



Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

The Good School Toolkit

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Uganda, Tanzania

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Raising Voices, Uganda (adapted by HakiElimu, Tanzania)

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

Preventing violence against children in primary and secondary schools, led by teacher protagonists, improves student voice and relationships, safer learning environments, and promotes positive discipline.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The Good School Toolkit is a proven whole school approach to prevent all forms of violence against children in schools. An RCT found a 42% reduction in corporal punishment over 18 months of implementation. The GST is a phased approach that fits within school timetables and transforms the operational culture of the school by involving teachers, students, administrators and the surrounding community to collectively prevent VAC.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

Preventing VAC at school presents a unique opportunity to influence children's experience of childhood and their future. School-based interventions present a path to influence many childhood experiences at a relatively modest cost. Schools are governable by external policies, and therefore its operational culture is open to scrutiny and influence. Schools are formative spaces where an early intervention would be deeply beneficial for the child as well as the entire society. More than 90% of Ugandan learners experience violence in school in their lifetime, according to survey data collected by Raising Voices. The Good School Toolkit was developed as a whole-school approach to address this pervasive issue. The Toolkit is a six-step, 18-month intervention that guides the whole school - teachers, learners, parents and administrators - through a process of change that seeks to transform the operational culture of the school. Objectives achieved and backed by a rigorous randomized controlled trial include reducing all forms of VAC in schools, improving student voice and participation, improving relationships at school, and improving students' sense of belonging and connectedness to their school. The RCT found that after 18 months of implementation, the GST reduced physical violence by school staff against students by 42%.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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The Good School Toolkit is being implemented in over 1,000 schools in Uganda. The Toolkit is comprised of over 60 in school activities, all led by Teacher Protagonists and Student Protagonists in primary and secondary schools. Examples of GST activities include workshops for students and teachers, student courts, suggestion boxes, and school-wide open meetings. Implementation begins with the formation of and regular meetings with Good School student, teacher and parent committees to discuss key issues of violence against children, as well as workshops on understanding VAC, corporal punishment, and positive discipline. Student Courts and Suggestion Boxes increase student voice and participation and put them in the drivers seat of how their school is governed. Implementation began in 2009 with a randomized controlled trial conducted from 2012-2014. With strong evidence of impact, Raising Voices scaled the GST to 1,000 schools - including 100 secondary schools using an adaptation for secondary - and is poised to expand to a further 5,000 over the next 5 years in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Raising Voices has partnered with CSOs including Cotton On, Save the Children, World Vision and others, as well as CBOs like Joy for Children and Kaana Foundation serving as VAC Prevention Centres in their community and supporting GST rollout. A pool of over 40 Regional Resource Persons have been the primary source of technical support for Toolkit implementation in recent years. GST implementation has been supported by a larger ecosystem of interventions including trainings through our Violence Prevention Learning Center, a robust Peer Learning Network, ongoing local activism, national dialogues and communications campaigns to support acceptance of GST ideas, among many others.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

There have been a number of studies conducted to understand the effects of the GST on violence against children and other goals. This includes articles published in academic journals based on data from a randomized controlled trial (RCT) conducted from 2012 to 2014 (Devries et al., 2015; Merrill et al., 2018), a quantitative process evaluation (Knight et al., 2018), and a qualitative study conducted in 2014 concurrently with the RCT's endline data collection (Kyegombe et al., 2017). The key findings from these studies all point towards the effectiveness of the GST. The RCT findings provided strong evidence that the GST reduced violence in schools; specifically, there was a 42% reduction in physical violence from school staff (Devries et al., 2015). Further analysis of the RCT data along three key dimensions indicated that students felt supported by teachers and other students (relational), attitudes towards physical discipline changed among teachers, students, and the community (psychological), and that both students and teachers were more engaged with their schools (structural) (Merrill et al., 2018).

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

Several formal studies and informal learning activities have improved our understanding of key drivers of change. Engaging the whole school environment, not only physical but the active engagement of students, teachers, administrators and the surrounding community including local leaders has been instrumental to shifting the operational culture of the school and reducing violence. The GST has a dose-responsive effect, so the more schools make use of activities and structures the greater impact we see. Localized implementation through Teacher Protagonists ensures buy-in and ownership, and support from those within the community (VAC Prevention Centres or Regional Resource Persons) ensures context-specific implementation and technical support for the work. We have found that VAC Prevention Centres (subgranted CSOs) have been more difficult to manage in terms of accountability and budgets, but Regional Resource Persons have proven to be vital as they are locally based, flexible in their ability to visit schools, and more easily trainable as TA providers for the GST. Surrounding GST implementation with a national dialogue through radio and TV campaigns and local dialogues in the community has helped to improve overall acceptability of the need to reduce VAC in schools. We have also learned that teachers will implement the toolkit how it best suits their needs, so while guidance is provided, flexibility is key while maintaining focus on TA that supports the core elements of the Toolkit and fidelity to the overall model.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

The Good School Toolkit is backed by a rigorous RCT and over 15 years of experience in implementing this work in schools. It is affordable and implemented within school timetables and within programmatic timelines. It is locally developed, locally led and locally owned, and has been adapted for secondary schools and other contexts demonstrating its agility beyond Uganda's primary schools. The Toolkit provides a compelling case for prioritizing the operational culture at school as a means to prevent VAC, and a whole-school approach has been shown to be effective in contexts beyond Uganda. Like other whole-school approaches, the GST focuses on the core underlying cause of violence against children and violence against women - POWER. By empowering student voice and participation, by encouraging teachers to share power with students, by encouraging collective policy formation and collective accountability, and by holding space to interrogate patriarchal norms underpinning violence, the GST is cultivating future generations of non-violent leaders with a healthier relationship with school and society.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

<https://raisingvoices.org/children/the-good-school-toolkit/>
<https://raisingvoices.org/children/the-good-school-toolkit/good-school-toolkit-study/>
https://coalitionforgoodschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Coalition_for_Good_Schools_Evidence_Review_R6.pdf