GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN
“There are no bad boys. There are only bad environments, bad examples, bad thinking”
– Father Edward Flanagan (Founder of Girls and Boys Town)

Supporting: Psycho-social learning

Area of operation
Western Cape, Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, North West, Free State, Limpopo & Mpumalanga

Background
The story of then ‘Boys Town’ in 1958, now Girls & Boys Town since 2004, is one of the most heart-warming tales of human endeavor of the 20th century.

The Girls & Boys Town journey has been a tale of everyday life reflected in many societies of the world where the tragedy of fear, loss, despair, abuse and neglect is superseded with the triumph of faith, courage and hope that change the way we care for children. Its legacy is about fulfilling dreams, bettering lives and helping youth to shine.

Today the organisation consists of four major national service divisions:

1. A Residential Service Division that provides residential care to over 350 youth on any given day from all communities in eight nationally located residential centres.

2. A Training and Education Services Division that provides:
   - Structured training workshops through the three National Training and Resource Centres that provide training services in their regions and surrounding provinces to educators, Principals, School Management Team members and other professionals such as Psychologists and Social workers.
   - Direct youth education services via four national Girls and Boys Town operated Learning Support Centres (small intensive ‘remediation’ class settings) for learners who are struggling in mainstream educational classes, either due to educational/remedial difficulties or challenging classroom behaviours (thus at risk of losing their school placements).

3. A Family Services Division – The Girls and Boys Town national mobile Family Services Units comprise family workers who work directly with families, in all communities including the most deprived, in ensuring stronger family relationships and bonds and avoiding family disintegration and separations.

4. Evaluation and Research Division – This nationally functioning team is charged with the responsibility of being guardians of the quality, integrity and effectiveness of all Girls and Boys Town models, services and programmes.

Youth, discipline, classroom management

Contact details:
GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN
☎ 011 482 2655 ☭ gptr@gbtown.org.za
🌐 www.girlsandboystown.org.za/

The best way to create a Well-Managed Class-room, is to help the learners learn productive ways of managing their own behavior and interacting with others.
Supporting: Psycho-social learning

What does it do?
State authorities and educators have consistently identified discipline as one of the biggest problems facing South African schools. When educators have to focus on controlling learner behaviours, rather than on teaching, learning inevitably suffers. Similarly, it can be safely assumed that learners who tend to disrupt the class also pose difficulties for their parents at home. In fact, parents constantly seek answers from educators for the management of their children. The abolition of corporal punishment and the increase in the ratio of students to teachers means that schools have to find new and creative ways of instilling and managing discipline. Girls and Boys Town has had many years of experience in working with youth in both residential and educational contexts and have developed a holistic approach to dealing with discipline that involves parents, teachers, students and other role players. This information is trained to schools through the Well-Managed Classroom Workshops.

How it works
The Well-Managed Classroom workshop is specifically designed to assist teachers to create and maintain a classroom environment that minimalizes the impact that misbehaviour has on teaching and learning. It promotes positive learner behaviour in the classroom, enables educators to focus on teaching and builds strong learner-educator relationships. Teachers are equipped with the ability to take control of their classrooms. The programme, which was introduced by Girls and Boys Town in 2002 in Western Cape schools, positively enhances educator job satisfaction and thus increases the likelihood that skilled and experienced educators remain in the field.

The programme is presented as a two-day workshop that covers four core topics:

Social Skills Curriculum: this curriculum provides the foundation for a structured educational approach to the socialization of school-age learners, helping students to exercise self-control and manage their own behaviour.

Teaching Interaction: While the Social Skills identify what to teach, the Teaching Interaction guides how to teach, using specialized approaches similar to the direct instructional techniques and structured role-play activities.

Motivation Systems: It is a process that includes giving positive consequences when the learner performs desired behaviours so that newly acquired behaviour can be strengthened. Learners are motivated to learn without extrinsic rewards.
Supporting: Psycho-social learning

**How it works continued**

**Administration Intervention:** this topic allows school administrators and the School Management Team to function as effective change agents in response to more serious or continuing school discipline problems. Research indicates that the use of the model helps to increase the amount of time learners spend on task and decreases the number of office referrals.

Above all, the model helps school communities to formulate proactive plans to decrease disruptive behaviours in the classrooms, thus increasing academic time.

**Successes**

- For 56 years Girls and Boys Town has turned the behaviours of young people around from what seemed hopeless in communities and families.
- They have a proud record of having worked with 11080 Educators nationally and impacted on more than 345 190 learners.
- They have launched boys and girls Family Homes in Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and Western Cape to continue breaking the barriers in the regions.

**Challenges**

- The success achieved with the schools trained so far has created great interest and demand for the programme in schools. With the support of corporate partners, Girls & Boys Town intends working with and training even the most disadvantaged schools in rural areas, where we currently have a waiting list of deserving schools.
- Inadequate resources to sustain the already trained schools/institutions.

**Key development findings/innovations**

- When learners are motivated to learn and they feel good about the classroom environment and the relationship they have with the Teacher, they can manage themselves and accept responsibility for their behaviour. They feel empowered to improve, then and only then can one effectively teach and learners truly learn.
- When working with troubled youth, respect and role-modelling have a much more positive impact on them than mere words.
- Using a strength-based approach when dealing with challenging behaviours enables the learners to acquire life-skills and become good self-managers.
- There is no such thing as a bad boy/girl, only bad environments, bad thinking, bad company and bad upbringing.

Contact details: PMGP via The General Manager - GM South Africa Foundation: PO Box 1137, Port Elizabeth, 6000 041 403 2528 041 453 3478 fndgmsa@iafrica.com