



# Learning in Peace

## Changing teachers' behaviours to end violence in school

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Summary of findings from the  
formative evaluation of APEV

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# Background

## School violence, teacher violence

Globally, more than 50% of children report experiencing physical, sexual or emotional violence in the past year<sup>1</sup>. This is more than **one billion children**. Violence during childhood has long-term consequences for physical and mental health, and for educational and employment outcomes, and also negatively impacts brain development. The World Report on Violence Against Children<sup>2</sup> increased attention on this pressing issue and the Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 calls for elimination of violence in childhood.

The Ivorian government formally banned corporal punishment and humiliating treatment of students by teachers in 2009. Despite this, violence in schools remains widespread. 2 out of 5 students regularly admit suffering from physical violence within schools and more than 1 out of 6 students has already been victim of sexual aggression or rape by a teacher<sup>3</sup>. Our own preliminary research shows that 57% of teachers admit regularly to using physical violence against a primary school student in the past school term, despite the ban on using corporal punishment.

The years of military-political crisis, which ended in 2011, challenged the legitimacy of governance institutions, and undermined social cohesion in many regions. After the crisis, Côte d'Ivoire has taken various steps to address violence against children. Côte d'Ivoire recently became a pathfinder country in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and has committed to a 5-year action plan to reduce violence.



*Schools are one of the main sites where violence against children occurs, and the little available data indicates that teachers are one of the most common perpetrators of violence against children in schools. (Devries, 2018)<sup>4</sup>*

Only a few interventions to reduce teacher violence against students have been formally evaluated through a trial and only one has reported results. Those that have been tested, such as the Good School Toolkit in Uganda are complex whole-school approaches that require substantial time and input from schools<sup>5</sup>.

There is a need to develop and evaluate shorter interventions, which could be scaled-up rapidly and delivered across large numbers of schools. One such intervention, **Apprendre en Paix, Eduquer sans Violence**, or APEV, has been developed by Graines de Paix.



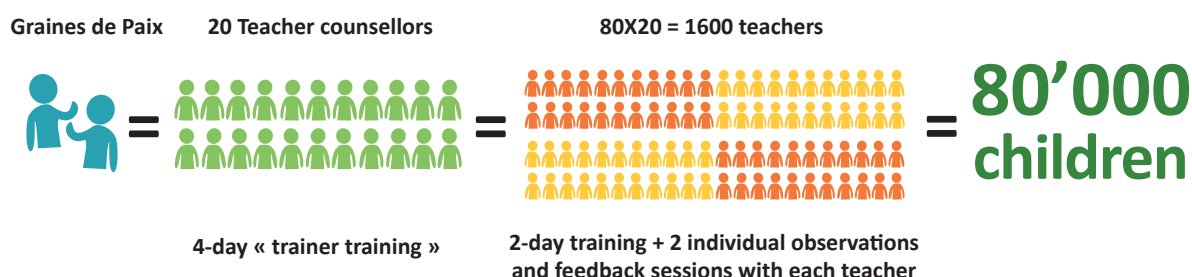
## Apprendre en paix, éduquer sans violence (APEV)

Graines de Paix is an international non-governmental organisation, founded in Switzerland in 2005, working to develop education solutions for sustainable peace. It signed a nationwide agreement with the Ivorian Ministry of Education (MoE) and launched its activities in 2012. The Côte d'Ivoire country office is the largest Graines de Paix team in West Africa.

**Apprendre en paix, éduquer sans violence (APEV)** or in English, **Learning in Peace, Teaching without Violence** by Graines de Paix is a brief educational and behavioural intervention designed for teachers to reduce the use of violence as an educational method in their classrooms. In Ivory Coast, the intervention has been developed in close collaboration with the MoE and is delivered by government personnel. Between 2012-2017, APEV was delivered to 320 teacher counsellors who reached 23,497 pre-school and primary teachers.

Through classroom tools and professional development, including trainings and personalised follow-ups the project aims to build teachers' capacities to use alternative non-violent classroom-management techniques and improve classroom dynamics. Incorporated within the MoE structures, APEV is easy to implement by Governments at a large scale.

### APEV Train the trainer model for 1 project cycle:



## LSHTM-Graines de Paix partnership

In January 2017, Graines de Paix partnered with the Child Protection Research Group at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and consultants from Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny d'Abidjan, to begin a process of research to see if APEV can successfully create change in teachers' behaviour and encourage a non-violent and stimulating classroom environment.

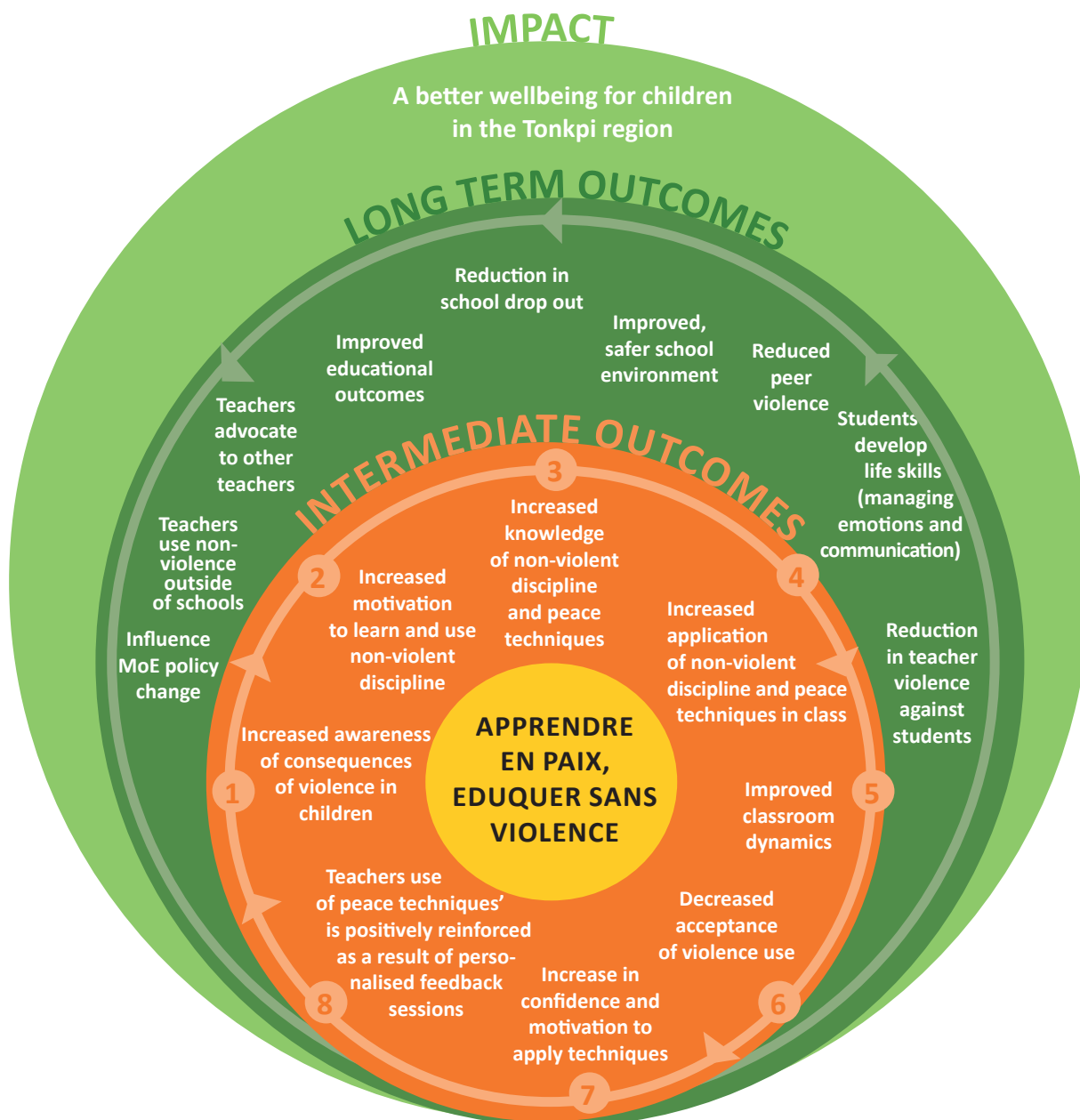
In this report, the research group outlines findings from our formative evaluation. A formative evaluation aims to inform stakeholders about whether the outcomes of the intervention are likely to be reached and to identify the barriers and facilitators of implementation.

Specifically, we explored how APEV was hypothesized to cause change in teachers' behaviour; whether teachers found APEV acceptable, and whether there was any evidence that APEV did result in changes in teachers' behaviour.

Our results show that participating in APEV affects how teachers think and feel about violence and authority, suggesting that it is potentially an effective strategy to reduce violence from teachers to primary school students. Additional research is needed to further explore whether APEV results in sustainable changes in teachers' violent behaviour.

# APEV's Theory of Change

One of the main results from the formative research is a theoretical hypothesis of how APEV works to induce behavioural change. Theory of Change (ToC) is a collaborative methodology aimed at producing a collective consensus of the idea of social change embedded within an intervention<sup>6</sup>. In March 2017 we hosted a one-day workshop using this methodology in Abidjan, with 18 participants including intervention staff, teachers, teacher trainers and MoE. A second workshop was held in the city of Man, with 14 stakeholders who were not yet familiar with the intervention to add local and context-specific expertise. The results were then arranged into a framework and flowchart.



APEV's ToC flowchart illustrates how the intervention is hypothesized to result in 8 intermediate outcomes which are interconnected in a circular manner. These intermediate outcomes reinforce themselves over time and create the conditions (particularly outcomes 4 and 5) for the long term outcomes to occur. Longer term outcomes directly contribute to APEV's ultimate goal of improving childrens' wellbeing in the region.

# How does APEV work?

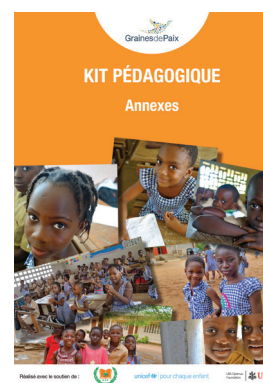
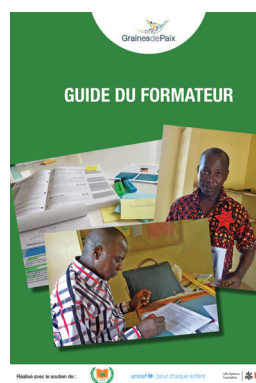
This collaborative methodology allowed us to identify eight main ways that participating in APEV would change how teachers think and feel about violence and peace-building in their classrooms. At this stage of the research the main objective was to find evidence of whether APEV achieves these intermediate outcomes:

<b>ToC 1</b>	<b>Increased awareness of the consequences of violence on children</b>
<b>ToC 2</b>	<b>Increased motivation to learn and use non-violent discipline</b>
<b>ToC 3</b>	<b>Increased knowledge of non-violent discipline and peace-culture techniques</b>
<b>ToC 4</b>	<b>Increased application of non-violent discipline techniques and peace-culture activities in class</b>
<b>ToC 5</b>	<b>Improved classroom dynamics</b>
<b>ToC 6</b>	<b>Decreased acceptance of violence use</b>
<b>ToC 7</b>	<b>Increase in confidence and motivation to apply non-violent techniques</b>
<b>ToC 8</b>	<b>Teachers use of peace techniques is positively reinforced as a result of personalised feedback sessions</b>

Over the longer term, we foresee that teachers who change in these ways will: use less physical violence against their students, and that students will then develop better life skills around communication and emotional management, reduce their use of violence against peers, leading to a safer school environment, and reductions in school drop out and improved educational outcomes. We hope that these changes will influence the MoE to reinforce its policies and practices around violence in schools.

Concretely, APEV aims to encourage teachers to challenge their personal conceptions of violence and its effects on children through participatory and experiential activities. The experiential nature of the program intends for the content to be appropriated at an emotional level so as to increase individuals' awareness of their own use of harmful practices and motivate them to change.

APEV then provides practical classroom tools and guidance to continue the transition from an authoritative disciplinary approach to one that is non-violent and nurturing.



# APEV Study

## Where did we work?

This research took place from 2017-18 in the region of Tonkpi, in western Côte d'Ivoire, an area of the country severely affected by the 2010-11 civil conflict. At the time of the APEV study, about 1,600 primary and preschool teachers had received APEV across the region. This study involved 160 teachers from over 60 different schools in the Tonkpi region, both rural and urban.

## Quantitative surveys

Surveys were administered to teachers to explore whether there was any change over time in four of the eight ToC intermediate outcomes: their awareness of the consequences of violence (ToC 1), motivation to change violent behaviour (ToC 2), increase in confidence to apply peace-culture techniques (ToC 7) and decreased acceptance of violent discipline practices (ToC 6). Teachers self-completed surveys on tablet computers at three different time points:

T <sub>0</sub> Pre-training survey (prior to the first day of training)	160 teachers
T <sub>1</sub> Mid-training survey (at the end of the first day of training)	157 teachers
T <sub>2</sub> 4 months post training survey (after teachers had implemented classroom strategies and completed one on one formative evaluations)	137 teachers (86%)

## Sample

SAMPLE OF BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS	
62% male, 38% female	23% reported high levels of mental distress
92% were caring for at least one child	20% reported being a victim of intimate partner violence
58% had been in their current job for more than 6 years	31% reported being a victim of non-partner sexual violence
	11% reported being a victim of child sexual abuse

## Qualitative research

We conducted 19 in-depth-interviews (IDIs) and 3 focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers and teacher-counsellors. 10 IDI were conducted after the initial training, and 9 were conducted after the 4-month post training survey. All FGDs were conducted after the post-training survey. Teachers participating in these activities had all completed survey data collection.

We posed exploratory and open-ended questions about the acceptability of the intervention and their perceived need for such an intervention, and changes resulting from participation in the intervention in all areas of the ToC.

## Ethics and child protection

The study received ethical approval from LSHTM (ref 14014 and 14537) and the Centre National d'Ethique de la Recherche (CNER) based in Abidjan. Teachers were notified in consent forms that disclosure of any acts of serious violence against students would necessitate a referral to child protection services. Two referrals were made to a local child protection agency based on survey responses by teachers.



# Results

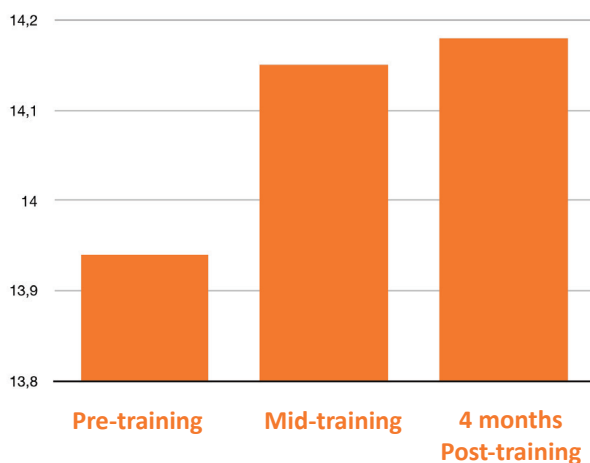
## Increased awareness of consequences of violence on children (ToC 1)

Teachers discussed a range of consequences of physical violence before and after the intervention (ToC1). One much discussed consequence was school drop out, but teachers were divided as to whether this was an effect of violence or not.

We interpret these findings as consistent with the quantitative results, which showed teachers already had high levels of awareness of the consequences of violence pre-intervention. The results show an upward trend but no statistically significant change in awareness of consequences of violence post-training, (mean scores were 13.94, 14.15 and 14.18, pre-, mid- and four month post-training respectively).



**Increased awareness  
of the consequences of violence on children  
(0-low to 16-high)**



*« Before, teachers used the «whip» a lot, now known as violence. It was used as motivation to improve oneself and that had its set of consequences. »*

**Female teacher, IDI,  
February 2018**



*« I am really satisfied with the Graines de Paix training you brought us! Why do I say that I am satisfied? Because, with the practice of non-violence in school, we see that the attendance rate has increased. That is satisfying. »*

**Male teacher, FGD,  
September 2018**

## Increase in teacher motivation and confidence to learn (ToC 2) and apply (ToC 7) non-violent discipline techniques

Teachers' feelings of self-efficacy, or motivation and confidence were already high before the intervention (mean: 26.11). Yet they still experienced a statistically significant increase mid-training (mean: 27.03) and increased again four months post-training (mean 27.51).



« I tried singing and dancing this year. Perhaps next year, I'll look for other positive sanctions to use. »

« After the training, I was able to observe that the teachers who really understood the training and its message had thrown away the whip. When you walk by their classrooms you can see that they are being careful, that they are making an effort to control themselves when confronted with situations in which the children are misbehaving.

**Female teacher counsellor,  
FGD, September 2018**

Qualitatively, teachers expressed motivation to learn non-violent discipline techniques (ToC 2), although this varied over time. Success in implementing some methods from the intervention led to increased interest in learning other APEV techniques (ToC 7). In the post-intervention interviews, teachers also began to call for further intervention and action targeting parents, community members and teachers, rather than simply observing the 'difficulty' of implementing non-violence in classrooms when it may not be practiced in streets and homes. This suggests that teachers increase their confidence with the content of the intervention over time.



## Increase in teacher knowledge (ToC 3) and application (ToC 4) of non-violent classroom techniques

There was an improvement in knowledge of non-violent disciplinary techniques (ToC 3), which teachers welcomed in order to fulfil Ministry requirements. Four months post-intervention, after the individualised reinforcement training, the interviewees spoke about classroom techniques with more familiarity. The specific activities they mentioned were classroom charters (participatory decision-making), verbal encouragement towards students (inclusive and encouraging pedagogical posture), songs and dance (positive discipline).

« 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**

« With the Graines de Paix training along with other trainings (online), I have gained something more. It shaped my understanding of disciplinary actions. I have already drawn up a charter with contributions from my students. This class charter established by students, is being used.»  
**Male teacher, IDI, February 2018**

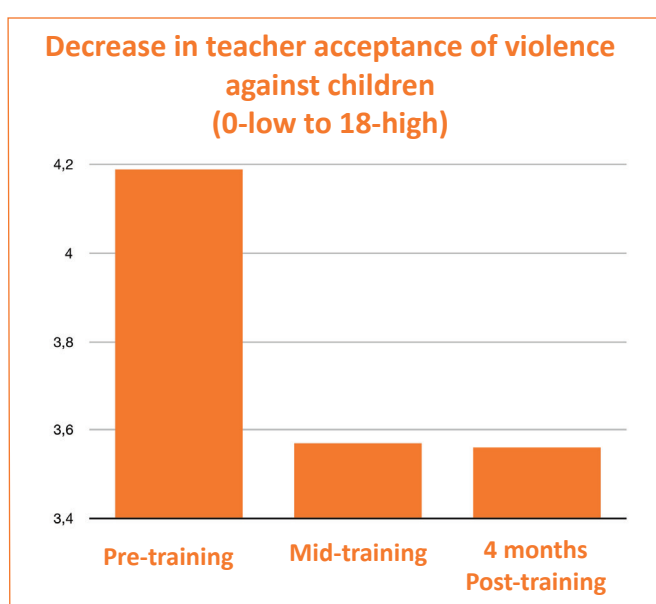
There was clear evidence that teachers had applied non-violent disciplinary techniques (ToC 4), with most teachers mentioning these at the interviews four months post-training. After trialling the non-violent methods, interviewees expressed fewer doubts about the efficacy of positive sanctions. However, there were still mixed views on the effectiveness of techniques over time.



## Teachers experience improved classroom dynamics (ToC 5) and lower their acceptance of physical discipline practices (ToC 6)

Many teachers spoke more assuredly about the benefits of non-violence (ToC 6), including increased attendance. However, this view was not universal, and some argued that African children are not responsive to non-violent techniques. We interpret these results as broadly consistent with the quantitative results, which show statistically significant decreases in teacher acceptance of physical discipline techniques over time.

A statistically significant lower acceptance of physical discipline practices in schools was reported mid-training (mean: 3.57) compared to pre-training (mean: 4.20). However, this difference did not persist at four months post-training.



*« I think violence does not solve a problem. It only aggravates the problem. »*

**Female teacher, IDI, September 2018**



*«... 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**

Teachers had mixed views on whether the intervention led to improved classroom dynamics (ToC 5). Teachers often commented that students showed less 'fear' towards them, but this was often not framed in a positive way by teachers themselves. Several teachers still questioned the efficacy of a peaceful approach towards students who made frequent mistakes; they associated it with 'lax' teaching and low expectations



## Teachers accept the intervention and feel that the use of personalised feedback sessions with teacher counsellors helped them maintain use of techniques (ToC 8)

Teachers were unequivocally positive about the value of participating in the Graines de Paix intervention. They saw it as adding distinct value to their professional development, going beyond the existing Ministry of Education programmes. Non-judgmental dialogue with their trainers was one of the most consistently praised aspects of the intervention, and feedback in the school environment where teachers worked (ToC 8).



*«...the best kind of training is in our immediate environment, in this school. The (Graines de Paix) trainers here are confronted with our realities.»*

**Male teacher, FGD,  
September 2018**



## New emerging themes: self-regulation and changing behaviour

Teachers discussed the self-restraint and changing of behaviour and long-standing habits necessary for them to implement new peace techniques that they had learned as part of the intervention. Teachers discussed how the implementation of new peaceful discipline techniques required self-control and how this was not always easy. However they also acknowledged that changing the classroom dynamic is a gradual process and expressed a strong conviction that a positive outcome would be observed in the long term.

Our findings suggest that teachers are actively engaged in a dynamic process of self-regulation and behaviour change in response to learning and implementing new techniques.



*« 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**



*« When you aren't able to control yourself, you have to step out because old habits are still there.»*

**Female teacher, FGD, September 2018**



*« it works but ....we often have to control ourselves. When we carry out another activity, we remind ourselves «Hmm, careful, careful. You've just had trainings.» You often you have to restrain yourself...it's not easy.»*

**Female teacher, FGD, September 2018**

# Conclusions and next steps

Our results suggest that APEV warrants further investigation in a randomised controlled trial to test effectiveness in reducing physical violence of teachers against students. In general, teachers found APEV acceptable and useful. Teachers felt Ministry policies on non-violent discipline were made at a central level and imposed on them, and perceived the intervention as useful because it actually provided practical methods for non-violent discipline and peacebuilding.

Our results are consistent with process evaluation and qualitative findings from the Good Schools Study, which showed reduced physical violence from teachers to students by 40% after an 18-month intervention implementation period in Uganda. In that study, we found that teachers also discussed the efficacy of the intervention in a mixed and variable way, and that there was a general perception that the intervention worked for some students, some of the time, but wasn't successful for everyone, all the time<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, some of our process evaluation findings in that study pointed to quantitatively small changes in intermediate outcomes and yet the intervention had a large effect<sup>8</sup>.



*Data from all streams of the research suggests the intervention leads to change in intermediate outcomes for teachers. Given the dearth of different intervention models to reduce violence from teachers to students which have been developed and tested in rigorous studies, a randomised controlled trial of APEV would provide welcome evidence to the field about effective ways to reduce this form of violence.*

There are few brief interventions to reduce violence, but in other fields, (eg, changing alcohol use behaviour) brief interventions can be equally effective when compared with longer interventions<sup>9</sup>. APEV has also been developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and is delivered by Ministry personnel, making it inherently easy to scale. We also note that existing interventions with evidence of efficacy have not yet been widely implemented on national scales, which may be in part because they are not delivered by Ministries of Education.

APEV's positive results provide encouraging perspectives towards effective and scalable violence reduction programmes.



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