

# PASS IT ON! (AND ON, AND ON...)

Issue 3 - 2022



## SAFE SCHOOLS, FREE OF VIOLENCE

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# DECIDING TO START A FAMILY (OR NOT)



A right and responsibility



Do you want to start a family someday?

**Lila:** Well, I have thought about it and came to the conclusion that it's not for me.

**Reine:** I would love to! I can't wait.

**Bary:** Yes, I'd like to, but I need to be in a position where I can provide for one.



When do you think you will be starting this family?

**Reine:** If I can, as soon as I am an adult. I'm just waiting to be physically, mentally, and emotionally ready for it.

**Bary:** I'll complete my studies first then maybe work for a year or two? By then I should have what it takes to start and provide for a household.

Do you plan to have kids immediately after you start your household or wait a bit?

**Reine:** Immediately, of course! That's the whole point of starting a household, why put it off?

**Bary:** I think I will wait a year or two. As a new couple starting a household we will need some time to establish our relationship and a good home for our kids, that does not happen overnight. Also, it takes quite a bit of savings to have children and raise them!

**How many kids would you like to have?**

**Reine:** Just two - no more for me. Life's tough nowadays, "seven sons and seven daughters" would be a curse instead of a blessing. I would like a little boy and a little girl that we can care well for.

**Bary:** I love a big family so if I am going to have kids, I want lots of them. Maybe five or six? That's why I am studying so hard. Once I get a great job and can provide for all of them, even if I go as far as seven, it should be all right...



**PASS IT ON!**

**EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE:**

- if they want to start a family or not.
- if they want to have children or not.

**THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO START A FAMILY AND/OR HAVE CHILDREN ALSO HAVE A RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE:**

- how many kids they want to have.
- when they want to have them.

**What measures do you plan to take to achieve those plans?**

**Lila:** I will take responsibility and act responsibly. And I will complete my studies so I can be independent and self-sufficient.

**Reine:** I will take due care until I officially am ready to start a family. Then I will do what it takes to adequately space the birth of my children. That way, both the kids and me, their mother, will enjoy good health. Life's not easy, you must face it head on. How many years again is enough spacing between births?

**Bary:** At least two years, I think. In my case, it will depend on how ready our household is to welcome a new member. Once our relationship is strong and we have financial stability, we will take a break from family planning and have a baby. And then we will go back to family planning and so on...

# DECIDING TO START A FAMILY (OR NOT)

## What's in it for us?

WHEN EVERY SINGLE PERSON TAKES RESPONSIBILITY for voluntary family planning - i.e. whether they will start a family or not; have children or not, and if so, when and how many - then:

- They can pursue and prolong their education,
- They can secure work that aligns with the goals they have set for themselves,
- They can enjoy every stage of life, i.e., childhood, adolescence, and adulthood,
- They can be a stable pillar of their family if and when they start one, and
- They can ensure a better life now and for generations to come.



## PASS IT ON!

- When children pursue and complete their education, especially secondary school, they, their family, and their community reap **lasting health and development benefits**. Sadly, many children do not go to school because they are exposed to violence and sexual abuse in the school environment.
- When schools are safe and violence-free, more children can pursue their education and become **well-rounded individuals**. Girls and women with higher education levels are often the ones that manage to delay their time of marriage and pregnancy and adopt healthy behaviors.
- When individuals access voluntary family planning and improved opportunities in life, the benefits ripple through families and communities, and across society and generations. This contributes to **a more prosperous nation** where every single person can have a happy life and family.

## DECIDING TO START A FAMILY (OR NOT)

A right protected under Law #2017-043



**T**HE DECISION TO START A FAMILY OR NOT, have children or not, and where applicable, their number and timing, is a right protected under the Madagascar law.

Article 3 of Law #2017-043 clearly states that the choice of if, when, and how many children to have is a fundamental right.

This right applies to everyone in Madagascar and cannot be denied to anyone for any reason. Anyone in Madagascar is entitled to exercise this right regardless of their skin color, age, gender, wealth, creed, and ethnicity.



- **It is our right to speak up in the face of challenges.**
- **It is our right to share our ideas for improvement.**
- **It is also our right to ask about the realization of this law!**

**Share your knowledge!**

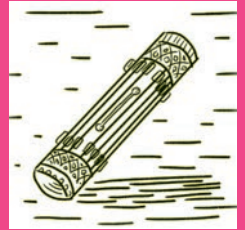
**PASS iT ON!**

# ViOLENCE

## The right to live a life free of violence

### ARTICLE 8.

Every person has a **RIGHT** to be protected from all forms of violence.



The abovementioned article is found in Law #2017-043 as well. Besides protecting every single person's right to freely decide all matters regarding their own family and children (or lack thereof), this law also **protects people from all forms of violence.**

It clearly establishes the right to feel safe and live violence-free as a **human right**. This means that every human being has a right to feel safe and to live a peaceful life free from suffering and abuse.

**All forms of violence are wrong because they are a violation of a person's human rights. Violence should never be condoned**

**NO MATTER WHAT THE REASON.**

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# Forms of violence

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## What exactly is violence?

Words or actions that **harm others** is violence. Violence can be physical, sexual, and emotional in form.

Often, the physical form comes to mind first when we think of violence – this is because we can often see the effects of physical violence on a victim's body.



However, emotional and sexual violence are **sometimes even more common** and can be just as harmful.

## So, what can violence look like?



- **Physical violence** includes hitting, spanking, kicking, pinching, and throwing objects.
- **Sexual violence** includes forcing a person to perform sexual acts and touching or talking about a person's body without their permission.
- **Emotional violence** includes bullying, teasing, swearing at, or putting someone down, and neglecting or ignoring their needs.



All these types of violence are harmful. They all **damage a person's health and well-being and ability to live a safe and happy life.**



## EDUCATION, NOT PUNISHMENT

Mr. Fetra was on his way to school when the sound of an old television caught his attention. He immediately identified the song that the national television was broadcasting and the voice of the duet that would follow the strumming of the guitar. He paused and listened in.

“The bell is ringing, the class begins,...”

He glanced at the documents he was carrying. The title read: “New school policy”. The parents’ association, school officers, and teachers were indeed meeting that afternoon to discuss the new school policy. Mr. Fetra was in charge of facilitating the meeting.

He had had an almost sleepless night, playing over and over his brazen intervention in his mind, how he stood up in the middle of the crowd and challenged the majority of the school staff and students’ parents by declaring that the current student punishment system was inappropriate. He had insisted that it was not okay to use physical or verbal violence on the students.

The room drowned in a buzz as teachers and parents hurried to shout their protests and views on the matter. Some argued that that was always the way education was conducted. That was the collective experience of all



schoolchildren and they turned out all right. Why the sudden need for change?

Some even claimed that was the Malagasy way of educating children!

However, Mr. Fetra stood his ground.

“Those kids are the adults of tomorrow, he said with force, we need to foster them not damage them. I agree that they need discipline and structure, but we need to find other ways, positive ways. They are like buds - no bud grows into a fruit if you slap and pour acid on it. When your crops sprout, what do you do? You water them, keep them in the shade, put in some fertilizer, keep diseases and pests away. Why should we act differently with our very own children, our offspring, the flesh of our flesh? Aren't they more precious to us than those crops? I would like to highlight that our job as teachers is to educate not punish. Let me say that again, our job is to educate not punish!”

To Mr. Fetra's surprise, the principal stood up and publicly gave him her support. The buzzing in the room took a different direction and ultimately, it was decided to hold another meeting to agree on a new school policy.

Physical and emotional punishment is indeed not an effective way to change bad behavior, in fact, it

## TOLL-FREE NUMBER

**If any of us are experiencing any type of violence, anywhere, call the toll-free number**

**147 or 813.**

Find a phone, then call the number **147 or 813** - it is free to call, and no charge is required. Tell them what you have seen or experienced; they are always willing to help you and listen to you. **Don't worry, it's confidential, too!**

## CAN YOU GUESS?

- What is the title of the song that Mr. Fetra heard on his way to school?
- Who is the singer?
- Can you sing it to the end? Here is the beginning:

“The bell rings,  
Class begins,  
Page one of your reading books.”

**Go on now!**

## WHY IS THAT?

**1 STUDENT OUT OF 2  
HAVE SAID THEY HAVE  
EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE  
IN SCHOOL.\***

**WHY IS VIOLENCE SO  
HIGHLY PREVALENT IN  
OUR SCHOOLS?**

**WHAT CAN WE DO TO IM-  
PROVE THE SITUATION?**

\* Results from a 2018 national study done by UNICEF Madagascar and the Ministry of Population and Social Services.

shows children that violence against others is acceptable. When teachers demonstrate respect for children's human dignity and integrity, children learn to respect themselves and others.

When students are disciplined in a positive and non-violent ways, they learn that conflict can be resolved without undermining this respect. This fosters mutual understanding and trust between students and teachers.

And this was the guiding principle that Mr. Fetra had subscribed to in his teaching and had made his excellent reputation in all the schools where he had worked.

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His determination to teach differently did not come by chance, it was rooted in his life experience. As a child, Fetra once had a violent teacher. He and his classmates seldom dared to raise their hands to answer questions because if they ever got it wrong, the teacher would hit them with the ruler or berate them harshly. In this teacher's eyes, students fell in two categories. Those who had adequate supplies and got good grades were well taken care of. On the other hand, those in difficulty, whether in terms of school supplies or performance, barely existed in the classroom. If ever he



acknowledged their existence, it was usually to put them down.

Fetra happened to feature in the first category because his parents made his education a priority even though they were no better-off than most regular people in their village. His dad held back on his hobbies and his mom sold crops at the market so they could afford adequate school supplies for him and his younger siblings.

None of the children could leave home for school unless they had finished their share of morning cassava to make sure an empty stomach would not distract them from their lessons. And before they could rush outside to play in the evening when they came back home, they first had to finish the next day's homework.

His classmate, Lesabotsy, on the other hand, sadly fell in the second category. Things were grim at home and school did not inspire any better prospects in his heart or mind but made things even worse.

Fetra never forgot how Lesabotsy's cheeks went deep red with shame as he hurried to slip back his battered schoolbook in his school bag. How distress filled his eyes when he realized the teacher did not know even his name. How he tiptoed to the back of the room, to the bench by the door, when he understood he did not matter in class.

Fetra racked his mind on a way to help him. But they were both kids, what could he actually do? Lesabotsy frequently skipped school that year and the following year, he did not show up. It appeared that Fetra was the only one to notice his absence and this saddened him further.

He promised himself he would become a teacher someday and would use a different teaching approach - he would correct without punishing, speak respectfully instead of scolding, guide instead of berating, offer support not criticism, seek agreements with students instead of ordering them around, and he would never, ever beat them up or use any form of violence against them.

Mr. Fetra took the song he heard along the way as an encouragement from above and this gave him the strength to stand firm in front of everyone at the school meeting where the new school policy was decided.

The policy covered all forms of harassment and violence, prohibiting all of them, while setting a clear discipline. Discipline, Mr. Fetra pointed out, not punishments. It also emphasized the training of teachers in positive discipline methods. It established a safe and confidential reporting system (that



**It's everyone's right to feel safe. No form of violence is acceptable and blame for violence should never be placed on the victim.**

**VIOLENCE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE ANYTIME OR ANYWHERE!**

### **Training for our teachers next week!**

#### **Learn all about positive discipline, including tips like:**

1. Set the classroom rules at the start of the year.
2. Have consistent expectations.
3. Set goals at the beginning of class.
4. Appropriate behavior should be reinforced.
5. Remain neutral during conflicts.
6. Search for the root cause of the misbehavior.
7. Student dignity matters.
8. Create individual plans for students.
9. Use praise.
10. Model appropriate behaviors.
11. Provide students with different choices.
12. Remove objects in the environment that cause distractions.
13. Listen to students.

all learners and teachers are aware of) for incidents of violence.

And lastly a method for learners and parents to report incidents of violence confidentially and without fear was implemented.

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At the end of the meeting, a person lingered at the door.

"Fetra?"

Mr. Fetra looked up. His eyes widened. Could this be his childhood friend Lesabotsy? Twenty years later?

"It's really you, Fetra," Lesabotsy went on as he approached and extended his hand.

Mr. Fetra grabbed the hand. He could not say a thing.

"Are you a teacher here?" Lesabotsy asked, grinning.

Mr. Fetra recovered his speech.

"Yes, I teach here. I teach the seventh- and eighth graders. What about you? What are you doing here?"

"Seventh-graders?" exclaimed Lesabotsy. "Dimby is my kid!"

Mr. Fetra also voiced his surprise. "Such a coincidence!"

"Dimby is lucky," added Lesabotsy, folding both of his hands over Mr. Fetra's. "Dimby is so lucky to have a teacher like you."

Neither of them could find any more words to say so they just stood there staring at each other.

“Thank you, my friend,” said Lesabotsy at last and then he left.

Mr. Fetra felt like a load of bricks had been lifted off his shoulders as he watched adult Lesabotsy walk out of the school gate. A sense of relief washed over him, and he promised himself he would give Dimby what he wish he could have given Lesabotsy decades ago - **a safe and violence-free school environment, a place to thrive and learn comfortably, care and support and guidance, and mutually agreed regulations...**

He knew deep in his heart that that was the way the school was going to give rise to a next generation of well-rounded adults and curb the number of children dropping out of school or skipping it.

**THE END**

### **VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL IS FORBIDDEN BY THE LAW**

The Ministry of Education specifically works towards the mental, physical, moral, civic, and artistic development of every student. When students experience violence – whether it is physical, sexual, or emotional – they do not grow and develop to their full potential.

That's why **the Ministry condemns physical discipline in schools** with Article 11 of Memorandum #5246-96 (1996) and Memorandum #234/MEN/SG (2017).

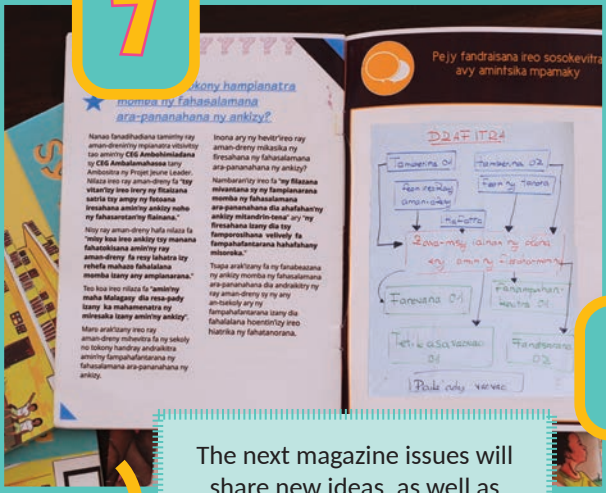
### **WHAT ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL?**

Does your school encourage learners and parents to report violence?

Does it provide a discreet and safe way for learners to do this?

**What else could your school do to ensure that learners are free from violence?**

7



The next magazine issues will share new ideas, as well as thoughts from other communities AND national decision-makers.



1

Pick a magazine issue. Read and discuss it!

Something challenging  
 Got ideas for improved services  
**SHARE THEM!**  
 Let's get in touch and discuss through **PASS IT ON!**



6

We will use the common ideas from a new magazine, this time with national decision-makers

They will read and see our ideas. This will help them make new and improved services.



2



Share your ideas, comments, and suggestions on the comment paper provided.

3



Return the magazine with your comments and take another issue!

? SPEAK UP!

ment?

discuss

4

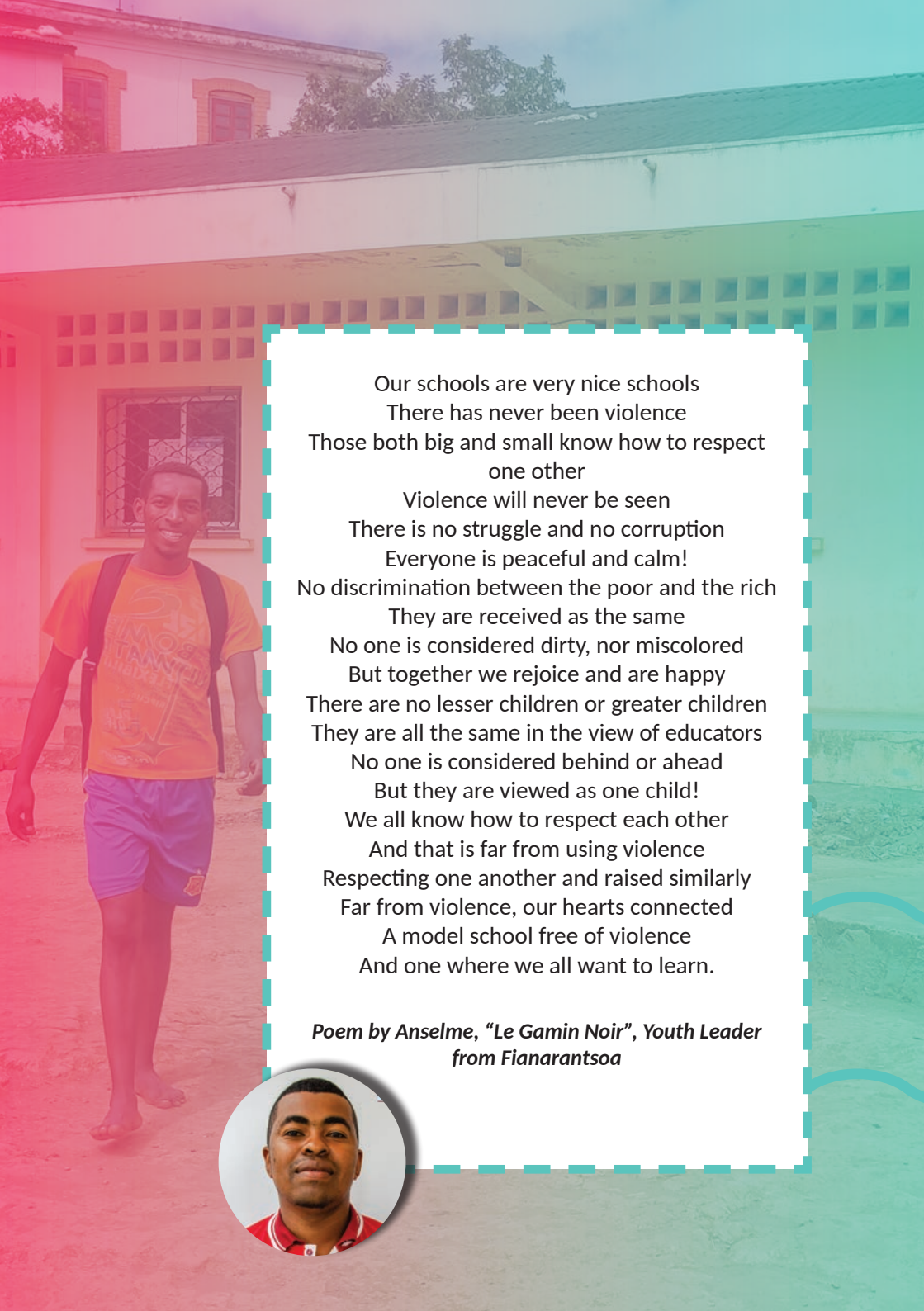


ideas to make  
for national  
s.

5



All of your comments will be combined into common themes and ideas.

A young man with a backpack is walking in front of a school building. The building has a white facade with a grid pattern of windows. The man is wearing a yellow t-shirt and blue shorts. The background is a mix of red and green colors.

Our schools are very nice schools  
There has never been violence  
Those both big and small know how to respect  
one other  
Violence will never be seen  
There is no struggle and no corruption  
Everyone is peaceful and calm!  
No discrimination between the poor and the rich  
They are received as the same  
No one is considered dirty, nor miscolored  
But together we rejoice and are happy  
There are no lesser children or greater children  
They are all the same in the view of educators  
No one is considered behind or ahead  
But they are viewed as one child!  
We all know how to respect each other  
And that is far from using violence  
Respecting one another and raised similarly  
Far from violence, our hearts connected  
A model school free of violence  
And one where we all want to learn.

***Poem by Anselme, "Le Gamin Noir", Youth Leader  
from Fianarantsoa***

