



# MWIA CASE STUDIES

## VIOLENCE AGAINST SCHOOL CHILDREN

### Case 28: Abuse of a 3-year-old in Nigeria

#### Objectives

- Sexual violence against girls can occur at school and at any age
- Sometimes females are the perpetrators of such violence

#### Narrative Case

*\* At the end of the case study you can find "Learning points" related to information presented in the narrative case, denoted by numbers in square brackets.*

A three year old girl was sexually abused by her female teacher [1]. During break time at school, the female teacher took the girl to a hidden place [2], gave her sweets and biscuits as a bribe for her not to tell anyone and inserted her finger and pencil into the girl's vagina [3].

The girl's mother noticed when bathing her daughter that the vagina was tender. Though surprised, she asked her daughter if she has been touched by anyone there; the girl refused to talk initially but later told her mother what the female teacher had been doing.

#### Learning Points

- [1] Children can be abused by anyone, even female teachers and caregivers. However, the majority of perpetrators are still male (the proportion is about 1 to 20).
- [2] School buildings and premises should be designed in such a way that there are no hidden corners or rooms for any form of immoral acts and/or sexual harassment.
- [3] Most of the time sexual harassment of children is done by people that are well known to the child and who are responsible for looking after them. Giving a reward such as sweets or biscuits make the perpetrators feel better and believe they have compensated the child.

Sexual harassment of children can lead to long term bad memories. It can result in feelings of guilt and the loss of trust. Some victims can develop a posttraumatic stress disorder or other problems for which psychological therapy might be necessary.

#### Background information

"School-related gender-based violence" is a common problem in schools not only in Africa but worldwide. It is estimated that each year between 500 million and 1.5 billion children become the victim of this kind of violence. The case study clearly demonstrates that young age does not protect the child. The UN reported that nearly 50% of all sexual assaults are committed against girls younger than 16 years.

## Useful Resources

- Plan International. (2017). *Preventing Violence Against Girls at School*. Retrieved from: <https://plan-international.org/because-i-am-a-girl/violence-at-school>
- American Humane. (2015). *The State of America's Children: 2015 Research Study*. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanhumane.org/app/uploads/2016/08/state-of-americas-children-research-2015.pdf>