

## Symposium seeks solutions to school-related gender-based violence

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This article was originally published on the [UNESCO website](#) [1].

A [Global Learning Symposium](#) [2] on ending school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) will be held from 26 to 28 March 2019 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event is timely in the context of a renewed global conversation around continued gender inequality, triggered in 2018 by the #MeToo movement and an increased commitment around the world to make schools safer places.

The Global Learning Symposium is a biennial event held by the [Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence](#) [3], co-hosted by UNESCO and UNGEI. The learning symposium aims to help partners, including representatives from Ministries of Education, civil society, UN agencies, education unions and research, develop a collective understanding of

SRGBV and find solutions to address it.

School-related gender-based violence can be defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated because of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics.

Joanna Herat, UNESCO Team Leader in the Section of Health and Education said “School-related gender-based violence impacts millions of children and young people across the world. Not only does it compromise well-being and physical and emotional health, it has far-reaching educational consequences”.

“In partnership with the Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence and through the upcoming Learning Symposium, UNESCO envisages a world where no child or young person is denied the fundamental right to education because of SRGBV.”

“Gender-based violence that happens in schools tends to mirror the types of gender violence that takes place in the broader community. This positions schools as an important context for challenging and changing the norms and practices that lead to violence and inequality in the broader community.”

This year’s Learning Symposium will be held in Eastern and Southern Africa with a view to bringing together several countries in the region that are implementing initiatives to address SRGBV and promote gender equality in education. Participants will share on their progress and lessons-learned around addressing SRGBV.

Some of the topics to be explored at the learning symposium include:

- Strengthening policy and policy implementation on SRGBV at national, district and school levels;
- Working with teachers to create safe learning environments;
- Shifting gender norms, behaviours and practice through innovative classroom programs;
- Key elements of a ‘whole school approach’;
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation.

### **About the Global Working Group to End SRGBV**

The Global Working Group was created in 2014 to respond to SRGBV by raising awareness and finding solutions to ensure schools are safe and inclusive environments, where boys and girls can learn to unleash their full potential. The Group has expanded to more than 100 members, representing 45 organizations (including humanitarian actors, civil society organizations, and regional/national offices from the UN).

### **Safe to Learn**

The Global Learning Symposium builds on UNESCO’s commitment to ensure all schools are safe places for children and young people to learn. Furthering this resolve, UNESCO has joined key partners for the ‘Safe to Learn’ campaign, a new initiative dedicated to ending violence in schools so children are free to learn, thrive and pursue their dreams. The campaign was initially conceived by members of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children: UNESCO, UNICEF, UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations Girls Initiative (UNGEI.)

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**Links**

[1] <https://en.unesco.org/news/symposium-seeks-solutions-school-related-gender-based-violence>

[2] <https://en.unesco.org/events/global-learning-symposium-solutions-end-school-related-gender-based-violence>

[3] [http://www.ungei.org/news/247\\_srgbv.html](http://www.ungei.org/news/247_srgbv.html)