

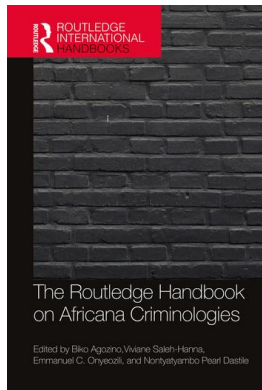
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 31 Mar 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Handbook on Africana Criminologies

Biko Agozino, Viviane Saleh-Hanna, Emmanuel C. Onyeozili,
Nontyatyambo Pearl Dastile

Rethinking School Discipline in Africa

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781003004424-17>

Augustine Obeleagu Agu, Patrick Ibe

Published online on: 30 Dec 2020

How to cite :- Augustine Obeleagu Agu, Patrick Ibe. 30 Dec 2020, *Rethinking School Discipline in Africa from: The Routledge Handbook on Africana Criminologies* Routledge

Accessed on: 31 Mar 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781003004424-17>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

12

RETHINKING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN AFRICA

From punishment and control to restorative justice practices

Augustine Obeleagu Agu and Patrick Ibe

Introduction

The current education systems across Africa were all framed on the former education systems of the colonizing powers (Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, etc.). “Spare the rod and spoil the child” was the prevailing modus operandi in Europe. Consequently, this philosophy of discipline enforcement in schools, characterized mainly by corporal punishment, became one of the tools of maintaining control in schools. This appears to have worked for some time as order was maintained through fear. However, it appears that punishment as a means of controlling children is not working. Alternative approaches to school discipline that promote personal accountability and allow the students opportunities to have their voices heard on issues that affect them need to be put in place. We propose the use of restorative justice principles and practices in African schools. Restorative justice practices in schools, which are based on relationships and not rules, are indigenous to the African communities’ ways of conflict resolution and reconciliation. The chapter will be organized as follows: (a) Background that is a critique of the traditional school discipline practices, (b) a description of the restorative justice approach/paradigm, and (c) suggestions for the implementation framework of a restorative justice approach.

Background and context

Traditional views of children

Philosophically, two views of children can be broadly discerned: (i) children as unfinished adults, and (ii) adults as defective children (Gheaus, 2015). How children have been treated and are treated depends on the prevailing view in the society. Childhood

as an unfinished adult sees a child as an agent who is not yet able to speak in her own voice because there is no voice that counts as hers (Richards, 2010). This is because children have not yet undergone the evolutionary process of becoming themselves: that is, of settling on reasons for action, reasons that the child herself endorses and with which she identifies. Therefore, children necessarily lack moral agency, which makes paternalistic behavior towards them legitimate. The essential task of children is to turn themselves into agents capable of moral agency, and adults have a duty to help them in this process.

While there must be some truth in the conceptualization of children as unfinished adults, we challenge its completeness. We argue that children have the capacity to show some valuable features to a greater extent than adults, and while, on average, they may lack the ability to accomplish the same valuable goals as adults, children are better able than adults to engage in processes that are valuable in themselves. Some philosophers reject the “children as unfinished adults” conception and argue that having a good childhood is not valuable merely because it contributes to a good adulthood. They think that we owe children above and beyond what it takes to prepare them for good adulthoods (Brennan, 2014).

The “adults as defective children” perspective argues that children are not merely unfinished adults but are likely to possess abilities that adults are likely to have largely lost (Gheaus, 2015). Childhood is a time of intense experimentation with a variety of interests and relationships, which is itself a good; and children and adults have privileged access to different goods – hence, the experience of having been a child contributes to the overall value of a life above and beyond its contribution to a better adulthood. Research in philosophy, developmental psychology, and neuroscience suggests that children are endowed with cognitive abilities that most individuals inevitably lose to a large degree as they grow up (Gopnik, 2009). These explain why children are very fast and imaginative learners, better than adults at imagining alternative worlds. Alison Gopnik captured this view aptly:

In fact psychologists and neuroscientists have discovered that babies not only learn more, but imagine more, care more, and experience more than we would ever have thought possible. In some ways young children are smarter, more imaginative, more caring and even more conscious than adults are.

(Gopnik, 2009: 5)

During childhood, mental plasticity is much higher than in adulthood: that is, children are particularly able to learn considering new experiences.

Neuroscientists explain children’s outstanding cognitive abilities by appeal to specific features of their brains. Children’s prefrontal cortices are not yet fully developed; hence, they lack strong prefrontal control. Prefrontal control is necessary for inhibition of information that is not vital to performing a specific task, which could be useful if one is trying to accomplish such a task. By helping to narrow down focus, prefrontal control impedes general learning and free use of imagination (Gheaus, 2015; Gopnik, 2009). According to Gopnik, “to be imaginative, you want to consider as many possibilities as you can, even wild and unprecedented ones. . . . In

learning, you want to remain open to anything that may turn out to be the truth” (Gopnik, 2009: 13). The lack of prefrontal control explains why children learn fast and display more of the open mind necessary for scientific investigation and creativity than adults. If this is correct, a rethinking of school discipline will need innovative inputs from children rather than rehashing the old ways that are not effective and inflict harm on children. How philosophically children are perceived determines our approach to discipline. If we see children as unfinished adults, we will more likely use the control/punishing methods to enforce discipline. If we see adults as defective children, we will provide more space for children to determine what will be the most effective methods of school discipline.

Disciplining children – punishment versus reward

The objective of school discipline is always to secure children’s compliance with adults’ demands. One of the responsibilities of teachers is to maintain control of their classrooms. Consequently, they are encouraged to focus on students’ behaviors and attempt to modify those they think are inappropriate. These behavioral changes are mainly achieved through the stick or the carrot: some sort of punishment or reward directed by adults in which rules and consequences are imposed on students. This is dictated by the philosophical belief in “children as unfinished adults,” which we critiqued earlier. What needs to be done by adults in school is to find out what children need and how the needs can be met.

Every teacher has a theory about children. How teachers treats children can be predicted by knowing what they believe about them. Those who think that children are unfinished adults are likely to believe that adults must force children to obey the rules and see to it that they are punished when they do not. The discipline approaches emanating from this perspective, which are negative in most cases, tend to elicit negative behavior from children. Treat children as troublemakers and watch them become troublemakers. This is one side, which is the negative side. The good news is that there is the positive side. Remember the “Pygmalion effect” documented in the 1960s, which showed that when teachers were led to believe that their students had extraordinary intellectual potential, these average students really did end up achieving impressively in their classes? Consequently, teachers who assume that children can act virtuously can likewise set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy. They can create an “auspicious circle rather than the more familiar vicious one” (Kohn, 1996: 8)

Corporal punishment in schools

What is corporal punishment (CP)?

CP is a disciplinary method in which a supervising adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child in response to a child’s unacceptable behavior (Alhassan, 2013). Similarly, CP has also been defined by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (2001) as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. CP can be

divided into three main types: (i) parental or domestic CP, (ii) judicial CP, and (iii) school CP. The focus of this chapter is school corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment in schools

School CP covers official punishment of school children for misbehavior that involves manual labor of all sorts or striking the child a given number of times. Striking as a punishment is usually administered either on the hands or across the buttocks with an implement specifically kept for that purpose. CP in schools has been outlawed in many countries such as Canada, Kenya, Korea, New Zealand, South Africa, and nearly all of Europe. In most African countries, the legality or illegality of CP in schools is still very confusing. In Ghana, although there are ministerial directives discouraging it, CP is lawful in schools, and anecdotal evidence suggests it is in widespread use (Ghana News Agency, 2011). In Nigeria, CP is lawful at home. It is lawful in alternative care settings and day cares under the Criminal Code (South), the Penal Code (North), and the Sharia Penal Code in the North; it is not explicitly prohibited in the Child Rights Act (www.endcorporalpunishment.org).

In Nigerian schools, CP is also lawful under article 295(4) of the Criminal Code (South), which states that “a schoolmaster or a person acting as a school master” is automatically considered as having been entrusted with “authority for correction, including the power to determine in what cases correction ought to be inflicted,” and article 55 of the Penal Code (North), which states:

Nothing is an offence which does not amount to the infliction of grievous hurt upon any person and which is done by a school master for the purpose of correcting a child under eighteen years of age entrusted to his charge.

Article 11 of the Child Rights Act states that every child is “entitled to respect for the dignity of his person” and that no child shall “be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,” but it does not explicitly prohibit CP in schools (www.endcorporalpunishment.org).

There is no question that discipline in schools is an integral part of learning. In many African countries, not sparing the rod is one essential aspect of discipline. School administrators and teachers have power and authority to administer a school disciplinary program. The power to control and discipline students for misbehaviors is traceable to the age doctrine of *in loco parentis* (in place of parents). The courts in democratic societies all over the world have also viewed school authorities as standing *in loco parentis*, allowing them to regulate the students in any manner, subject only to the standards and restraints that the parents would use in supervising the welfare of the child (Alhassan, 2013). The issue is whether the use of CP in schools is adequately delivering the desired discipline in schools. If not, as we have argued and will be indicating, there seems to be an urgent need for alternative forms of school discipline.

Impact of corporal punishment on learning

The use of CP to discipline children in schools in both developing and developed countries has stubbornly persisted because of its long history; consequently, it has a strong intergenerational tradition in most societies. Parents, in most cases, learn their lessons about how to be a parent from their own parents. Hence, adults' support for CP is significantly related to whether they believe their own parents were supportive of the practice and whether they themselves were physically punished as children (Gershoff, 2010). Corporal punishment also persists because it is a practice with strong ties to religion, particularly Islam and Christianity (Greven, 1991, emphasis added). Religious leaders and religiously inspired parents, like their earlier compatriots, associate firm discipline with child's spiritual well-being and encourage parents to use CP as a key part of discipline instrument (Gershoff, 2010).

Although long history and religious affiliation to a reasonable extent explain the persistent use of CP as a means of discipline, a growing body of research has challenged the long-held assumption that CP is a good way to instill discipline in children. A consistent body of evidence reveals that more CP by parents and teachers is associated with more aggression and antisocial behavior (Gershoff, 2010; Kohn, 1996). A summary of some of the unintended effects of CP includes: (i) physical injury and abuse, (ii) mental health problems, (iii) eroded quality of children's relationships with their parents, (iv) reduced cognitive ability, and (v) increased adult aggression and antisocial behavior. Not every child who is spanked or slapped will experience all, or indeed any, of these negative outcomes. What seems very clear is that use of CP puts children at risk for both short- and long-term negative effects. CP of children does more harm than good. Our key question about children should not be how we can make them conform but rather, what they require in order to flourish. As correctly argued by Alfie Kohn, "instead of trying to control students behavior by punishments and rewards . . . the teacher should focus on nourishing students natural curiosity, helping them develop their problem-solving abilities and experience a sense of community" (Kohn, 1996: ix). On this, the restorative justice approach could be of great help.

Description of restorative justice

Restorative justice explained

The term "restorative justice" is used in various ways – as a concept, a philosophy, an approach, a process, and a set of practices. In this chapter, we will use the term interchangeably. Restorative justice is a very new approach to justice that involves the parties to a crime (victims, defenders, and the community). It aims to identify harms, have the defendant take responsibility and make restitution, and take measures to prevent a recurrence; the communities and families then forgive the offender and promote reconciliation. A restorative approach to offending behavior is one in which the repair of relationships and of the harm caused takes precedence over assigning

blame and applying a sanction (Hopkins, 2015). This mind-set shift from what is often a deep-seated attachment to punishment as a response to wrongdoing to a desire for healing and closure, following genuine connection and communication between all those involved, is at once simple and yet profound (Roberts and Hough, 2002).

As a concept and as a process, restorative justice (RJ) was first developed and applied in the criminal justice field in the late 1990s and early 2000s, building on work that had already been done in the field of victim-offender mediation (Hopkins, 2004), which fundamentally had its origins in a variety of community practices globally (Boyes-Watson and Pranis, 2010). There are various types of RJ globally. One, in New Zealand, is the Family Group Conference (FGC), inspired by community practice amongst the Maori peoples (Hopkins, 2015). Australia has the Restorative Conference, which took its inspiration from the New Zealand FGC model. This model relies on the facilitator following a scripted process (Moore, and O'Connell, 1994). In the U.S. and Canada, several models are used, including face-to-face victim-offender mediation and sentencing circles. Each model has its strengths and weaknesses. Examination of these is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, we will suggest that schools and other training institutions use a blend of most of the models to achieve optimal outcomes.

In restorative justice, crime is viewed as an act against the victim and focuses on repairing the harm that has been committed. One focus of restorative justice is the idea that the offender needs assistance and must seek help to prevent reoffending. The community must then encourage reentry into the society to discourage reoffending. In the early 1970s, it emerged as an alternative to the court process, or what we may call alternative dispute resolution. Marshal (2011) describes restorative justice to respond to crime as focusing primarily on repairing the damage caused by the criminal act and restoring, insofar as possible, the dignity and well-being of all those involved. It has also been described as a process in which stakeholders affected by an injustice have an opportunity to communicate about the consequences of the injustice and what is to be done to right the wrong (Braithwaite and Strang, 2002). It is a process designed to bring out the best in the offender, instead of leaving them isolated and embittered, and in the victim, who instead, of seeking revenge, accepts the offender's apology and/or restitution. An earlier definition by Marshal, which has also been adopted by the United Nations Crime Congress and is still widely used, describes RJ as "a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future" (Marshal, 1998: 32).

Restorative justice in African society

Restorative justice has always been and continues to be a way of settling disputes in African societies. Before the arrival of the "White man," African societies had ways of settling disputes. In some towns in the Eastern part of Nigeria, such as Nkerehi, Ogbunka, and Owerre-Ezukala in the Aguata local government and Ihe, Agbogugu, and Awgu in the Awgu local government. These communities have always had a way of settling their disputes. When somebody commits a crime, there

is what is known as *Nriko*, which means that the person is fined – maybe asked to bring two gallons of palm wine, a goat, or some tubers of yam, depending on the seriousness of the offense. The community, normally comprising the elders, will gather and prepare the food, and everybody will participate in eating the prepared food, including the offender. It is through this process that the victim forgives the offender, and the offender is reintegrated into the community. This process is also applicable to other parts of African societies.

Elechi (2006), in *Doing Justice without the State*, discussed (Ehugbo) the restorative tradition of dispute resolution used in Afikpo in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Dalglish (2005), in his paper “Pre-Colonial Criminal Justice in West Africa: Eurocentric Thoughts versus Africentric Evidence,” discussed extensively how rulers in Ghana did their justice. Yamamoto (1997) writing about restorative justice in Africa, discussed extensively the South African *Ubuntu* as an idea that no one can be healthy when the community is sick. “*Ubuntu* says I am human only because you are human. If I undermine your humanity, I dehumanize myself.” It characterizes justice as community restoration – the rebuilding of the community to include those harmed or formerly excluded.

In some instances of murder, in many parts of Nigeria, instead of the murderer being killed, the village might exchange land for the dead person, and the land is called *Ani Ochu*. Cows and camels are used by Somalis for exchange. It is clearly believed that if you kill the murderer, you are equally guilty of murder. Sometimes, when *Nriko* is conducted, both sides will come and eat together as a way of forgiving whatever that might have happened. In some cases, banishment is imposed. Adeyemi (1994) is of the opinion that justice is traditionally about restitution and must be seen by the people to have been done.

Restorative approaches to school discipline

The restorative approach to school discipline is not a behavior management tool. Rather, it is a process that represents the school culture and the relationship between the school and its community. Schools are institutions where every child belongs. Sometimes there are children who come with a lot of problems, and schools should address these problems by being supportive of these children through educational intervention. Restorative justice in school, therefore, builds a peaceful relationship of conflict resolution between the students, the school, and the community. Schools are institutions where students mold their characters for the future with the support of their teachers and the school environment. Browne stated that there is a relationship between how children are treated in school and the number of juveniles involved with the legal system (Browne, 2003).

Many schools in the United States that have implemented restorative justice have seen a lot of progress in discipline and dropout rates. West Philadelphia High School, which started using restorative justice in 2007 and 2008, noticed a considerable drop in violent acts and assault on students. Pottstown High School also noticed a considerable drop in cafeteria violations, fighting, and physical altercations. In 2000, when restorative justice was introduced in Palisades High School, discipline referrals were

cut into half. Many teachers in many school districts are asking for more training in restorative justice because of the impact it has on students' behavior. Restorative approaches to school discipline are rarely used in African schools.

Implementation of restorative justice in schools

Why restorative practices in schools?

Teachers and school administrators globally are faced with indiscipline in schools, which constantly interferes with the learning process. There is a perceptible breakdown in school discipline (Blandford, 1998). Indiscipline in schools is popularly depicted as an accelerating problem globally, impacting negatively on the teaching and learning processes. In many African countries, teachers seem to have lost control of their classes. Lack of discipline seems to be the most serious problem facing the countries' educational systems. It could be argued that approximately half of all classroom time is taken up by activities other than instruction, and discipline problems are responsible for a significant portion of this time. Teachers in Africa are very familiar with the disruption and harm caused by indiscipline in schools. In Nigeria, there is serious indiscipline, with reports of attacks on teachers, damage to school property, truancy, drugs, intoxication among older children, and defiance of school rules (Ibrahim, 1984). Other frequently committed offenses are absenteeism, stealing, and smoking.

It seems very clear that teachers are failing to control pupils as their authority has been undermined. Disruptive behavior causes harm in the classroom. There is no question that when students misbehave, they learn less and keep their peers from learning. Teaching contact time is reduced as more time is devoted to managing misbehavior rather than teaching. This creates stress for teachers when they lose academic time. A lesson depends on many factors to reach an acceptable level of success, one of which is discipline in the classroom. Discipline in the classroom is a prerequisite if any meaningful learning is to take place. In the classroom, to maintain an academically focused environment for teaching and learning, some standard of behavior must be encouraged.

The traditional approach has failed. Traditional behavior management practices, including corporal punishment, do not seem to be delivering discipline. Discipline in schools can only be achieved through creating an effective learning environment. There are two aspects of an effective learning environment: (i) relationships (especially the range of interpersonal skills necessary to maintain healthy relationships) and (ii) high-quality instruction (Smith et al., 2015). Our argument is that students are going to misbehave as they learn and grow. What matters is how we respond to their misbehavior. We believe that students should have a chance to learn from their mistakes and to restore any damaged relationships with others. This view is known as the restorative approach to discipline.

Applying restorative practices in schools

As discussed earlier, restorative practices are offshoots of the restorative justice model used by the courts and law enforcement agencies around the world in which mutually consenting victims and offenders meet so that the victim can be given a voice and the offender can be given an opportunity to make amends. Restorative practices

in schools cast a wider net than restorative justice in the courts (Smith et al., 2015). While justice is, by its nature, reactive, restorative practices, especially in schools, also include preventive measures designed to build skills and capacity in students as well as adults. There are several ways to build relationships and create healthy learning environments.

Building/strengthening the foundation of restorative practices in schools

The foundation of restorative practices in schools will rest on three main pillars.

THE TEACHER

The main pillar of the foundation of restorative practices in schools is the teacher. There are four distinct types of teachers (Purkey and Stanley, 1991). These are teachers who are (a) intentionally uninviting by actively belittling children; (b) unintentionally uninviting due to hopelessness and low expectations; (c) unintentionally inviting as they have positive relationships with students, but not sure why they make the decisions they do; and (d) intentionally inviting as they treat all students with respect and build trust with students. The intentionally inviting teachers are the ideal teachers who are proactive, systematic, and transparent. The foundations of restorative practices in schools will be successful in schools that have these types of teachers.

BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Restorative practices are built on the positive relationships that teachers foster with students and with each other in schools. Teachers can use the following strategies to build, maintain, and strengthen their relationships with students: (a) knowing students names, (b) coming to school with the right and positive attitude, (c) understand the student's interests, and (d) regularly visiting students in their homes.

QUALITY RELEVANT INSTRUCTION

Relationships alone will not deliver full positive behavior if instruction is ineffective. Instruction must be of good quality and relevant to complement the effects of positive relationships.

Establishing structures that support restorative practices in schools

Organizations and groups function best with rules and procedures. However, those rules and procedures work best when (a) they are developed with the people who will be using them, and (b) they are applied fairly. Basically, rules and procedures in schools should be developed to align with the following principles: (i) self-regulation in mind, since one of the objectives of restorative practices is to develop self-regulated learners who have a growing capacity to manage their lives; (ii) high expectations by teachers of students capacities, as there are long-term effects of teachers expectations

for students achievement; (iii) teacher sensitivity, as classroom rules, procedures, and expectations are transmitted to students through teachers' behavior.

Applying informal restorative practices in schools

The International Institute for Restorative Practices identifies a continuum of practices ranging from informal to formal (Smith et al., 2015; Costello et al., 2010). This part of the chapter explains four of the informal practices. The formal practices are examined in the subsequent part of the chapter. The four informal practices are:

- *Affective statements and questions* that develop students' senses of agency and identity. Students' senses of identity and agency are critical to restorative practices because they influence the extent to which students can solve problems, assume ownership of situations, and take actions to make improvements. When students misbehave, teachers can use restorative identity labels to separate them from their actions: a statement like "That is not the Uche I know" communicates that you see the individual behind the event.
- *Classroom meetings* that build community with and shared commitments to one another and the group. Class meetings are best when they are facilitated by students. Class meetings build group cohesion, thereby strengthening relationships. An investment in class meetings can move the climate of the class from peace-keeping to peace-making and eventually peace-building.
- *Informal classroom circles* to discuss content and issues that affect the group. The circle has a wide variety of purposes: conflict resolution, healing, support, decision-making and information exchange. Types of informal circles include sequential and nonsequential circles, fishbowls, and inside-outside circles (Costello et al., 2010). Sequential circles have a fixed order for member participation, and each student is encouraged to participate. Nonsequential circles do not have a fixed order and allow students to respond directly to one another as frequently as they care to. The fishbowl strategy uses two circles: one small inner circle surrounded by a larger observing circle. The students in the inner circle discuss a topic while those in the outside circle observe and take notes.
- *Impromptu conferences* to resolve low level problems that arise in the classroom. When situations arise, teachers can convene impromptu conferences to help students resolve occurrences that threaten their relationships and disrupt their learning. Impromptu conferences are one way to resolve conflicts quickly before they get any bigger. Along the way, students develop skills to solve minor conflicts on their own.

Implementing formal restorative practices

Formal restorative practices are meant for restoring damaged relationships. We have all been wronged, and we have wronged people. To move on freely, these wrongs, need to be repaired. Formal restorative practices see justice as getting well rather than getting even (Pranis, 2003). The International Institute of Restorative Processes has

formal practices that it views as most helpful in a variety of settings. Three formal restorative practices are briefly examined below:

- *Formal classroom circles* to resolve a problem within the class. Formal classroom circles are used for addressing issues that affect the entire learning community, from student absenteeism and dropout rates to violence in schools and bullying. Because of the complexities of the issues, formal classroom circles should be run by trained facilitators rather than by the teachers of the students involved.
- *Victim-offender dialogue* for resolving conflicts, allowing victims to face offenders, and allowing offenders to show remorse and make amends. Victim-offender dialogue works best for addressing conflicts among small groups of students rather than class-wide issues. This requires facilitators who are neutral and have good interpersonal skills. The facilitator can ask the offender the following questions: What happened? What do you think you might need to do to make things right? The questions for the victim could include: What did you think when you realized what had happened? What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- *High-stakes conferences* for addressing serious conflicts that involve larger groups, such as the victim's and the offender's families, and that may require law enforcement involvement. This is called the Family Group Conference (FGC) and Family Group Decision Making (FDGM) in New Zealand, where it originated, and the U.S., respectively. The main features of the FGC/FDGM are (a) the family is the primary decision maker; (b) an independent coordinator facilitates the conference and refrains from offering preconceived ideas of the outcome; and (c) the professionals and family members monitor the plan's progress, and follow-up meetings are often held.

Conclusion: The challenge of moving from principles to practice in Africa

There is no question that the traditional approaches to addressing disciplinary issues in schools are increasingly becoming ineffective. Although there are difficult issues on the path to making it happen, there is increasing support for adopting restorative justice approaches in schools. However, even in the criminal justice field, there is still a long way to go before it becomes the norm across the world, despite its endorsement by the United Nations (UN, 2006). This could be much more difficult in education, especially in schools in African settings where the foundations (see the three pillars listed earlier) are still weak.

Successful implementation of restorative practices in schools requires buy-in across the entire school and must relentlessly focus on examining long-held practices. As a practical way forward, the schools in Africa will need adults in school who are "intentionally inviting," teachers who love children, have high expectation of children, are ready to continuously build trusting relationships with children, and are excellent in their teaching. The foundations of restorative practices should be there and strong.

The world should borrow from the philosophy of nonviolence that Gandhi claimed he learned from the Zulu. It is an Africana philosophy that enslaved Africans used predominantly in the struggle for abolitionism, even though some rebellions were violent, and the civil war to end slavery was very bloody. Nonviolence was used overwhelmingly in the struggle for decolonization in Africa, even though some of those struggles adopted violent means to resist the violence of the colonizers. The struggle against apartheid was also overwhelmingly nonviolent, despite the launch of the armed struggle to force the bloody apartheid regime to the negotiation table. The civil rights movement was characteristically nonviolent, in spite of the violence that was visited upon the activists and despite the fact that some of the activists armed themselves in agreement with the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa took the African philosophy of nonviolence beyond the level of resistance to the level of governance as a more effective response to wrongdoing than punitive justice. Nnamdi Azikiwe demonstrated a similar nonviolent philosophy in government when he became the premier of the eastern region of Nigeria in 1952 during the period of self-rule under British colonialism. The very first law that Azikiwe abolished was the use of corporal punishment on adults in the courts. The colonizers opposed the abolition on the grounds that if you spared the rod, you would spoil the child. Azikiwe insisted that the proverbial rod in question was the staff of the shepherd, which was used to guide the flock and not to brutalize them (Azikiwe, 1961). He wondered if this nonviolent approach should be extended to children by abolishing corporal punishment in schools, and we answer in the affirmative. What the tradition of nonviolence suggests is that educators in Africa and worldwide must adopt it as a restorative justice model of correction without the violence of corporal punishment.

References

- Adeyemi, A. A. (1994) 'Personal Reparation in Africa: Nigeria and Gambia'. In Zvekic (ed.), *Alternative to Imprisonment in Comparative Perspective*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, pp. 53–66.
- Alhassan, A. B. (2013) 'School Corporal Punishments in Ghana and Nigeria as a Method of Discipline: A Psychological Examination of Policy and Practice'. *Journal of Education and Practice* 4, 27.
- Azikiwe, Nnamdi (1961) *Zik: Selections from the Speeches of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blandford, S. (1998) *Managing Discipline in Schools*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Boyes-Watson, C. and Pranis, K. (2010) *Heart of Hope: A Guide for Using Peacemaking, Circles to Develop Emotional Literacy, Promote Healing and Build Healthy Relationships*. Boston, MA: Centre for Restorative Justice, Suffolk University.
- Braithwaite, J. and Strang, H 2002. 'Restorative Justice and Family Violence'. In H. Strang and J. Braithwaite (eds.), *Restorative Justice and family Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brennan, S. (2014) 'The Goods of Childhood and Children's Rights'. In F. Baylis and C. McLeod (eds.), *Family-Making: Contemporary Ethical Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 29–48.
- Browne, J. A. (2003) *Derailed! The schoolhouse to jailhouse track*. Washington, DC: Advancement Project.
- Costello, B., Wachtel, J. and Wachtel, T. (2010). *Restorative Circles in Schools: Building Community and Enhancing Learning*. Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices.

- Dalgleish, D. (2005) 'Pre-Colonial Criminal Justice in West Africa: Eurocentric Thought versus Africentric Evidence'. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* 1(1), 55–69.
- Elechi, O. (2006) *Doing Justice Without the State: The Afikpo (Ehugbo) Nigeria Model*. New York: Routledge.
- Gershoff, E. T. (2010) 'More Harm Than Good: A Summary of Scientific Research on The Intended and Unintended Effects of Corporal Punishment on Children'. *Law and Contemporary Problems* 73, 33–58.
- Ghana News Agency (2011). *Accra*. Ghana.
- Gheaus, A. (2015) 'Unfinished Adults and Defective Children: On the Nature and Value of Childhood'. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 9(11), February.
- Gopnik, A. (2009) *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Greven, P. (1991) *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse*. New York: Knopf/Random House.
- Hopkins, B. (2004). *Just Schools*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hopkins, B. (2015) 'From Restorative Justice to Restorative Culture'. *Revista de Asistentă Socială, anul XIV*(4), 19–34.
- Ibrahim, G. (1984) 'Students Indiscipline in Secondary Schools in Kano Metropolitan Area, Nigeria'. M.Ed Thesis of the University of Wales, UK.
- Kohn, A. (1996) *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Marshall, C. (2011) 'Justice Restorative'. In J. B. Green (ed.), *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics.
- Moore, D. and O'Connell, T. (1994) 'Family Conferencing in Wagga Wagga'. In G. Johnson (ed.), *A Restorative Justice Reader*. Winchester: Willan Publishing, pp. 212–224.
- Pranis, K. (2003) *Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.
- Purkey, W. W. and Stanley, P. H. (1991) *Invitational Teaching, Learning and Living*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Richards, N. (2010) *The Ethics of Parenthood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roberts, J. and Hough, M. (eds.). (2002). *Changing Attitudes to Punishment*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Smith, D., Fisher, D. and Frey, N. (2015) *Better than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- UN (2006) *Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes*. New York: United Nations.
- UNCRC (2001) 'General Comment No.1, Paragraph 11'.
- Yamamoto, E. K. 1997. 'Race Apologies'. *Journal of Gender, Race and Justice* 1, 47–88.