This article details the sexual abuse that many Zambian school girls face on a nearly day to day basis. A recent Cornell study concluded that 88% of the girls interviewed had personally experienced sexual assault or knew someone who had experienced sexual assault from a teacher, classmate, or other men they encountered at, or on their way to school. The study concluded that such a high number of incidents was related to the fact that there is really no established system amongst the schools for dealing with the problem of sexual assault. With no clear cut rules or report systems it is difficult for young girls to report their assaults and seek the needed help or counseling.

I thought this article was extremely interesting to read, especially considering that we just recently learned about gender violence and with the current Amherst stories that are circulating. As the article explains, a school is suppose to be a place where one is free to express themselves and stretch themselves to learn as much as possible. However, when girls and young women are having their experiences at school be closely correlated with horrifying experiences of sexual assault It is a shame that girls in countries like Zambia have to fight in order to receive schooling, and then once they do they are targeted with sexual abuse. It is frightening to think that such a high percentage of Zambian school girls are affected by such a horrible action. It must be assumed that by experiencing such abuse at a young age they girls probably have seriously emotional and physical trauma as they mature, preventing them from engaging in any healthy relationships with men.

The very end of the article talks about how important this issue is because it does not only effect school girls in Zambia, but girls and women all around the world. As many people heard with the Amherst story this week, sexual assault is even a problem for people in prestigious institutions, just like Hamilton. So when reading this article I had to force myself to think that this is not just an issue for impoverished girls living in developing countries. Instead I tried to think that this is a global issue that affects so many women each day. I am lucky enough to never had experienced such violence, but that doesn’t mean that is a foreign issue to me. It was difficult, but I tried very hard to think about my intimate environment when reading this article, how people are around me face such issues daily.

The good news is that the Ministry of Education is currently drafting a National Child Protection Policy for schools throughout Zambia. Although this is just the first step to preventing sexual assault in the schools, it is definitely a movement toward improvement. One has to hope that eventually a problem of such sexual violence will be diminished in schools and institutions like Hamilton, through new policies, strict enforcement, and student body cooperation.