

lisaun sira-ne'ebóé aprendé

LESSONS LEARNED:
SIMPLE & EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING TIMORESE CLASSROOMS



NGO Ba Futuru

Since its founding in 2004, NGO Ba Futuru has provided life-enhancing programming to more than 25,000 children, women, youth, community leaders, police and other key actors in the areas of peace building, gender empowerment, child protection and conflict transformation.

Ba Futuru has made significant progress in stopping violence against women and children through empowering people across Timor-Leste with conflict mitigation skills, positive discipline strategies, protection information and human rights awareness. In a country where many people do not yet realize that there are negative impacts of physical punishment, providing parents, teachers and community leaders with information about the negative impacts of physical punishment and helping them to build positive discipline skills, is instrumental to stopping the cycle of violence and helping children lead happier and healthier lives.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not represent the views of the donor.

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Preface

What is the purpose of this manual?

This manual is designed to provide new teaching and learning strategies that can help to transform a classroom environment. This manual, and the film that it accompanies, include simple, realistic and understandable techniques for using in Timor-Leste classrooms. This manual will help you learn about how positive classroom management is possible, and show you how other teachers and schools have successfully changed their discipline methods to create more positive classrooms.

Part One of this manual looks at the discipline challenges that we face today in Timor-Leste classrooms, explores the legal framework for child protection, and provides information on abuse. Part Two discusses the meaning of 'discipline' and illustrates the process of using positive discipline techniques in the classroom. Part Three presents tips for positive classroom management to address the challenges faced in Timor-Leste classrooms. Part Four provides some final suggestions for implementing positive discipline in your own classroom and finding more information and help to transform the learning environment.

For whom was this manual written?

This manual was compiled for educational personnel including teachers, school directors, teacher trainers and other individuals working in the area of education. The strategies explored in this manual were developed with Timorese teachers, students, parents and school administrators to be relevant to the Timor-Leste cultural and social context.

How was this manual created?

This publication and the accompanying film have come out of Ba Futuru's *Strengthening Peace in the Lives of Children: Stopping the Violence* project, which ran between 2011 and 2012 with generous funding support from the East Timor Justice Sector Support Facility, in three senior high schools¹ in Timor-Leste: Nicolau Lobato School in Tasi Tolu, 10 de Dezembro School in Comoro, Dili, and 99 Atauro School in Atauro. The information in this manual has been created together with Timorese teachers, school directors and students from these schools.

This project provided skill building for individuals who impact the lives of children, to help them ensure children's access to justice and protection from abuse and neglect. In addition, this project worked directly with students in a participatory process of creating positive discipline models together with their teachers and parents, in order to stop the use of violence in the classroom. After holding intensive training workshops, Ba Futuru brought together

"Prior to this training I always used to hit students with a stick and yell at them when they did something wrong. But

the training was very beneficial for me,

and in my opinion the strategies I [now] use in disciplining the children are effective, and there are changes in the children's behaviour in class. For instance, before they always used to sleep in class or skip the class when I was teaching. But now they participate with enthusiasm until the end of the lesson."

– male high school teacher

¹ The students who participated in this project were in Grades 1, 2 and 3 - the last three years of schooling in Timor-Leste, and were between the ages of 15 and 24.

students, teachers and parents twice a month to discuss, share and develop good strategies for positive discipline and classroom management. This project also developed the capacity, knowledge and skills of students in the areas of positive discipline, access to justice, human rights, conflict resolution, peer mediation and civic education.

What are the intended outcomes of this manual?

This manual is designed to produce five main outcomes:

- Open the eyes of educators in Timor-Leste to the importance of building a positive relationship with their students;
- Build an understanding of the negative impacts of physical punishment and inspire teachers to try different approaches to disciplining students;
- Provide replicable examples of positive discipline that have been shown to work in the Timor-Leste school context;
- Build skills to transform classrooms into positive learning environments; and
- Improve understanding of child abuse and how educators can assist children in getting help.

Why is this manual needed?

Currently in many Timor-Leste schools, the discipline strategies that are used are often not effective at encouraging children to learn. Students learn better when they do not feel fear, and physical and mental pain. However physical punishment is commonly used in schools across Timor-Leste.

Change is difficult, but we have seen the ability of many Timorese teachers and students to transform their relationships and create positive learning environments that benefit everyone.

We invite you to join us in making the schools of Timor-Leste more positive places for teachers and students, and hope that the information you find in this manual and the film it accompanies is useful for you and your colleagues.

The director of one secondary school in Dili commented on his own transformation after learning about the negative consequences of physical punishment:

"I am happy with the program that NGO Ba Futuru has brought to our school. I have seen that the program has so far really helped my teachers and the students. As the Director, besides looking after the needs of the school, I also spend time controlling students in the school environment, for example; if students were still standing outside after the warning bell to start the class, I would hit the students with a stick so that they entered the classroom. However, after I participated in the training that was facilitated by NGO Ba Futuru focusing on child protection and positive discipline, this made me realize the actions I was using were part of physical abuse.

I realized that the behaviour I was engaging in was damaging to the students' mentality. I haven't yet changed my behaviour 100%, but slowly I am improving and instead of always using the stick I am changing this to speaking nicely with them. I am grateful to NGO Ba Futuru for this partnership opportunity that has helped my teachers and students by offering them training to increase their knowledge."

1: What is happening in our schools?

There are many challenges and obstacles that teachers in Timor-Leste face in the classroom. Teaching resources are lacking, students are accustomed to being punished with violence, and there are often a large number of students in one classroom. Moreover, students with behaviour problems can be a challenge for their teachers, administrators and fellow classmates. These challenges can seem overwhelming for teachers. Creative and constructive approaches need to be found to help teachers meet these challenges and discipline their students in positive ways to achieve positive classroom environments conducive to student growth and development.

Many students in Timor-Leste classrooms have a different experience of physical punishment than teachers do. Students generally feel physical punishment is not effective in helping them to learn, and research from around the world agrees. This manual will help explore discipline strategies that will assist in the teaching and learning process.

Despite the 'Zero Tolerance' policy on violence against students in the classroom declared by the Minister of Education in 2008, students in classrooms across Timor-Leste continue to experience physical punishment as discipline methods, including slapping, hitting and beating with sticks. Although the national legal framework prohibits the use of violence as discipline, many school personnel are unaware of how to implement other types of discipline practices.

Now it is time for a change!

The legal system is strengthening and once the laws are properly enforced, violence in the classroom will not be tolerated. In addition to it being illegal, physical punishment also damages the relationship between students and teachers, which negatively impacts the learning process. Moreover, physical punishment has lasting negative consequences on children's wellbeing and development. In UNICEF and Plan International's 2006 joint report on violence against children in Timor-Leste, *Speak Nicely To Me*, it was shown that physical abuse within schools has significant psychological implications for the wellbeing of both the children who experience abuse, and those who witness it. As a consequence, victims suffer from lower academic performance and are at greater risk of dropping out of school. Due to the many reasons that physical punishment is not conducive to creating a positive learning environment for our future generations (which are covered later in this chapter), it is extremely important that we work together to find more effective and positive ways to discipline students and manage classrooms without the use of violence.

84%

In the three senior high schools Ba Futuru has worked in over the last year and a half, 84% of surveyed students reported regularly seeing violence in their day-to-day lives.

After receiving a training on positive classroom management, like what is included in this manual, one female senior high school teacher reported:

"I think this training was great because it opened our minds to ways to seek assistance when children face problems. It also provided knowledge on how to teach positive discipline because, I want to speak honestly and say that before I attended this training, I would often use violence to discipline children. After the training I have tried to reduce my negative behaviour. To speak about positive discipline is very important but then to implement it is quite difficult because we work with so many students and there are some students that are easy to control but others that sometimes make you very emotional.

To respond to those students I don't want to use violence any more. When you hit someone, the impact is often they will look at you angrily and have angry feelings towards you. They won't pay better attention to the class material and often they won't want to come to your class. I've experienced this, and I try to speak again with them nicely and in the end they become interested again in what I'm teaching. From now I think I have to continue to use positive discipline strategies that won't have negative impacts, including on myself. I'm grateful for these bi-monthly meetings [with Ba Futuru], as the discussions have been very supportive and have helped to strengthen the implementation of positive discipline strategies in our school."

Legal Framework for Child Protection

Timor-Leste is a signatory to international legal instruments that prohibit violence and maltreatment of children, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The domestic legal framework also provides legal protection for children from all forms of child abuse. Some examples of legal obligations to use non-violence with children include the following:

38%

In the senior high schools that Ba Futuru worked with on this project, 38% of surveyed students reported being hit at least once a week by their teacher, with 13% being physically punished three or more times per week. More than half of surveyed students reported seeing their teachers hit other students at least once a week, with 16% reporting this occurring more than five times a week.

- **Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor** – Section 18(1) of the Constitution is a cornerstone for the national child protection framework, stating that “Children shall be entitled to special protection by the family, the community and the State, particularly against all forms of abandonment, discrimination, violence, oppression, sexual abuse and exploitation.” Section 18(2) further notes that “Children shall enjoy all rights that are universally recognised”, while Section 9 directly incorporates into national law the rules of international conventions, treaties and agreements ratified or acceded to by the Government. National legal provisions that are contrary to such international law are considered invalid.
- **Timor-Leste Penal Code** – The Decree Law No. 19/2009 approving the Penal Code penalizes many violations of children’s rights, among others: harm, mistreatment, cruel treatment, and sexual abuse.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** – many articles of this international legal convention, to which Timor-Leste is a signatory, are relevant to the use of physical punishment and violence against children, including Article 28(2), which states that signatory countries “shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention”.

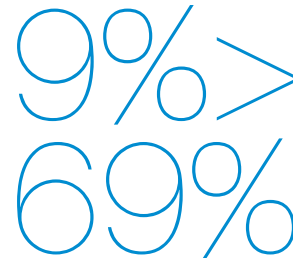
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** - Article 5 states that “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”, and Article 26 (2) states that “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

Teachers in Timor-Leste are integral to the protection of children. They help to report cases of abuse and neglect that occur in the home and community, and can help children get assistance when it is needed. On the other hand, many teachers also violate the rights of children without even realizing that they are doing so. They often feel that using physical punishment will help their students to get a better education and do not realize that it in itself is abusive.

Physical punishment is commonly used in Timorese schools as a discipline measure. UNICEF and Plan International’s 2006 report *Speak Nicely to Me* cites that “two-thirds of children (67%) reported teachers beating them with a stick and almost four out of every ten children (38.7%) reported teachers slapping them in the face”¹.

This problem is not Timor-Leste’s alone: around the world, up to 80 to 98% of children suffer physical punishment in their homes, with a third or more experiencing severe physical punishment resulting from the use of implements². International law and many countries around the world are working together to eliminate violence against children and protect our youngest and most vulnerable citizens from abuse in all its forms.

In order to prevent abuse against children and create safer environments which nurture, rather than hinder, their development, it is important to understand what child abuse actually is.



Before positive discipline training with Ba Futuru, only 9% of surveyed teachers were able to list any non-violent strategies for disciplining children. Following the training, all surveyed teachers reported having knowledge of positive discipline strategies, and 69% could list specific examples. This manual will help educators from across Timor-Leste to also understand positive discipline techniques and how to use them in the classroom.

¹ *Speak Nicely to Me: A Study on Practices and Attitudes about Discipline of Children in Timor-Leste*, UNICEF, 2006, p.12.

² *UN Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children*, 2006, section II. B., pp. 9-10.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a complex and serious problem that may occur in the lives of children, young people and their families. Often it occurs in environments that are isolated and stressful, affecting those who are most vulnerable. Child abuse occurs in all types of families and societies, including the rich and poor, the uneducated and the highly educated, and in all cultures and religions. Many abused and neglected children go on to abuse their own children, continuing the cycle of violence from one generation to the next.

Child abuse: the physical, sexual, or emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child, which results in actual or potential harm to a child's physical, mental or emotional health and development. Child abuse can occur in the child's home, school, community, and other organizations the child interacts with, and is often perpetrated in the context of a relationship of power, authority, or trust, such as a parent, teacher, older relative or community leader.

There are four main types of child abuse: **physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.** (*For more information on these types of abuse, see Annex I*). Think about the different types of abuse that happen in communities, schools and homes in Timor-Leste. Some examples might include:

- Being tied to a tree
- Being imprisoned in a small room or cage with limited light
- Being banned from going outside or to school
- Being burned with cigarettes
- Being evicted from home
- Being made to do work which is beyond their capability
- Being forced to have sex with an adult
- Being forced to have sex for money
- Being left alone
- Being punched

Some of the possible outcomes of child abuse include:

- Physical brain injury
- Psychological disturbance
- Anxiety, aggression, denial, lack of trust and self-esteem, delinquency, substance abuse and hyperactivity
- In the most serious cases, death
- Trauma

Teachers and students in Timor-Leste both have reported that the use of physical punishment in the classroom has had negative impacts on them personally.

One female high school teacher commented: *"When I received physical punishment in the past, I felt hurt inside. Physical punishment isn't good, it stays with you for a long time, so for that reason I don't want to inflict it on my students. I don't want that my students feel something similar to what I felt."*

One prior teacher, who is now also a Ba Futuru staff member, reported: *“When I received physical punishment in the past... I was scared, I was anxious and I also felt hatred for the person who punished me. Specifically, I also thought about doing the same thing back to the person who punished me.”*

Child abuse, including the use of physical punishment – especially when it is severe and repeatedly used – can cause trauma.

Longstanding traditions and cultural beliefs perpetuate the use of physical punishment in many societies. These include that physical punishment:

1. is effective;
2. prevents children from getting into trouble;
3. teaches them right from wrong;
4. instils respect, and
5. is different from physical abuse.

Research has shown, however, that physical punishment does none of these and is, in fact, a form of violent abuse against children.³ It is important to always question our own beliefs and ideas, and to be aware that what society believes is ‘acceptable’ and ‘right’ changes and develops over time.

For more information on the types of abuse, how to identify children experiencing trauma and abuse, child protection principles, and where to get help for children who are experiencing abuse, see the annexes at the back of this manual.

A female high school student reported:

“I feel sad

when I go to school because I always see the teachers use violence which isn't good for me. And also, when I see the teachers it makes me angry because the teachers show negative behaviour.”

³ Durrant, Joan E. ‘Physical Punishment: Prevalence, Predictors and Implications for Child Development,’ in: Hart, Stuart N (ed.), *Eliminating Physical Punishment: The Way Forward to Constructive Child Discipline*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2005.

Arguments Against Physical Punishment

Think back to your own schooling. Were you or any of your friends ever physically or emotionally punished? Chances are you will say “Yes” because physical punishment is a common practice throughout the world.

Below are some arguments against the use of physical punishment that you can discuss with your colleagues:

28%

Before receiving training on positive discipline, more than 40% of surveyed students and 47% of surveyed teachers from three senior high schools thought that students learn best when they are physically punished. However, after the training, only 28% of these students and 25% of teachers thought physical punishment was beneficial for students.

- 1. Physical punishment doesn't produce positive changes in children's behaviour.**
When we use physical punishment, the results are unpredictable. They can include sadness, low self-esteem, rage, aggressive behaviour, a desire for revenge, nightmares and bed-wetting, disrespect for authority, depression, anxiety and drug use, among many others.
- 2. Physical punishment reinforces negative behaviour.**
Our use of physical punishment can sometimes back-fire; that is, it can become unintentionally reinforcing. This can occur when the punishment brings attention from teachers and peers, something that the misbehaving child may be seeking. In this case, punishment only encourages the child to repeat the misbehaviour in the future, to gain more attention in the classroom.
- 3. Physical punishment negatively influences the psychology of a child in the long term.**
Children who are physically punished have been shown to develop anti-social behaviour with their peers in the long term, and are likely to resort to violence quickly to resolve problems and conflicts. This creates a cycle of abuse from one generation to the next. By using violence, we teach violence.
- 4. Physical punishment impedes education.**
Physical punishment often creates resentment and hostility, making it difficult to nurture positive teacher-student and student-student relationships. It thus makes our work as teachers harder, less rewarding, and immensely frustrating. We begin to dread going to class and teaching. Our students may sense our displeasure and regret coming to class, too.
- 5. Physical punishment doesn't provide positive discipline.**
Even when we are successful at stopping one instance of inappropriate behaviour, our use of physical punishment doesn't foster appropriate behaviour in the child. Why is this? The child doesn't know, or learn, what they *should* do; only what they *should not* do. It's similar to telling you as a teacher not to use physical punishment, but not showing you what alternative disciplinary methods you can use.

Conclusion

Think about what you have learned during this section, discuss it with your colleagues, and see if you can answer the following questions:

- a. *What is child abuse?*
- b. *What are some of the negative effects of violence on children?*
- c. *What is the cycle of abuse?*

Children come into this world helpless and unable to fully develop without the support and guidance of their carers. Teachers and parents have the job to nurture them and to teach them how to live. This is no easy task. Looking after children is the most important work we'll ever do. When we understand what child abuse is, and the negative impact it has on the lives of children, we can start working together to strengthen peace in the lives of children and stop the violence. Let's change our ideas and our actions to create a better future for Timor-Leste!

"This project really changed my mind,

because before Ba Futuru worked together with our school, I never knew what positive discipline is, or how to discipline students in a positive way. I thought that as a teacher we had the power to manage students, and that to do this, we should use violence with them at school. But the information that Ba Futuru shared changed my mind to minimize the violence that I use with students."

– female high school teacher

2: What is Positive Discipline?

75%

Before positive discipline training with Ba Futuru, 75% of surveyed teachers reported they knew of non-violent strategies for disciplining children, however only 9% were able to list any. Following the training, all surveyed teachers reported knowing positive discipline strategies, and 69% could list specific examples.

In many cultures and languages, the word 'discipline' has come to be equated with control and punishment, particularly *physical* punishment. However, this is not the true meaning of 'discipline'.

The word 'discipline' actually means 'teaching'. Effective teaching requires setting goals for learning, planning an approach that motivates students to learn, and finding constructive solutions to challenging situations.

Discipline is a way of educating children as to how to live their lives, which benefits their development as the future of our nation.

Positive Discipline:

- Motivates, encourages and supports;
- Fosters a love of learning;
- Leads to self-discipline; and
- Increases competence and confidence.

Positive discipline is not just about stopping violence, and it is not one action like instructing a child to pick up rubbish. Positive discipline is long-term education that provides children with positive models of appropriate behaviour, teaches them the value of education, and shows them how to respect themselves and others. These are lessons they will learn in school but carry with them throughout their lives.

"The training [with Ba Futuru] has provided me an opportunity to reflect on my previous behaviour and attitudes towards my family and students. I am a person that always used violence and physical punishment to discipline people, because I thought that it was the right way to correct people's mistakes or behaviour. But after I attended the training, I regretted what I had previously done to my students. I now feel that the strategy that I used was not a good one, and it hurt the students emotionally and physically. I am trying to change my mind and will try to implement the positive discipline strategies in the classroom."

– male high school teacher

What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

“Discipline is a positive method to use to develop each individual, whoever they are. It is about actions that help to develop human beings as people. And physical punishment is behaviours that uses physical actions that have a negative impact on the development of individuals.”

– male high school teacher

Positive Discipline Steps

While punishment is a single act, Positive Discipline is a four-step process that recognizes and rewards appropriate behaviour in the following manner:

- 1. The appropriate behaviour is described:**
“Everyone quiet down now, please.”
Rather than telling students off for doing the wrong thing, explain to them what behaviour you expect of them at the beginning of every lesson.
- 2. Clear reasons are provided:**
“We are going to start our mathematics lesson and everyone needs to listen closely.”
This instruction shows students the importance of respecting others, and is a good example of treating others as you would like them to treat you. Providing instruction without reasons might tell the students what behaviour you expect, but not the logic behind it. By explaining your expectations, students learn to model appropriate behaviour and make positive decisions for themselves.
- 3. Acknowledgement is requested:**
“Do you see why being quiet is so important?”
Ask students to acknowledge why the expected behaviour is important. This will get them thinking about the reasons behind your request, and help them to make their own positive choices by thinking about the impact of their behaviour on other students and on the class as a whole.
- 4. The correct behaviour is reinforced:**
“Because you have all behaved so well this class, you can have an extra five minutes of lunchtime.”
When students behave well and do the right thing, this should be acknowledged and rewarded, which will encourage them to continue to behave positively. Eye contact, a nod, a smile, an extra five minutes of play time at the end of the day, extra credit points, having success mentioned in front of the class or school (social recognition is the greatest award) are all great ways of acknowledging positive behaviour. When rewards are used, they should always be immediate and small, yet gratifying.

This process is effective with individual children and also large classes. The trick is to make children feel they are on the ‘winning team’ (ie. the class as a whole) and to praise each child’s efforts in being a good team member.

Conclusion

The true meaning of the word 'discipline' is 'teaching'. Positive Discipline contributes to the mental, emotional and social development of young people, and teaches them lessons that they will carry with them throughout their lives. Catch students behaving well and acknowledge and reward them immediately: this is the core of positive discipline.

Discuss the following questions with your colleagues:

- a. *Why is it important to provide clear reasons for our requests?*
- b. *What are some possible ways of acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behaviour in the classroom?*

"When they [students] show good behaviour, I try to reward them. Another thing I do is try to nurture friendship with them, try to get close to them so they don't feel I am distant, so that we can talk together if there are problems or there is something wrong."

– male high school teacher

3: How can we make a positive classroom?

Classroom Challenges

There are many challenges and obstacles that teachers in Timor-Leste face in implementing positive discipline strategies in the classroom. Sometimes teaching resources are lacking, including text books, desks and chairs. Many students are used to being punished with violence, and teachers sometimes think that their students won't understand any other discipline methods. One challenge that many teachers in Timor-Leste face is the large number of students in their classes, which can reach as high as 100 children in one class! All of these challenges can seem overwhelming for teachers. Creative and constructive approaches are needed to help teachers meet these challenges and discipline their students in positive ways.

"Some of the obstacles I face are

...sometimes I find the students sleeping in the classroom.

Another obstacle is that some students don't pay attention to my teaching."

– male high school teacher

Successful Strategies for Timor-Leste Classrooms

The following tips have been developed and used by the teachers and students in the three schools Ba Futuru has worked with as part of the *Strengthening Peace in the Lives of Children: Stopping the Violence* project. All have proven effective positive discipline methods to encourage appropriate behaviour in schools. We encourage you to try some of these strategies in your own classroom!

- Asking students who are late to do small tasks that support the school.
- Asking students who are late to dance in front of the class.
- Speaking softly and nicely to the students.
- Positively reinforcing good behaviour by giving extra time at a break.
- Asking students who are not listening to repeat what the teacher has said.
- Reminding the students of their error and explaining why you are upset with them.
- Taking a deep breath and calming your own feelings before reprimanding the students, to avoid reacting violently.
- Communicating clearly and fairly - listen to them and they will listen to you.
- Walking around the class to monitor the students during group activities.

Positive Classroom Teaching Tips

Positive Discipline needs to be supported by positive teaching. There are many positive ways that you can prevent misbehaviour when you're teaching, or at least deal with it effectively and without disrupting your class. Here are some detailed examples and ideas that you can try in your classroom:

1. Focusing and being softly-spoken

Be sure you have the attention of everyone in your classroom and wait until everyone has quieted down before you start the lesson. Experienced teachers know that silence on their part is very effective. They emphasize the fact that they are waiting by extending their silence for 3 to 5 seconds after the classroom is completely quiet. Students soon realize that the more time the teacher waits for their attention, the less free time they have at the end of the lesson. Once you are ready to begin, use a quieter voice than normal. A softly-spoken teacher often has a calmer, quieter classroom than one with a stronger voice. Her students sit still in order to hear what she is saying.

2. Direct instruction

Uncertainty increases the level of excitement in the classroom, which can result in poor behaviour. Begin each class by telling your students exactly what you and your students will be doing during the lesson, including setting time limits for some tasks. You might choose to finish the description of class time activities with the promise of a reward for good behaviour, for example, *"I think we will have some time at the end of the class for you to chat with your friends, go to the library, or catch up on work for other classes."*

3. Monitoring

Circulate; get up and walk around the room, especially when students are doing written assignments or working in groups. Check on their progress. Don't interrupt or try to make announcements to the whole class unless you notice that several students are having difficulty with the same thing. Use a quiet voice - your students will appreciate your personal and positive attention.

4. Non-verbal cueing

In some classrooms, teachers have a small bell on their desk. When they ring it, even softly, they get everyone's attention. Other teachers have developed creative and clever ways of using non-verbal cues in the classroom: some flip light switches, others tap the chalkboard with a piece of chalk or a pencil. Non-verbal cues can also include facial expressions, body posture, and hand signals, or clapping rhythms which students repeat back to the teacher to focus their attention. Care should be taken when choosing the types of cues you use in your classroom - they should be easily recognisable by students, and help them return their focus to you when you use the cues. Take time to explain what you want the students to do when you use your cues.

5. Sharing

Just as you should want to know about your students, young people often want to know about you and your interests. Include personal items in your classroom: a family picture or a few items from a hobby or collection on your desk will trigger personal conversations with your students. As they get to know you better as a person, and not just an authority figure, you will experience fewer problems with discipline in the classroom.

6. Low-profile interventions

An effective teacher will take care that a student is not rewarded for misbehaviour by becoming the focus of attention. She monitors the activity in her classroom by moving around the room and anticipating problems before they occur. A clever approach to a misbehaving student is inconspicuous, so other students in the class are not distracted. For example, a teacher can make effective use of name-dropping: if he sees a student talking or not participating, he simply drops the student's name into his dialogue in a natural way. For example, during a lesson on solar power, a teacher might ask a student who is not paying attention: "Atoy, can you please explain to the class why solar power is important for our community?" In this way, the student hears his name and is drawn back on task, while the rest of the class doesn't seem to notice.

Conclusion

There are many challenges for teachers in Timor-Leste to maintain discipline and an orderly classroom environment, including large classes, lack of resources, and old habits of using physical punishment to control students' behaviour. Creative approaches are needed to overcome these obstacles and implement positive discipline methods in the classroom. Try using some of the teaching tips in this chapter, and discuss other ideas with your colleagues. Remember the importance of nurturing children's development and the long-term objective of education: by modelling your positive example and being rewarded for appropriate behaviour in the classroom, students develop qualities that will help them throughout their entire lives.

- a. *Do you experience any of the challenges to maintaining discipline mentioned in this chapter? Are there other obstacles you encounter in your classroom? Discuss with your colleagues how you could you creatively overcome these with positive discipline methods.*
- b. *Why do you think students would appreciate your quiet and personalised attention while monitoring your class?*
- c. *Can you think of any other ideas for non-verbal cues to get students' attention?*

*"If I or
my other
friends*

don't follow the school or classroom rules, there is no more physical punishment from the teachers. Instead, they use a new strategy, that is: asking us to repeat the lesson or subject. Also, when we come late to school, the teachers don't send us back home, but rather they discipline us by asking us to help collect rubbish around the school or take water to the school bathroom. These methods or strategies are good for us because we don't lose any of the lessons from school."
– female high school student

4: Where to from here?

"As a student I feel happy because I am able to learn and increase my understanding and knowledge of civic education. [...]"

To make our future brighter,

we can't just talk, but have to try [through actions]. I think that the information about positive discipline needs to be shared to everyone in this country, especially the teachers and parents so they know positive ways to discipline their children."
– female high school student

Positive Discipline rewards appropriate behaviour, models positive citizenship, and helps young people develop into competent, confident, happy adults who respect themselves and others.

By making simple changes to your discipline methods in the classroom, you can make dramatic and lasting changes to the way your classroom operates, and the impact it has on your students' learning, development and their future.

The schools Ba Futuru worked with throughout the *Strengthening Peace in the Lives of Children: Stopping the Violence* project have made great progress towards eliminating violence and negative discipline in the classroom, and working towards a creating more positive environments for students and teachers.

By following the strategies and tips in this manual and the accompanying DVD, you too can start to make positive changes in your classroom.

Now that you've read the manual and seen the film, where do you go from here?

- Try to follow the Positive Discipline Steps in Part 2
- Try the Positive Classroom Teaching Tips in Part 3 in your classroom

Here are some more ideas, which we have found to be very effective at promoting positive discipline and a violence-free school environment:

- Start a regular meeting group with student and teacher representatives to discuss discipline issues at your school and develop mutually beneficial solutions
- Develop a Child Protection and Positive Discipline policy at your school that all teachers sign and agree to abide by, including acceptable forms of disciplining students, and sanctions for non-compliance (contact Ba Futuru if you would like to see a sample school policy).
- Develop some classroom rules (see below for more information).

How to Develop Classroom Rules

We often develop rules as a way to anticipate and prevent behavioural problems or difficulties that may arise in the management of the classroom.

General guidelines for developing rules include the following:

- Make only a few rules that emphasize appropriate behaviour; neither you nor your students will remember a long list.
- Post these rules in the classroom for everyone to see.
- Consider making rules or setting expectations for the following issues in order to create a smoothly functioning classroom:
 - (a) beginning and ending the period or day, including how attendance will be taken and what students may or may not do during these times;
 - (b) use of materials and equipment;
 - (c) how to ask permission for unexpected needs (such as going to the toilet or sharpening a pencil);
 - (d) seatwork and independent group work procedures; and
 - (e) how students are to ask or answer questions. Choose rules that make the classroom environment orderly and that promote successful learning.
- Do not develop classroom rules that you are unwilling, or are unable, to enforce consistently.
- Make the rules as clear and understandable as possible. They should be stated behaviourally: “Keep your hands and feet to yourself” is clearer, and sends a more positive message, than “no fighting.”
- Select rules that are unanimously agreed upon or abided by everyone in the school. If students learn that they can’t behave in a certain way in your classroom, but can do so in other classes, they will test the limits to see how far they can “get away with” a misbehaviour.
- Above all, *involve your students in developing classroom rules!* You might start with the principle that “you may do what you want in this classroom, unless what you do interferes with the rights of others, such as your classmates and your teacher.” Using this ‘rights-based’ approach, ask your students to identify what behaviours are acceptable and what behaviours are not acceptable because they violate the rights of others. Develop rules to fulfill these rights and penalties for violating the rules. Remember that these penalties should help the child to learn and they should be consistent with the nature of the misbehaviour; that is, they are in the best interest of both the child and the class.
- Ask your students to develop a ‘classroom constitution’ or ‘classroom policy board’ that can be prominently displayed in the classroom. Ask them to sign it so that they agree to adhere to the rules and, if they break them, they will abide by the consequences. Misbehaviour is less likely to occur if a student makes a commitment to avoid breaking the rules and to engage in other, more desirable, behaviours.
- Revisit classroom rules regularly to see if some are no longer necessary. If there are, praise your students, and ask them if other rules are needed.

“My message to my fellow teachers is this:

we know that we must treat students as human beings because they are our nation’s future. Because of this, we need to avoid using physical punishment, so that they don’t use it in the future. In order to avoid this behaviour, we as teachers must try to keep in mind how we can teach our students with positive discipline methods.”

– male high school teacher

Contacts & More Information

If you would like more information about positive discipline or child protection, or another copy of this manual or film, please give us a call at Ba Futuru or come visit us at our Peace Center near the Dili International Airport.

This manual is available in Tetun-English and Tetun-Portuguese versions.

Ba Futuru also has additional manuals with information about positive discipline and child protection including:

- Use of Non-Violence with Children – A Guide for Teachers and Childcare Staff in Timor-Leste
- Transformative Arts and Human Rights Education Guide
- UNESCO manual “Positive Discipline in the Inclusive, Learning-friendly Classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators”

All of these materials are available in Tetum and English.

Ba Futuru

Peace Center, Comoro Road, Seroja, Golgota, Dili, Timor-Leste
www.bafuturu.org
tel: 3322437

For information on teacher training, contact the National Training Institute for Teachers and Educational Professionals (INFORDEPE)
Antoninho Pires, Vice President GAFFPC (Cabinet for Matters of Continuing Professional Training)
tel: 7304156
antoninhopires@hotmail.com

Conclusion

Talk with other teachers, your school director and parents association and see how you can work together with students to create a school without violence and with positive discipline. Always keep in mind the long-term objective of education when guiding students in their behaviour and learning. Good luck with creating positive classrooms, which will help build a brighter future for Timor-Leste!

“I am very appreciative of the involvement of students, parents, teachers and Ba Futuru, for the regular meetings twice a month in order to share perspectives on how to strengthen the use of positive discipline strategies in the classroom. I would also like to say that Ba Futuru cannot only share this information with our school: building peace in all of Timor is the large task that Ba Futuru has to do, by continuing to share information with other schools so that all schools can operate with one system that doesn’t use physical punishment, but instead uses positive discipline strategies.”

– male high school teacher

Bibliography

The following sources were drawn upon in the compilation of this manual. All are available in both English and Tetun:

Trauma and Violence Manual, PRADET, Dili, Timor-Leste, 2006.

Positive Discipline in the Inclusive, Learning-friendly Classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators, UNESCO, Bangkok, Thailand, 2010.

Responding to Children who have Experienced Trauma and Violence through Child Abuse – A Resource Kit to Assist Training, East Timor, PRADET, Dili, Timor-Leste, April 2003.

Transformative Arts and Human Rights Facilitation Manual, Ba Futuru, Dili, Timor-Leste, 2010.

Use of Non-Violence with Children: A guide for teachers and childcare staff in Timor-Leste, Ba Futuru, Dili, Timor-Leste, 2008.

Annex I: Types of abuse

Physical abuse: Includes injury, bruises and/or pain that occurs as a result of abuse (including internal injuries) or neglect, for example:

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Pinching
- Burning
- Tying up

Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Emotional abuse: Is a pattern of behaviour that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- Severe verbal abuse
- Continual rejection
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Parents' behaviour harms the child's well being

Emotional abuse can result in a range of negative behaviours in the child, including withdrawal, aggression, depression, drug use, truancy, running away, fear of going home, unusual shyness and an avoidance of physical contact.

Sexual abuse: Occurs when an adult (someone bigger and/ or older) uses their power or authority over the child to involve the child in any sexual activity. It usually involves great secrecy and coercion. Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Any sexual threat imposed on a child or young person
- A broad range of sexual acts including: touching genitals, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, tongue, penis or any other object
- Exposure to pornography

Neglect: Is the failure to try to provide a child with the basic necessities of life e.g.; food, clothing, shelter, supervision and medical care, such that the child's health, growth and/ or development is put at risk. Examples of neglect include:

- Failure to provide basic needs
- Failure to protect a child's health or provide medical aid
- Leaving a child alone without supervision
- Lack of stimulation
- Abandonment

Annex II: What can you do about trauma and abuse?

Educators play an important role in the development of children. Firstly, as an educator you have the responsibility to find non-abusive ways to discipline students. You also have the opportunity to be a safe person for them to share their problems with. Children are vulnerable, and so adults need to support and protect them in their daily lives. To support children is not just about supporting their physical needs, but also supporting their emotional needs. Children can become vulnerable when they have problems, as they don't yet know appropriate ways of dealing with their problems due to their age and limited experience. It's not easy to get close to children who are experiencing problems, but we need to try to talk with them and understand where they are coming from in order to support them.

Principles of Child Protection

- Children deserve a childhood free from abuse. The rights and welfare of the child must be respected.
- Parents should be the optimal source of protection for their children and the main resource for meeting their basic needs.
- The safety, welfare and well-being of the child are most important. When there is a conflict between the interests of the parents and children, the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Children and youth should be given the opportunity to participate, at levels appropriate to their development, in decisions which significantly impact their lives.
- Families must be given an opportunity to participate in the development of their children.
- Child protection decisions must take account of the culture, language, religion, gender and ability of the child.
- Intervention should only occur in order to secure a child's safety, welfare and well-being.
- The identity of a child at risk *should not* be shared, unless it is essential to obtaining assistance for the child.
- If child can't live with their family, they should be provided with an environment which meets all of their needs.
- All agencies and services (government and non-government) should ensure that staff are properly trained, screened and supervised.

45%
&
27%

Before the training with Ba Futuru, 45% of surveyed students and 27% of surveyed teachers in two senior high schools in Dili reported that they did not know which institutions could provide help to victims of abuse.

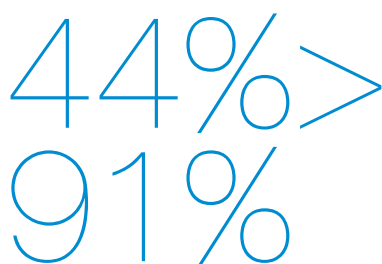
Learn how to identify children experiencing trauma and/or abuse

Trauma: Psychological or emotional injury caused by a deeply disturbing experience.

Psychological effects of trauma are likely to be more severe if they are human-inflicted, repeated, unpredictable, involving more than one type of event, sadistic, undergone in childhood and perpetrated by a care-giver or trusted person.

In your school, you can see day-to-day how children express the pain, trauma, loss and anxiety they carry inside them. Children can express these feelings in many ways – sometimes the child will be angry and violent; sometimes the child will seem distracted and find it difficult to concentrate; sometimes the child will be shy and withdrawn. Each of these types of behaviour can show that a child is holding onto some trauma. Rather than punish the child or force them to participate, you can help them to move through the process of letting go of the trauma. For this reason, it is also important for you to feel comfortable about being approached by the child. Children find it very difficult to articulate their problems, however we can tell a lot about their problems from their gestures and body language.

Examples of behavior that indicate a problem:



Prior to child protection training with Ba Futuru, only 44% of surveyed teachers from two senior high schools in Dili were able to list signs of trauma in children. However, after the training, 91% of the same teachers demonstrated they could recognise these signs.

1. When we talk to them they act nervous or scratch themselves
2. The child hits themselves or frequently hurts themselves in other ways
3. When the child cries unexpectedly
4. When the child does not want to go somewhere or spend time with a specific person (this may indicate that in the place they don't want to go they are experiencing abuse, or the person that they do not want to spend time with is abusing them)
5. When the child shakes and/or feels cold for no reason
6. When the child talks and/or laughs to themselves
7. When the child appears absent-minded or hides their face behind their hands (this can be a sign of sexual abuse)

Annex III: Places where you can find assistance

If your students are the victims of abuse, neglect or maltreatment and need assistance, the places you can find help are below. The most realistic places to access ongoing support are at the community and family levels. These are important resources, but depending on the nature of the problem, they may or may not be appropriate (for example, if the violation is from someone in the child's immediate family, it may be difficult to get their immediate family to support them).

Traditional Justice

- Village Leaders (mediation)
- Church

Health

- Mental Health and Ministry of Health
PRADET Safe House – 3321562
Sexual Abuse – 7254597 (24 hrs)

Placement

- Ministry of Social Solidarity – 7274156 (24 hrs)

Government & Social

- National Department of Social Reinsertion (DNRS): Child Protection – Sr. Florencio – 7345430
- Department of Vulnerable Women: Sra Joana – 7339883
- PRADET (NGO) – 7254597 (24hrs)
- Fokupers (NGO) – 3321534 (24hrs)
- Men Against Violence – 7264240 / 7251218
- Rede Feto – 3317405
- Ba Futuru – 3322437

Legal

- Victim Support Services – 7295795 / 3323883
 - Merita Correia (Coordinator VSS – Dili) – 7244304
merita@jsmp.minihub.org
 - Marcelina Amaral (Lawyer VSS – Dili) – 7275553
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 - Mario Duarte Soriano (Database Officer VSS – Dili) – 7444072
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Police

- PNTL Emergency – 112
- PNTL Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) – 112