



Training Center for Community Development
Peace Ambassador Program



Save the Children Sweden
المنظمة السويدية لرعاية الأطفال

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"Violence in Schools"

Capacities for Action

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(Please note that this document is intended as a guide, and should be read in conjunction with the power point presentation presented at the regional consultation, this may be obtained from Ms Sana El Bizri: bizri_sana@hotmail.com)

**I've put on some colors
Some yellow
Some white
Some red
Some black
And more still
I've mixed them together
To result to only one
And the prettiest of them all
The color of love and equality**

Written by an 11 year old child

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Introduction

To start with, I would like to convey my best wishes of happiness to all those in the world who are sensitive to the plight of children, especially to Save the Children Sweden, who through their partnership, allowed us, step by step, to realize the Ambassadors of Peace project.

One has stopped counting the amount of children that have witnessed or paid the price of the murderous insanity of adults. Their lost and wrecked childhoods are a cry for justice and peace, a cry to trust in life again and have the strength again to build a more tolerant society.

The dynamism of growing up and the interaction of children's environments make violence at school appear to be a normal cycle of life. When the causes of this are unknown alternatives are hard to find and violence at school becomes increasingly a part of a child's everyday life. One cannot prepare children for peace when day after day they are confronted with the frustrations and limitations of their parents. Moreover these frustrations and limitations are the root to violence inside and outside the family and society as a whole.

Through the acknowledgement of violence around us and the wish to push individuals into action, TCCD's program aims at inciting an answer to these questions in its duty bearers:

1. Who doesn't suffer from violence at home, in their neighborhood, their workplace, or their learning environment?
2. How does collective history influence individual history? How does collective history influence the psychological development of children and adolescents?
3. What are the signs, within the psychological suffering of children and adolescents of psychological destruction attempts, deliberately organized by torture systems?
4. How to treat children and adolescents submitted to psychological destruction? The author will shortly present the general principles of psychotherapy with tortured and traumatized children.
5. How do we stop enduring and provoking this violence?

Finally, how is it possible to do prevention, in order that violence doesn't transform those children in real "human bombs" when reaching adulthood?

Thus it is of great importance that programs that aim at preventing violence in schools be implemented. I have found that Violence in all its shapes and forms impact in a very negative way on the children's self-esteem. Abused children are under permanent stress, and trauma which affect their emotional relationships and inner identity and are therefore prone to sexual abuse. This means that even if governments have ratified the CRC, or created laws to combat corporal punishment in schools, programs that are created to combat violence in school should be widely implemented.

For example, although Lebanon has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in October 30, 1990, Lebanon's position regarding the Convention remains ambiguous and the process of the Convention's full implementation remains incomplete regarding corporal punishment in general and punishment practiced at schools in particular. However, I will not attempt to account for the reasons and give details why these barriers exist (for a very thorough account please see Save the Children's paper entitled '*Corporal Punishment in Lebanon –The Role of Public Administration in Implementing a Ban on Corporal Punishment in Schools*' by Zeina Halabi, found in the Save the Children CD distributed at the regional consultation). I will briefly outline the problem that Lebanon faces in safeguarding its schools from violence, and

demonstrate how The Training Center for Community Development (TCCD) with Save the Children Sweden have worked with Parents, Children and Teachers to find a successful solution for this violence in schools.

TCCD's capacity of action includes policy work and educational measures that target duty bearers in society from children to politicians. The project 'Ambassadors of Peace Lebanon' (AOP) is the key focal program initiated by TCCD, and sponsored by Save the Children Sweden, to help prevent violence in schools. Originally a program initiated in Canadian Schools it was adapted to the Lebanon experience to give duty bearers the tools to implement peaceful conflict resolution in schools, with the eventual aim of abolishing corporal punishment in schools and also eventually in homes. The project was launched in 2002 in Lebanon, and includes work with students, school staff, and parents. Over 3723 children, 109 teachers and 362 parents and other adults have benefited from its training to date, from identifying forms of violence (which is difficult for most adults) to recognizing its manifestations, and its impacts. By acknowledging the origins of this expressed violence and how to deal with it in a sensible manner the person can begin to acquire peaceful and positive behavior and can start his/her route to peace

One of the main objectives of TCCD in implementing the AOP program is enhancing and ensuring the participation and the contribution of children in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating most of the activities. For example, TCCD's method when working against peer-to-peer violence is Child to Child training.

The Ambassadors of Peace project, Lebanon

The Ambassadors of Peace project is based on a psycho-educational foundation that has been created through a compilation of methodologies and techniques by the people working with the Training Centre for Community Development as well as by its focus groups trained in these fields. The interaction of the crowd is essential in helping to form the curriculum, taking into consideration new focus groups and consequently new needs, so that the curriculum is constantly adapting to its target population.

General Objectives:

- To Favor the engagement of the responsible citizen through research, education and action, so as to fight injustice and violence in all its forms.
- To promote the action of the AOPs, to defend their rights, their interests in all arenas-public, private etc.
- To Inform, sensitize, and mould members to improve the mental and physical health of the children, their parents and teachers.
- To Facilitate, initiate and give rise to discussions between members, so as to act uniformly and take the right decisions on all important matters.
- To awaken, international solidarity. To orient the centre in many cases of international solidarity so as to sensitize the public to the impact of violence.
- To Favor social participation and improve relationships in neighborhoods, the workplace, schools and colleges.

How does the program break the cycle of violence?

In simple terms, it is by learning what are the origins of this expressed violence (such as learning what it means to have, a conflict between needs and desires, values and principles, communication, stress etc), and how to resolve these conflicts in a well reflected manner, that the person can initiate a path towards the acquisition of a peaceful affirmative behavior, a path that will lead to peace.

The various duty bearers go through a process of learning aimed at each age group. This process incorporates human rights, conflict resolution, psycho-social education, and tools of intervention, that focus on the individual and their interaction with their surroundings, by focusing on these main themes:

Three levels of methodological psycho-social intervention:

1. the philosophy of the curriculum:
 - a. “Concepts of needs versus desire”
 - b. “Values versus principles”
 - c. “Categories of stress”
 - d. “Verbal communication and nonverbal communication”

2. The clinical approach to education-based psychology:
 - a. “Development of parenting skills”
 - i. Parental educational background
 - ii. Unacceptable parental behavior
 - iii. Level of tolerance
 - iv. The 4 styles of authority
 - v. The 5 “C” of discipline rules
 - vi. Constructive punishment
 - vii. Expression and anger management
 - viii. Verbal & psychological violence
 - ix. Alternatives in parent-child communication

3. Counseling methodology:
 - a. “Helping the Child and his Environment”
 - i. how: Use of clinical assessment tools: child’s behavior assessment grid, child’s characteristics and needs assessment grid, grid of challenges
 - ii. Strategies to prevent behavioral problems: human and structural organization in a child’s environment

4. Using the Education – Action – Sustainable change mainly through:
 - a. Interaction and participation:
 - b. Exploration and confrontation of attitudes
 - c. Practice of new behavior
 - d. Integration of new attitudes and behavior
 - e. Development of new skills: critical thinking/communication//problem solving/listening/advocacy
 - f. Gaining confidence to stand up for rights

5. Taking into consideration the learning environment:
 - a. Support of the principles of human rights
 - b. Creation of respect and tolerance
 - c. Respect of people’s differences and dignity

The pedagogic method that is used at the training is: “*learning by doing*” and a method of identifying a “*hierarchy of problems*”:

An important characteristic of any set of problems is defining that problems “hierarchy”. The hierarchy is based on a cause and effect relationship between problems (more explanation on slides).

Learning by is characterized by the fact that theories are put into practice through the participants own personal and professional experience. In this sense, theories are complementary in the actual practice of the participants by bringing additional understanding and means to their actual practice. *Learning by doing* serves a second goal which is that of offering the opportunity for the participants themselves to experience some of the topics that are delicate issues in society here and therefore, within their work with their clients such as: the conflict between needs and desires, values and principals, stress, and communication

1. Attaining knowledge
2. Knowing how to be.
3. Knowing how to act.
4. Knowing how to develop.

The Ambassadors of Peace Lebanon’s ambition is to give its target groups the tools necessary to fulfill these needs on a/an:

- Adult to adult level
- Child to child level
- Adult to child level
- Child to adult level

Collaboration is vital

From the start the Ministry of Education was an important part of the Ambassadors of Peace process. The Minister of Education saw the value and necessity of incorporating the program in all public schools in Lebanon. This was due to the fact that the program dealt with developing the inner dimensions of humanity, and the absence of having such a program in Lebanese schools, despite its great need. This was reinforced a year later in which the impact of the AOP had on the children, their parents and teachers was phenomenal.

The Lebanese Minister of Education, in addition to the headmasters who have adopted the Ambassadors of Peace program did this in full comprehension of the program and the understanding of the positive impact on the behavior of children.

Furthermore, the AOP project prevailed and expanded (to both private and public schools) because the schools that integrated the AOP project in their schools, noticed the positive impact on the children's schoolwork and behavior, despite a change in Government and (subsequently) the denial of a new permit. It is a testimony to the success of the AOP project that the program was integrated into the school curricula.

The program now stands in 11 schools. It is also supported by the Municipality of Sydon and has given TCCD open access, and working space to the municipality itself, to train children and other members in Sydon, so that TCCD may improve the quality of life for the people of Synod. TCCD has also been asked to do this inter-municipally. In addition, the municipality has also asked TCCD to supervise and train all Lebanese University students that require training from the Synod municipality to complete their medical-social degrees.

Although the program stands by its own merits, we cannot deny the importance of organizations such as Save the Children Sweden, other international NGOs, and certain governmental bodies, who benefit from international and governmental support and expertise, in bringing about much needed awareness raising and advocacy for an enabling environment.

However, it is through the voices of the students, teachers and headmasters, and others themselves that speak to the success of the AOP project. Some of their voices are recorded below, but please allow me time for you to hear them yourselves.

Impact and testimony: the impact speaks for itself:

The AOP program is not magic, if it is well applied; it does bring about real change, and has profound implications for peace. Of course the impact of each duty-bearer cannot be stated in full, but I do hope to draw your attention here to a few stated impacts and testimonies collected/observed:

1. Teachers/Parents:

- Able to express their needs: **“I have gained the ability to express my needs and explain the exact meaning of values and principles...”**
- Communicate with their students/children more effectively: **“I learnt how to listen to my children and students needs and desires and respect them...”**

- Feel there is no longer the desire to use violence: “ **I have learnt to communicate without the use of violence**”
- Notice an improvement in their student’s/children’s grades: “**I have definitely seen an improvement in some of my student’s grades and behavior, but we need this program to stay with us longer...**”

2. Students:

- "I've reached the level of self-independence, self-synchrony and inner harmony, as I've gained the ability to distinguish my needs from desires and to transform the inner violence to positive energy to construct my personality.
 - "I've learned to respect myself, others' selves, and I've become more self-confident"
 - "I've gained success and happiness through sustainability, so please give me the opportunity to become a peace ambassador for other children like me"
 - "I've been leashed out. This is enough to be said in order to stand on the value of what we are doing with you"
 - "When I turned to be angry, I used to go to the peace corner, and only then I realize what the truth does mean for me"
 - "it was the first time that I apology for my kids, it was a so important situation to get introduced to my real self"
-
- Use peaceful methods of communication: “**Now when I fight with M I tell her its ok darling, don’t worry...**”
 - Have increased self esteem: “ **I feel better about myself , I no longer feel like an outcast...my friends have changed towards me because of this**”
 - Are aware of violence: “**I never realized that what I was doing was a form of violence...**”
 - Express the need for education and the AOP project: “**I used to think there was no point to education, now I can see how we can help our country through education....I want to continue the program and become an ambassador for peace**”

Some testimonies collected from teachers, the vice-president of the Synod Municipality, and interns from the Lebanese University:

- **You had the courage to raise this problem in its real dimension.** You will be a better person. Even in the case of disappointment, or apparent social failure, or half-victory you will have better self-esteem and your pupils will too.
- **Your acts and words will have a long-term effect.** The students will remember. It is a tough fight, which must remain non-violent on your side.

- Pupils and teachers are fused into one group. There are no more pupils or teachers, **only human beings** with their conscience.
- The students are asked to give their opinions on behavior that they have just witnessed. **Their opinion is taken into consideration. They are recognized as valued partners.**

Conclusion

Due to the importance of this program, especially with its value vis a vis children and with the enthusiasm it has generated in both the teachers, the students, the parents, and the government, with the help of Save the Children Sweden, and other organizations, the promulgation of this program is needed to have a widespread national and global impact. Further, because of the program's flexibility it allows it to be adapted to many environments, and subsequently translated to many schools in various countries.

TCCD and the future:

The Ambassadors of Peace program will be applied in Yemen, with the co-operation of the Higher Council of Motherhood and Childhood and partner organizations including Save the Children Sweden, in 2005/6.

Recommendations

Future work should include:

1/ Legal Reform:

- a. **Unifying national legislation** in spirit and the requirement of the CRC in order to design not only remedial laws that ban corporal punishment at schools but also preventive ones by eliminating article 186 from the Code of Criminal Justice and introducing laws that explicitly ban corporal punishment in all schools in Lebanon.
- b. **Removing discrimination from Lebanon's domestic laws.** It is the responsibility of the Lebanese parliament and in accordance with the requirements of the CRC to eliminate article 186 from the Code of Criminal Law.
- c. **Institutionalizing the application of Article 18 of the CRC** that calls for State parties to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity.

2/ Educational Measures:

- a. **Unify the school system in Lebanon** so that all schools are held accountable and can be monitored accordingly.
- b. **Institutionalize the Ambassadors of Peace program in Lebanon,** so that all schools may benefit from a method that applies peaceful conflict resolution in schools, benefiting students, teachers and society as a whole.

- c. **Create a co-ordination committee** between NGOs, governmental bodies and ministries.

3/ General Training:

Theoretically:

- a. **Increase/create psycho-educational training sessions** for all front-line staff on non-violence.
- b. **Implement program planning and regular monitoring** through a national committee of NGOs and governmental bodies.

Practically:

- a. **Implement daily monitoring** of training sessions at a national level. Thematic and specific monitored supervision should be insured by this national committee.

(This speech can be found in full in both Arabic and English on the Save the Children CD distributed at the Regional meeting)