norms are at higher risk of school violence and bullying. Physical appearance is the most frequent reason for bullying; bullying based on race, nationality or colour is the second most frequent reason reported by students. Socio-economic disadvantage is also associated with increased risk of being bullied. Age is also a factor: as children grow older they are less likely to be bullied, to be involved in a physical fight or to be attacked, but older students appear to be more at risk of cyberbullying. UNESCO, 2019. Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying.

How do teachers respond to violence in school?

Four in five teachers surveyed say they are able to help students who are victims of violence. In Central and South America, the most common ways in which teachers support victims are reported to be classroom discussion and talking to parents. In other regions, overall, the most common practices are reported to be stopping the violence immediately when it occurs and talking to the victim. Fewer respondents say that they mediate between the victim and the perpetrator, or teach the victim how to avoid violence. The least mentioned ways are referring the victim to professional services or involving other students in supporting the victim.

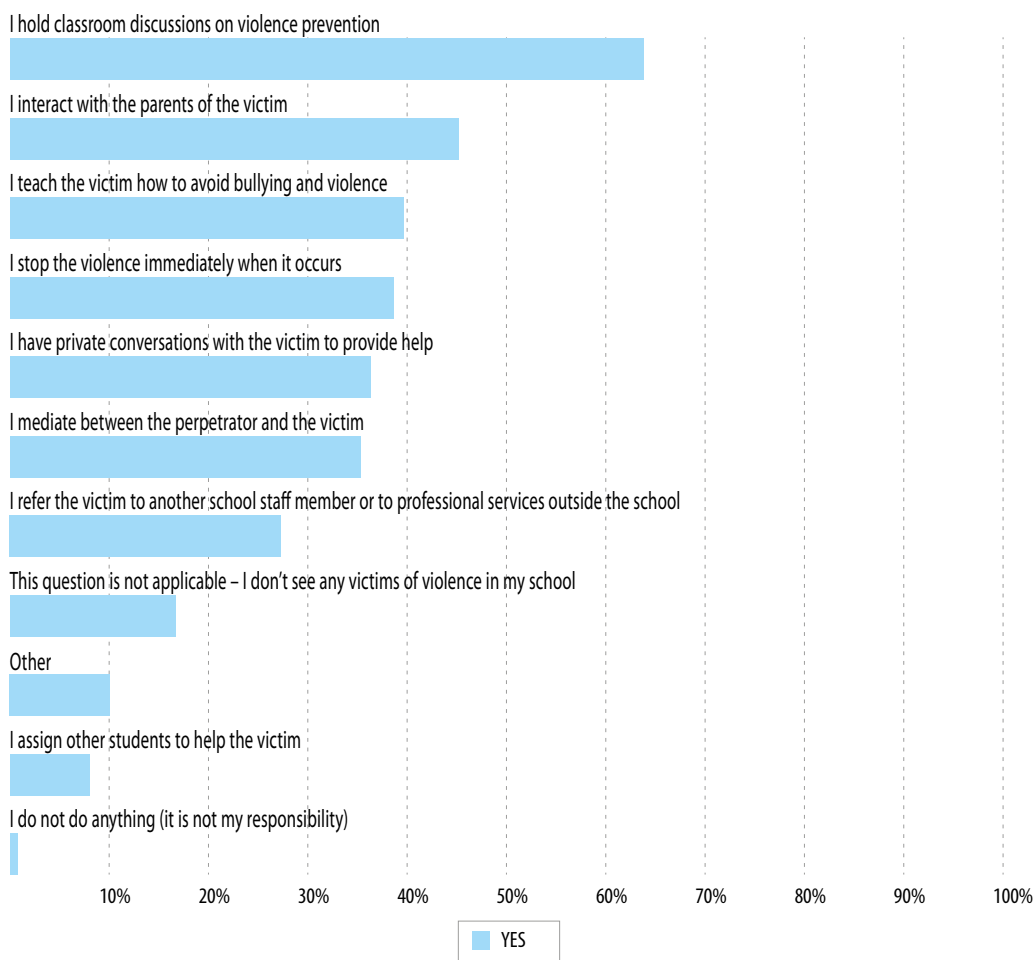
Most teachers surveyed do not intervene to stop violence. Many respondents report that they feel unable to intervene in incidents of violence. Only two in five respondents overall, and half of respondents from Central and South America, say they take action to stop violence immediately.

The most common interventions with perpetrators are reported to be use of school disciplinary procedures and classroom discussion about violence prevention. Two-thirds of Central and South America respondents and about half of respondents from other regions report using these strategies. A lower proportion report that they talk to the parents of the perpetrator, talk to the perpetrator and teach them how to change their behaviour, or ask them to apologise to the victim. Very few respondents say that they use physical or verbal punishment.

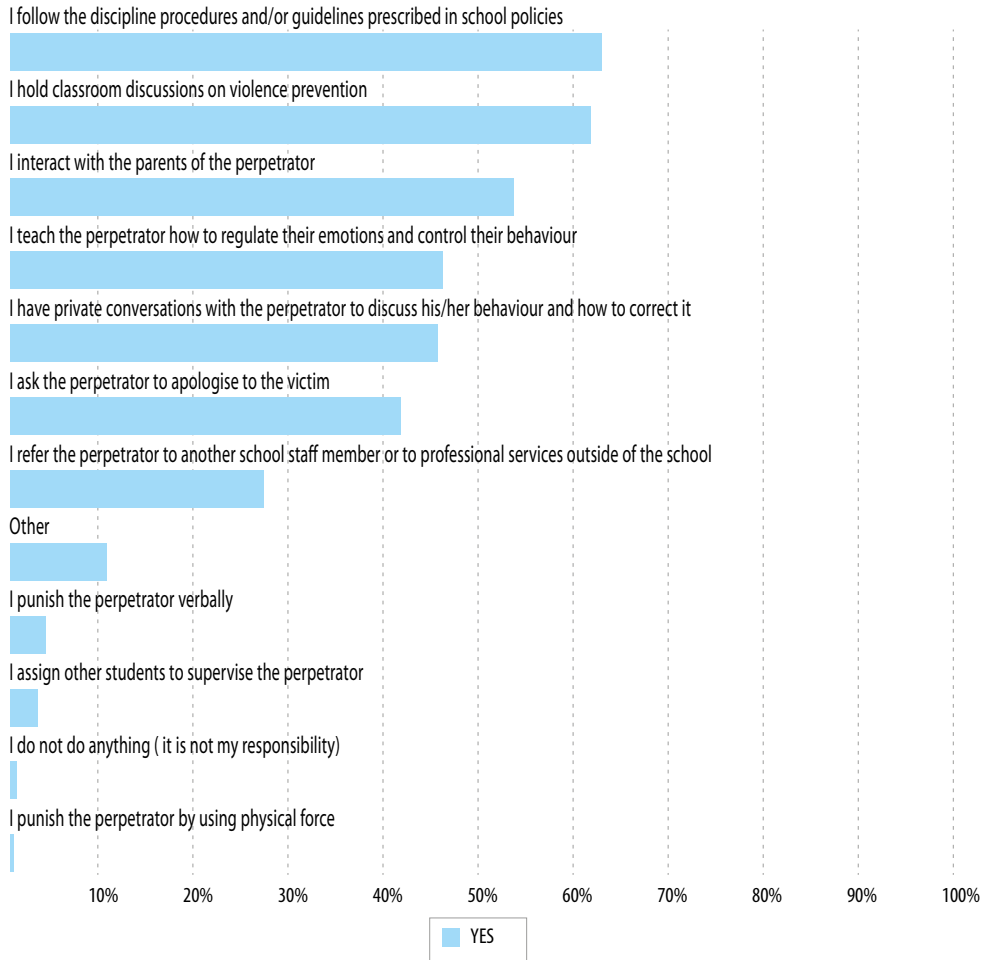
Only half of teachers surveyed address the role of students who witness violence. While half of respondents say that they discuss the role of bystanders in general with the class, fewer report talking to bystanders about what the bystanders saw during an act of violence or discussing what the bystanders saw with the whole class.

Figure 14. Teacher responses to questions about what they usually do with students who are victims, perpetrators or bystanders of violence in their schools, in %

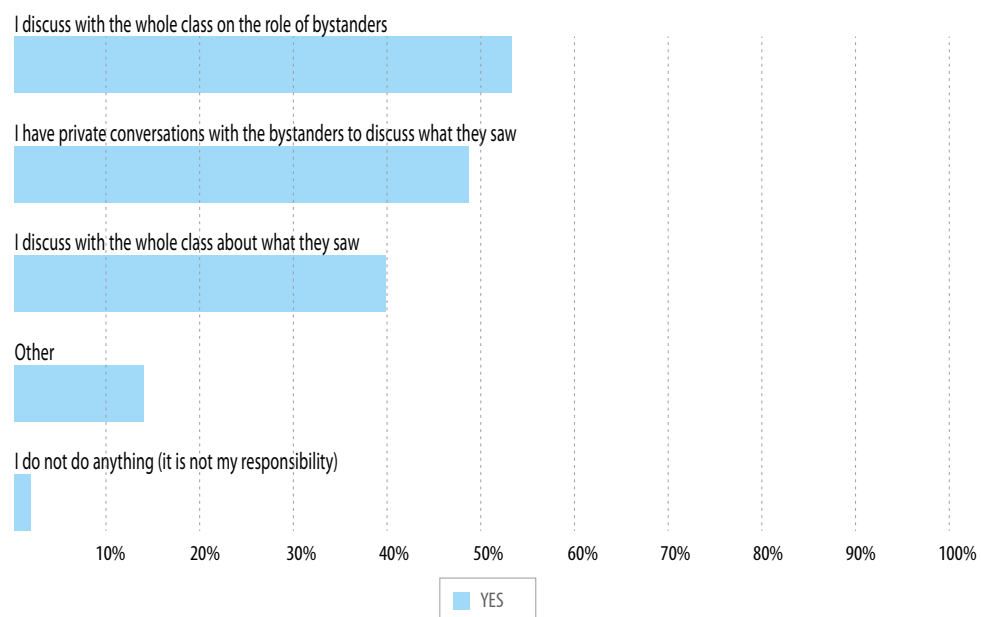
With Victims



With Perpetrators



With Bystanders



2.3 Training and support needs: Do teachers think they are well equipped to prevent and respond to school violence?

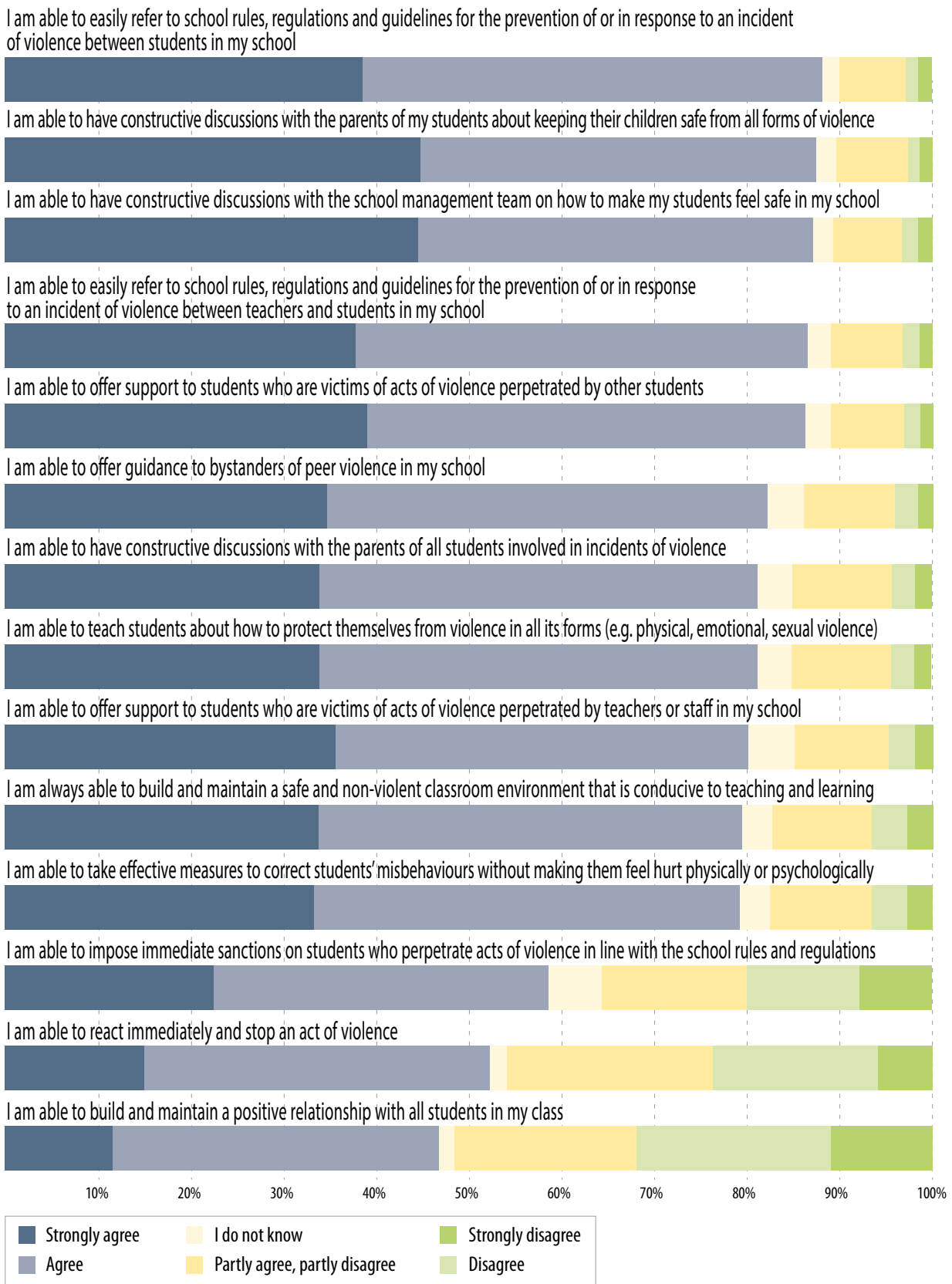
Are teachers equipped to prevent and respond to school violence?

The majority of teachers surveyed believe they have the skills they need to prevent and address violence. More than four in five respondents (three in four in respondents from regions other than Central and South America) say they have the competencies needed to create a safe classroom environment, teach students how to protect themselves from violence, support students who are victims of violence, and talk with parents of students involved in violence. Older respondents feel more confident about their skills than younger respondents.

Fewer than half of teachers surveyed feel equipped to develop good relationships with their students or to intervene to stop violence.

Building positive relationships with students is key to teachers' ability to prevent and respond to violence effectively, but fewer than half of the respondents say they feel able to develop positive relationships with students and around one in three say they do not have the competencies to build such relationships. One in four respondents report that they do not know how to stop violence when it occurs and younger respondents feel less well equipped to intervene than older respondents. (Figure 15)

Figure 15. Do teachers agree that they have the following competencies to prevent and address school violence?

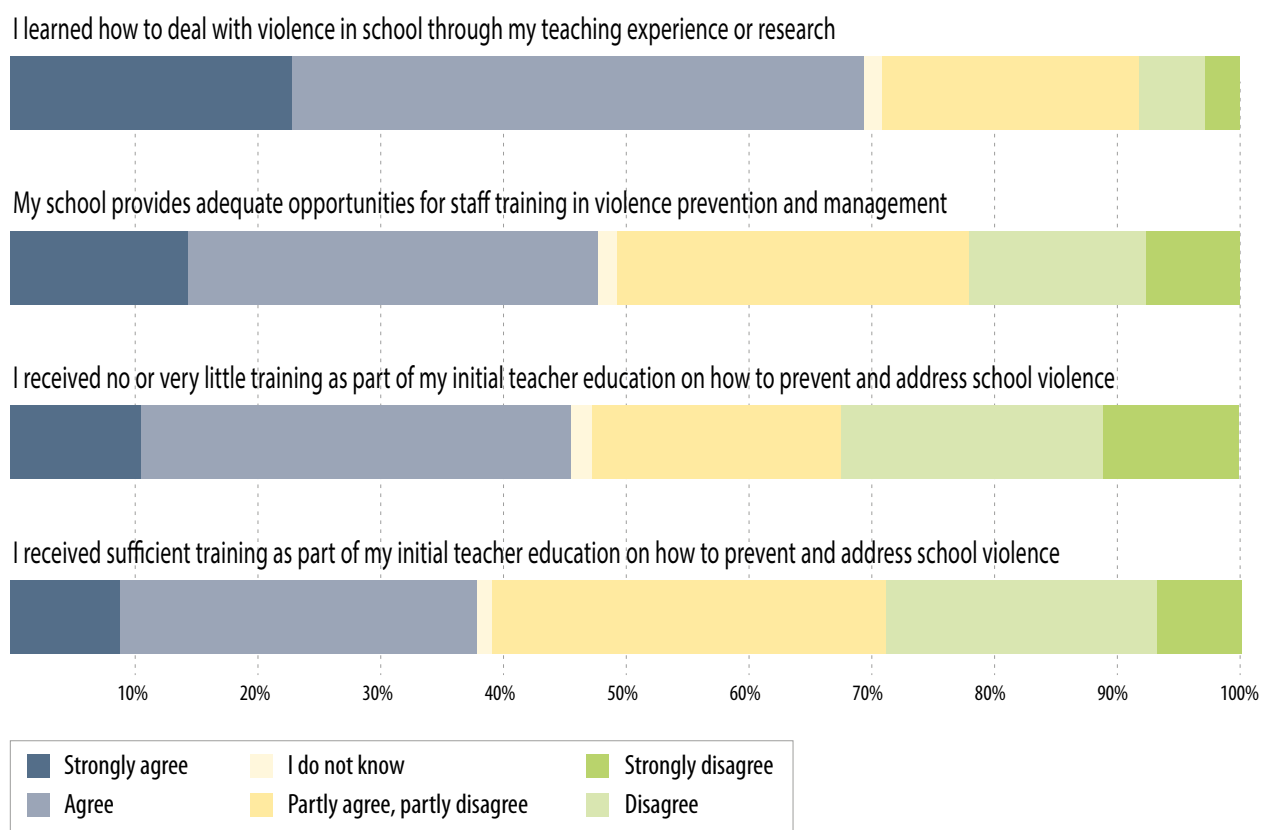


Most teachers surveyed are not adequately prepared to address school violence through pre-service or in-service training. Only one in three respondents in Central and South American and two in five in other regions say they received sufficient training on how to prevent and respond to school violence during their pre-service education; almost half of respondents say that they received little or no training on school violence during their pre-service education. Female and younger respondents are most likely to report that they have had insufficient pre-service training. Some teachers participating in focus group discussions commented that pre-service training was not adequate or relevant to the challenges they face. Only half of respondents say that their school provides adequate opportunities for in-service training and professional development in violence prevention and management. Case

studies in countries that have reduced school violence and bullying suggest that training teachers to increase their understanding and skills is a critical success factor.¹⁵

Instead, most teachers surveyed learn how to deal with violence in school on the job. More than two-thirds of respondents say that they have learned how to manage school violence through experience or research. Teachers participating in focus group discussions also report that they learned how to deal with violence through practice and sharing ideas with other teachers. This is consistent with the finding that younger teachers are, in some contexts, less confident about intervening to stop violence and less likely to use positive disciplinary strategies. (Figure 16)

Figure 16. Teacher responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your training on how to prevent and address school violence?’; in %



15 See UNESCO, 2019. Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying.

Do teachers receive adequate support?

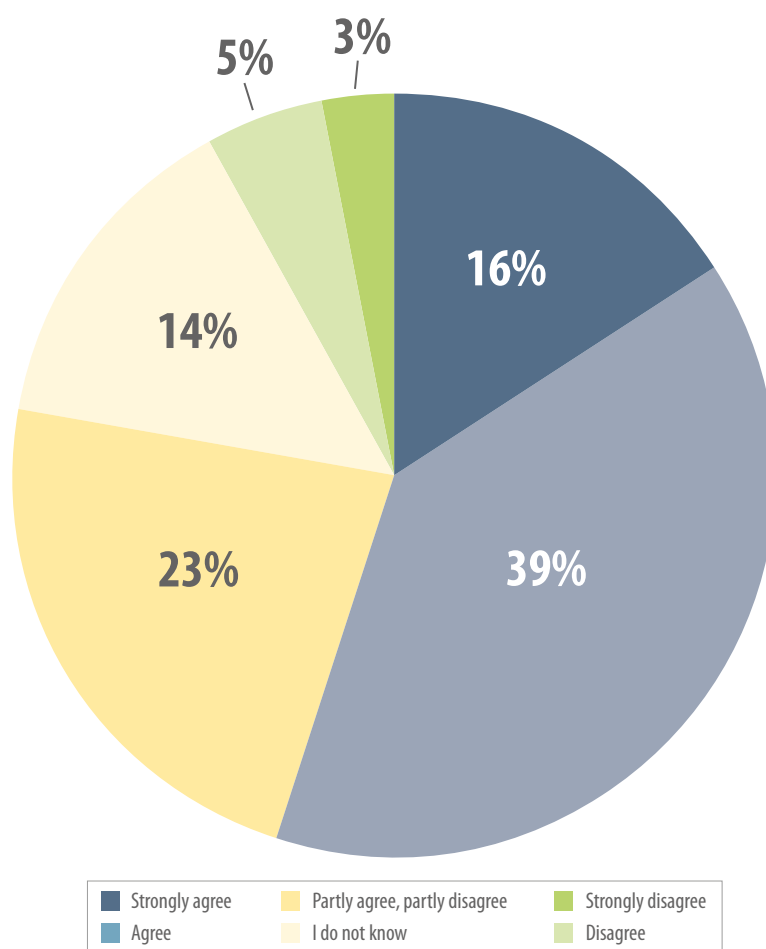
Violence in school has a negative impact on teachers. Overall three in five respondents say that violence in the classroom affects their teaching practice, motivation and job satisfaction. There appears to be some regional differences, with respondents in Western and Central Europe, North America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific being more likely to report this.

Only half of teachers surveyed say they have the full support of school management to address school violence. Around three-quarters of respondents say they report cases of violence to the school management and more than four-fifths report that they have constructive dialogue with the school administration and with parents on how to make students safe. Support from school management is essential to enable teachers to deal with school violence, but only just over half of respondents, with similar proportions of female

and male respondents, report that they have the full support of the school principal and management team for action to prevent and respond to violence. Respondents in Asia-Pacific, Central and South America and the Caribbean, and Eastern and Central Europe are more likely to report having the full support of school management.

Most teachers surveyed say they can refer to school rules and regulations when dealing with violence, but fewer report being able to implement them. More than four in five respondents report that they can easily refer to school rules, regulations and guidelines to respond to an incident of violence. However, only just over half say that they are able to impose immediate sanctions on students who perpetrate acts of violence, suggesting that there may be inadequate support for teachers to put rules and regulations into practice.

Figure 17. Teacher responses to the statement 'I have full support from the school principal and management team for my initiatives on preventing and addressing violence in my school', in %, by region



3. Conclusions

While most teachers surveyed are able to recognise violence between students, a significant minority do not identify certain behaviours as physical, psychological or sexual violence. For example, one in five teachers responding to the survey do not identify threatening another student with a weapon, slapping another student in the face and hitting, shoving, kicking or striking another student as physical violence. One in five respondents do not agree that forced sex, touching in a sexual way, making fun of another student with sexual jokes or comments, and offering money or goods for sex are forms of sexual violence. These findings suggest that, in some regions and countries, there is a need to increase teachers' understanding of the scope of peer violence in schools.

Teachers surveyed are less likely to recognise psychological violence between students than physical or sexual violence, and are also less likely to identify more subtle forms of psychological violence. While most respondents agree that more aggressive behaviours, such as name calling, verbal threats, intimidation and teasing are forms of psychological violence, this is not the case for behaviours such as leaving a student out of activities, intentionally ignoring them, spreading rumours or cyber-bullying.

Despite this, respondents report that psychological violence is the most common form of violence between students that they observe or hear about in their schools. Physical violence between students is also reported to be very common. In contrast, most respondents believe that sexual violence between students rarely occurs in their schools.

There are also gaps in respondents' ability to recognise violence perpetrated by teachers, and these gaps also need to be addressed. While most respondents have a clear understanding about what behaviours constitute physical violence perpetrated by teachers, one in five respondents do not believe that a teacher who hits, shoves, kicks or strikes a student, slaps a student in the face or threatens a student with a weapon is committing an act of physical violence. Respondents appear to be less likely to identify behaviours as physical violence when they are perpetrated by a teacher than when

they are perpetrated by a student. In addition, some respondents justify physical violence as necessary in some circumstances, for example, to maintain classroom discipline or manage student behaviour. This appears to be a more common practice and view in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Asia Pacific, than in other regions.

Similarly, although most respondents are clear about behaviours that constitute sexual violence perpetrated by a teacher, a significant minority are not: one in five respondents do not agree that a teacher who engages in forced sex with a student, touches a student in a sexual way, makes fun of a student with sexual jokes or comments, or offers a student money, goods or favours for sex is committing sexual violence. Female respondents and urban respondents appear to be more likely to identify these behaviours as sexual violence.

Violence perpetrated by teachers is perceived to be less common than violence perpetrated by students. Respondents to the survey report that teachers are more likely to engage in psychological violence towards students than in sexual or physical violence. Almost all respondents believe that sexual violence perpetrated by teachers never occurs in their school. The majority of respondents also believe that physical violence perpetrated by teachers never occurs in their school.

The majority of respondents report using positive strategies rather than punitive measures to maintain discipline and manage challenging student behaviour. Younger respondents and male respondents appear to be more likely to employ punitive measures. However, a significant minority of respondents – around one in ten overall, with larger proportions in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia Pacific than the other regions – believe that corporal punishment is sometimes necessary to maintain classroom discipline, correct student behaviour and improve student performance. One in seven respondents, with larger proportions in the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions, justifies the use of corporal punishment by teachers in response to student behaviours such as lack of respect for the teacher, aggression or

not completing tasks. And a higher proportion of teachers – one in five – do not recognise the harmful effects of corporal punishment on students' well-being and learning. This lack of awareness needs to be addressed as well as some teachers' limited understanding of how all forms of violence adversely impact both individual students and the learning environment for all students.

The survey highlighted differences in respondents' expectations of male and female students' behaviour and different approaches to behaviour management for males and females. As many as one-third of respondents report that they have different expectations about the behaviour of boys and girls and over half say that they use different strategies to correct the behaviour of boys and girls. Respondents also report that they do not discriminate in responding to misbehaviour or do not know if they discriminate. This suggests a need for teacher training to ensure that teachers are aware of potential gender bias in expectations of and responses to student behaviour.

The majority of respondents see it as their responsibility to ensure that students feel safe in the classroom, but one in five respondents do not view creating a safe learning environment as their responsibility. As teachers are critical to preventing and responding to violence, it is essential that they understand their role and are equipped to fulfil it.

Most respondents believe they have the skills required to prevent and address violence – more than four in five respondents say they have the competencies needed to create a safe classroom environment, teach students how to protect themselves from violence, support students who are victims of violence, and talk with parents of students involved in violence; older respondents feel more confident about their skills than younger respondents. But fewer than half of respondents feel equipped to develop positive relationships with their students, which is critical for effective prevention of and responses to violence.

Respondents use a range of strategies to prevent violence and create a safe classroom. Classroom teaching is the most common. Respondents are most likely to teach comprehensively about values, such as tolerance, inclusion, and respect for diversity, standing up for your rights, and avoiding unsafe

situations and abusive relationships, but are less likely to teach students about how social norms influence behaviour. Almost all respondents also take steps to identify students who are vulnerable to violence, mainly through classroom observation and interaction with students. However, there are gaps in respondents' understanding of which students might be more vulnerable. For example, only one-third of respondents identify younger students, students with different sexual orientation or identity and students with a disability as more at risk of violence.

Respondents also report that they support victims after incidents of violence and, to a lesser extent, engage with perpetrators and with students who witness violence. Strategies to support victims focus on classroom discussion and talking to the victim's parents – teachers are less likely to employ other approaches, including talking to the victim, mediating between the victim and the perpetrator, teaching the victim how to avoid violence, referring the victim to professional services or involving other students in supporting the victim. Two in three respondents intervene with perpetrators but only half engage with students who witness violence. The most common strategies used with perpetrators are school disciplinary procedures and classroom discussion about violence prevention. Respondents are less likely to talk to the parents of the perpetrator, talk to the perpetrator, or teach them how to change their behaviour. Half of respondents say they discuss the role of bystanders in general with the class, but fewer talk to bystanders about what they saw or discuss what they saw with the whole class.

It is clear that teachers surveyed are not using a comprehensive range of strategies to support victims of violence or to engage perpetrators and bystanders. Of perhaps greater concern is the finding that only one in three respondents say that they take action to stop violence immediately, and that many respondents report that they feel unable to intervene in incidents of violence.

Around two in three respondents do not feel that their pre-service training prepared them adequately to prevent and respond to violence in schools. Some report that their training did not address violence, others that it was not relevant to the situations they face. One in two respondents also report that

they receive insufficient in-service professional development. Consequently, most respondents learn to manage school violence on the job and on their own. This may explain why younger respondents are more likely than their older peers to use punitive measures to correct students' behaviours.

The study findings suggest that teacher training, both pre-service and in-service training, needs to better prepare teachers to deal with school violence and to address gaps in their competencies, in particular, their ability to use positive classroom discipline and behaviour management strategies, to provide comprehensive teaching for violence prevention, to build positive relationships with students, to intervene to stop violence and to implement effective responses to violence. In addition, younger, especially newly-qualified, teachers need support and mentoring to prevent and respond to school violence while they develop experience and confidence.

While respondents indicate that violence in school has a negative impact on their motivation, practice and job satisfaction, only half of them feel that they have the full support of school leadership and management in actions they take or might take to prevent and respond to violence. This may explain the gap between respondents' self-reported skills and their practice in intervening school violence.

Without strong institutional support within the school & beyond, it is difficult for individual teachers to address school violence effectively.

The views, practices and needs for training and support expressed by teachers who responded to the survey vary across different regions. Given the unrepresentative sample for the study, these findings are not meant to be generalisable for all teachers or by region. Nevertheless, these differences are found to correlate with the situations of school violence across different regions: teachers from regions where the prevalence of school violence is relatively high tend to be more likely to normalise or justify, and less capable to identify and respond to, various forms of school violence and their consequences.

The research findings therefore call not only for improving teacher training but also for institutional support for teachers. This includes political leadership, legal and policy frameworks at national, local and school level and teaching and learning resources to address the gaps in their ability to identify, prevent and address school violence in its all forms. Regional and local contexts influencing the nature, scope and consequences of school violence should be fully taken into account in determining what kind of training and support should be provided and how.

Annexes

Annex 1: Survey questions

1. In which country do you teach?
.....
2. I would describe the location of my school as:
 Rural Urban
3. How old are you?
 18–30 31–40 41–50
 51–60 61+
4. What gender do you identify as?
 Male Female Other
5. What religion do you identify yourself most closely with?
 I am not religious Buddhism
 Hinduism Judaism Islam
 Christianity (Catholic protestant or any other Christian denomination)
 Other – Please indicate
6. How religious do you consider yourself to be?
 Deeply (daily religious practice)
 Moderately (religious practice on a weekly basis)
 Somewhat religious (bigger religious holidays and traditions)
 Non-religious
 Unsure/Prefer not to answer
7. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
 Below upper secondary education (Below ISCED Level 3)
 Upper secondary education (ISCED Level 3)
 Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED Level 4)
 Short-cycle tertiary education (ISCED Level 5)
 Bachelor's or equivalent level (ISCED Level 6)
 Master's or equivalent level (ISCED Level 7)
 Doctoral or equivalent level (ISCED Level 8)
8. How long have you been a teacher?
 Less than 5 years 5 to 10 years
 11 to 20 years More than 20 years
9. What discipline(s) do you teach? Tick all that apply.
 Foreign languages
 Geography and/or History
 IT, communications, media studies
 Life skills and/or Health
 Maths and/or Science
 Practical and vocational skills
 Native or national language
 Social studies, citizenship
 Other – Please indicate (Required)
10. Which classes do you currently teach? Please choose the answers(s) that most closely resemble your students.
 Pre-school (students aged 3–5 years)
 Primary school (students aged 6–8 years)
 Middle school (students aged 12–13)
 Lower secondary school (students aged 14–16)
 Vocational school (students aged 14–16)
 Upper secondary school (students aged 16+)
 Vocational school (students aged 16+)
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours that happen among students can be described as violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
 Threatening another student verbally
 Threatening another student with a weapon (e.g. a knife or other object)
 Hitting, shoving, kicking or striking another student
 Slapping another student in the face

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours that happen among students can be described as violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- Offering money, goods or favours to another student for sex
 - Touching another student in a sexual way without permission
 - Having pressured or physically forced sex with another student
 - Making fun of another student with sexual jokes, comments or gestures
13. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours that happen among students can be described as violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- Teasing another student in a hurtful way
 - Intentionally ignoring another student to make them feel overlooked
 - Spreading rumours about another student
 - Ridiculing or making fun of another student in front of others
 - Calling another student names
 - Leaving another student out of games or group activities
 - Sharing embarrassing information about another student through emails, text messages or websites
14. How often do you think the following behaviours happen between students in your school, based on what you have seen and what has been reported to you? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; I don't know]
- Threatening another student verbally
 - Threatening another student with a weapon (e.g. a knife or other object)
 - Hitting, shoving, kicking or striking another student
 - Slapping another student in the face
15. How often do you think the following behaviours happen between students in your school, based on what you have seen and what has been reported to you? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; I don't know]
- Offering money, goods or favours to another student for sex
 - Touching another student in a sexual way without permission
 - Having pressured or physically forced sex with another student
 - Making fun of another student with sexual jokes, comments or gestures
16. How often do you think the following behaviours happen between students in your school, based on what you have seen and what has been reported to you? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; I don't know]
- Teasing another student in a hurtful way
 - Intentionally ignoring another student to make them feel overlooked
 - Spreading rumours about another student
 - Ridiculing or making fun of another student in front of others
 - Calling another student names
 - Leaving another student out of games or group activities
 - Sharing embarrassing information about another student through emails, text messages or websites
17. In your school, how often do you think other teachers do the following to their students? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; I don't know]
- Threaten a student verbally
 - Threaten a student with an object (e.g. a ruler)
 - Hit, shove, whip, cane a student
 - Slap a student in the face
18. In your school, how often do you think other teachers do the following to their students? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; I don't know]
- Offer money, goods or favours to a student for sex
 - Touch a student in a sexual way
 - Have pressured or physically forced sex with a student
 - Make fun of a student with sexual jokes, comments or gestures
19. In your school, how often do you think other teachers do the following to their students? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; I don't know]
- Tease a student in a hurtful way
 - Intentionally ignore a student in the class (e.g. no eye contact or interactions with this student)
 - Spread rumours about a student

- Ridicule or making fun of a student in front of others
 - Call a student names
 - Leave a student out of games or group activities
 - Share embarrassing information about a student through emails, text messages or websites
20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours by a teacher should be described as violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- Threatening a student verbally
 - Threatening a student with an object (e.g. a ruler)
 - Hitting, shoving, whipping, caning a student
 - Slapping a student in the face
21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours by a teacher should be described as violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- Offering money, goods or favours to a student for sex
 - Touching a student in a sexual way
 - Having pressured or physically forced sex with a student
 - Making fun of another student with sexual jokes, comments or gestures
22. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following behaviours by a teacher should be described as violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- Teasing a student in a hurtful way
 - Intentionally ignoring a student in the class (e.g. no eye contact or interactions with this student)
 - Spreading rumours about a student
 - Ridiculing or making fun of a student
 - Calling a student names
 - Leaving a student out of games or group activities
 - Sharing embarrassing information about a student through emails, text messages or websites
23. To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the victims of violence in your school? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- Younger boys
 - Older boys
 - Younger girls
 - Older girls
 - Students with disabilities
 - Students who are, or are seen as different from the majority in terms of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or girls acting like boys and vice versa)
 - Students who (or whose parents) were not born in my country
 - Students who hold, or are perceived to hold, religious beliefs that differ from the majority of the students
24. How often do you take the following actions in order to maintain order in the classroom? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; Always; Not applicable]
- I give students extra school work during playtime
 - I discuss students' behaviour with them and how it can be corrected
 - I hit, spank, beat or cane students
 - I scold, belittle, humiliate or ridicule students
 - I ignore students who are misbehaving in class
 - I ask students to leave the classroom
 - I ask students to apologise (verbally or in writing)
 - I ask students to stand in front of the whole class during the lesson
 - I refer students to another responsible staff member in the school
 - I meet with the students' parents
 - I follow the discipline procedures prescribed in school policies
 - I have different behaviour expectations for boys and girls
 - When correcting misbehaviour, I use different strategies for boys and girls
 - I teach all my students how to behave and control their behaviour in the classroom
25. Towards which gender in the classroom are you more likely to take the following actions in order to maintain order? [Response options: Girls; Boys; Equally likely; I do not know]
- I give students extra school work during playtime

- I discuss students' behaviour with them and how it can be corrected
 - I hit, spank, beat or cane students
 - I scold, belittle, humiliate or ridicule students
 - I ignore students who are misbehaving in class
 - I ask students to leave the classroom
 - I ask students to apologise (verbally or in writing)
 - I ask students to stand in front of the whole class during the lesson
 - I refer students to another responsible staff member in the school
 - I meet with the students' parents
 - I teach students how to behave and control their behaviour in the classroom
26. How often do the following student behaviours in your class justify hitting, spanking, beating or caning students? [Response options: Never; Occasionally; Sometimes; Often; Always]
- Playing with toys, using mobile phones, unrelated reading or drawing, eating or drinking
 - Shouting, having disruptive conversations
 - Verbal aggression (e.g. teasing classmates, quarrelling with classmates, using bad language)
 - Disrespecting me as a teacher (e.g. disobeying me, refusing to carry out instructions, rudeness, arguing with teachers)
 - Non-attentiveness, daydreaming, idleness, sleeping
 - Changing seats without my permission or wandering around the classroom
 - Not completing set tasks and/or homework
 - Physical aggression (e.g. striking or pushing classmates, destroying things)
 - Giving incorrect answers
27. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are potential consequences of teachers hitting, spanking, beating or caning students? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- The student may respect the teacher more and behave better in the future
 - The student may improve his/her academic performance
 - The student may become less engaged in schoolwork
 - The student may feel distressed
 - The student may become more aggressive
 - The student may avoid coming to school
 - The student may suffer from low self-esteem
 - The student may become distant from the teacher
 - Enter another option
28. To what extent have you ever taught your students about the following in your classes? [Response options: Never; Little; To some extent; Comprehensively]
- How to recognise situations in which violence can happen
 - How to avoid or get help in unsafe or risky situations
 - How to recognise abusive relationships
 - How to keep safe from online harassment
 - How to appreciate and stand up for their rights as children
 - How to be understanding, collaborative, tolerant and respect diversity
 - How our behaviours and relationships are influenced by society's views and expectations about women and men
 - How our behaviours and relationships are influenced by society's views about different ethnicities, religions, etc.
29. How do you identify students that are vulnerable to violence? [Tick all that apply.]
- I talk with students' parents or other relatives
 - I do not monitor my students for this purpose – it is not my responsibility
 - I rely on my personal observations in the class or through interacting with students out of class
 - I encourage students to talk to me
 - Other – Please indicate (Required)
30. What do you usually do with students who are victims of violence in your school? [Tick all that apply.]
- I stop the violence immediately when it occurs
 - I assign other students to help the victim
 - I interact with the parents of the victim
 - This question is not applicable – I don't see any victims of violence in my school
 - I refer the victim to another school staff member or to professional services outside the school
 - I do not do anything (it is not my responsibility)

- I have private conversations with the victim to provide help
 I teach the victim how to avoid bullying and violence
 I mediate between the perpetrator and the victim
 I hold classroom discussions on violence prevention
 Other - Please indicate (Required)
31. What do you usually do with students who have perpetrated acts of violence? [Tick all that apply.]
- I hold classroom discussions on violence prevention
 I have private conversations with the perpetrator to discuss his/her behaviour and how to correct it
 I do not do anything (it is not my responsibility)
 I teach the perpetrator how to regulate their emotions and control their behaviour
 I refer the perpetrator to another school staff member or to professional services outside of the school
 I ask the perpetrator to apologise to the victim
 I punish the perpetrator by using physical force
 I punish the perpetrator verbally
 I follow the discipline procedures and/or guidelines prescribed in school policies
 I assign other students to supervise the perpetrator
 I interact with the parents of the perpetrator
 Other – Please indicate (Required)
32. What do you do with students from your class who have stood by during acts of violence? [Tick all that apply.]
- I have private conversations with the bystanders to discuss what they saw
 I do not do anything (it is not my responsibility)
 I discuss with the whole class on the role of bystanders
 I discuss with the whole class about what they saw
 Other – Please indicate (Required)
33. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- It is my responsibility to ensure that students feel safe from all forms of violence in my classroom
 Violence in my school affects my teaching practice, motivation and work satisfaction
 I am always able to build and maintain a safe and non-violent classroom environment that is conducive to teaching and learning
 I am able to teach students about how to protect themselves from violence in all its forms (e.g. physical, emotional, sexual violence)
 I am able to build and maintain a positive relationship with all students in my class
 I am able to react immediately and stop an act of violence
 I report incidents of violence to the school management
 I have full support from the school principal and management team for my initiatives on preventing and addressing violence in my school
 I am able to have constructive discussions with the school management team on how to make students feel safe in my school
 I am able to have constructive discussions with the parents of my students about keeping their children safe from all forms of violence
34. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]
- I am able to easily refer to school rules, regulations and guidelines for the prevention of or in response to an incident of violence between students in my school
 I am able to easily refer to school rules, regulations and guidelines for the prevention or in response to an incident of violence between teachers and students in my school
 I am able to offer support to students who are victims of acts of violence perpetrated by other students
 I am able to offer support to students who are victims of acts of violence perpetrated by teachers or staff in my school
 I am able to offer guidance to bystanders of peer violence in my school
 I am able to impose immediate sanctions on students who perpetrate acts of violence in line with the school rules and regulations
 I am able to take effective measures to correct students' misbehaviours without making them feel hurt physically or psychologically
 I am able to have constructive discussions with the parents of all students involved in incidents of violence

35. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your training on how to prevent and address school violence? [Response options: Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree, partly disagree; Agree; Strongly agree; I do not know]

- I received no or very little training as part of my initial teacher education on how to prevent and address school violence
- I received sufficient training as part of my initial teacher education on how to prevent and address school violence
- I learned how to deal with violence in school through my teaching experience or research
- My school provides adequate opportunities for staff training in violence prevention and management

36. How can teacher education be improved to better prepare teachers to prevent and address school violence? [Please choose the 3 most important options.]

- More focus on how to collaborate with school support staff
- More involvement of teachers in the development of teacher training programmes

- More focus on teaching inclusive values and behaviour, such as understanding, tolerance, empathy, collaboration
- More focus on how to support the social and emotional learning of students
- More focus on the development of the social and relational competencies of teachers
- More focus on how to collaborate with parents
- More focus on how to deal with challenging/difficult behaviour of pupils before punishment
- More focus on concrete strategies to prevent and address violence at school
- Other – Please indicate (Required)

37. If you have any further views on violence towards children in school that were not addressed by the questions in this survey, please feel free to give them here.

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Annex 2. Number of survey respondents by country/territory

Country/territory	Number of respondents	Country/territory	Number of respondents	Country/territory	Number of respondents
ASIA PACIFIC		Jordan	12	Finland	2
Eastern, South & South Eastern Asia		Lebanon	56	France	30
Afghanistan	1	Libya	11	Germany	22
Bangladesh	1	Morocco	4	Greece	27
Bhutan	5	Oman	3	Ireland	4
China	555	Palestine	438	Lithuania	15
Hong Kong SAR of China	11	Qatar	1 456	Luxembourg	17
India	704	Sudan	1	Monaco	1
Indonesia	53	Syrian Arab Republic	7	North Macedonia	4
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	Tunisia	1	Norway	1
Laos, PDR	8	United Arab Emirates	1	Portugal	5
Macao SAR of China	10	Yemen	3	Romania	13
Malaysia	2	TOTAL	2 123	Serbia	1
Maldives	1	CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA		Slovakia	8
Mongolia	23	Argentina	6	Spain	11
Myanmar	56	Belize	54	Turkey	2
Nepal	56	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	United Kingdom	5
Pakistan	34	Brazil	297	United States of America	17
Philippines	61	Chile	13	TOTAL	291
Singapore	4	Colombia	11	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	
Sri Lanka	1	Costa Rica	18	Botswana	1
Taiwan Province of China	23	Ecuador	24927	Burkina Faso	2
Thailand	6	El Salvador	49	Cabo Verde	1
Timor-Leste	3	Guatemala	57	Cameroon	19
The Pacific		Honduras	4	Central African Republic	3
Australia	2	Mexico	2626	Congo, Republic of the	6
Fiji	10	Nicaragua	1	Côte d'Ivoire	72
Kiribati	4	Panama	6	Congo, DPR	1
Micronesia	11	Paraguay	3	Equatorial Guinea	15
Nauru	1	Peru	177	Eswatini	3
New Zealand	12	Suriname	1	Ethiopia	2
Papua New Guinea	1	Uruguay	2	Gabon	5
Solomon Islands	1	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	2	Gambia	2
Tonga	2	TOTAL	2 8257	Ghana	19
Tuvalu	1	THE CARIBBEAN		Kenya	29
Vanuatu	1	Antigua and Barbuda	1	Lesotho	1
TOTAL	1 665	Cuba	1	Liberia	5
EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA		Dominica	8	Malawi	22
Armenia	14	Dominican Republic	4	Mali	2
Azerbaijan	6	Jamaica	19	Mauritania	1
Belarus	537	Saint Kitts and Nevis	23	Mauritius	6
Georgia	1	Saint Lucia	15	Mozambique	2
Kazakhstan	168	Trinidad and Tobago	1	Namibia	3
Kyrgyzstan	21	TOTAL	72	Nigeria	30
Republic of Moldova	68	CENTRAL & WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA		Senegal	12
Russian Federation	385	Albania	3	Sierra Leone	1
Tajikistan	1	Andorra	2	Somalia	10
Ukraine	512	Belgium	3	South Africa	21
Uzbekistan	116	Bulgaria	24	Tanzania	108
TOTAL	1 829	Canada	21	Togo	96
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA		Croatia	8	Uganda	8
Algeria	32	Cyprus	19	Zambia	125
Bahrain	1	Estonia	26	Zimbabwe	1
Egypt	32			TOTAL	634
Iraq	57			Missing values	6
Israel	8			TOTAL	34877



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Safe to learn

What do teachers think and do
about violence in schools?

Around 35,000 teachers, 81% of whom were from Latin America, were surveyed for a UNESCO study as part of the Safe to Learn initiative to end violence in schools. This report presents the findings from the research, calling for improving, not only training, but also policy and institutional support for teachers to address the gaps in their ability to identify, prevent and address school violence in all its forms.

