



Africause Knife culture Community Approach

Tackling the issue of knife culture among schoolchildren requires a comprehensive, community-driven, and evidence-based approach. Africause can draw from international best practices and adapt them to local conditions in Victoria to address this pressing problem effectively. Here's an outline of strategies and approaches:

Africause Strategies and Approaches

1. **Community Engagement and Awareness Campaigns**
 - Partner with schools, local councils, and community leaders to organize workshops and forums focused on the dangers of knife crime.
 - Launch media campaigns featuring testimonials from affected families and communities to humanize the issue and raise awareness.
 - Collaborate with cultural organizations to address underlying factors such as social alienation, peer pressure, and cultural disconnection.
2. **Youth Mentorship Programs**
 - Establish mentorship programs pairing at-risk youth with positive role models from their community.
 - Train mentors to provide guidance, emotional support, and alternative pathways for dealing with challenges, emphasizing conflict resolution and self-confidence.
3. **School-Based Prevention Initiatives**
 - Partner with schools to implement anti-violence education programs that teach conflict resolution, anger management, and the consequences of carrying knives.
 - Encourage peer-led initiatives where students take a leading role in advocating for a safe, knife-free school environment.
4. **Crisis Intervention Teams**
 - Work with schools and community hubs to establish rapid-response teams to address incidents of knife violence and support affected students and families.





- Provide counselling services to victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of knife crime to break cycles of violence.
5. **Collaboration with Law Enforcement**
 - Advocate for community policing models to build trust between law enforcement and local communities.
 - Facilitate joint initiatives with police focused on early intervention rather than punitive measures.
 6. **Alternative Pathways and Skills Training**
 - Organize workshops in sports, arts, music, and vocational training to engage young people positively and reduce idle time that can lead to antisocial behaviour.
 - Offer scholarships or support for young people to access further education or employment opportunities.

International Examples

1. **Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)**
 - Scotland successfully reduced knife crime by treating it as a public health issue. The VRU implemented education campaigns, youth diversion programs, and extensive collaboration between law enforcement, health services, and community organizations.
 - Key success: A significant drop in knife crime and youth violence by addressing root causes and changing societal attitudes.
2. **London's "Knife Crime Strategy"**
 - Introduced school outreach officers, knife amnesties, and anonymous reporting systems.
 - Focused on targeted interventions for high-risk youth, combined with community-based programs.
3. **New York's Community Policing Model**
 - Community policing initiatives and after-school programs successfully decreased gang-related knife violence by creating safer neighbourhoods and building trust with law enforcement.

Recommendations for Immediate Action

1. **Develop a Multi-Stakeholder Taskforce**





africause
Youth and Community Services

*Not all African Australians are
with Africause, but Africause is
with all African Australians*



- Bring together Africause, schools, law enforcement, parents, and youth to design and implement tailored interventions.
2. **Create Safe Zones**
 - Establish safe spaces in schools and communities where young people can share their experiences and access support without judgment.
 3. **Launch Anonymous Reporting Systems**
 - Enable students to report concerns about peers carrying knives anonymously, ensuring confidentiality and rapid intervention.
 4. **Advocate for Policy Reform**
 - Work with policymakers to address systemic issues, such as social inequality and access to education, that contribute to knife culture.

These combined strategies, grounded in community involvement and learning from international success stories, can help Africause make significant progress in curbing knife culture and protecting children in Victoria.

