



Knowledge hub

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Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

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

"My Voice" P-VAC Reporting and Response Boxes in schools. HakiElimu, in collaboration with students, introduced an anonymous box where children in school and those of school write cases of violence and drop them in the box, which is located at place selected by the children. The box has three padlocks and is opened periodically in the presence of three keyholders, student, school head, matron/ patron. The cases are opened, analyzed and sent to the respective party for action (community leader/ police gender desk/ community development officer, social welfare officer, health care provider). The students / children receive responses and action is taken against perpetrators. This reporting mechanism has been selected by the ministry responsible for community development and children as the best practice and is now included in the national guidelines for prevention of violence against women and children.

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

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) *

HakiElimu. This practice can be replicated and applied across different AT as it is relevant, engages beneficiary youth groups and is partnership strong, with the community-based solutions, thus making it sustainable.

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

Equity violence free education, empowered youth, supported by community and government partnerships.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

It has been included in the National Guidelines on Prevention of Violence in and out of Primary and Secondary Schools, and is also linked with the National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children reporting mechanisms.

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? *

i. The project was designed to address the issues of girls' school dropout, school transition, and equality and equity for pupils and students with from all walks of life. Issues of violence in schools, affects directly girls, marginalized children including those with disability, children from broken homes, with single parents and from families with low, unsustainable income.

ii. HakiElimu's study on "The State of Violence Against School Children in Tanzania Mainland" in 2020 revealed alarming rates of violence in and around the school environment, where by 60% of girls experience or have experienced violence at the school setting, or on the way / to from school. Among the various types of violence, psychological violence was leading, with 82% of girls reporting to have experienced such form of violence within the school grounds. There is also an issue of sexual violence, where by 19% of girls and 14% boys in public schools reported to have experienced at least one such incident, in school on the way and even at home. The project aimed to improve school attendance, increase transition rate among girls and reduce cases of violence against children in schools through safe and accountable reporting mechanisms, so that school children have a platform to report cases of violence and the cases are addressed accordingly by the school authority, with the support of the community development officers, gender desks and community leaders

iii. The approach was to design and use an anonymous box in schools, where school children put in the written complains/ reported cases of violence. The box is located in a safe, reachable and not visible to all place, chosen by the children / students themselves. The beneficiaries were trained on P-VAC issues and how to report. The objective was to create anonymous and trustful way to report and address cases of violence in schools, that held accountable school heads, matrons / patrons, teachers and caregivers, and reduce school drop outs among girls.

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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i. Establish school clubs and provide the students who are club members awareness to the club members on issues of violence and how to prevent and report it, gender equity and equality and life skills. HakiElimu in collaboration with local government authorities, Senior Female Friend of Education (SFFF), and officers from the ministries responsible for education and community development facilitated and supported training to matrons/ patron school heads on prevention of violence against children, reporting mechanisms and the existing government structure to address issues of violence. The SFFF and matron/ patron trained the students in the school clubs and they then cascaded the knowledge to peers and together they address the issues of violence in the school settings. The Establishment of the "My Voice" (Sauti Yangu in Kiswahili Language) boxes was a result of the participation of the children, through meetings and group discussions they proposed this mechanism as the safest for them.

The box has three padlocks, with three keys, one for teachers, student and matron/ patron. It is opened together, in the presence of all three.

This is a continuous practice and to report the cases of violence to the relevant authority for further action. The school club members also were trained to use theater to express their concerns in the community (theater for development).

ii. This was established in 2020 and is an ongoing activity, expanding to other project locations. It is implemented in 127 schools in 22 Districts in Tanzania.

iii. Key implementors and collaborators are the Senior Female Friend of Education, these are volunteers of the education network established by HakiElimu about 16 years ago and is established country wide, local government authorities who received training and provide support to resolve cases. As members of the Tanzania Education Network we collaborate with other CSOs and NGOs, officers from the ministries responsible for education and children welfare and local government, students, teachers, parents, community leaders, local media, local artists (theatre for development) and community at large. All these partners and collaborators provide awareness on importance of prevention of violence against children in the community, supporting children's voices and exposing cases of violence in the community. The media also created awareness on reporting mechanisms.

iv. The activity had an initial investment of the training of the school children, members of the school clubs on prevention of violence, together with the matron/ patron and school heads. Manufacturing of the wooden / metallic box, purchase of the three padlocks and fixing it on the wall (selected place).

Other resources include follow up of cases in the box, reporting and following up on the reported cases from the gender desk.

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? *

i. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry responsible for community development and children visited one of the project schools and has endorsed this practice to be replicated national wide. In 2021, the same ministry reviewed the in and out of school child protection guidelines and the "My Voice" box is included, so are Friends of Education. This practice is also now linked with the National Action on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children that is under review for extension.

ii. One of the results is testified by a student, Nagenjwa 13yrs old, at Isike primary school, who reported her brother in law for sexually abusing her through the "My Voice" box and is no longer living in fear and hiding from people. She is now an active ambassador among peers encouraging other to speak up.

iii. Yes, we conducted evaluation study and results show that 95% of boys and girls confirm existence of P- VAC reporting mechanisms in their school and students rated designated boxes higher than other P-VAC reporting mechanisms, finding it more personal- centered and confidential.

The study also revealed that establishment of VAC reporting and response mechanisms greatly impact reducing violence practices in schools as students become confident to share their concerns with matrons, fellow students in the clubs, or the designated box. The following views from DEOs, ministry officials and parents clarify:

Reduction of cases of in schools as students are confident to report and talk to matrons, peers and use the designated box.

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? *

Periodic monitoring and evaluation of the project found out that the education volunteers namely Friends of Education, responsible to provide support in addressing issues of violence against children in schools were did not clearly understand the impact of violence and hence they did not always access the impact correctly. They used to judge and make assumptions of the extent of violence, thinking some of the cases reported by students are minor and were not forwarding the issues to the relevant authority for further action. As result, very few cases were reported, children did not have a platform to voice their issues and the community were not informed that they were actually hurting the children. To address this gap, HakiElimu organized a training to Friends of Education to create awareness on the meaning of violence, its occurrence and the reporting mechanisms. The training emphasized on the need to address all cases of violence regardless of their nature and they should encourage students to make sure all cases are reported.

- What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- Collaboration among school heads, matrons/ patrons, students /children, Female Friends of Education, parents/ guardians, and all responsible parties to address issues of violence against children. The roles of managing the “My Voice” boxes by SFFF, Matron/Patron and students helped to ensure that all reported cases were noted and addressed, without missing any of them, in a case specific manner. The joint opening, recording of entries and putting measures to solve cases meant collaboration, involvement and participation of the beneficiaries and those reasonable of their welfare.
- Provision of support to survivors of cases of violence by the recommended professional (psychosocial, nutritionist or health care).
- The school clubs comprise of 20 P-VAC ambassadors in each school. Their responsibility is to create and raise awareness on issues of violence and importance to report any such cases. They use various methods such peer discussions, theatre, songs and village meetings.
- The Government (Ministries responsible for education and community and development (children) respectively, already have the reporting mechanisms set in place at the national level, in line with the implementation of NPA-VAWC, thus the “My Voice” boxes were linked to that mechanism.
- LGAs support at Village level to allow installation of boxes
- Involvement of all stakeholders in all settings-Schools (Students, Teachers, school administration, school committee)-Village-Parents, Friends of education to support weekly monitoring
- What did not work – why did it not work?

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)? *

- This is kind of reporting mechanism demands all parties responsible for child safety and protection to be accountable and work in synergy to provide the necessary support and solution to children, in and out of school.
- It involves the beneficiaries directly and gives them the sense of ownership, strength and courage to raise voices of issue concerning their safety.
- It is anonymous for those who report.

• Introduce this method to the potential stakeholders, share with them best practices and find out from them how they would like to replicate it. Since it requires multiple partnerships from responsible parties, it will benefit to advocate for policies to include the Box as an anonymous means of reporting and all parties to be trained and learn how to benefit from it.

Link this method of reporting mechanism with the existing mechanisms at national level and empower with knowledge and skills those dealing with cases of violence against children to address the cases with the child lens perspective, and not always from the adult and the usual legal side.

Also, empowering children and youth with the right skills and knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights allows them to understand issues of violence, become confident and know how to engage teachers and adults to make informed decisions and address any issues. This supports partnerships that are engaged and responsible to each other.

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://www.hakielimu.or.tz/publication.The State of Violence Against School Children in Tanzania Mainland](https://www.hakielimu.or.tz/publication.The%20State%20of%20Violence%20Against%20School%20Children%20in%20Tanzania%20Mainland)