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an overview



Foreword

Greetings from Raising Voices!

Congratulations for choosing to transform your school into a Good School! The journey you are about to begin will help your school to improve relationships between teachers, students, school administration and the surrounding community.

The Good School Toolkit was developed in Ugandan schools to help reduce violence against children and improve learning environments to help students reach their true potential.

Violence against children whether physical, emotional, sexual or economic has long term consequences on students. It affects how they learn, and determines who they become when they leave your school and enter the community. That is why we have developed this Toolkit, which contains a set of ideas and tools that will help you imagine, learn about, and create a Good School and reduce violence against children at your school.

A Good School is one with good and motivated teachers, a good learning environment, and a transparent and accountable administration. It offers a wonderful opportunity to promote positive discipline and practice sharing power in a way that benefits everyone. Each Step of the Toolkit is designed to fit within your school timetables and encourage active participation from girls and boys. You do not need any specialized skill or expertise. All you need is motivation and good leadership.

We encourage you to make good use of the resources provided. The Toolkit will help everyone in your school build skills to create a violence-free childhood for every student and create a better life for all!

We wish you every success in your journey to create a good school.

The Raising Voices Team



List of acronyms

GST: Good School Toolkit

RTRR: Reporting, tracking, referral and response guidelines on violence against children in schools

VAC: Violence against children

WHO: World Health Organization

Share the Ideas of a Good School

This Introductory Package also comes with engaging materials for sharing with others:

What Is a Good School? A Companion for Teachers and Students

A colourful pamphlet about the Toolkit's ideas, ideal for leaving in the classroom or office.

Four Cartoon Booklets

A collection of illustrated stories that introduce what it means to create a Good School.

Booklet 1: *What Is a Good Teacher?*

Booklet 2: *What Is Wrong with Corporal Punishment?*

Booklet 3: *What Is Positive Discipline?*

Booklet 4: *What Is a Good Learning Environment?*

Four Good School Posters

A collection of drawings that highlight the qualities of a Good School.

Poster 1: *A Good School Is Everyone's Right!*

Poster 2: *A Good Teacher Is Everyone's Right!*

Poster 3: *A Good Learning Environment Is Everyone's Right!*

Poster 4: *An Accountable Administration Is Everyone's Right!*



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What Is a Good School?



A Good School aims to create a violence-free learning environment within which students develop their skills and confidence to grow into creative, constructive and thoughtful members of their community.

The Good School Toolkit is designed to help you create such a school.

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What You Will Achieve

The Good School Toolkit has three objectives:

1. To equip **teachers** for increasing student confidence and success
2. To create a **learning environment** that is safe and respectful
3. To support the **administration** in becoming more transparent and accountable

These are the three things that transform schools!

This is what you will achieve using the Good School Toolkit!

The Toolkit has been designed and tested with the involvement of teachers, students and administrative leaders from schools like yours.





The Most Common Questions

What is the Good School Toolkit?

The Toolkit is a six-step process that helps you create a Good School. This Introductory Package will give you an overview of what it contains and how you can use it.

How long will it take?

The Toolkit has six steps. You could complete two steps per term and thus all six steps within two school years. However, your progress is entirely dependent on your school.

Who will do the work?

The whole school! However, your Good School Committee will help coordinate the activities and spread the ideas introduced in each step. This group of students, teachers and community members will also participate in special learning and skill-building modules.

How will we know what to do?

Every activity is outlined in detail. You'll find easy-to-follow instructions, monitoring checklists and ready-made materials. You can customize the Toolkit to your needs, or follow it step by step from beginning to end.



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What kind of leadership is required?

The school administration must approve the school's implementation of the Toolkit. The Toolkit is then implemented by educators, students and community members who

- see themselves as leaders;
- feel the responsibility and inspiration to make their school a better place;
- will be motivated to endure challenges and quick to celebrate successes;
- will role model—in everything they say and do—an openness to new ideas and learning new skills.

What resources will we need?

You do not need any special resources or a large budget to implement the Toolkit. You just need the motivation and desire to improve the quality of education at your school.

How will we know if we are making progress?

Each step includes a monitoring checklist that will enable you to track your progress.

What if we need help?

We encourage you to join the Good School Network, where schools like yours and the teachers within them share the ideas, skills and tools they have developed (details and registration form available in Step 1).

*If you need more information or have questions, please get in touch with
Raising Voices through our website or by sending an email to
goodschools@raisingvoices.org*



The Toolkit's Six Steps At a Glance

Step 1: Your Team & Network

Step 2: Preparing for Change

Step 3: Good Teachers & Teaching

Step 4: Positive Discipline

Step 5: Good Learning Environment

Step 6: Good Administration & The Future

Everything Is Connected

Good teachers, a good learning environment and a good administration are all interconnected. Although some of the Toolkit's steps focus on one area more than the others, every step contributes to all three aspects of a Good School. For example, every step helps build a good administration. It is just that in Step 6 the accumulation of these efforts creates an administration trusted to lead the way forward.



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For each step you will receive a guide that includes the following:

School Activities

These activities are specially designed to engage your entire school community in creating a Good School. They are the heart of the Good School Toolkit. For each activity there is a brief overview of the activity's purpose and easy-to-follow suggestions for implementation.

Leadership Workshop

This workshop includes a series of modules for strengthening the capacity of your Good School Committee, helping them to succeed as leaders and role models. The modules can be implemented as a single workshop or introduced individually over several weeks.

Tools & Materials

These tools and materials are designed to make your work easier. They are ready-to-use handouts, worksheets and references that support specific school activities. You can use them as is, or as inspiration for customizing something for your school.

Note: Some steps come with additional teaching aids and publications to explore the step's topic in further detail.



Step 1 Your Team & Network

This project requires the vision and dedication of many. In this step you will create your Good School Committee and join the Good School Network. The goal is to connect yourself with key people who share your commitment to creating a better school, and who will help you along the way.

With the guide for this step, you will receive

- *What Is a Good School?* by Dipak Naker



Step 2 Preparing for Change

Change is challenging, no matter how positive. In this step you will conduct preliminary activities that will spark people's interest and document their starting perspectives. The goal is to launch the project with an inclusive culture and with the tools to measure and celebrate change.

With the guide for this step, you will receive

- Four Good School Toolkit posters



Step 3 Good Teachers & Teaching

Good teaching requires many skills that reach far beyond traditional academic instruction. In this step you will provide teachers with a renewed sense of their role, greater professional support, and approaches for interacting positively and creatively with students. The goal is to create motivated teachers who excel as educators and take pride in their work.

With the guide for this step, you will receive

- The cartoon booklet *What Is a Good teacher?*



Step 4 Positive Discipline

The strongest type of discipline comes from within. In this step you will establish the school culture and disciplinary methods that support positive discipline instead of corporal punishment. The goal is to create students who believe in themselves and are thus motivated from within to be their best.

With the guide for this step, you will receive

- *Positive Discipline: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* by Raising Voices
- *Positive Discipline Responses* poster
- The cartoon booklets *What Is Wrong With Corporal Punishment?* and *What Is Positive Discipline?*



Step 5 Good Learning Environment

When students feel protected and respected, they can cease to focus on self-protection and open themselves to personal growth. In this step you will create a psychological sense of safety and inclusion, as well as enhance the school's physical compound. The goal is to give students a sense of security, dignity, value and voice.

With the guide for this step, you will receive

- The cartoon booklet *What Is a Good Learning Environment?*



Step 6 Good Administration & The Future

Remaining a Good School requires valued and trusted administrative leadership. Every step so far has helped you build just that. In this step you will measure and celebrate the successes of your Good School project and transfer ongoing Good School leadership to the administration. The goal is to inspire everyone with what you have accomplished and with a vision for the future.



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Why Use the Toolkit?



The following reasons have inspired many people to envision better schools for students. Use these explanations to help express your motivation to lead change.

Our current school is not responding to children's needs.

Approximately three out of four children who joined the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in P1 in 1997 did not finish P7. They dropped out for many reasons, mainly because the school was not responding to their learning needs. An accountable school cannot afford this kind of loss.

Our schools are designed to teach children to memorise information, motivating them by fear and humiliation.

Those kinds of skills are virtually useless in today's world. We need to change our teaching methodology to build children's confidence and help them explore new ways of thinking and learning. We need to teach them how to think creatively and solve problems, not memorise useless information.

The psychological and physical environment of our school influences how and what children learn.

If children are made to be fearful and hesitant and their opinions are silenced, they may not take the risk of exploring new ideas. If our school is falling apart and no effort is put into maintaining it, children learn that they are not valuable to the system that creates that environment. In this way, they miss out on the opportunity to learn new thinking skills and develop beliefs about how valuable they are as individuals.



If children have no role models and no one takes interest in their long-term development as human beings, they will not develop positive discipline.

Instead they develop unhealthy ways of trying to get attention. They develop anti-social behaviour and rely on external forces to control their behaviour. We know that lasting behaviour change can only come when the person sees the value of the change in behaviour and when the motivation comes from inside.

Our schools are based on ideas that no longer serve the needs and challenges of today's world.

Look around you at the way the world is changing and the kind of skills needed to succeed in it. We need compassionate leaders and imaginative thinkers who can analyse old problems in new ways and bring new thinking to develop solutions that are creative. Our schools are trying to produce obedient students who will do what they are told. This will not help us create leaders and creative thinkers.

If the school governance is ineffective, unfair or only selectively enforced, teachers, parents and children lose faith in it.

If students and teachers do not feel accountable for their behaviour and do not feel that there are clearly articulated values all school members must live by, they lose respect for the school. They stop caring. The school will start its slow decay towards mediocrity and produce students and teachers who have no stake in performing well. What follows is a decline in academic performance and discipline at school.

For these and many other reasons, it is important that we all take proactive steps to create a Good School. The Good School Toolkit is designed to help you and your school take those proactive steps.



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Is the Toolkit Right for Your School?

These questions will help you reflect on what is currently happening in your school, identify areas you would like to focus on, and evaluate the commitment needed to proceed with the project.

1. Do we support good teachers?

- a. How do teachers feel at our school? Do teachers feel supported and valued or overwhelmed and frustrated?
- b. Do teachers help students to ask questions and learn from their mistakes?
- c. Do teachers help students to analyse information and think critically? If so, how?
- d. Are we committed to providing a quality education for our students? If so, what exactly does that mean?
- e. Do teachers and students relate well to each other? Do students feel free coming to teachers with their problems?
- f. Do we have a way of recognising student effort and encouraging good behaviour instead of just punishing bad behaviour?

2. Do we practice positive discipline?

- a. Is there a problem with discipline in our school?
- b. How are students currently disciplined in our school?

- c. Do we have specific guidelines on how children should be disciplined?
- d. What are the shortcomings of our current approach to discipline?
- e. What do we believe is the purpose of discipline?
- f. Why do we use corporal punishment?

3. Does our school have a supportive environment?

a. Psychological environment

- i) Do students have a voice at our school? Is there a way for students' voices to be heard?
 - Do we have a student council?
 - Do we have a prefect's body?
 - Do we have a student magazine or newsletter?
 - Do we have a suggestion box?
 - Do students participate in making school rules?
- ii) Is there a clear channel of communication between students and teachers?
- iii) Is there a way for students to make a complaint about something or to suggest an idea to improve the school? Do the students know what it is?

b. Physical environment

- i) Is our compound clean and smart?
- ii) Are we proud of the way our school looks?
- iii) What are some of the challenges we are facing in terms of improving our environment?
- iv) Is it possible for us to improve the environment with the resources we have? Are we willing to work towards making the environment better, even without funds? What might that entail?



4. Do we have a transparent and accountable administration?

- a. Do we have school policies in place?
 - i. Do we have a discipline policy? What does it say?
 - ii. Do we have a policy on corporal punishment?
 - iii. Do we have a policy on sexual violence?
 - iv. Do we have a policy on bullying?
- b. Do we have clearly stated rules for:
 - i. Students?
 - ii. Teachers?
 - iii. Parents?
- c. Are the rules posted anywhere?
- d. Is it clear what happens to students when the rules are broken?
- e. Are all students treated fairly and equally when the rules are broken?
- f. Are all stakeholders engaged in how the school is run?
- g. Is the school community inspired by clear school standards and the school's vision for the future?

5. Can we commit to implementing a Good School project?

- a. How much time do we think this project will take?
- b. Can we make this project a priority?
- c. Are there other projects that the school is committed to right now? Will they conflict with this project?
- d. What are the benefits of this project? Do we agree with them? Are they worth our time and effort?
- e. Do we believe in the objectives of the project? What are some of the challenges we might face in achieving the objectives?
- f. Are we willing to commit to not using corporal punishment?
- g. Do we have open minds? Are we willing to challenge our ways of thinking and doing things?





One School's Story

What a student says about the Toolkit:

In my school we use the Toolkit, and I like it! The Toolkit contains books and posters from which we learn many things that make our school safe for the children and other people. From the Toolkit we learn that corporal punishment is bad. Corporal punishment causes injury to other lives, and it does not give knowledge. Teachers who in most cases punish children using corporal punishment should use better methods to discipline children. We call this positive discipline.

From the Toolkit, we also learn that it is good to have a good learning environment which helps children to learn without interference. We use the Toolkit in my school to promote good ideas. Our teachers and pupils work together to promote children's ideas.

The Toolkit has helped us to learn how well we can express our feelings and become school leaders responsibly. Our teachers' and pupils' committees use the Toolkit to teach everyone about how our school can become a better school.

OKIROR BRUNO

Primary school pupil in Uganda





One School's Story

What a teacher like you says about the Toolkit:

In my experience as a teacher at St Peter's Primary School in Kanyanya, I have found the Toolkit very useful in helping me to develop my own vision of what makes a good school. The Toolkit has contributed to my skills and capacity to help other teachers, pupils and parents appreciate the ideas and be able to start creating a good school.

There are many wonder-working activities suggested that my school has already adopted. We also use the Toolkit to reach out to many within the division. Since the introduction of the Toolkit in 2008, tremendous achievements have been reached. Policies that are fair, acceptable and respected by everyone have been instituted to guide the general behavior and actions of the school-wide community.

As teachers, we have been able to develop a teaching approach that has made teaching and the learning process more adventurous. Members of the school have a shared vision of what their school should be. We are also promoting an environment where the student can raise his or her opinion and is respected and attended to without bias.

Primary school teacher in Uganda



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Our Many Thanks



First and foremost, our gratitude goes to the students and teachers of St Peter's Primary School in Kanyanya and Mulago Secondary School. For eighteen months they embarked on the courageous enterprise of creating a Good School. We have learned much about what works and what doesn't from their openness and willingness to share their experiences. Their resiliency, courage and perseverance have inspired us to believe that with commitment and passion, it is possible to create better schools anywhere.

Our gratitude also goes to the twenty schools that responded to our questions about what helped most in creating a Good School and what their greatest challenges were. Their patience and candour over hours of questions have saved us from many costly mistakes and lead to many insights regarding what it takes to create a Good School. We would also like to thank more than 1,400 children and 1,100 adults from diverse parts of the country who shared their perspectives with us about schools. This work would have lapsed into an academic exercise without their insights and insistence on workable solutions.

Many people contributed their talents and creativity to bring this work to fruition. The time-consuming work of testing ideas, documenting experiences, working with teachers and developing the first draft of this work was heroically undertaken by Deborah Sekitoleko. Her unique ability to work with adults and children concurrently and compassionately created a strong foundation upon which others could build. Marco Tibasima's witty artwork, Sarah Healey's and Samson Mwaka's elegant design work and Emily Simon's preliminary edits of the final draft have made the work accessible to a wider audience. Prema Michau's and Kirsten Zook's meticulous final editing and patient, detail-oriented copyediting as well as Sara Siebert's final editing have saved us from many embarrassing oversights.



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The painstaking work of documenting the experience of using the Toolkit and the vast amount of feedback received from more than 450 schools that are currently using the Toolkit was skillfully coordinated by Willington Ssekadde. His patience and persistence was the direct impetus behind updating the Toolkit to this second edition. Stephanie Sauvé's creativity and imagination helped us rewrite and reorganize this second edition of the Toolkit to make it clearer and responsive to the users' needs and feedback. Without the commitment of each of these individuals, this second edition would have been noticeably less.

We would like to thank Emmanuel Aarali Kusemererwa, the Principal Education Officer at the Ministry of Education and Sports, who has worked tirelessly to promote these ideas, for organizing the consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders. The comments from this consultation have strengthened the section on how to create positive discipline in schools. We would also like to thank Dr. Nkaada for his support during various phases of testing this work in Ugandan schools.

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We would like to thank the National Curriculum Development Center for their review, guidance and support in the refinement of the Toolkit.

Lastly, special thanks to Lori Michau—for thoughtful questions and friendship. Her insistence on quality inspired us to reach beyond what we thought we were capable of.

Without input from these friends and colleagues, as well as many other unnamed individuals who work daily to influence the quality of our schools, this work would not have been possible. To them we owe the debt of bringing these ideas alive in our schools.

Dipak Naker

June 2011





Glossary

Good School Toolkit: a six-step process that helps teachers and administrators create a good school.

Wall of Fame: a visible board for recognizing good behavior and achievement among students.

School policies: a set of related guidelines developed, documented, and enforced by schools to ensure students' safety.

Suggestion Box: a box placed in an easily accessible location in the school compound, used to collect students' ideas and concerns about their school.

Ideas Board: a board where students generate and share ideas for school improvement.

Student's Court: a group of students elected by their peers to handle minor disciplinary cases.



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