# Project Name:

Promoting a safe, secure and positive school environment.

**Objective:**

Reducing the prevalence of violence in schools and promote a school environment that is safe and secure that promotes learning and positive development among students.

**Background:**

Youth Violence typically includes persons between the ages of 10 and 24, although pathways to youth violence can begin in early childhood. School violence is a subset of youth violence, and is the intentional use of physical force or power, against a person with the behaviour likely to cause physical or psychological harm.  While school violence may not have been a critical problem in Trinidad and Tobago a decade or so ago, it has assumed a high profile in many of the schools in Trinidad. It wears many faces and ranges from well-planned gang activity, through bullying and intimidation, to theft and verbal slurs. It incorporates the use of knives, cutlasses, ice picks, and even guns. It is perpetrated against teachers, students, administrators, and even security personnel. Bullying can occur in-person and through technology. Electronic aggression or cyber-bullying is bullying that happens through email, chat rooms, instant message, a website, text message, or social media. The question of how to maintain school order has taken up and continues to take up a lot of time, energy, and effort at the administrative levels of the education hierarchy. It has become increasingly clear that bullying in schools is a serious, and insidious, form of violence that plagues the school system. There is also building empirical evidence of the consequences of its ill effects. Those who bully are more likely to drop out of school, use drugs and alcohol, as well as engage in subsequent delinquent and criminal behaviour.

According to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), research shows that prevention efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and even students – can reduce violence and improve the overall school environment. No one factor in isolation causes school violence, so stopping school violence involves using multiple prevention strategies that address the many individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that influence the likelihood of violence. Restorative Justice seeks to build communities of care around individuals while holding people accountable and not condoning harmful behaviour. It is a philosophy based on a set of principles for responding to harm and wrongdoing. It is victim-centred, and also focuses on offender accountability to those who were harmed. UNDP proposes to introduce a National Anti-School Violence Project using the philosophy of Restorative justice (RJ), and with specific focus on various levels/ target groups. Some of the proposed strategies include:

* Using school rules and behaviour management techniques in the classroom and throughout the school to detect and address bullying by providing consequences for bullying.
* Preparation of a school anti-bullying policy, and enforcement.
* Promoting cooperation among different professionals and between school staff and parents.
* Promote positive relationships between students and their prosocial peers, teachers, and families can be critical assets in promoting youth’s well-being and preventing school violence.

**Project Activities:**

**Output 1: Build the capacity of educators, and students to cope with and respond to deviant behaviour in schools**

1. Provide educators with training and support to better meet the diverse needs of students, providing opportunities to actively engage families, and creating open communication and decision-making processes.
2. Design and implement a programme to deliver training of students in emotional self-awareness and control, self-esteem, anger coping (cognitive behavioural training (modelling, role play, problem solving, and positive reinforcement), positive social skills, social problem-solving, conflict resolution and teamwork.
3. Trained Students as Peer Mediators to help resolve conflict among perpetrators and victims as well as train other students.
4. Enhance parent involvement in both academic and social aspects of their children’s school experiences - including involving parents in prevention programmes.

**Output 2: Promote a peaceful and safe school environment**

1. Establish a website and toolkit on resources that would provide guidelines and best practices for dealing with violence towards teachers, intimidation and bullying and violence among students.
2. Enhance the physical features of the school environment that could reduce violence include increasing natural surveillance, such as having windows at entrances and low or no shrubbery that does not block visibility, and effectively managing access to the building with well-marked entrances and exits that are continually monitored.
3. The project will focus on a dynamic school education campaign to ensure that there is a better understanding of the messages and signals it emanates which may promote or have negative effects.

**Project Budget:**

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| Timeline | Activity | Budget |
| 2017 | Training for teachers, students, security personnel and other school staff and creation of toolkits | 25,000 |
| 2018 | Implement a school education campaign using a variety of communications tools and channels not limited to social media, website, posters and fliers and banners, role play etc | 25,000 |
|  | Upgrade school environment | Cost share / PPP |

**Target group:**

Pilot programme in three secondary schools in Trinidad

**Key partners:**

Ministry of Education, National Parent / Teachers Association (NPTA), and Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teaches Association (TUTA).