



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.) *

Prevention of Violence against Children in Afghanistan Schools

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Afghanistan

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) *

Help The Afghan Children (HTAC)

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

In Afghanistan children are exposed to multiple forms of violence, including at the family and school levels. HTAC School-based peace education and a community-based intervention to change harmful social norms and practices related to gender and the use of violence in conflict resolution to reduce violence, most the targets are children and parents and broader community.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

School-based peace education and a community-based intervention is holistic programming changing harmful social norms and practices

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) Afghanistan has experienced more than four decades of conflict, leading to massive disruptions in the development of education, health, livelihoods and infrastructure, and the stability of political governance. Against a backdrop of war, conflict and insecurity, Afghan society is recognised as suffering from endemic violence and children are exposed to multiple forms of violence at home and at schools.

ii) According to a global study conducted by UNICEF [1], Afghanistan is one of the few countries in which children are more likely to be disciplined using violent physical methods (for example, kicking, slapping, spanking, beating or other forms of corporal punishment) rather than violent psychological methods (for example, verbal aggression, threats, intimidation or humiliation). Although globally, approximately 17% of children are subjected to extreme forms of corporal punishment, more than a third of children in Afghanistan are subjected to extreme violence, and 78% of children aged 5 to 14 were reported to have experienced any violent discipline (psychological or physical) in the past month

iii) School-based peace education and community social norms change intervention in Afghanistan identified as holistic approach to engage various stakeholders in the program to achieve purpose of reducing aggressive behaviors among Afghan boys by encouraging critical reflections and behaviour change that led to reject violence and adopt the principles of peaceful, everyday living; Increase the use of non-violent conflict resolution approach in homes, thereby reducing abuse and threatening behaviour towards women and girls and motivated male leaders to respect and value women by including them in local councils and supporting their involvement in decision making; Educated women about their rights and protections and empower them to take a more active role in local community affairs.

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) Peace Education program: HTAC's Peace Education program ran for two years with the aim of enrolling one cohort of students into the program who would attend peace education classes for the two-year period. HTAC enrolled 2000 boys and 1500 girls (a total of 3500 students) into this cohort. Peace education training was delivered either before or after official school hours to students from grades seven and eight (in the first year) and grades eight and nine (in the second year). Peace education with teachers: Fifty teachers (27 female and 23 male) were trained to deliver the peace education curriculum to students in target schools. Teachers were selected through communication with the Department of Education in Jawzjan province, with key selection criteria being that teachers should have completed Grade 14 (a two year vocational education certificate in teaching) and be teaching social subjects such as Dari, Pashto or History. Conflict resolution, peace building and women's rights training: HTAC implemented conflict resolution and peace building and advocacy training with a range of different local community actors, including parents and community and religious leaders. A total of 1507 mothers and 1993 fathers (i.e. parents of students participating in peace education classes), and 150 religious and community leaders (30 female and 120 male) participated in the training across the 10 communities. Capacity building of women: HTAC sees Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and particularly women's rights CSOs, as being key actors in the prevention of violence and support of women's rights. Consequently, HTAC built the capacity of representatives of women's CSOs and staff from government departments. A total of 2000 CSO representatives and government officials were trained in 80 training sessions. Radio messaging: In order also to lengthen the reach of HTAC's activities into communities in which they were not working directly, HTAC implemented two radio-messaging activities. The first radio messaging activity consisted of 90 weekly radio round table discussions that typically involved between three and five participants (e.g. religious leaders, influential women, women's CSO members and other civil society activists, and government officials). The second radio messaging activity consisted of airing 90 episodes of scripted radio dramas. Each episode dealt with a different issue related to conflict and violence against women; for instance, not allowing girls to go to school or favouring the education of boys, denying women's rights to property and inheritance, and the prevalence of intimate partner violence against women in Afghan families.

ii) The program was implemented in Northwest region (Jawzjan Province) from 2016 to 2018.

iii) Help The Afghan Children as lead implementer in area and collaborated with Civil Society Women Led Organizations, provincial education directorate, schools, teachers, students (girls and boys), parents (women and men), religious leaders and media.

iv) Of course budget is key is key to implement the grant and technical support from international colleagues at SAMRC and other projects were vital. Fund was available and continues technical support attained from consortium.

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 evaluation of peace education held with teachers and students and below analysis and findings indicate significant transformation in teachers practices and reduction in peer violence victimization and perpetration and experience of corporal punishment at homes. HTAC's intervention primarily aims to reduce peer violence and corporal punishment against children at the school level, and reduce violence against women and girls at the broader community level. The evaluation of HTAC's intervention suggests that it has been very successful in achieving these aims. Although high levels of peer violence victimisation and perpetration were observed at baseline, particularly for boys, there has been more than a 50% reduction in both peer violence victimisation and perpetration by the endline evaluation point, and this is true for both boys and girls. These findings suggest that peace education can be an effective approach for reducing interpersonal violence and promoting peaceful and respectful conflict resolution among school-aged children. The results of the evaluation also show that students' reports of corporal punishment by teachers at school have reduced significantly. For girls, experience of corporal punishment has reduced by more than 50% and for boys it has reduced by more than a third.

ii) There are no significant differences between baseline and endline in relation to boys' observation of their fathers fighting or hitting boys' mothers. However, there is a significant reduction at endline in the proportion of boys who witnessed their mothers being beaten by other family members, although the proportion is low at all evaluation points. Significantly fewer girls at endline observed their fathers fighting with another man, or observed their mothers being physically beaten by any family member. There was a large and significant reduction in boys' and girls' reports of experiencing physical punishment at home in the past month. Furthermore, both boys and girls have significantly more equitable gender attitudes and significantly less violence-supportive attitudes at endline than at baseline. There is a significant decrease between baseline and endline in students' experiences of peer violence perpetration and victimisation (Table 5). The proportions of girls and boys who experienced peer violence victimisation or who perpetrated violence against their peers in the past month have dropped by approximately a half. The reduction in peer violence between baseline and endline is particularly large among non-perpetrating boys and girls who reported victimisation. Boys and girls also have significantly lower depression scores at endline.

iii) HTAC evaluated the effectiveness of the practice and below is the link for publication in PLOSE one Journal given for further information

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0220614>

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? *

i) HTAC's intervention primarily aims to reduce peer violence and corporal punishment against children at the school level, and reduce violence against women and girls at the broader community level. The evaluation of HTAC's intervention suggests that it has been very successful in achieving these aims. Although high levels of peer violence victimisation and perpetration were observed at baseline, particularly for boys, there has been more than a 50% reduction in both peer violence victimisation and perpetration by the endline evaluation point, and this is true for both boys and girls. These findings suggest that peace education can be an effective approach for reducing interpersonal violence and promoting peaceful and respectful conflict resolution among school-aged children. The results of the evaluation also show that students' reports of corporal punishment by teachers at school have reduced significantly. For girls, experience of corporal punishment has reduced by more than 50% and for boys it has reduced by more than a third and the programming is implemented with various key stakeholders to accept peaceful living and reject violence.

ii) Peace education is a holistic curriculum which covers broad topics. The curriculum covered a range of topics, including peaceful, non-violent conflict resolution methods, positive role modeling skills, tolerance for others, respect for women and girls, and rejecting violence and embracing the principles of peaceful everyday living. Learning methods included helping children to understand conflict, deal with grief, loss and anger, and use active communication through mediation, collaborative problem solving and community leadership and building the capacity of influential women and engagement of men as supporters for girls and women, religious and influential leaders were part of the program, trained on conflict resolution and mediation modern skills and broader community benefited from dispute resolution and social change norms and through radio messaging activity covered the broader community by creating the listen clubs and spread the message of violence prevention and adopt peaceful everyday living. The capacity building strategy of the consortium was effective and productive which enhanced the capacity of HTAC in research, program design, theory of change, conducting and analysis evaluations and participating in number of communities of practices and cross learning was brilliant for all.

iii) Peace Committees were trained once during the life of the project, the training needed to be continued to acquire the new learning in the field. The school teachers who were non-interventions were training one during the life of award, for them the training could be delivered in series and refresher trainings to remember and implement positive modeling practices in schools and at homes.

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)? *

HTAC, aligned with theory of change has identified factors affecting violence against women and girls and proposes different ways to intervene effectively:

Holistic approaches – Working with religious leaders and respected elders who have great influence on general public and can help pave the road for women in different ways.

Educating men – During the last 12 years, the international community while focusing on educating Afghan women and girls; has overlooked the importance of providing education to Afghan men. It is the fact that Afghan men create an abusive environment where women and girls’ rights are violated. The behavior and attitude of Afghan men is the main barrier for women and girls to reach their potential and have equal rights. We believe that change will not come unless we invest in both men and women. That is why, when it comes to preventing women and girls from violence, HTAC include the male population by providing Peace and Civic Education and conflict resolution, so they understand their rights the rights of women and girls.

Empowering women – HTAC believes that one of the effective ways to empower women is to teach them their rights and responsibilities; how to negotiate and utilize their knowledge to influence the decision makers, how to network, and how to resist and manage backlashes. HTAC also believes that women should gain financial power by receiving trainings in various fields that will help them become self-sufficient because financial freedom is empowerment.

Civil Society Organizations – We believe that civil society organizations have important role in preventing violence against women and girls. By getting actively involved in trainings, workshops, and community dialogues, CSOs can persuade local communities to stop the physical and emotional abuse of women and girls and the practice of forcing their young girls into arranged marriages.

Media, especially radio is a great tool to be utilized for discussions and debates since the majority of Afghans have no access to internet and TV.

Social change will happen if current social norms changes into new norms. And the new norms will replace old ones only by collaboration, continuous efforts, and persistence of active members of the society that was mentioned above.

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://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0220614>