

Success Story: Myanmar 2012

Promoting positive discipline among educators



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (World Day), celebrated annually on 20 November, is an opportunity for all sectors of society - governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and religious communities - to work together to end violence against children. World Day events take many forms, including mobilization and media campaigns, workshops, religious services and vigils, and common action to protect children from violence.

The World Day was launched in 2008 at the Third Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in Hiroshima. The initiative unites secular and religious organizations and harnesses their collective power in support of children. A Council, composed of religious leaders and experts in child rights and child protection, guides the initiative. In 2011, more than 200,000 people participated in the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children. Actions in 2012 mobilized people from 62 countries to take part in over 100 activities.

This Success Stories series tells the inspiring stories of 2011 and 2012 World Day actions in selected countries and provides resources and recommendations for organizing similar actions. This success story focuses on Myanmar, where corporal punishment in schools and homes is not explicitly prohibited by law, and quality of education remains an issue of particular concern in monastic schools. The example of Myanmar highlights the transformative power of participatory and positive discipline and demonstrates how a World Day action can be incorporated into an ongoing annual activity, with support from the World Day Secretariat.

A Buddhist approach to educational reform

Since 2009, the Coalition for Promotion of Monastic Education (CPME) has been facilitating educational reform in Myanmar's monastery-based schools serving some of the poorest children the country. The CPME initiative aims to transform communities by training monastic school leaders and educators in self-awareness, techniques to promote critical thinking, and participatory approaches to

classroom and school management. Ethical values of respect, nonviolence and compassion underpin this multi-faceted approach, which nurtures the hearts, as well as the minds, of students.

“Now the teachers and students set up and agree on rules on how to handle discipline, how to help with the cleaning of the school and classrooms, and how to help children who have difficulties in learning and so on. This way, children learn how to follow school and class rules, understand their responsibilities, and help one another. Since the children are the ones who help set up the regulations and rules themselves, they are more willing to follow the rules.”

-Abbot U-Wayama of Shwe Kaung Monastic School

Extracted from *Report of the CPME Monitoring Visit in Yangon and Mandalay* by Ng Shui Meng

Participatory discipline is a key aspect of the CPME programme. Involvement of students in classroom management is important because it reduces behavior problems and enhances the classroom learning environment. Schools implementing the CPME programme have reported favorable results from the application of participatory discipline.

For more information on corporal punishment and monastic education reform:

- Access information about the [legality of corporal punishment in Myanmar](#).
- Watch the [TEDxTalks presentation by educational reform specialist Mr. Ko Tar](#) about monastic education reform.

Recognizing the power of positive discipline



Opening of the Workshop

The promotion of positive discipline is an important theme of the World Day initiative to end violence against children. As a member of the leadership Council of the World Day of Prayer and Action, Mr. Somboom Chungprampree of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) identified an opportunity to connect CPME (an INEB affiliate) to the World Day Secretariat.

In Mandalay, Myanmar, on December 8 and 9 2012, a group of two hundred educators and leaders from monastic schools gathered to participate in the second annual Education Fair and Seminar. The INEB collaborated with CPME and other partners to organize the event, which took place at the largest *Success Story: Myanmar 2012 World Day of Prayer and Action for Children*

monastic school in Myanmar, Phaung, Daw Oo Monastic School. The World Day Secretariat supported the activity by providing modest funding and sending a staff person to facilitate a workshop on positive parenting and schooling on the first day of the Seminar.

“Positive discipline assumes that children want to and can behave well, but need help in understanding how to do so. It works on the principle that children learn more through co-operation and rewards than through conflict and punishment. It also builds on the idea that when children feel good, they tend to behave well and when they feel bad they are likely to behave badly.”

Source: *Positive Discipline: What it is and how to do it* published by Save the Children Sweden and the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children by Professor Joan Durrant, as cited in *ABCs for Action and Advocacy: A Note on Positive Parenting and Nonviolent Discipline*

The workshop was designed using the World Day resource *ABCs of Action and Advocacy: A Note on Positive Parenting and Non-Violent Discipline*. It began with an introduction to the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children. Then two interactive exercises engaged the 15 participants in an examination of positive discipline. The first exercise involved a discussion of the difference between punishment and positive discipline. Participants agreed that methods used for discipline should be relevant to the needs of children and should enhance critical thinking of children. This discussion was translated into action during the second exercise when the participants developed a list outlining the Dos and Don'ts of Positive Discipline.



Participants working in small groups

The 2012 actions in Myanmar demonstrate successful involvement of the World Day Secretariat in an established activity and show how the *ABCs of Action and Advocacy* can be a useful tool when organizing a workshop. This involvement has opened possibilities for an ongoing relationship between the Secretariat and CPME.

Dos and Don'ts of Positive Discipline

Dos

- Be fair
- Ensure relevance to the needs of students
- Give reminders of rules and disciplinary actions
- Encourage students to learn
- Remain mindful of the evolving capacity of students
- Enhance critical thinking of the student
- Understand the students
- Build trust with students before taking disciplinary action

Don'ts

- Conduct the classroom with absolute authority and command
- Take actions that harm students
- Inhibit student participation/Enforce one-way communication
- Be too strict
- Place too much pressure on students

Resources on positive discipline and ethics education for children:

- Access the World Day [ABCs for Action and Advocacy: A Note on Positive Parenting and Non-Violent Discipline](#).
- Access information on ethics education for children as well as the *Learning to Live Together* ethics education manual on the [website of the Arigatou International ethics education programme](#).