

# School-related gender-based violence in Cambodia

*A baseline study in 20 VVOB target schools in Battambang*

*A master's thesis by Kaat Van Horen*

# The TIGER project

**“Teaching for Improved Gender Equality and Responsiveness”**

**Improve gender equality and responsiveness in Cambodian education**

**Ensure that primary and lower secondary school children are protected from school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)**

**Funded by the EU**

**Runs from October 2017 until october 2020**

**Collaboration between VVOB Cambodia and...**

- Puthi Komar Organisation (PKO)
- Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE)
- Gender And Development Cambodia (GADC)
- 5 Civil Society Organisations (CSO's)

## Target province: Battambang



## Capacity development for

30 staff members of the Teacher Education College

480 teachers and school leaders in forty target schools

→ 20 by VVOB, 20 by the CSO's

## Action guide on the gender-responsive transformation of schools

**If the intervention proves to be efficient it will be upscaled by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.**

# The study

**GBV: Any form of violence directed at people because of their gender**

**SRGBV: all forms of GBV occurring in school-related contexts**

Can occur in school, but also on the way to school and online

Can be inflicted by students, teachers or other members of the educational community

Can be physical and psychological

Can involve, but is not limited to:

- Sexual violence

- Bullying and verbal harassment

- Corporal punishment

**Determining the prevalence of the different types of school-related gender-based violence in the 20 TIGER target schools**

According to teachers and students

**Detecting determinants of SRGBV**

Determinants within teachers: sex, age, childhood SES

Determinants within students: sex, age, SES, parents' literacy level

## **Qualitative: Open interviews with key informants**

15 NGO staff members (working on education, gender, violence against children)

9 government staff members (MoEYS, POE, DOE, MoWA, PDWA)

5 researchers (RUPP, journalist)

## **Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews in 4 public schools in Battambang**

4 principals

10 teachers

23 students (grade 4-9)

## **Quantitative: Surveys in 20 TIGER target schools in Battambang**

223 teachers

579 students (grade 4-9)

# Results

- **Gender equality in schools**
- School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)
- Other safety issues
- Prevention

## Perceived meaning of gender: gender issues, women's issues

### Enrollment of boys and girls

- Big gap in the past

- Girls are closing the gap, first in primary then in secondary

- Many people believe girls still drop out more in secondary

- Battambang exams 2017: 54% girls in grade 9, 55% girls in grade 12

- 50/50 in TIGER target schools

### Girls perform better than boys

### Equal opportunities in class

- Indirect gender bias

- Traditional gender roles

### Progression towards gender-neutral learning materials

# Results

- Gender equality in schools
- **School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)**
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## Gender-related bullying is influenced by gender stereotypes

### Two forms:

Boys and girls bully each other

Children who cross the “gender stereotype border” are bullied

## Types of bullying:

Most often: Verbal violence: “sim pi”, “gay”, “girls are weak”, cursing

Physical violence: pushing, pulling, hitting

Gossiping, excluding

Taking/hiding/destroying personal items

Cyberbullying

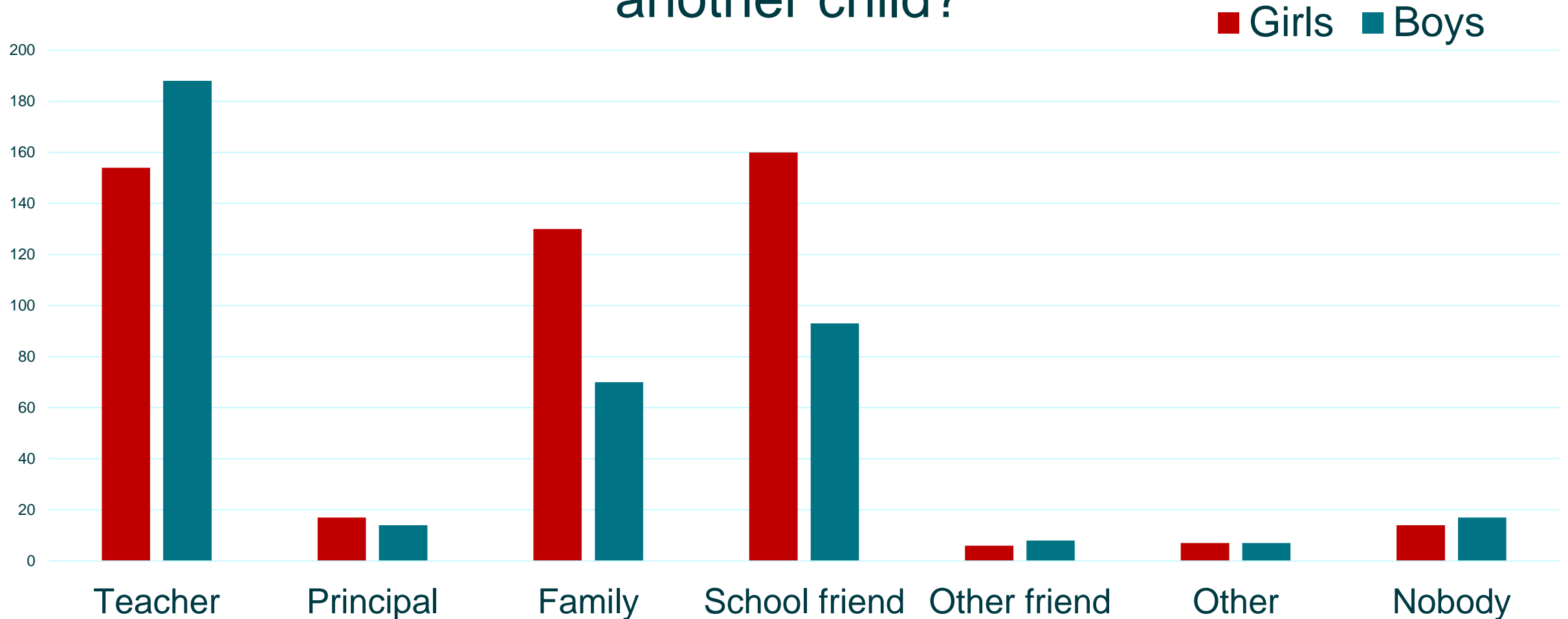
## **Determinants of bullying:**

Girls are bullied more than boys

Younger children are bullied more than older ones

Poor children are bullied more than rich children

Who do you talk to when you feel mistreated by another child?



**In the past: very common to use a stick to hit children**

**Nowadays: hitting children with a stick is not allowed anymore.**

**Teacher training resulted in:**

- Some teachers changed to positive discipline

- Some teachers changed to other methods of physical punishment

- Some teachers still use the stick

**Both parents and teachers have differing opinions on the use and efficiency of corporal punishment, often their opinion depends on their age and school culture**

**The average child experiences corporal punishment seldom to sometimes**

**Students report more cases of physical punishment than teachers**

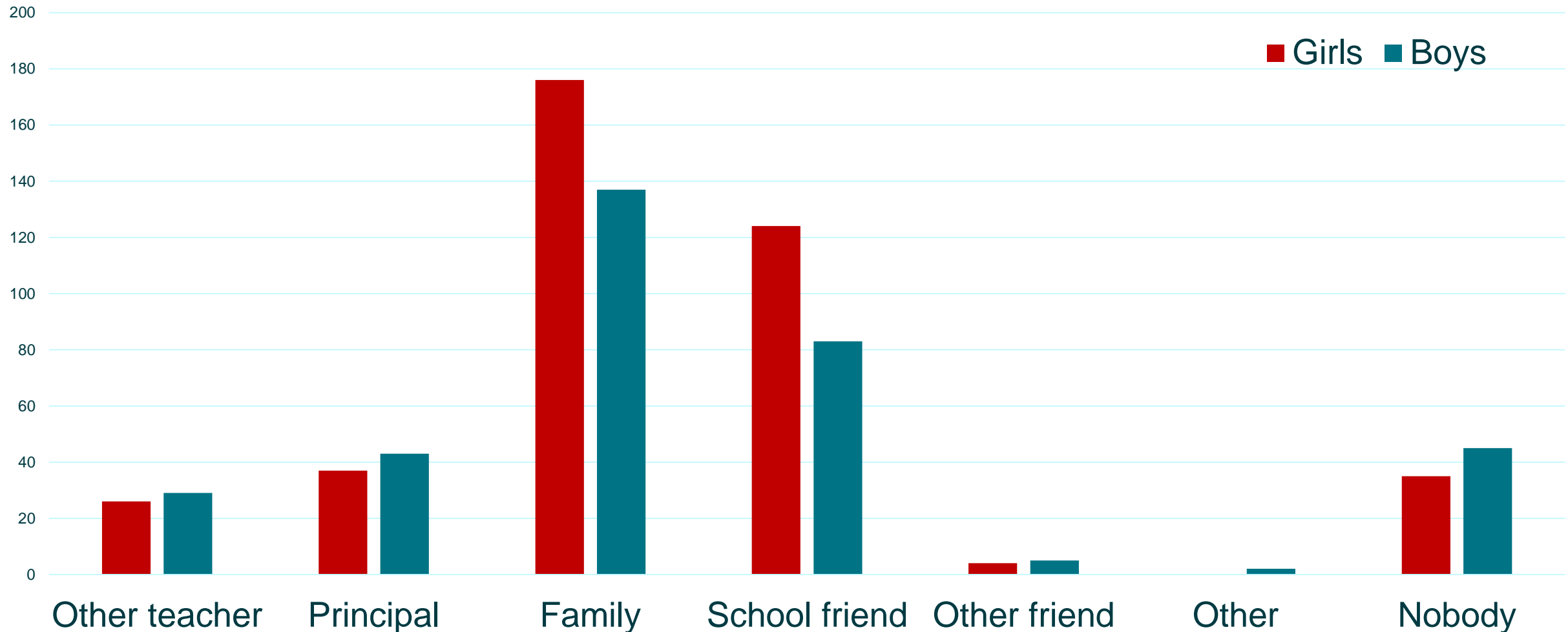
**Determinants of corporal punishment:**

Boys are punished more often and more strongly than girls

Male teachers use more corporal punishment than female teachers

Older teachers use more physical discipline than younger ones

Who do you talk to when you feel mistreated by a teacher?



**Children's self-reported experience of sexual violence is low (between never and seldom)**

**This may be influenced by the taboo surrounding the topic or lack of knowledge about sexual violence**

**Determinants of sexual violence:**

Boys experience more physical harassment

Girls experience more verbal harassment and are forced to watch pornographic pictures more often

**Counselling for 10 children**

# Results

- Gender equality in schools
- School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)
- **Other safety issues**
- Prevention

## On the way to school

Traffic (59%)

Kidnapping, human trafficking (30%)

Drug addicts or gang violence (16%) and robbery (11%)

Wild animals (5%)

Ghosts (3%)

## In school

Main issues: physical violence by fellow students (29%) and teachers (16%)

Second: psychological violence by fellow students (14%) and teachers (12%)

Gang violence and thievery are also mentioned (12%)

Unsafe buildings and lacking sanitary provisions are not mentioned (0%)

# Results

- Gender equality in schools
- School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV)
- Other safety issues
- **Prevention**

## **The current preservice training curriculum includes 15 teaching hours about gender equality**

This is not enough! But it's a start

Older teachers did not receive preservice training on gender equality

## **Inservice training is mainly provided by NGO's cooperating with MoEYS and MoWA**

eg: UNICEF

**60% of teachers remembers receiving a (pre- or in-service) training on gender equality, violence against children or both.**

**Of those teachers:**

40%: <5 years ago

38%: 5-10 years ago

22% >10 years ago

73% agreed to the content of the training.

86% find it at least moderately difficult to apply what they learned during the training in their teaching.

Traditional norms and values

Lack of understanding

Lack of resources

**The curriculum includes gender equality and violence against children.**

**In the survey:**

- 70% of children learned about gender equality

- 75% of children learned about violence against children

**However, children often mix up both concepts.**

**Some teachers have the same misconception.**

**Sexual education for children focuses on the reproductive system only, not on the social aspects of sexuality**

## **Which improvements do you believe have been made?**

More schools in rural areas so schools are not so far away from children's homes

More sanitary provisions in schools

Scholarships for girls

Female student representative committees

→ Strong focus on girls

**There are good national policies on equal treatment, the implementation can be improved**

	Know about an existing school policy	Finding it at least moderately difficult to apply
Gender equality	72%	87%
Bullying	70%	83%
Acceptable discipline	83%	85%
Sexual violence	53%	86%

# Discussion

## Relatively low prevalence of SRGBV found in this research

### Probably due to:

- Self-reported behaviour

- Taboo, social desirability

- Specificity of TIGER target schools: urban demonstration schools

## **Improve teacher training**

Inservice: change from 2 to 4 year programme: opportunity

Preservice: MoEYS should upscale more NGO programmes

## **Mentoring programmes**

## **Awareness raising for children and parents**

## **Reporting mechanisms within student counsel**

## **Psychosocial support**

## Teachers should learn about:

- Gender equality and violence against children
- Mental and physical effects of SRGBV for children
- Identifying SRGBV victims and guiding them
- The existence of gender-related bullying and which forms are most prevalent
- Protecting (girls and poor) children from bullying
- The advantages of positive discipline and how to use it
- Gender equal disciplinary methods
- The prevalent types of school-related sexual violence and how to respond to them

**Thank you for your attention!**

**Any questions or feedback?**