Learn in Peace, educate without violence: preliminary evidence for the effects of a brief, school-based violence prevention intervention in Côte d’Ivoire

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Violence against children (VAC) in schools

• VAC highly prevalent in school in CIV
  • 78% of children reported at least one episode of verbal or physical violence (Unicef, 2015)
  • Perpetrators: school staff, teachers and students
  • Primary school students twice as likely to be exposed than secondary school (Unicef, 2015)
  • 63% reported physical abuse by a teacher (MENET, 2015)
The Context of Côte d’Ivoire (CIV)

- 1999-2011: political and military conflict
- Child discipline as part of a dominant social norm
- One in three parents tolerates corporal punishment in school (MENET, 2015).
School-based interventions to reduce VAC

• Few interventions to reduce violence from teachers to students have been evaluated.

• 2009: Côte d’Ivoire formally banned corporal punishment in schools

• 2012: APEV developed by Graines de Paix in collaboration with government
Description of APEV

• “Apprendre en Paix, Eduquer sans Violence”, French for “Learning in peace and educating without violence”.
• Classroom-based intervention to reduce the use of violent teaching techniques
To measure the acceptability of the *intervention* among teachers and explore how APEV *induced* peaceful education behavioural change.
Theory of change
Formative Research

• Partnership: Graines de Paix, Child Protection Research Group at LSHTM and Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Abidjan

• Conflict-affected Tonkpi, North West of Côte d’Ivoire
  • Routine implementation of APEV

• When: 2016-2018

• First evaluation
Methods - quantitative

[Diagram showing various outcomes and processes related to learning and peace education.]
Methods - quantitative

• Self-administered survey at 3 point time
• Purposive sampling
• Outcomes measurements

• Sample characteristics
  • ORR: 98%
  • Mean age: 37 years
  • Male 62%
  • Urban 58%
  • 74% in a relationship; 92% had at least one child.
  • 58% current job for six years or more

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<th>60 pre-schools and primary schools; rural and urban</th>
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<tr>
<td>$T_0$</td>
<td>Pre-training survey</td>
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<td>$T_1$</td>
<td>Immediately after d1 training</td>
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<td>Four months post training</td>
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Methods- qualitative

- Feb 2018: 10 In-depth interviews (IDIs) with teachers
- Sept 2018: 7 IDIs and 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with teachers

- Sample characteristics
  - Convenience based on availability
  - 6 females, 5 males
  - Age: 26-59 years
  - 10 urban and 1 rural
  - Public and private schools
ToC1: Increased awareness of consequences of violence on children

- School drop out
- Teachers were divided as to whether this was an effect of violence or not

“That is true. Children come to school. But it is also true that some other children play truant like in old days when we used the whip. With violence, some children performed very well in school.” Female teacher, FGD, September 2018
Increased awareness of consequences of violence on children
ToC 2: Increase in teacher motivation and confidence to learn
ToC 7: Teachers apply non-violent discipline techniques
• Motivation to learn non-violent techniques

• Success in implementing some methods increased learning interest (ToC 7)

“I tried singing and dancing this year. Perhaps next year, I’ll look for other positive sanctions to use.” Male teacher, FGD, September 2018

• Interventions targeting parents and wider community
• Improvement in knowledge of positive sanctions

“In my classroom, we have a charter. If a child talks in class, we ask the other pupils «do we talk in class?» and they say «no». The child gets a little embarrassed and he keeps quiet.” Male teacher, IDI, September 2018

• Clear evidence that teachers had applied positive sanctions
Teachers spoke more assuredly about benefits of non-violence

“... the [exam] success rate is good. The success rate is good because we said that will no longer inflict violence on to children. As such they are now comfortable coming to school.” Male teacher, FGD, September 2018

Mixed views about classroom dynamics

- Less fear; school performance
- African unresponsive to non-violent techniques

“The African realities and the realities of the West are different. A bit of whipping is needed to keep an African child in line.” Male teacher, September 2018
ToC6: lower their acceptance of physical discipline practices.

**Decrease in teacher acceptance of violence against children**

(0-low to 18-high)

- Pre-training: 4.2
- Mid-training: 3.6
- 4 months Post-training: 4.0

**Note:** The graph shows a decrease in teacher acceptance of violence against children post-training.
Teachers’ use of positive techniques is reinforced as a result of personalised feedback

- Teachers were positive about participation in APEV
- Non judgmental dialogue with trainers
Emerging themes

• Self-restraint, change of behavior

• Long standing and gradual process

“Graines de Paix which has just been introduced. As it is new, people’s mentalities will not change straight away. I think this change will take place over time.” Female teacher, IDI, September 2018
Conclusions

• In general, teachers found APEV acceptable and useful.

• Teachers are actively engaged in a dynamic process of self-regulation and behaviour change in response to learning and implementing new techniques.

• Further investigation in a randomized controlled trial.
Next steps for research

Formative research
What is the intervention?
How is it hypothesised to work?
Are there any effects we can observe in teachers?

Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial
How can we measure outcomes in children?
Is it feasible to conduct a full-scale trial to test the effect of the intervention in children?

Full Randomised Controlled Trial
Does the intervention reduce teachers’ physical and emotional violence to children?
Does the intervention improve educational outcomes?
How much does it cost, and how does this compare to other interventions?
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Questions?