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Introduction

The social life and very especially the progress in the acquisition of the skills to recognize our own individuality, at the same time as the need of establishing positive relationships with others, has become one of the great educational challenges within this global society that requires people to be supportive and understanding to each other more than ever. In fact, the legislation that encourages to build an only educational European space, has as one of its challenges to provide all of the children, teenagers and youths with social and emotional competencies, with the purpose that they achieve to be educated as real citizens with a cosmopolitan view of the world they have to live in, as well as to govern under the principles of democracy. This praiseworthy aim is a task for every country, every community and institution in charge of education: families, schools and the overall society.

Institutions do as much as they can to achieve it, but still it has not been possible to avoid that the conflict, the diversity of interests, even the injustice or incompetence have reduced the range of social problems that affect our youths. One of the problems – not the only and maybe not the most extended one, but obviously serious and worrisomely- is the problem of the School Bullying and Violence (SBV). This problem is present in all of the school institutions and although a lot has been made since it was admitted as a real, assessed fact with negative effects on the pupils involved in it as well as on the institutions that see their quality of living together affected, it has not been eliminated at all.

The project of educational research-innovation carried out by the European network that works under the name of VISIONARIES-NET (http://www.bullying-in-school.info), have wanted to contribute with this e-book to publish their work focused on preventing and reducing the SBV. The result of this work, where not only researchers and educators from the VISIONARIES-NET have participated, but a wide range of web surfers form different professional and scientific origins, is the document we are publishing now in E-book format. Within our project that lasted for two long years, we have tried to emphasize the analysis of the roles played by different agents for the solution for the SBV problem: from local representatives, to the media, the providers of Internet resources as well as academics and scientists.

Through the two years working in the net we have studied in depth the knowledge and the search of educational strategies to prevent, palliate and stop any type of School Bullying and Violence, with the online conference format and helped by some analysis instruments, such as the Delphy model, Within this process we have not only focused the conventional ways of these perturbing phenomena, but also in a very especial way the new types of SBV, as the one called cyberbullying, which is starting to emerge under the cover of new technologies provided by the virtual knowledge and technology society, to what our project has dedicated an especial attention.

As we have mentioned, the result of the work done is specified now and offered to all of those who have contributed to make it and to all the new visitors of our virtual room. It has the format of a virtual document that as any former book, present an structure in chapter that include the content, once it is analyzed and classified, of each one of the online conference held for the two years of virtual life of the VISIONARIES-NET project. But this book has further implications than presenting a sum of the contents of the conferences. According to this, in every chapter we have tried to check all the existing information about every topic, reflect about the main critical issues linked to the phenomenon itself and to the performance against SBV problems and to add particular experiences of either applied work or research. All of this with the perspective each author provides from his or her experience with regard to the topic itself.

Within the first chapter we have made under the Dr. Mora-Merchán's cooperative responsibility and me, with the appreciable help from the rest of the members of the network, very especially from the coordinator of the project Mr. Thomas Jäger, we tried on the one hand to offer a current synthesis of the psychological and social nature of the SBV phenomenon and of the state of the subject, in the scientific terms as well as in the educational ones. On the other hand, in the first chapter we present an analysis about the new forms of School Bullying and Violence, focused, above all, on cyberbullying, happy slapping and dating violence phenomena, since they have had a stronger repercussion in the media. Here we checked the main researches about each one of these problems, the levels of incidence they present within the young population and the consequences they provoke in the people involved in them. We also discuss about the connexion between every one of them and the conventional bullying episodes.

The second chapter, in charge of Thomas Jäger from the team of the Centre for Educational Research of the University of Koblenz-Landau in Germany, is directly focused on the intervention in SBV situations from the Internet resources for that. After an introduction about what this medium means and its overall features, they check, from a critical point of view, the current and potential uses Internet offers, to whom is in search of help (pupils, parents or teachers), as well as who wants to offer it in a fight against bullying. Within this chapter have been selected, as an example, some of the initiatives of different nature that clearly show how proposals based on the Internet can be carried out to combat the SBV problem.

The third chapter, presented by Agnès Pradet from the French Forum for Urban Safety in Paris, deals with the role local authorities has at the time of proposing, planning and running interventions against School Bullying and Violence problems. Within this matter they thoroughly reflect about the sense and the importance that the local authorities themselves get involve in the problem solution, they study the ways such intervention can be done together with the main questions that worry the local authorities at the time of confronting SBV problems: such as determining the existence of school violence problems, how to

measure the effectiveness of the actions taken to combat the problem or how to establish networks of permanent collaboration with other institutions. The chapter ends with the presentation, as an exemplum, of a collection of good practices already "in route".

The forth and last chapter, elaborated by Monica Cugler and Oana Mateescu of the Concept Foundation in Bucarest, is focused on the role of the media in an overall perspective. Firstly the review the main data gathered in the surveys about the media influence, especially the television, on the violent behaviour; from a negative point of view, since there is a belief that a not very clear or biased broadcasting may increase these phenomena appearance, as well as from a positive view, outstanding their educational and preventive role when they inform conveniently performing as trainers of the people. Secondly they analyze how the media can affect the problem according to the forms the problem is presented. In a third place some initiatives taken to reduce the presence of school bullying and violence behaviour are reviewed. Finally some ideas about the possibilities the media have in order to encourage actions developed to combat school bullying and violence problems are proposed.

We will conclude the presentation of this work being very grateful to the participation of numerous Internet surfers within this project, that with their own worries for the problem –scientific, educational, or simply citizen- have contributed to the development of this virtual scene, of this public square that Internet is nowadays, where sometimes had happened a calmed refection, sometimes a heated discussion and always a respectful and understanding communication about a problem that worries all of us and that is in everybody's hand our contribution to reduce, palliate or eliminate it, if it was possible.

Rosario Ortega On behalf of the VISIONARIES-NET team

THE NEW FORMS OF SCHOOL BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

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 - 1. THE APPEARANCE OF NEW FORMS OF SCHOOL BULLYING AND VIOLENCE
 - 2. CYBERBULLYING
 - 3. HAPPY SLAPPING
 - 4. DATING VIOLENCE
 - 5. NEW PHENOMENA OR DIFFERENT FACES OF THE BULLYING PROBLEM?
 - 6. REFERENCES

1. THE APPEARANCE OF NEW FORMS OF SCHOOL BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

More than ten years ago, we wrote an article that presented and analyzed the classroom as a privileged scene where the affective and moral life of the students is developed (Ortega and Mora-Merchán, 1996). From this text we were defending that the school, and therefore the classroom, turns into a space of interaction and learning where the individuals who take part in it, by means of the activities that are proposed and the networks of interpersonal relationships that are established, are capable of constructing their, and others' who are around it, development. This framework, formed and defined by the curriculum, reflex of the values that the society assigns to the school, is a suitable context for the relational processes that develop the systems of living together, and as a consequence the keys that will help to the appearance and authority of the emotions, affections and values that the students put in at stake, to take place in it, not only during the stage of education but along all his/her life, in their personal and social life, if this distinction was really possible.

When we analyze this scene, we indicate that inside it there were taking place the positive effects we are talking about, but, undoubtedly, this space was also the framework where the problems of relations between students or, in a more extensive way, the problems of *convivencia* arise (Ortega y Martín-Ortega, 2005). Between them we must emphasize here, the problems of bullying and school violence, due to the deterioration that they suppose of the interpersonal relationships and the development of values opposite to those who are prosecuted inside the educational context.

From the theoretical approach that we were defending then and that we still support, these violence phenomena must be interpreted as the result of the participation in interpersonal processes that include different degrees of the same structural violence of society and become present in the attitudes and activities that are developed within the classroom (Ortega and Mora-Merchán, 1996). This way, in the school the model of rules and values prevailing in the society is repeated, to a great extent, beginning to participate therefore the abuse, the social exclusion, the competitiveness, the cruelty or the deception of the relations that are established in it.

With this we do not want to say that these aspects would characterize in a major way the activity and the affective and moral tone of the relations that take place inside the school, either between pupils or between pupils and teachers. Nevertheless, we think that we must recognize that in those cases where the pupils live, permanently, in scenes in which the affections and the relations do not acquire the positive tone that it is entrusted to them in the own educational purposes of the school, it is reasonable to think that the social and moral development that is constructed is going to show the presence of the above mentioned values (Ortega and Mora-Merchán, 1996), although neither this relation is certainly established in a direct form, nor affect all the individuals in the same way. Nevertheless, following the information of the investigations that in the matter exist in the whole world, it seems that it can reach to involve a significant number of students (Spanish Ombudsman, 2007; Ortega and Mora-Merchán, 2000; Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano and Slee, 1999).

At this time, nevertheless, the problem of school bullying and violence has gone further the school institution, generalizing the manifestations of violence to other contexts that looked safe up to a little time ago. Forms of aggression associated with the use of the new technologies, as Internet or mobile phones, or present in the relationships among others, appear in a frequent way in the mass media. It is difficult to summarize in a few lines the reasons that have caused this fact, but we will do an attempt. A first hypothesis supposes that, when a scheme of abuse, domination-submission or violence becomes present in the interactions that are established among the teenagers and young people, it is possible that these end being exported to other spaces or relations where the pupils take part. If it is right, this hypothesis might partly explain, for example, the manifestations of dating violence or phenomena of violence present in relations of flirting and engagement (Howard and Vang, 2003; Schwartz, O'Leary and Kendziora, 1997). Thus, the behavioural and affective-moral patterns based, as we have said, in schemes of domination-submission present in the young nets (and typical of the episodes of bullying), would end generating processes of violence in the young couples, due to the above mentioned relations use to be born and grown in the same scene, that is to say, in the nets where school bullying among peers and violence events take place.

A second explanation, complementary to the previous one, is based on the appearance of new contexts and relational scenes where the students have become a part, aspect that is mainly motivated by the important development experienced by the new technologies and its accessibility to the general population. According to the information of the INE (2006), in 47,83 % of the Spanish residences it is

possible to find a personal computer, in 13,49 % a laptop computer, 34 % has access to Internet and in 80,92 % of the houses there is at least a mobile telephone. These numbers, that besides are demonstrating a clear increase in the last years, up to a point reflect that the presence of new technologies in the daily life are a reality for the families and, therefore, for the students. As the same statistics reflects (INE, 2006), more than the half of the pupils between 10 and 14 years, 54,33 %, has mobile telephone or have acceded to Internet, 65,87 %.

This reality has reached the level that many teenagers and young people not only share with other peers the possibility of relating by means of the net (Hernández Prados and Solano, 2005), but even all their behaviour turns around the same reality, producing what it has been called the e-Generation (Veen, 2002, 2003). Within this label we would be including children, teenagers and young people between 3 and 18 years that use, in a natural and spontaneous way to communicate, technological mechanisms as the television and the remote control, the personal computer or the mobile phone among others (Hernández Prados and Solano, 2006).

Nevertheless, next to the positive values that in a clear way possess the fact of familiarizing themselves in an early way with the technological means with which we are going to have to face along our life (Katz, 2006), the participation in these contexts has meant the appearance of new forms of violence based on the use or abuse of the same ones. If we are allowed to combine the hypothesis that we proposed above with this new reality, the appearance of new scenes of interaction with equal gives the opportunity to the students to develop, in a new space, the same keys that are present in the relations that support with the equal in other contexts of interaction, which would suppose therefore the appearance of manifestations of violence adapted now to the own particularities of this new way. In agreement with this idea, Castells (1999) indicates that the behaviour that is observed in Internet is not any more than the reflex than those who take place in the society.

Along this chapter, we will try to go deeper in the keys of the new forms of bullying and school violence that are arising nowadays, giving special importance to those that are reaching more repercussion in the media given its social significance: the problems of cyberbullying, where we will dedicate a specific paragraph to the phenomenon of the happy slapping, and the episodes of dating violence. Finally, we will think if these new problematic are really ways of bullying or, on the contrary, it is a question of differentiated phenomena.

2. CYBERBULLYING

As we have said, the development of the new technologies, especially those related to Internet, has caused a spectacular increase of the possibilities of establishing links with other people, whether they are close (neighbours, class mates, relatives, etc.) or distant (unknown people until that moment, from distant

geographic locations, etc.). But unfortunately, the appearance of these "online" relations has been accompanied by behaviours marked by the abuse and the violence that have made these interactions not to have always a positive sign.

In Nancy Willard's words (2004, 2006), cyberbullying consists of being cruel with another person by means of sending or publishing harmful material or by involvement in other ways of social aggression using Internet or other digital technologies. The development of this way of violence would turn in a real " social aggression online " (Willard, 2005). Professor Peter Smith (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho y Tippet, 2006) proposes in turn a definition of the problem that places it in direct relation with the more conventional ways of bullying, when understanding that cyberbullying manifestations really answer to the same general phenomenon. Cyberbullying is defined from this approach as an aggressive and intentional behaviour that it is repeated in the time in a frequent way, it is carried out by a group or individual by means of the use of electronic media, and it is focused on a victim who cannot defend him/herself easily (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho and Tippet, 2006). In a similar line, Bill Besley (2005) affirms that the cyberbullying implies the use of the technologies of the information and the communication as a base for an intentional, repeated and hostile behaviour developed by an individual or group to damage others.

At the time of establishing a typology of the cyberbullying we can base on two types of criteria. On one hand to depart from the means that are in use to develop this type of behaviour, that is to say, depending on if they are developed by Internet, mobile telephone or any other way, or by photos, videos, instantaneous messenger, chats, etc. This is the system that among others has chosen Peter Smith's Team (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho and Tippet, 2006), giving as a result a typology with seven well differentiated categories:

- Text messages: for example, sending offensive SMS.
- Sending photos or videos: taken normally with the camera of the mobile and spread later by the same telephones, or by systems of diffusion of images in Internet.
- Phone Calls: especially from the mobile phones.
- Cyberbullying by means of sending emails
- Cyberbullying in chat rooms
- Instantaneous messenger: sending offensive, harmful and/or intimidating messages.
- Websites: designed to damage other person or group.

Nevertheless, some authors (Willard, 2004), because of the level of overlap that exists between all of them (for example, telephones with access to Internet, PDAs with telephone, etc.) they understand that it is difficult to support this differentiation, since not always it is possible to be applied with precision. This circumstance makes that these authors propose as an alternative a taxonomy centred on the type of action that it is developed with independence of the way

that is in an original way for it. In agreement with this principle, we can distinguish seven different types of cyberbullying (Willard, 2005, 2006):

- Flaming: fights, passionate discussions online by means of electronic messages that use a vulgar and offensive language. This type of aggression use to have a sharp beginning and a very fast increase in tone of the discussion.
- Harassment: repeated sending of offensive, disagreeable and / or insulting messages.
- Denigration: to insult or to defame someone online sending rumours, gossips or lies, normally of offensive and cruel type, to damage the image or reputation of someone or his/her relations with other people.
- Impersonation: getting the personal information or the appearance of a person (nicks, passwords, etc.), with the purpose of posing as him or her and making that person look bad, to commit inappropriate acts, to damage his/her reputation or to generate conflicts with his/her friendships.
- Outing and Trickering: to spread someone's secrets, awkward information or images online. In some cases it is possible to cheat someone in order that the same one is the one that spreads them without knowing the repercussion of this information.
- Exclusion: to separate someone in an intentional way from an online group (chats, lists of friends, thematic forums, etc.).
- Cyberstalking: repeated sending of messages that include threats or are very intimidating. It can include the fact that the harassing one registers in activities where the victim takes part so that this one feels persecuted and vulnerable.

Together with the different types of cyberbullying, also it is possible to talk about the cyberthreats as an associate phenomenon. We understand the cyberthreats (Willard, 2005) as the online material that threatens or causes concern about the damage that can become to be inflicted on others or on one self, including the possibility of the suicide. Inside this type of behaviour two levels can be established depending on whether it is a direct threat, or an information that makes think the person who receives about the possibility of a damage.

The incidence of cyberbullying

The cyberbullying problems have experienced an important increment in the last few times, certainly favoured by the every time more extended access to the new technologies as well as by the growing impact in the media. Nevertheless the data of incidence change considerably depending on the studies we consider as references. One of the reasons that affect this fact most is the different level of penetration the new technologies have in the different societies. Together with this reason, another factor, complementary to the other one, is the moment in which the survey is carried out, since, even in the same country, the presence and the access to the new technologies is growing constantly. We should also mention the

different methodologies that have been used to collect the data, which is a variable that contributes to this variability as well. In any case, we think that is relevant now to briefly mention the main data we have up to now, making reference to the moment and the country where every survey has been carried out.

In one of the first studies made to explore the incidence of cyber bullying events in New Hampshire during the 2000 year, they found out that the 6% of the youth surveyed had suffered bullying on line (Thorp, 2004). In Canada the percentage of Internet users that had received intimidations or aggressive messages above others reached 25% (Mnet, 2001). The same percentage, within a sample of teenagers between 11 and 19 years, expressed in the United Kingdom to have suffered some experience of cyber bullying (National Children's Home, 2002). With regard to this survey it is interesting to say that in 2005 the NCH made another survey for tracking the problem; they obtained that the 20% had experienced some kind of cyber-bullying, which meant a reduction compared with the other percentage breaking the generalized tendency of these studies

Oliver & Candappa (2003), within a research that analyzed the bullying problems from a perspective not only focused on cyberbullying events, found out that 4% of the pupils between 12 and 13 years old had suffered aggressions through text messages in their mobile phones. In another research not only focused on cyber bullying, but in healthy habits and conducts at the school Balding (2004) found out that only 1% of the children between 10 – 11 years old had suffered attacks through their mobiles phones,

Beran y Li (2005) discovered in Canada that 21% of the pupils surveyed had suffered cyber bullying in several times, while 69% of them knew someone who had suffered this type of experience. Li, in a further survey (Li, 2006), also taking in this case data about the number of aggressors, found out that almost 25% had been victims of aggressions online, while 17% admitted to have attacked somebody in that way. In this case, the number of people that knew another person that had gone through that type of violence decreased to 53, 6%. In this survey Li also point out the importance of the teenagers' sex to understand the involvement in the problem. According to the outcomes of the investigation, there aren't any differences between boys and girls when they had part in the problem as victims, while if they were aggressors, boys were more frequent.

In the United States, also in a recent study Burgess-Proctor, Patchin e Hinduja (2006), show that 38,3% of their sample admitted that they had been victims of cyberbullying. Although within this group, only a reduced percentage, between 10% and 15% mentioned that they had experienced especially serious types of aggressions (i.e. being directly threatened). In a survey of the same authors (Hinduja y Patchin, 2005), now focusing on the role of the aggressor, they found out that 16% of the cases of the sample declared that having attacked others online. With some more reduced results Ybarra y Mitchell (2004), by interviewing teenagers between 10 and 17 years old by telephone, they found out that 19% of them had participated in a bullying event either as a victim or as an aggressor.

In an exploration carried out in all of the United Kingdom, the outcomes of msn.uk (2006) declare that 13% of the surveyed had suffered cyberbullying. Also in this country, Smith and his colleagues (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho y Tippet, 2006) have found out a higher percentage of pupils that have lived experiences of cyberbullying (22%), although only 6,6% of their sample said that they had suffered it for a long time in the last two months.

The people involved

There is a high level of agreement at the time of categorize the people involved within three main groups. Nevertheless is also mentioned in some papers the presence of those who play a double role of aggressor and victim in a simultaneous way within a group of students identified as involved in cyberbullying within that research. They found out that only 63% behaved as aggressors on line, 21% as victims and 16% as aggressors and victims.

Each of these groups has a complex role in the establishment of the dynamics aggression-victimization that has its own features in relation to the ones established out of the digital setting. Nevertheless, it seems that many of the features of these dynamics look to be similar; i.e. those that develop within the school context; it is supported by the fact that 30% of the victims know personally their aggressors online (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006, Ybarra y Mitchell, 2004) and that 84% of the aggressors know their victims (Ybarra y Mitchell, 2004).

Although this is not the main object of this part, we must confirm here the relation established between bullying in the school and cyberbullying. Li (2006) found out in one of his works the way the aggressors and bully-victims (pupils who play both roles victims and aggressors in a simultaneous way) usually have a higher tendency than the others to maintain the same roles in cyberbullying situations. In the same work they observed that aggressors online have a higher probability than the rest, of being victims of cyberbullying

According to this, Ybarra y Mitchell (2004) found out several resemblances between the aggressors' and aggressors/victims' features and conventional bullying. Among these features stand out the low level of the psycho-social performance of these pupils (Haynie et al., 2001) and their tendency of suffering psychological adjustment (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000). Nevertheless we can also observe typical features in the people involved in cyberbullying events, since in the cases of aggressions on line they last for a longer time than conventional bullying (Ybarra y Mitchell, 2004).

Effects of cyberbullying

Every time we consider the question of the effects of this kind of problem we consider the ones that include threats, sometimes of death, attempted suicide the most dramatic: they normally get more attention by the media and, in consequence, by parents, educators, and the educational administration. Nevertheless we cannot forget that any type of participation in cases of cyberbullying provokes harmful effects in the pupils, since these attacks can damage self-esteem and self-confidence and drive into the appearance of academic problems, difficulties in the establishment of interpersonal relationships and a bad psychosocial adjustment (Manke, 2005). In fact, within a survey carried out by Ybarra & Mitchell (2004) where the effects that cyberbullying had in teenagers and youths were assessed, they found out that those who took part in this problem, regardless of the role they played in it, they had a higher chance than the others of suffering depressive and behavioural problems

In order to understand these effects in a better way, we must consider the general differences that exist between the distinctive features in cyberbullying events when we compare them with the conventional of face to face bullying. Among these features the most relevant ones are:

- There are *no safe places* left where victims may stay far from virtual aggressors.
- A consequence of the first one there is no safe time away from a potential aggression
- There is a wider audience in being bullied by technology, which means a damage in self-image and a weakening of the supporting social network
- The power of the written word in harming is even greater than that of the spoken word as it can be read and re-read.
- Although we have already seen that in a significant number of cases the victims know the bullies, they can easily remain anonymous increasing their impunity
- Cyber bullying is even more difficult to detect by adults than traditional or f-2-f bullying, which means that interventions, when the come, come late.

This set of features makes the effects of the aggressions online to be even more serious in many cases than conventional forms of bullying. According to this we must mention here the data from Smith and colleagues' survey (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho y Tippet, 2006) where they compare the impact received in cyberbullying situations with conventional bullying events:

- Photos and unwanted and later spread films, as well as telephone calls were perceived as more harmful for the victims than having part in conventional forms of bullying.
- Web pages and aggressions through text messages were considered by pupils as harmful as conventional forms of bullying.

• Chat rooms attacks, by means of instantaneous messages or electronic mail were perceived less harmful than habitual types of school bullying.

Supporting this idea, the data of the research carried out by msn.uk (2006) show that 11& of the sample thought the effects of cyberbullying were even more serious than physical aggressions. In the same research, according to other works (Hinduja y Patchin, 2006), they point out ten emotions that victims live frequently most towards this type of event (msn.uk, 2006):

- 1. Upset
- 2. Angry
- 3. Sad
- 4. Scared
- 5. Alone
- 6. Frustrated
- 7. Invaded
- 8. Annoyed
- 9. Hurt
- 10. Depressed

Box 1: INTERVIEW WITH NANCY WILLARD1:

1. How would you define cyberbullying?

The term that is now coming into use among the academic community is "online social aggression." This term encompasses harmful activities that go beyond the traditional boundaries of what is called "bullying." My working definition is: Cyberbullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the Internet or other digital technologies. When communicating to young people I frequently just say "mean kids online."

I have developed a taxonomy of the types of cyberbullying that I hope is helpful:

Flaming: Online "fights" using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.

Harassment: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.

Denigration: "Dissing" someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors

 $^{\rm 1}$ Executive Director of the Center for Safe and Responsible Use of the Internet (http://csriu.org and http://cyberbully.org)

about

person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.

Impersonation: Breaking into someone's account, posing as that person and sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person¹s reputation or friendships.

Outing and Trickery: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online. Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which

is then shared online.

Exclusion: Intentionally excluding someone from an online group, like a "buddy list".

Cyberstalking: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly

intimidating. Engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for her or her safety.

2. Would you say cyberbullying is related to school bullying problem or it would be a different phenomenon?

Most frequently these two activities are related. But it is important to recognize that the relationship may be two ways. Some targets of cyberbullying are also being targeted in school. But in other cases, the person who posts harmful material online may be doing so in retaliation for in harmful treatment he or she is receiving in school. I call the first type "put down" cyberbullying and the second type "get back at" cyberbullying. It is really important for school officials to sort out who is the bully and who is the target in the overall situation.

Also, it is important for school officials to realize that if someone is being harmed online this will most likely impact the school in some negative way.

3. From your point of view, which are the main causes of cyberbullying?

I think there are 3 main causes:

Most bullying behavior is grounded in social status issues. Teens try to enhance their social status by putting others down. I do believe that much of the underlying research on bullying behavior is inaccurate. Much of this work is grounded on Olweus's work and his "bullies" are the "school yard thug" characters. These thugs do exist. But lots more bullying behavior is associated with the "social climber" teens who take great delight in putting

down others simply for not meeting their "standards" or not caring to "play the game" the way these teens think is important. I think the issues related to cyberbullying will force a reevaluation of overall bullying behavior.

Teens are using Internet and cell phone communications to establish and maintain their social connections and their social status. Most often, the incidents of cyberbullying appear to involve students who are the "social climbers," targeting "wannabes" and sometimes targeting "outcasts." The social climbers and wannabes are the students who are communicating with each other in the online environments. Students who are "doing their own thing" are not likely communicating in the same online communities.

Another reason is grounded in the "You can¹t see me. I can't see you" phenomenon. It is just lots easier to rationalize being mean online because you perceive that you are invisible and will not get caught and you cannot clearly perceive the consequences of your actions.

Lastly, there is a pretty strong social norm online: I have the free speech right to say anything I want online, without regard for the harm it might cause.

4. Why cyberbullying can be particular harmful for people involved (if we compare it with other forms of aggression)?

It is possible that the harm caused by cyberbullying may be greater than traditional bullying because:

Online communications can be extremely vicious.

There is no escape for those who are being cyberbullied «victimization is ongoing, 24/7.

Cyberbullying material can be distributed worldwide and is often irretrievable.

Cyberbullies can be anonymous and can solicit the involvement of unknown "friends" so the target may not know whom to trust.

Teens may be reluctant to tell adults what is happening online or through their cell phone because they are emotionally traumatized, think it is their fault, fear greater retribution, or fear online activities or cell phone use will be restricted.

There are reports of cyberbullying leading to suicide, school violence (including one school murder in Japan), school failure, and school

avoidance.

5. Are there any type of cyberbullying more dangerous than others because of their effects?

There really isn't research on this. Obviously, this would depend on the severity and the continuing nature of the harm. My suspicion is that anonymous cyberbullying is likely very emotionally damaging because the young person simply does not know who he or she can trust. Also the more widespread the harmful material, the more damaging.

6. How could we help to stop cyberbullying?

First and foremost, parents need to be engaged in the online activities of their children. (I have a book coming out for parents in less than a month. If it does well in the US and UK, I believe there are plans to translate for other countries).

Second, we need to focus on bystander strategies. Adults are simply not present in these online environments. We need to empower and encourage young people to take personal responsibility for how their peers are being treated online -- by speaking out, helping the target, or reporting to an adult if this does not work or they can't risk becoming personally involved.

Third, we need to empower the targets and potential targets to know not to set themselves up for online abuse and know how to most effectively respond. Young people need to know how important it is not to post material online that can be used against them -- and not to try to hang around online places where people are treating them badly. They must know how exceptionally important it is not to ever retaliate against a cyberbully -- this only gives the bully a "win" and can make them look like part of the problem. They need to know how to stop minor incidents on their own and when they ought to ask for help. Young people must learn how to protect themselves in these situations -- we should not treat them as "victims."

Adults need to know the full range of possible options for stopping the cyberbullying and be willing to work with and listen to the target in regards to which strategies to use. Young people are not going to report the concerns unless and until they know that there are some effective strategies adults can use to stop the harm. So to increase youth reporting, we have to increase adult effectiveness n responding. Generally, the most effective strategy is to download the material and send it to the parents of the cyberbully. Alternatively, school officials could be the ones to contact the parents.

3. HAPPY SLAPPING

Within the different types of cyberbullying, the one with the most social effect is the one called happy slapping. Its importance and features, somehow different to the rest of online aggressions, make us consider this phenomenon independently of the others within this chapter. In Wikipedia (2007) happy slapping is described as an unexpected attack on a victim while the aggressor's mate films what is happening, normally, by means of the camera of a mobile phone, in order to spread it later or play it repetitively. In phrases.com.uk (2007) the aggressor's intention of filming the violent episode and especially the victims' expressions of surprise and fear is pointed out.

Happy slapping expression appears for the first time in January of 2005 within an educational supplement of The Times news paper. The article "Bullies film fights by phone" from Michael Shaw (January 21 of 2005) describes the teachers' growing concern from London schools for the new trend of filming with cameras of mobile phones the bullying events that happens at the schools. In this article, as well as in others of the same newspaper, they point out the way that from isolated, but no less serious, events happened in the south of London at the end of 2004, they had come to an overall phenomenon in the whole country in a little time. From then, the happy slapping phenomenon keeps spreading itself, being every time more frequent within the different countries.

Despite of the name, the aggressions displayed under this modality are not only slaps or glows. Even they have come to film any type of rapes or beatings, which in some unfortunate cases ended with the victim's death. The feature that seems to give an internal coherence to the wide variety of forms of aggressions included within happy slapping, is the attempt on the part of the aggressors of giving the attacks a play look, although, as we have already mention they reach a high level of violence. This assumed recreational intention has often been offered by the aggressors as the last justification of their acts.

Among the features this phenomenon has, we would like to stand out its group character. Within the different types of cyberbullying, the most of them have a nature where aggressions "one against one" dominate, that is to say an aggressor who attacks a person every time. In happy slapping events, on the contrary, they need two aggressors at least, since one of them has to film the aggression performed by the other one. This collaboration hurts the victim even more who perceives a higher number of aggressors and, in consequence, less chances of being able to solve the situation by him or her self.

Happy slapping incidence

People have talked a lot about being living an epidemic with happy slapping phenomenon (Barnfield, 2005), since every time more episodes of this type of violence are coming out to the public and in more countries are appearing cases related to this. Nevertheless, despite of the clear social concern these situations provoke there are not accurate data about the real incidence of happy slapping events that therefore may support this hypothesis.

One of the ways we have to estimate the figure of happy slapping events is checking the data of aggressions where cameras of mobile phones are used either to take pictures of the victims or videos of them. Although happy slapping problems would be included in this type of cyberbullying we also need to stand out that not all of these aggressions have to correspond to happy slapping (i.e. compromising images or videos of the victims, touched up pictures, etc.)

According to Roland's work (Auestad y Roland, 2005; Roland, 2002) about bullying using mobile phones, 4,5% of the boys and 2,2% of the girls have attacked some of their classmates taking pictures of them. In another paper, Smith and colleagues (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho y Tippet, 2006) declare that 6,5% of their sample have been victims of filming pictures or videos of them with their aggressors' mobile phones. Within the last survey, it is interesting to point out that although it wasn't the most frequent way of aggression it was, in deed, the most known by the students, which is to say that it was the one were there was the highest figure of pupils (45,7%) that admitted having seen examples of this type of aggression.

Although the number of people affected is not high, at least not as high as in the other types of cyberbullying, the impact and the spread of this types of aggressions is especially significant, above all through Internet. According to this, the big increase experienced by happy slapping presence in the Web stands out. Barnfield, in the beginning of 2005 (Barnfield, 2005), found 400 pages related to happy slapping in the searcher Google. This figure has increased up to 1420000 nowadays. In Youtube. com there are 2620 videos about happy slapping (5/03/2007) and 2900 in Google (5/03/2007), many of them are violent events spread by this mean.

To the first question raised above about if we were facing an epidemic, data look to answer "no". Nevertheless, it is clear that it is a phenomenon that has raised a great social concern, and with an impact amplified by the use of the Internet as the main mean chosen to spread these types of aggressions.

Happy slapping consequences

There are no direct data about the effects that victims of happy slapping events suffer. Nevertheless, the same as we did when we talked about the incidence of this problem, it is possible to establish some inference starting from the consequences that the victims of cyberbullying feel, especially when they are

photographed or filmed in a video by means of mobile phones. The resemblance in the media used in both types of violent attacks permit us to do that.

According to the results obtained by Smith and his colleagues (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho y Tippet, 2006), within cyberbulling the aggressions where the victim perceives the highest harm are those where pictures or films are spread by the mobile phone. There are several reasons to explain this circumstance. Firstly the aggression is *unexpected*, which makes the victim feel she or he can be attacked at any time. Secondly, the damage that the image of the victim meant by spreading the images where the victim is assaulted or ridiculed, etc. This effect is multiplied with regard to the number of people that have knowledge of the event by images. That is to say that, as more people can access the aggression; the pain and the damage of the victim's self-image and social network will be bigger. The post of the images to the Internet pages together with the diffusion to wider lists of mobile phones, increase the potential effect of the aggression.

The last factor is related to the permanence of what is been experienced in the aggression and the memory of what happened on others' minds. The pictures and films remain through time, they can be recorded for ever and checked and reviewed as many times as they want. On one hand it means that the aggression has no a clear end, and on the other hand, and with regard to this fact, that the pain suffered by the victims go on for a much longer time.

4. DATING VIOLENCE

As we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the keys present in the bad interpersonal relationships established among peers within the school context, sometimes continue within flirts or dating relationships, originating the problem known as dating violence. (Howard y Vang, 2003; Schwartz, O'Leary y Kendziora, 1997). The Department of Justice in Canada (2007) define this phenomenon as the abuse or mistreatment produced between couples that have an intimate relationship or are in the process of having it, excluding those couples that are already living together. The use of this definition means that, although this problem can appear in couples of any age, we are focusing violent events between teenagers and youths couples more than others. In fact the range of age included between 16 and 24 years old is the most prone of suffering this type of violent event (Bureau of Justice, 2000).

This type of violent behaviour displays itself in different ways within the couple relationships. These variations are conditioned, above all, by variables such as the age and sex of the participants (Molidor y Tolman, 1998; Wekerle y Avgoustis, 2003). According to this we must stand out that the girls suffer this type of aggression more, reaching to represent 85% of the total victims of dating violence in some surveys (Bureau of Justice, 2001).

With regard to this, these episodes can happen at different moments of the relationship: when two people start being interested in the other, at the first date, during the relation, after having established an engagement by the member of the couple, or even after having finished the relationship. Although dating violence situations occur within the couple, these events can be performed by a single person or by a group against an only victim (Department of Justice of Canada, 2007)

The dating violence can be displayed in several ways, either through isolated violent behaviours, such as sexual aggressions, or systematic patters of abuse and mistreatment frequently growing their intensity. With these attacks the aggressors try to get power and control on her/his victim, generating, in this way, a strong dynamics based on the harmful patterns of control-submission. The different types of dating violence can be joined in three large dimensions (Lavoie, Robitaille y Hébert, 2000): physical, sexual and psychological abuse. These three types include different kinds of aggressions themselves (Lavoie, Robitaille y Hébert, 2000):

- Physical abuse: it includes any type of aggression that means the use of the strength, regardless of whether any kind of weapon of object is used or not for it and the physical harm produced. Within this group we can include, i.e.:
 - Restraining the activity or the movement of the other person by forth.
 - Shaking de other person by the shoulders or the arms.
 - o Pushing or shoving.
 - o Throwing something hard
 - Kicking
 - o Hitting or slapping.
 - o Hair pulling.
 - o Biting
 - o Choking.
 - o Burning or scalding.
 - Beating
- Sexual abuse: including all the ways of bullying, coercion or sexual aggression.
 - Sexual bullying includes the use of unwanted words or actions with sexual content, normally to offend or humiliate. This behaviour is repeated even after having asked to stop.
 - Sexual coercion means the manipulation of other person or situation, in order to get a sexual relation. The most habitual ways are: threats, the use of drugs, or by ridiculing the victim.
 - The sexual aggression includes any kind of sexual activity without both parts' consent.

- Psychological abuse: words of actions to control, isolate, intimidate, or harm the partner's self-esteem. Among others we can refer:
 - o Being cruel.
 - o Ridiculing or insulting.
 - o Constantly criticizing the other person.
 - o Being excessively jealous and possessive, not allowing the partner to have friends or talk to others.
 - o Threats
 - Hurt the couple's properties.

Nevertheless, this distinction among the different types of aggressions is frequently difficult to maintain, since it is not rare that the same behaviour have features from two or even three types at the same time. Despite of this limitation, this type of classification has a great importance since it displays a quite accurate taxonomy of possible situations of dating violence.

Dating violence incidence

It is difficult to establish which the real levels of the incidence of dating violence clearly are, although a high number of surveys have been carried out related to this (Foshee, 1998; Jezl, Molidor y Wright, 1996; Jonson-Reid y Bivens, 1999). The obtained outcomes haven't been very coincident at the time of giving a precise answer, possibly as a consequence of the very different study methodologies and objectives (i.e. some of them only consider the physical aggression while others also survey the sexual and psychological abuse). In consequence we will try to present as clearly as possible the main data we have at this moment.

In a research carried out in the United States (CDCP, 1999) the found out that 9% of the pupils admitted to have been victims of dating violence through physical aggressions in the last year. The same figure said that they had been forced to have sexual relationships without their consent. The outcomes achieved by Jezl, Molidor y Wright (1996) are much more significant: 96% of the teenagers surveyed declare having suffered psychological and emotional abuses in their flirt and dating relationships.

They are also interesting the data collected by the Bureau of Justice (2000) about this phenomenon, since they are offering us, together with the information of incidence, another data that help us to understand better the dynamics established within dating violence events. The main outcomes shown in this study are (Bureau of Justice, 2000):

• Around one third of the two last years of High School students (in America, GCSE or General Certificate of Education in England, or "Bachillerato" in Spain) have been or will be involved in dating violence situations, being girls' risks higher than the boys'.

- 20% of the couples suffer some type of violence in their relationship.
- 40% of the girls between 14 and 17 years old mention to know someone of their age that has been hit by her boyfriend.
- Dating violence events usually happen in one of the couple's homes.
- 38% of the victims raped by their couple were girls between 14 and 17 years old
- 60% of the sexual aggressions suffered by teen girls between 14 and 17 years old happen in their own houses or in their friends' or relatives' ones.
- In 1995, 7% of all of the victims killed were in their couple's hands.

On the other hand, within a survey carried out with Canadian teenagers (Totten, 2000), they found out that 67% of the boys between 13 and17 years old admitted to have abused of their couples using physical, sexual and psychological aggressions at the same time, in the most of the cases (34%). In another survey with pupils between 15 and 19 years old (Poitras and Lavoie, 1995) they show that 54% of the girls and 13% of the boys had suffered any kind of sexual coercion within the couple.

Starting from these data it looks evident that is necessary to consider the sex of the people involved, as well as the ways of aggressions, if we want to have an accurate approach of the levels of incidence within the dating violence problem. This is especially obvious as we consider the aggressions of sexual type within the couple, where these differences get significantly wider, being the girls the most affected (Jackson, 1999). In any case, it seems necessary to keep studying this problem in the next future, dealing with this problem in depth.

Dating violence consequences

Participating in dating violence events can provoke immediate effects, as well as medium and long term effects for the victims, the aggressors and the people around the couple. Among the most habitual consequences we can mention (Silverman, Raj, Mucci y Hathaway, 2001):

- The self-esteem damage.
- The loos of trust in oneself and the others.
- A growing feeling of insecurity.
- Feelings of blame, sadness and shame.
- Problems in personal development and psycho-social adjustment.
- Physical damages.
- Psycho-physiological alterations.
- Anxiety, depression.
- Illnesses of sexual transmission, including HIV.
- A higher probability of suffering new episodes of dating violence in the next relationships.
- Suicide attempt.

Death.

The outcomes of the researchs about dating violence show how these effects affect boys and girls in a different way. In general, girls show more serious effects than boys when they are victims of this type of violence (Silverman, Raj, Mucci y Hathaway, 2001). Girls that are victims of physical or sexual abuse usually increase the possibility of falling in the abuse of substances, weigh alterations, or suicide conducts (Silverman, Raj, Mucci y Hathaway, 2001). In the same way, girls that suffer physical abuse within the couple relationship have a higher risk than boys of suffering emotional alterations, fears and anxiety (Jackson, 1999).

The research within this field show us the relation between the most significant ways of dating violence and the answers the victims more probably develop according to the sex. In this way, girls are more frequently pressed to do unwanted sexual conducts; they usually respond by crying, fighting, obeying or running away. Boys, on the other hand, usually suffer aggressions more frequently in the form of hitting, scratching or kicking; they usually respond by contempt or laughing (Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, O'Leary y Smith, 1999). These data just confirm the risk situation the girls are with regard to the boys at the time of suffering dating violence events. Not only because of the most frequency of participation as victims, but also because of the forms of aggressions and the bigger damages that they suffer.

Aggressors usually suffer the effects of their conducts too, although there is much less research in this issue. Within the main consequences we can mention the destruction of their supporting social networks, the social rejection, the shame, a higher probability of repeating the violent behaviour in the next relationships and a possible judicial respond (Bureau of Justice of Canada, 2007).

The ones around the people involved in dating violence also suffer the effects of this behaviour, especially the family, In those cases where the consequences of the participation are particularly serious (substances consume, emotional alterations, eating disorders, unwanted pregnancies judicial punishments, etc.), the family will have to play an essential role for the recuperation of the parts involved, but at the same time suffer together such consequences (Bureau of Justice of Canada, 2007).

Box 2: INTERVIEW WITH JAVIER ORTEGA-RIVERA AND VIRGINIA SÁNCHEZ²:

1. How would you define the problem of dating violence?

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² Members of the research project about dating violence titled: "Prevention of sexual harassment and violence in peer and intimate relationship".

The scientific literature defines dating violence as the violent behaviours that take place in the teenager's relationships. According to the age of the participants, the important aspect of being the first sentimental relationships is added to the concept. It gives a singularity to the studies of violence within the couple since until the 80s they were only subscribed to the sentimental relations in the adult age.

2. Would you say that it is a problem related to the school bullying or on the contrary it is a different phenomenon?

Dating violence and School Bullying share many common aspects since both are violent phenomena among equals. At the same time they present specific characteristics that make them different and have in consequence an individualized study. Besides, we must consider that the study of the dating violence takes place in the adolescence when the first sentimental relationships of the couple appear, whereas bullying spreads during all the boys and girls' education. Nevertheless, between both violent phenomena exist similarities relative to the aggressive behaviours that are stated (physical, verbal, psychological, sexual aggressions and those indirect aggressions much more difficult to evaluate), and even some studies expose that the boys and the girls implied in violence during the infancy are in the habit of demonstrating also violent behaviours in the first sentimental relations in the adolescence.

3. Which are the main reasons of the dating violence from your point of view?

Due to the fact that it is a phenomenon that is very recent in its study, and that the extension of the researches have not been so important and fast as other violent phenomena between teenagers, for example bullying, its causes are not clear yet. We can group the explanatory models in three categories: the uni-causal models, that identify an only determining cause (for example, the theory of the affection, the theory of the social learning, the feminist theory of the patriarchal model, etc); the multi-casual models, that analyze the phenomenon attending to the processes of development and the interaction that is produced by means of multiple factors of risk and of protection along the individual life (for example, the systemic-evolutional model proposed by Capaldi); and finally, those models that try to identify the predictors and the factors of risk that predict the phenomenon, although in an individual way (for example, the theoretical model of Riggs and O'Leary).

4. Are there different types of dating violence? Is someone of them especially serious because of its effects?

In fact the dating violence is a very specific phenomenon since it is subscribed to a concrete period of the interpersonal relationships, the beginning of the intimate relationships, and that usually happens during the adolescence. For this reason, the

scientific literature has not established distinction between different types of dating violence. Nevertheless, the consideration of aggressiveness or violence as a discriminational behaviour in itself has been and still is a source of controversy and distinction that orientates the studies, The distinction between "dating aggression" and "dating violence is established in this way. This distinction is crucial to understand the definitions: in the first one the term aggression puts the emphasis in the behaviour performed, whereas in the second the term violence would involve not only the above mentioned behaviour but also the consequences that can be of different type (psychological, physical, social, etc). In our case we use the most extensive term of violence in the first sentimental relationships, since introducing the consequences of the same one in the interaction between the members of the couple we consider fundamental for understanding the phenomenon.

In the answer to the seriousness, the dating violence presents a multiplicity of effects as a violent phenomenon among peers. Since we have already exposed the diversity of violent behaviours it makes the consequences to be very varied, but they are maybe the physical and sexual aggressions those that have a major effect in a short and half term, whereas, in general, the dating violence reproduces and perpetuates a model of relationship based on the imposition and authority that states in the matrimonial relation in a long term, turning into a key factor to understand the violence towards the woman. In synthesis, the study of the dating violence can allow us to determine the physical, psychological and social consequences for the teenagers, as well as establish the predictive value that can have for the violence to the woman in the adult age.

5. What could be done to solve the dating violence?

In fact there are not many experiences of implementation and evaluation of programs of intervention in dating violence yet. Nevertheless, due to the high index of effect, its complexity and the consequences for the psycho-evolutionary development of the ones involved, the lines of action will have to be included within integral projects of the improvement of interpersonal relationships. In this way, the intervention will have to combine the preventive action with the direct intervention with the teenagers in risk. But the affective - emotional education will probably be one of the important pillars to promote the personal and interpersonal well-being within the intimate relations of a couple.

5. NEW PHENOMENA OR DIFFERENT FACES OF THE BULLYING PROBLEM?

Once we have checked, along the chapter, the main violence expressions that nowadays are appearing, it is time to reflect whether these phenomena are new versions of an old known one, such as bullying, or, on the other hand we are talking about different realities with their own features and types.

If we only focus the shapes that cyberbullying, happy slapping and dating violence events adopt, it looks to be quite clear that the relation established with conventional bullying situations is not very evident at first. The use of new technologies, in their different formats, introduce new rules and their own features that make the aggressions online to be differentiated from any other type of aggression: the invisibility of the aggressor, the potential growth in the number of the audience as a consequence of the diffusion that can be given to the violent action, together with the use of new spaces (and as a consequence of the non existence of safe spaces for the victim) identify cyberbullying problems.

In happy slapping situations we can also observe some particularities that were not usual up to now, such as the singularity of each violent act without an apparent relation with other event, the recreational character the aggressors pretend and the permanence of the aggression in time when it is kept up by recording it.

Finally, we can also find own features in the dating violence versus other forms of violence: the emotional link existing between the aggressor and the victim, the ways of aggression used (with special importance for sexual abuse) or the most confusing role the group adopt within these types of aggressive behaviour. However, are these particularities enough for us to be able to talk about different phenomena or on the contrary are they different displays of an only problem?

Despite these apparent differences, we think that there are reasons to understand that we are really facing the same problem that adapts itself progressively to the different means where it can be developed, and therefore they mostly mean the continuation of those relations already initiated within the school context. For that reason we will check the features of bullying definition and we will see if the key features correspond to the one present within cyberbullying, happy slapping and dating violence event.

The first aspect present in the bullying definition (Olweus, 1993) makes reference to the intention of the damage. This is an important factor to differentiate the real aggression from those conducts that in a non voluntary way provoke any type of harmful effect on others. In every type of aggression we have considered within this chapter this condition is clearly confirmed. Nevertheless we need to point out that in some occasions it would be the possibility of confusing some situations of disturbing effects with really aggressive episodes. With regard to cyberbullying i.e., the intention of causing harm is an important aspect to distinguish advertising spam from the one used to harass another person.

The second element is the recurrence of the aggressive behaviour (Olweus, 1993). This circumstance is clearly shown in dating violence situations, being less clear in cyberbulying and happy slapping events. With regard to cyberbullying, one

of the problems to determine the continuity is that aggressors often remain anonymous, which makes difficult for the victims to determine whether the aggressions come from the same aggressors or on the contrary from different people. At the same time, it can happen that some of the expressions of bullying are not frequently used, even only in some occasions. Something similar happens in the case of happy slapping where normally a few repetitions occur and if they happen is when filming the aggressions.

Nevertheless we think that is really possible to talk about the repetition of the aggression that happens in these two last phenomena. Several arguments make us think this way. Firstly the fact that in the aggressions where films or text messages are used this aggression is repeated somehow, every time the victim "reread" or "re-watch" it. If we add to this the broadcasting systems used in these attacks, being received by other class mates by means of mobile phones or the Internet, every post means another aggression. Secondly cyberbullying not only means an only use of an only attack form. In fact, the victims often point out to be victims by several means (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho y Tippet, 2006). Finally, due to the continuity found between conventional bullying events and cyberbullying events (Li, 2005; Patchin e Hinduja, 2006), as well as the knowledge the aggressors online have of their victims, it is easy to think that the recurrence of the aggressive behaviour can occurs in different types of violence.

The third element in the bullying definition is the umbalance of power between the victim and the aggressor (Olweus, 1993). This factor means the will of control on the part of the aggressor about what is happening to the victim and what he or she feels, etc. This control of the situation comes together with the fact that the victim feels every time more helpless while violent events happen. Both aspects combination creates a dynamics of domination-submission that does not need the aggressors' physical presence, because of the possibilities the new technologies provide to make an aggression present at any time.

The three phenomena considered within this chapter fulfil the conditions that define bullying events. In consequence, we understand that they respond to new displays of the same phenomenon and do not correspond to different problems. Nevertheless, it is true that each one of them has their own features because of the specific characteristics of the contexts where aggressions occur or the means used to develop them. For all of this, it seems necessary for us to keep studying the variables that determine each one of them as well as the relations established between all of them and conventional bullying.

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COPING WITH SBV USING THE INTERNET

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years the Internet has got an increasingly important impact on our everyday life: we use it at various locations and occasions for instance at work, in schools, in universities, in public places, at home; and we use it for a wide variety of purposes such as the search for information, for communicating and interacting with others, for seeking for help and advise, for playing games, shopping online, watching video files or listening audio files, for playing online games, planning our everyday life and numerous other things (cp. Wellman et al., 2002).

Today, approximately 69 percent of the North American population and 38 percent of the European population (with considerable differences between European countries) is online. And though still on a smaller scale also an increasing proportion of the population in the less developed parts of the world has access to the Internet (Internet World Stats, 2007). Since the early years of the World Wide Web (WWW) the number of web sites has grown exponentially. Though the explosive growth rate of the WWW's early years has slowed (from a growth rate of 850 percent per year between 1991 and 1997 to 25 percent per year between 2002 and 2006) the WWW is still expanding (Nielsen, 2006). In November 2006 there were more than 100 Million web sites available (Netcraft, 2006).

Along with the increasing awareness and public attention for the problem of school bullying and violence (SBV) throughout the world, numerous web sites on this topic have emerged in recent years. Today there is a broad range of web sites and other web resources that focus on SBV such as comprehensive Internet portals, project descriptions, materials, video and audio clips, online games, discussion boards, newsgroups or blogs.

For users as well as for researchers various questions come up when dealing with web sites on SBV, such as

- What types of web resources on SBV are available?
- Where is their benefit? Where are their limits or possibly even dangers?
- Who do we know about users of web sites on SBV?
- Who has the chance to profit from web sites on SBV, who not?
- Are there any concerns with regard to the quality and the appropriateness of such sites?

The answers on these and many other questions related to web sites on SBV are as unsatisfying as surprising: There is no clear answer as web resources on SBV have not been subject of comprehensive research initiatives and studies yet. Of course there are small studies focusing on certain aspects of web resources on SBV, commented link lists, anecdotic user reports about the usability of web sites or publications and studies emphasising the importance of web resources (e.g. Jäger et al., 2003; Minton & O'Moore, 2004). Nevertheless, so far there is no systematic research dealing with the overall role the Internet plays for tackling and coping with SBV. Considering that not only much time but also much money is invested in creating web resources on SBV this is not only surprising but rather astonishing.

This chapter aims at giving this largely "unexplored" field of research a first structure and framework. Due to a lack of research data this chapter can neither be scientific nor can it give a depletive overview about the wide and very dynamic field of web resources on SBV. It rather aims at structuring observations, impressions and ideas of people interested in and dealing with this medium.

In May 2005 we hold the online conference "Coping with School Bullying and Violence Using the Internet3" at which 28 experts – mainly representatives of web sites on SBV – from five continents came together and discussed issues related to this topic. In this chapter we will come back to one or the other outcome of our conference4. However, the focus of this chapter will lay in giving an introduction to the Internet and the World Wide Web in general as well as on information that might be useful for readers dealing with school bullying and violence who are not familiar with what Internet research has to say. Building on this rather general introduction and outcomes of Internet research we will then focus on certain aspects such different types of web sites on SBV, a look at users of web sites on SBV and the benefits and limits of the Internet.

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³ http://conference.bullying-in-school.info

 $^{^4}$ A more detailed overview about the conference's outcomes is available in form of a conference report (Jäger, 2006)

2. THE INTERNET AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Before we look at what the Internet has to offer in terms of SBV we first will take a look at what the Internet and the WWW are and what some of their main characteristics are.

What is the Internet ...?

The Internet is a "network of networks" that consists of millions of computers around the world that communicate with each other and that are connected to each other by telephone wire, cable and satellite (UNESCO Courier, 2002)." The Internet does not contain information itself. It is the infrastructure in the background or - in other words - the transport vehicle for the information stored in files or documents on computers that are connected via a global network (Kahn & Cerf, 1999). Computers on the Internet may use various information and services, such as e-mail, online chat, file transfer or web pages and other documents of the World Wide Web (Wikipedia, 2006).

The Internet was originally intended to share data between a few universities and government agencies (Wikipedia, 2006). Only recent developments in the late 1990s – user-friendly innovation such as the creation of the WWW and the distribution of free web browsers - transformed the global network to a mainstream phenomenon that is having an increasing impact on our today's society.

And what is the WWW ...?

The Internet is *not* synonymous with World Wide Web. The World Wide Web, or simply the Web or WWW, is only one way of accessing information over the medium of the Internet.

The WWW is an information-sharing model that is built on top of the Internet. It incorporates various Internet services (Webopedia, 2006) what allows a broad variety of usages such as retrieving or publishing documents, viewing and uploading images or videos, speaking or hearing sound and many other things.

The founding principle of the WWW is a programming language called HTML that makes possible hypertext links. Each web site, document, audio file or anything else that can be found in the WWW has a unique URL (uniform resource locator) that identifies on which computer it can be found. Hypertext links allow connecting web pages, documents and other web applications and making it possible to navigate easily from one site to another by means of a simple mouse click. It was this unique and truly revolutionary capacity of HTML that made the WWW being a huge interconnected database.

The *basic idea of the WWW* is that it is an information space through which people can communicate by sharing their knowledge in a pool. As Tim Berners-Lee - who is considered to be the inventor of the WWW – states it: "The Web should be a medium for the communication between people: *communication through shared knowledge*" (Berners-Lee, 1997). Thus, following its original intention the WWW "is more of a social creation than a technical one" (UNESCO Courier, 2002).

According to Berners-Lee (UNESCO Courier, 2002) the WWW has given people greater choice than ever before by simply providing information. The capacity to share their knowledge in a huge information pool and to interact with one another makes the WWW being a powerful tool that has an enormous impact on nowadays' societies.

Some characteristics of the Internet and the WWW

There is a wealth of characteristics of the WWW. In the following we only focus on some selected aspects that are relevant when regarding the complex system of web resources that are available in a rather broad field such as SBV.

Constant change

The Internet and the WWW are in *constant change*, both in terms of the technology or the software used and the various manifestations of Internet culture. The Internet and its architecture have grown in evolutionary fashion, rather than from a grand plan (Network Working Group, 1996). Therefore descriptions and analysis can not be more than a snapshot (what also applies to this chapter that can only describe the situation as it is in late 2006 and make assumptions on developments in new future).

Wealth of information

The WWW makes available a *wealth of easy to use information*. As mentioned previously one of the main characteristics of the WWW is its hypertext structure that allows connecting formerly separated texts and other files to one huge interconnected pool of information. At the same time it's relatively easy to publish information. However, the fact that the amount of web sites is increasing in an exponential fashion does not only create benefits but also numerous problems as users have to develop strategies that enable them to cope with the *information flood*.

Decentralisation

One of the main characteristics of both the Internet and the WWW is that they are highly *decentralized*. There is no central server or central authority, anybody can start a server or run a browser. There is rather little structure and much autonomy and freedom single users or whole groups of networked users have (Berners-Lee, 1998). The decentralisation of the WWW and its openness did not only allow it growing in a remarkable pace but also made it almost impossible to control and to structure. Again, this creates both benefits and problems. The fact that no overall authority controls or structures the WWW provides much room for creativity and democratic processes and gives people a voice that wouldn't be heard otherwise (or who because of governmental or other restrictions wouldn't be allowed to state their opinion). At the same time this rather "anarchic" trait of the Internet creates enormous problems, such as difficulties that go along with the easy spread of inappropriate information. Also it makes it relatively easy to abuse the WWW for criminal activities.

Interactivity

The Internet and the WWW provide much more than mere information, they also changed fundamentally the way people interact. Internet applications such as e-mails, newsgroups, discussion boards, instant messaging or recent developments such as blogs or Voice-over-IP did not only complement to traditional means of communication, they rather created something new and altered the realms of the reality in which we live (Zhao, 2006). The Internet makes its users being more independent from time and space as they can access it whenever and wherever they want – provided they have online access. With the rise of the Internet new forms of social contacts, social patterns and networks came up like for instance the formation of online communities, groups of users who share similar interests who meet in virtual spaces such as forums or newsgroups.

Anonymity

One characteristic of the Internet that is especially important for users seeking help and advice is that it widely ensures anonymity. As several studies revealed, anonymity is a major factor for the readiness of users who seek help to open up (Barak, 1999; Kummervold, 2002). At the same time users fear violation of their anonymity and privacy. Concerns that a web site or a discussion board is not "safe" make users avoiding it. Though the relative anonymity of the Internet can have a positive impact for users who seek help, anonymity can be also a source of problems as it allows also users to insult others anonymously.

3. WAYS OF USING THE INTERNET AND WHAT IT OFFERS USERS INTERESTED IN SBV

There have been various attempts for classifying the ways the Internet can be used, all of them having advantages and disadvantages. Following recent studies on how users actually use the Internet (e.g. EuroStat, 2005; Pew Internet, 2006), in this chapter we choose a rather pragmatic approach and will deepen the following aspects:

- Retrieving and publishing information
- Communicating and interacting with other users
- Virtual communities
- "Web 2.0": sharing information and social networking

For each of these aspects we will examine first what Internet research has to say in general. Most data that we refer to are related to the situation in Western countries, mainly the United States and Europe. Though these data are not representative for the rest of the World they give an interesting insight in some recent developments that – considering the pace of Internet "evolution" – will soon arrive in other parts of the world as well.

In the second part of each section we will take a look at web sites on SBV. We will examine what users can find and present selected examples of web sites from different countries.

Retrieving and publishing information

What does Internet research say?

Searching for, retrieving and publishing information have been among the most common Internet activities since its early days.

There is a broad range of *Internet resources* that primarily focus on information like for instance search engines, databases, e-journals, descriptions of projects, link lists and many more.

According to a surveys conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2006⁵) some typical *activities* of American adult Internet users related to information in the Internet are for instance:

- Use a search engine to find information (91%) (December 2006)
- Look for health/medical info (79%) (November 2004)
- Get news (67%) (December 2006)
- Research for school or training (57%) (January 2005)
- Do any type of research for your job (50%) (December 2005)
- Create content for the internet (19%) (November 2004)
- Created or worked on your own webpage (14%, December 2005)

⁵ The table provided at the web site of the Pew Internet & American Life Project gives an overview about data related to online activities of American adults, collected between 2004 and 2006. The figures in bracket mark the most recent survey date for each activity.

Create or work on your own online journal or weblog (8%) (February-April 2006)

When comparing these data with data related to e.g. the use of the Internet for communicating and interacting with others it gets obvious that retrieving information is still the most frequent range of application of the Internet, only rivalled by the use of e-mails (see below).

It becomes also evident that retrieving information by far outnumbers publishing information e.g. in form of creating content for the Internet or publishing information in an own online journal or blog. Though new technological developments ease the publication of own content in the WWW it can be assumed that activities related to searching for and retrieving information will also dominate in future.

Web sites on SBV that focus on information: some examples

The big majority of web sites on SBV still primarily focus on information. They provide background information on the topic, help and advice, materials and resources, link collections, news on SBV and much more.

Web sites that focus primarily on information on SBV are available in different types: there are for instance huge, comprehensive *portals* that can include hundreds, if not thousands of sub-sites, *e-journals* that publish e.g. the latest studies and research articles on SBV or web sites that present *campaigns*, *projects*, *charities* or *initiatives* in SBV.

In the following some selected examples for web sites that focus on information on SBV will be given.

Portals

Bullying Online (UK)

http://www.bullying.co.uk

One good example for comprehensive web portal is Bullying **Online**, a national UK charity helping parents and pupils deal with school bullying. In separate sections for pupils, parents and school the site contains detailed information and advice on various issues related with SBV such cvberbullving. happy slapping, homophobia, racism, bullying on the school bus and walk to school or ideas for school projects.



Bullying. No Way! (Australia)

http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Bullying. No Way! is an Australian portal created by educational communities. web includes background site information on issues related to bullying in school and includes a comprehensive resources database. three moderated forums **(classroom** ideas. school communities in action, student talk out, a chillout space and ideas area.



Online journals

International Journal on Violence in Schools (IJVS)

http://www.ijvs.org

The IJVS is a peer-reviewed scientific journal founded by the International Observatory of Violence in Schools in 2005 and seeks to promote progress in knowledge on violence in schools. The IJVS is mainly aimed at researchers and students but is also of interest to teachers, educators, those responsible for or active in politics and associations, as well as to all those in charge of prevention and security policies.



Campaigns and initiatives

The Anti-Bullying-Alliance (UK)

http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together 65 national organisations from the voluntary and private sectors, professional associations and the research community into one network to work together to reduce bullying and create safer environments for children and young people to live,



grow play and learn. Amongst other the web site holds resources, material and information for professionals, children and parents.

Communicating and interacting with other users

What does Internet research say?

Right from its early days on the Internet was also a medium used for communicating with other users. And still sending and receiving emails is amongst the most frequent online activities.

There is a broad and constantly growing range of Internet resources that can be used for communicating and interacting with other users, such as e-mail, chat / instant messaging, newsgroups or forums. Recent developments have added the possibility to communicate via audio or video connections.

When looking at Internet communication tools it's necessary to differ between synchronous tools (tool with which users communicate with each other at the same time, such as forums or instant messaging) and asynchronous tools (tool with which users communicate with each other independent of time, such email).

Again, we take a look at some selected data from the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2006) for getting an overview about how users are using the Internet for communicating and interacting with others. Some very common activities are:

- Send or read e-mail (91%) (December 2006)
- Send instant messages (39%) (August 2006)
- Take part in chat rooms or online discussions with other people (22%) (September 2005)
- Make a phone call / VoIP online, using the internet (13%) (December 2005)

As these figures reveal e-mail is still the most frequent online activity, and as other studies show there is remarkably few difference between different age groups concerning their use of e-mails. Yet, it seems as for teenagers e-mail may be at the beginning of a decline as many teenagers start to prefer instant messaging. Especially when communicating with friends many teenagers prefer instant messaging while e-mail is regarded as a medium they use when communicating

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⁶ The table provided at the web site of the Pew Internet & American Life Project gives an overview about data related to online activities of American adults, collected between 2004 and 2006. The figures in bracket mark the most recent survey date for each activity.

more formally e.g. with "older" people or institutions (Lenhart, Madden & Hitlin, 2005).

Web sites on SBV that focus on communication and interaction: some examples

Though the number of web sites that primarily focus on information on SBV still surmounts the number of sites that facilitate communication and interaction amongst their users, their number has been rising constantly over the past few years.

Web sites on SBV make use of the whole range of sites that aim at making their users communicate such as *forums, discussion boards, newsgroups* or *mailing lists*. Recent developments such as the establishments of *blogs, social networking sites* and other innovations associated with what is called Web 2.0 (see below) seemingly have widened the options for communicating and interacting with others on SBV in the WWW. Especially for online counselling and personal, anonymous help and advice "traditional" *e-mail* or *instant messaging* still play an important role. New technical possibilities such as "*Voice-over-IP*" that allow voice conversation over the Internet will even widen the range of possibilities.

Little is known about the number of communication sites, how they are used and about whether they are perceived as helpful or not. At the first sight it seems as if a surprisingly low proportion of web sites on SBV primarily focus on communication or do at least offer a communication section. Apart from this these section often seem to be used by a relatively small number of users (see below). It is subject of future research to find out whether this first impression proves true or wrong.

Again, in the following some selected examples of sites that focus on communication will be given.

Message boards and blogs

Schüler Mobbing (Germany) http://www.schueler-mobbing.de

With several thousand postings "Schüler Mobbing" ("Pupils Bullying") is the biggest German site on SBV that has a strong emphasis on making its users communicate and interact. It offers a message board with separate sections for pupils, parents and teachers and has recently added further communication sections such as a blog and a wiki over which users can commonly write text about topics related to SBV.



Online conferences

VISIONARIES-NET online conferences (Europe)

http://www.bullying-in-school.info/en/content/conferences/online-conferences.html

As a part of the VISIONARIES-NET project (the EU-funded project on which this e-book bases) five online conferences were hold that brought together experts and practitioners on SBV from throughout the world. Apart from the conference sites themselves the site provides reports for each of the conferences (short versions are available in several languages), a blog as well as this e-book.



Online counselling

Kids Help Line (Australia)

http://www.kidshelp.com.au

Kids Help Line is a free, confidential and anonymous, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25. Like the majority of sites that offer online counselling Kids Help Line provides help and advice not only related to school bullying but a wide range of problems from relationship breakdown to sexual abuse, homelessness, suicidal thoughts, and drug and alcohol usage.



Online communities

What does Internet research say?

Its capability of facilitating communication processes between its users soon made the Internet being a place that brought together people who share interests, passions, beliefs, hobbies, or lifestyles. Making use of the communication tools that were available these people organised and networked in groups, called virtual communities or online communities.

The first online communities such as "The WELL" – the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link - (Rheingold, 1993) already came up in the early years of the WWW and in the meantime make an essential part of it. According to a study of the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2002) 16% of American adults take part in an online group of which they consider themselves a member, a figure that will certainly have increased since 2002 due to recent developments of Web applications that facilitate networking.

The Internet has largely contributed to the fact that people's social relationships and communities are transforming. There has been a widespread fear that the Internet will weaken social relationships. Instead the Internet has fostered the transformation from "traditional human orientation to neighbourhood- and village-based groups ... towards communities that are oriented around geographical dispersed social networks". There is even some evidence that the Internet supports and widens social networks. Tools such as emails, instant messaging or forums do not replace in-person encounters, they are rather one part of an "overall communication system in which people use many means of communication" (Boase, Horrigan, Wellmann & Rainie, 2006).

Online virtual communities that focus on SBV: some examples

In recent years *online communities on SBV* have emerged in many countries. Like online communities that deal with other topics, online communities on SBV unite users who share common interests and concerns and repeatedly make use of the site, many of them communicating and interacting with others by using the site's message boards, blogs or other communication facilities.

Still, there is only a rather small proportion of web sites on SBV that meet the criteria of real online communities in the sense that their users return regularly, interact with other or identify with the site and the community of its users. As mentioned previously the big majority of sites on SBV mainly or predominantly provides information to its users. Yet, with the growing importance of user-interaction, integration of user-contributed content and social networking that go along with recent developments of the Internet, referred to as Web 2.0, the number of online communities might increase significantly.

Some web sites that have been presented previously in this chapter - such as "Bullying. No Way! (Australia) or "Schüler Mobbing" (Germany) - can be regarded as online communities. In the following two further examples will be presented.

Bullying.org "Where you are NOT Alone!" (Canada) http://www.bullying.org/

Bullying.org is a supportive community, and with nearly 1 million visitors from around the world each month probably one of the world's most frequently used sites on SBV. Users can contribute their personal stories, poems, images, oral stories (audio files), music and animations and movies. Bullying.org also has moderated online support groups for adults and youth.



Beat Bullying / BBClic (UK)

http://www.beatbullying.org/

Beatbullying is a children's charity to devise anti-bullying strategies for young people by young people. It is part of Beatbullying's mission to entrust young people to develop and implement anti bullying strategies. The site provides toolkits for professionals, a media centre and has recently been extended by *BB Clic* (http://www.bbclic.com) a fully interactive web site for young people with embedded video and audio content.



"Web 2.0": user-generated content and social networking

What does Internet research say?

In recent years new Internet-based services came up that facilitate the publication of user-generated content, online collaboration and sharing among users like e.g. weblogs, wikis, social networking sites or podcasts. These services form up to something that is often perceived as a new generation of the WWW, referred to as *Web 2.0* (O'Reilly, 2005).

For some "Web 2.0" is not more than a buzzword, and indeed there is an ongoing debate about what exactly "Web 2.0" is. Defining characteristics that are often related to Web 2.0 are e.g. "user-generated content", "giving users control over their data", "utilizing collective intelligence" or "architecture of participation" (O'Reilly, 2005, O'Reilly, 2007)

Actually the vast majority of online activities and application that are associated to Web 2.0 already exist for years and there is rather a blurry verge than a clear boundaries between "old" "Web 1.0" and Web 2.0. A look at some

online activities that are considered to be typical Web 2.0 activities demonstrate this (Madden & Fox, 2006):

- Rated a product, service or person using an online rating system (30%) (September 2005)
- Shared files from your own computer with others online (27%) (May-June 2005)
- Shared something online that you created yourself, such as your own artwork, photos, stories or videos (26%) (December 2005)
- Created or worked on webpages or blogs for others, including friends, groups you belong to, or for work (13%) (December 2005)
- Used online social or professional networking sites like Friendster or LinkedIn (11%) (September 2005)
- Created or worked on your own online journal or blog (8%) (February-April 2006)

So, what is Web 2.0 then? Obviously it's not the activities themselves that have changed but rather the applications used to upload, share and tag data that have changed dramatically over the past years (Madden & Fox, 2006) and that make possible a new generation of web sites such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr or Facebook. These applications pave the way for a Web that is less static but instead is dynamic and made by people, a development that has only started recently and that opens a whole wealth of possibilities in future.

In the following box some of the biggest and most important Web 2.0 sites will be presented.

Box 1: A QUICK WEB 2.0 GLOSSARY

(All definitions below are taken from the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, retrieved in February 2007)

Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) is a multilingual, Web-based, free content encyclopedia project. Wikipedia is written collaboratively by volunteers; its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the Web site. The name is a blend of the words wiki (a type of collaborative website) and encyclopedia.

MySpace (<u>www.myspace.com</u>) is a social networking website offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos. MySpace also features an internal search engine and an internal e-mail system.

YouTube (www.youtube.com) is a popular free video sharing website which lets users upload, view, and share video clips. Videos can be rated; the average rating and the number of times a video has been watched are both published.

Facebook (<u>www.facebook.com</u>) is an English-language social networking website, popular among college students. It was originally developed for university students, faculty and staff, but has since expanded to include everyone, including high school, corporate and geographic communities.

del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us) is a social bookmarking web service for storing, sharing, and discovering web bookmarks. The site came online in late 2003 and is now part of Yahoo!.

Technorati (http://technorati.com) is an Internet search engine for searching blogs, competing with Google, Yahoo and IceRocket. As of December 2006, Technorati indexes over 55 million weblogs. The name Technorati is a portmanteau, pointing to the technological version of literati or intellectuals.

Second Life (<u>www.secondlife.com</u>) is an Internet-based virtual world. Developed by Linden Lab, a downloadable client program enables its users, called "Residents", to interact with each other through motional avatars, providing an advanced level of a social network service combined with general aspects of a metaverse.

SBV web sites meet Web 2.0: some examples

In the meantime many web sites on SBV include elements of Web 2.0 for instance by giving their users the possibility to contribute content such as texts, art or music, to rate links or other web content related to SBV, publish one's opinion in blogs or to commonly write texts together with others in Wikis. Currently the number of web sites on SBV that include Web 2.0 elements is still rather small. Yet, with a broader availability of easy-to-handle technologies and applications the number of web sites that will make use of Web 2.0 elements will certainly increase soon.

Apart from web sites on SBV that contain Web 2.0 elements a big proportion if not the majority of users may use typical Web 2.0 sites such as MySpace, YouTube, Facebook, del.icio.us., or Technorati. As search queries reveal all of these sites contain numerous texts, video or audio files, materials, tags and other content related to SBV, much more than many web sites that are explicitly dealing with SBV can offer.

This is not as elusive as it might seem at the very first view as one factor that contributes to the success of Web 2.0 is what is often referred to as the "collective intelligence" of is users. In many cases it's the sheer number of users some Web 2.0 sites have, that makes them interesting, that increase the number of contents available or that ensures the quality of a rating. Consequently, small wikis established on a single web site or links to other web sites on SBV only rated by the users of one single web portal, will certainly be less attractive for most users than

content that is available at some of the leading Web 2.0 sites such as MySpace or YouTube that unite several millions of users.

Again here are some selected examples of sites that contain Web 2.0 elements as well as for content available at some of the bigger Web 2.0 sites.

User-generated content

The Zone - Young peoples voice through Music, Art, Video & Verse (UK) http://www.bullying.co.uk/zone

The Zone is a youth-focused project by Anti-Bullying Charity "Bullying Online" aimed at many different social groups of young people.. It brings together user created content from young people that supports and promotes the message that school bullying is unacceptable. The content is split into sections including: Music, Art, Video and Verse.



Virtual worlds

aVataR@school - virtual conflict mediation

http://www.avataratschool.eu/

The EU-funded project aVataR@school offers virtual role plays for pupils and teachers. Having been launched in early 2007 it will make use of Second Life. Using avatars and supported by experienced mediators, participants will work through typical conflict scenarios. The role plays themselves will be complemented by a web site that amongst others will include an archive of selected role plays.



4. THE USERS OF WEB RESOURCES ON SBV

Having a clear idea about who is actually using a web site is essential for designing a web site and for making sure that the web site indeed reaches the intended audience. This gets even more important when examining the comprehensive and complex system of web sites that is available in one specific field such as SBV.

Various questions come up in this context: Who are the users of web sites on SBV? How important are web sites that address to one specific target group such as pupils, parents or teachers? Are there certain groups who benefit from more from these sites than others do? Are there maybe certain groups or even whole countries that get excluded from what the Internet has to offer?

In the following we will first examine what we know about Internet users and overall tendencies in general. We will then deepen some of the aspects mentioned above.

What do we know about Internet users in general?

According to a study of the Pew Internet & American Life Project conducted at December 2006 70% of adults in the US use the Internet. A study conducted by EuroStat in 2004 shows similar figures for Europe, at least for most West European countries such as Sweden (86%), Norway (79%), Denmark (81%), Finland (75%) or (Germany (70%). Many Eastern European countries such as the new EU-member countries Romania (16%) and Bulgaria (23%) are still far behind, a clear sign for a digital shift within Europe.

The EuroStat study also reveals that the digital shift is mainly a matter of age and education. While the percentage of Internet users in younger age groups is rather high and close to 100% for the more developed countries, the use of Internet and computers gradually decreases with increasing age. While according to the EuroStat data 75% of individuals aged under 24 use the Internet, only 11% of the oldest age group between 64 and 74 do so (EuroStat, 2004; Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006). Nevertheless as several studies demonstrate, the percentage of adult Internet users is increasing, even for older age groups (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2004).

Surprisingly, Internet-usage is no matter of gender. Both, the EuroStat and the Pew Internet & American Life Project data show similar figures for men and women. According to EuroStat the small gap between men and women is due to the lower proportion for older women in the same age group (EuroStat, 2004).

And what do we know about users of web resources on SBV?

Due to a lack of studies and concrete data it's not possible yet to answer questions that might be of major interest in this context such as who exactly is using which kinds of web sites, whether there is an age or gender group that is predominantly using specific kinds of sites or whether there is a difference between users with a different educational or cultural background.

Having answers to these questions is more important and useful than it might seem first. Only when we know who actually makes use of web resources on SBV, who profits and who possibly gets excluded from the wealth of information and communication devices out there in the Internet, we can develop web sites that meet their users' needs.

Many web sites keep their own statistics so that they have a rough clue about who is using their site. Yet, still many web sites are "acting blind" in the sense that they offer content on their site that is probably not used by the target group it was tailored for.

At the moment we can only speculate about who is actually using web sites on SBV. Presumably, apart from pupils who are affected by SBV, the main groups seeking for information, help and advice will be parents, teachers, professionals dealing with SBV and certainly also groups dealing with SBV on a meta-level such as journalists or policy makers. Clarifying this important question will have to be subject of future research.

Different web sites for different target groups: Is there a need?

As mentioned previously it is not only useful but in many cases essential to provide different web sites for different target groups - such as pupils, teachers or parents – as these groups differ in terms of their problems, their ways of coping with the problem of school bullying and violence (SBV), the vocabulary or the tools that fit to a specific group.

Web sites that are tailored to the need of a specific target group are still far away from being reality in most countries, not only in developing countries. Yet, with the rise of the Internet and the increasing importance of the topic of SBV in many countries of the Western world, also the supply with more target-group-oriented material and web resources started to broaden. While the first web sites on SBV addressed to a rather broad, unspecific audience, soon many web sites provided separate sections for different groups such as pupils, teachers or parents.

In the following two interviews we will examine some specifics of target group oriented web sites on SBV. We start with an interview that we made with Helga Johannessen, founder of the Norwegian web site, AFAM (Anonyme Foreldre Av Mobbeofre), who tells us what to consider when running a web site for parents.

Box 2: INTERVIEW WITH HELGA JOHANNESSEN (AFAM⁷, NORWAY) - WEBSITES FOR PARENTS

Helga, you offer a web site on SBV for parents. Why do you think it's important to have separate web sites for parents?

When we first started AFAM, we soon found out that parents of bullying victims are victims as well. Parents suffer when their children are bullied. A Norwegian psychiatrist, Dr Dag Oulie, says that parents become ill and depressed when the child is bullied.

Parents often can't find a place where they get help and advice or information and the juridical situation. The most important thing is the help to help themselves, but also to show parents that they are not alone and the only ones dealing with these problems.

What are typical problems of parents you are confronted with?

They are unsure and desperate because they feel something is wrong with their child. They often cry on the phone when talking to AFAM. Mails from parents often contain the child's history, and often include the question "what can we do?" In many cases the child has altered its behaviour and the parents are scared! Many are exposed to rumours in their neighbourhood. Those parents need someone to talk to, even though they think the information on the AFAM web site is good and helpful.

Where do you see the possibilities, where the limits of the Internet as a medium that helps parents coping with SBV?

As long as a web page is serious and the information it contains is easily accessible I see no limits. I think the most important thing is that Internet is anonymous. Parents can read and learn about a problem, chat with others without anyone in their close surrounding taking notice of that.

Another important factor is that one can help the parents in finding links to other useful sources and thus, enabling them to help the bullied child as well as the rest of the family in a constructive manner.

At your site you don't offer a forum but an anonymous message service? Where do you see the advantages compared to a forum and what's your experience?

⁷ <u>http://www.afam.no</u>

I do believe that in some cases such a forum could be an asset. However, our rather bitter experience is that bullies find their way into the forum as well. We believe that victims of bullying should be free from the bullies in the Internet. And because cyber bullying is problem that is getting increasingly important, a forum for the victims and their parents might be a vulnerable place. Such a forum would need a moderator 24 hours a day, and we in AFAM do not have capacity for this. Our forum was shut down a few years ago.

The anonymous service is working very well! It is almost like a forum, sometimes we answer when parents who contacted us are still online. We check the incoming messages several times a day, and we present other means of contacting us as well. After chatting with parents for a while, we encourage them to call us over the telephone. It is easy to exclude bullies in this way as they generally don't respond on our questions. Since we launched the anonymous message service we have been contacted by more victims of bullying that before.

The following interview with Jörgen Stoute, from Vereniging TegenPesten in the Netherlands, focuses on web sites on SBV for pupils.

Box 3: INTERVIEW WITH JÖRGEN STOUTE (VERENIGING TEGENPESTEN⁸, NETHERLANDS) – WEB SITES FOR PUPILS

Jörgen, in the Netherlands you offer a forum that targets especially victims of bullying. Why do you think this group needs a separate forum?

Victims of SBV are almost always being isolated. As result, they often feel incredibly lonely. By 'giving' them a forum like this they can get in contact with other victims of SBV. This alone already gives a huge positive psychological impact, as they finally can share their pain with others.

What are typical problems of pupils you are confronted with?

The most common problem is self-denial and self degrading behaviour. Victims usually hear things like such as they are stupid or ugly every day over and over again. At a certain point they will actually believe that they are bad and ugly.

How can a web site like the one you offer help pupils coping with problems related to SBV?

By giving them a platform where they can search for other contacts and where they can express themselves without getting any bad reactions.

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⁸ http://www.tegenpesten.nl

There are many forums that hardly have any contributions from their users and that do not work? What is the secret of your forum? What does it make successful?

Much of hard work and a lot of commitment. Well, it's truly an art to keep a forum running, especially a forum about SBV. The main thing our users love about us is the freedom we give them. Our board is about 99% open for almost everyone (including guests). Next to that we often ask their opinions and we actually work at new things what they want to see.

Where do you see the possibilities, where the limits of the Internet as a medium that helps pupils coping with SBV?

The only limit is you yourself. The Internet gives infinite possibilities and range of communication. Information is easily spread and new inspirational ideas can be tried out in a couple of weeks. One obvious drawback is the integrity of information; how can you as a user actually believe that what you're reading is true?

Who profits from Internet resources on SBV? Who not?

Not all groups or persons do profit or have the chance to profit from Internet resources on SBV, probably due to the problems they are confronted with, their socioeconomic situation or simply the availability of the Internet where they live.

In our questioning that preceded our online conference we asked the participants if there are any groups of persons who do profit more from Internet resources on SBV than other groups, and if yes which groups do rather profit, which not. Box 4 gives an overview about some categories of answers that resulted from the questioning. Each of the categories is illustrated with one selected quotation

Box 4: WHO DOES PROFIT FROM INTERNET RESOURCES ON SBV?

- Persons who share similar problems
 Example: "Moreover, the internet facilitates to contact people with the same problems and easily makes visible the projects and solutions."
- Groups who profit from a good socioeconomic situation Example: "I would think groups with more access would benefit more i.e. wealthy, highly literate groups."
- Groups who are familiar with the Internet Example: "Maybe kids -victims- have more occasions to use internet (friendless,

social exclusion...) and this medium is useful to help them to face their problems of school bullying. "

- Teaching staff
 Example: "School directions and teachers can profit too from internet resources on school bullying to prevent and also to find news intervention pathways"
- Victims and their parents Example: "Groups which do profit from internet are victims, school/workplaces who actively want to support their students/employees."

WHO DOES NOT PROFIT FROM INTERNET RESOURCES ON SBV?

- Groups with socioeconomic problems who don't have access to the Internet Example: "Here in Brazil we have some difficulties because most Brazilians don't have access to the internet, or even have a computer"
- Groups that already have found their own solution Example: "Groups who don't profit, are groups which already have found their own solution against bullying, people who bully"

As the questionings' outcomes reveal, victims, parents or teaching staff are considered to be the groups and persons who profit most from Internet resources on SBV. As the users statistics and user feedback of the VISIONARY portal⁹ give a clue that there are further groups that were not mentioned in our questioning but who also make use of web sites on SBV frequently, like for instance researchers, professionals dealing with SBV or journalists.

The outcomes of our questioning point to a problem that seems to be rather obvious. There is a huge number of persons in need who is still excluded from what the Internet offers, for instance because of a *poor infrastructure* in less developed countries or regions. One other factor that hinders persons in need from using and profiting from Internet resources is what experts call a low *Internet literacy*, the capability to use the Internet in an appropriate and target oriented way. While nowadays for the younger generation, especially in the more developed countries, using the Internet is rather common, for the rather older generation – and many teachers fall in this group – using the Internet is still a challenge.

The situation in different countries: Is there a digital shift?

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⁹ http://www.bullying-in-school.info

As outlined in the first section of this chapter there is still a big difference between countries in terms of Internet access and the usage of the Internet. In our online conference we examined whether this digital divide also applies to web resources on SBV.

The discussions revealed that the "supply" with websites on SBV differs considerably from country to country. Not surprisingly the situation in the rather developed countries like e.g. the USA, the UK or Germany differs from the *less developed countries* like e.g. Brazil. While developed countries comprise of a broad range of different types of web sites on SBV that include big portals, a huge range of information sites or sites that facilitate communication between the users, most less developed countries don't have more than one web site on the topic.

One factor that limits the role the Internet can play in the process of SBV prevention is the *Internet infrastructure*. Some countries like Brazil or many Eastern European countries lack of a good infrastructure so that most schools are not connected to the Internet at all. At the same time most people also don't have access to the Internet from other places (like at home). One reason for the lack of sites on SBV in some countries might also be in the teachers and other persons involved in SBV prevention who still don't perceive the Internet as an effective tool for them.

Of course also the *size of a country* plays a significant role in terms of the supply with web sites on SBV in a country. Bigger countries like the USA, the UK or Germany comprise of a broader range of web sites on SBV than smaller also highly developed countries like Norway or New Zealand. Nevertheless as one participant pointed out, the fact that big developed countries like Canada with more than 30 Millions inhabitants only have "about 4 agencies who specifically have bullying only websites" makes clear that a number of factors apart from a country's size determined the supply with sites on SBV.

One interesting finding was that in spite of numerous link collections with hyperlinks that point to other sites on SBV in the respective country there is a lack of networks of websites on SBV in most countries.

Box 5: INTERVIEW WITH ARAMIS LOPES (BULLYING.COM.BR, BRAZIL) - A WEBSITE ON BULLYING IN SOUTH AMERICA

Aramis, in 2002 you launched the first web site on SBV in Brazil. What was your motivation to establish this web site?

I coordinated a bullying study in 11 schools in Rio de Janeiro between September 2002 and October 2003. The topic of bullying was almost unknown in Brazil and our group decided to create a web site on bullying as a strategy to divulgate what was school bullying to Brazilian society and show how important it is.

What were the problems and challenges you faced when creating and establishing such a site in a country like Brazil?

First of all was my inability to create a web site and renew it. Second, we didn't have any financial support to make it, and the third, only 10 percent of Brazilians have computer and even less have access to the Internet.

Concerning the role the Internet plays in the process of preventing SBV, what are the main problems in a country like Brazil?

Like I said before, I think the main problem is that only 10 percent of Brazilians can use a computer. So, the Internet is mainly a good instrument for the middle class and for some public schools.

According to your experience, which persons or groups do profit from web sites on SBV in Brazil, which persons or groups rather not?

Mainly the middle class does profit. In recent years the government has been buying computers for public schools. There are some socials works to promote digital inclusion, but there number is still very low. At the moment, one of the most important things is that the web site is used by the media to obtain information about SBV. Most of the people can't access the web site, but with the help of the media and middle class the web site is useful to promote the concept of SBV.

What is your impression of the situation in other South American countries? Is the situation comparable to the one in Brazil?

I don't know any web site in another South American country. SBV is very new for Brazilians and South Americans. We believe that here in Brazil we are in the beginning of this work. Our biggest challenge at the moment is to obtain social attention and support so that we can continue with our work. For the past three years I was a volunteer promoting SBV as much as I can.

5. WEB SITES ON SBV: THE BENEFITS, CHALLENGES AND LIMITS

As it has been outlined in the previous sections, web sites on SBV have a broad potential when it comes to helping and assisting people in need for instance by providing information, by making users exchange with other users who share their problems or by networking them. Yet, there are limits of the medium and sometimes the Internet can even become the actual source of the problem itself as

the emergence of new forms of SBV such as cyberbullying or happy slapping demonstrates.

In this section we will first examine where the potential and the advantages of the Internet are. We then focus on one aspect that has been broadly discussed in other fields of research, the problem of the quality of Internet resources and how it can be ensured.

As mentioned above the Internet has become a source of new problems related to SBV such as cyberbullying or happy slapping. Both of these rather new phenomena will be subject of the first chapter.

Advantages, benefits and potential of Internet resources on SBV

In a questioning that preceded the online conference we asked the participants of our conference where they see the benefits of the Internet for dealing with school bullying and violence. The categories presented in box 6 resulted from the evaluation of the participants' answers. Again, each of the categories is illustrated with one selected quotation.

Box 6: WHERE DO YOU SEE THE BENEFITS OF THE INTERNET FOR DEALING WITH SCHOOL BULLYING AND VIOLENCE?

- Easy access and availability of information Example: "The benefits I can see is the internet's capacity to disseminate the information with a low cost and the easy access."
- Low costs
 Example: "The economic benefits of the Internet dealing with SBV is from our side
 that it is cheaper to use than sending brochures which is rather expensive. For
 free you can give a lot of information on a web site"
- A good way to disseminate information Example: "The internet is the best way to disseminate the information. By the way, the visitors must know about the theme they are looking for."
- Almost unlimited amount of information
 Example: "Internet has the capability to give information just about everything,
 most victim's are more 'open' to us if we show that we take their problems
 serious. You have the ability with internet to share each other's experiences,
 problems, just about everything. If you can put all of this in a good controlled
 information-flow, you have a powerful tool of helping people with each others
 experiences."
- Outlasting information Example: "The information on the Internet is staying there eternally in antagonism to other media."

- The Internet ensures anonymity
 Example: "The benefit of the internet in bullying prevention and Intervention is
 without measure. The Internet provides students (who are appropriately
 orientated by school officials) with a tool where they can safely report bullying
 without being -seen- by other students walking into an administrator or
 counsellor's office. This anonymity cannot be matched. It is surprising that this
 effective use of the internet has not been widely discussed among experts in the
 field of bully prevention."
- The Internet facilitates communication
 Example: "We can deal with school bullying and other violence; but there are
 many additional values if we lead with internet, mainly, the possibility to make a
 large dialog with many people, for example about a specific problem or a
 incidental case."

One aspect that might be of big importance in the context of SBV is the fact that the Internet ensures anonymity. Especially pupils affected by SBV as well as their parents value this aspect, and often persons who need help first seek anonymous help and advise before they consult counsellors in their neighbourhood. The Internet significantly increases the opportunity for searching anonymous help that is not restricted to telephone help lines any more but now also includes e-mail, chat or discussion boards.

The quality of Internet resources on SBV: problems, challenges and solution

In other thematic areas - such as health information - the discussions on the capabilities, the limits and the dangers of the Internet have already started years ago. One of the most heavily argued topics in the area of health information was the one of quality of health care information in the Internet. Discussions were focusing for instance on the question whether users can tell the good from the bad information, whether the majority of information is useful at all, whether information can be dangerous or harmful and criteria for good quality information.

As far as we know there have been neither studies nor any initiatives or networks focusing on the quality of Internet resources on SBV. Nevertheless, as in our qualitative questioning that preceded our conference this topic revealed to be one of the topics of main interest we picked it up in some of the discussion threads of our online conference "Coping with SBV Using the Internet". In the following we refer to some of our discussions` outcomes.

The quality of web resources: also a problem for users of web sites on SBV ...?

As indicated above in other fields of research like e.g. on health information in the Internet there are numerous articles and studies that say that the quality of

information in the Internet is very poor if not wrong and sometimes even dangerous for the users.

In our qualitative questioning we asked the participants what "the problems, limits or maybe even dangers of the Internet as a medium that provides information on SBV" are. Though the answers are not representative they demonstrate that the quality of web resources is indeed perceived as a problem. Box 7 gives an overview about the main outcomes of our questioning.

Box 7: WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS, LIMITS OR MAYBE EVEN DANGERS OF THE INTERNET AS A MEDIUM THAT PROVIDES INFORMATION ON SBV

- Misinformation and poor Information quality
 Example: "Could be hard to judge and monitor the accuracy of the information a
 technologically sophisticated site doesn't guarantee high quality advice and
 accurate information Internet must not be seen as substitute for direct personal
 contact"
- Qualification of online counsellors Example: "Danger= email advice this should be provided by trained advisors/counsellors who put safety first"
- Inappropriate advice on country specific problems

 Example: "some advice may be relevant in one country but not in another (eg the responsibility of schools regarding monitoring bullying incidents). This could prove to be misleading and even dangerous."
- Information flood Example: "Too much information"
- Dominance of information Example: "the internet though its possibility of interactivity is often just a passive medium, that hold information."

Most frequently the problem of *misinformation or poor information* was mentioned what also reflects a very common problem the users of web resources on SBV have. In spite of the fact there are numerous web sites on SBV it's difficult to judge if the information they find is appropriate. There are no studies so far whether the majority of information available at the Web is correct or at least perceived as helpful. Nevertheless, studies that have been conducted in other areas lead to the assumption that not all information available is trustworthy.

Yet, another closely related concern that came up in one of the discussion threads of our online conference was the one of "non-engaging" web sites. As one participants stated "while there may not be any sites on the internet that are truly

harmful to students, there are many sites that are bland, "middle of the road", non-engaging, and do not provide the hope kids are looking for.

As many sites quote from other sites (often without stating clearly the source of this information) and in the Internet information is spread without any control it can happen easily that information that is not appropriate is quoted again and again. One possible problem in this context might be when information is just copied from English sites as the respective sites may offer information that is country-specific.

The outcomes of our questioning also reveal that the concerns go beyond the problem of misinformation and poor information quality but also include further aspects.

One source of concern was the *qualification of online counsellors* that is often difficult to judge for Internet users. Several countries have introduced certification systems and licenses for online counsellors and within these countries people in need who make use of their services are strongly advised to make sure whether an online counsellor meets state licensing and certification requirements. Nevertheless, the big majority of countries still lack of such certification system. And even where they exist, people in need are not sufficiently informed about existing licenses or systems.

Another common problem of nowadays information society – not only in terms of web resources on school bullying and violence – is the sheer amount of information and resources available, often referred to as *information flood*. Internet users are often so much overwhelmed by the amount of information available that they don't know where to start, and which web sites and information they find to choose. Modern search engines, web portals and databases or link collections – especially the ones that allow the users to tag or rate content – provide first help and a good starting point but don't solve the problem of how to cope with too much information satisfactorily.

Strategies for ensuring a good quality of web resources on SBV

Apart from efforts single web sites bear to ensure high quality content and services on their sites, there currently aren't any broad nation-wide or even International quality initiatives that focus explicitly on web resources on SBV.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, web portals, commented link lists or tips and advice from other users published within forums, newsgroups or blogs can provide users a good orientation. Also, services and new applications associated with what is called Web 2.0 (see below) like tagging or rating of web content can be considered as being very helpful as they give a clue about the usability and quality of a site.

Nevertheless, though these mechanisms provide a first help and orientation they still make necessary time consuming search processes. Apart from this even the very helpful Web 2.0 applications - that allow the rating or tagging of web content – are highly subjective and often base merely on the views of laymen. Undoubtedly the "collective intelligence" of Internet users who rate the quality of a web site or maybe even commonly write a web site together (a principle that is used by the web-based encyclopaedia Wikipedia) can bring up astonishing results. However, in many cases it can replace objective evaluation or certification made by experts, as very often only experts can judge whether e.g. a project idea only looks promising or whether it is an evaluated approach that significantly reduces SBV in a school.

As several participants of our online conference pointed out there is a need for a system that ensures a high quality of web sites on SBV, such as an *International certification group* that issues *quality labels or trustmarks* for web sites that meet certain pre-defined quality criteria. Such an International certification group could also provide users with guidance and decision support for judging the quality, credibility, security and usability of web sites. A first step towards an International initiative could be the establishment of a *common code* of conduct of web sites on SBV that fixes common rules and principles as well as quality criteria web sites on SBV need to meet.

6. COPING WITH SBV USING THE INTERNET: WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING?

In this chapter we tried to gain a first rough insight in a wide, yet widely unexplored field, the role the Internet can play for tackling and coping with SBV. Especially when considering what we know about the Internet in general, it becomes evident how little we know about web resources on SBV.

This chapter contains numerous subjective observations, assumptions, hypothesis and "soft data" and as it seems we currently have more questions than answers when it comes to the role the Internet plays for SBV. It also got evident that it is extremely difficult to examine "the Internet" as a whole, as its wide range of diversified applications are in constant movement and hard to grab, so that an analysis can never be more than a snapshot.

Nevertheless, this chapter also made clear that these questions are worthwhile thinking about as for many people, especially from the younger generation, the Internet has become the medium of choice when they search for information, seek for help or when they interact with others. In the Western world the Internet has become a part of our everyday life and obviously it is getting an increasingly important impact on our society as a whole.

What we tried to do in this chapter was making a start by compiling ideas and observations that might be subject of further, more target-oriented research

activities. In the following we will recapitulate and sum up what we found out and will conclude with some predictions on what the near future might bring.

The Internet as a resource for tackling SBV: where are we now?

As Internet research reveals the Internet and the WWW are having an increasing impact on our everyday life and though the explosive growth rate of the WWW's early years has slowed it is still expanding considerably. At the same time the proportion of the population who has online access and who is making use of the Internet is still rising – in all age groups and also in the less developed countries. This development has of course also an effect on web resources related to SBV and as subjective observations suggest not only their number is rising but they also change considerably in terms of their diversity, usability or interactivity. There are neither studies nor objective data proving this rather subjective observation, yet there is no reason to think why web resources on SBV should be except from a development that affects the Internet as a whole.

Today, there is a wide range of *different kinds of web sites on SBV*. Still, the majority of web sites on SBV seem to focus on spreading information for instance in form of Internet portals, online material, online journals or web sites related to single projects, initiatives or campaigns. Yet, in recent years the number of web sites that allow users to communicate and interact - such as discussion boards, newsgroups or blogs - has been increasing constantly. In some countries even online communities emerged - virtual communities of users who share a common interest and who regularly come back making use of the respective site and interact with other users. The rise of Web 2.0 opens up a whole range of new possibilities as it will involve users in contributing to existing sites, rating their content or networking with other users and interacting with them in virtual environments.

There is not much we know about *users of web sites on SBV*. There are certainly figures such as tracking data or personal user feedback that are gathered in one or the other form especially by bigger web sites, but as long as these figures are merely known by the people who run these sites it will hardly be possible to judge who is using sites on SBV. As we know there are groups that do profit less from what the Internet has to offer than other groups do, such as groups with a low socioeconomic background or people from less developed countries with a considerably lower proportion of Internet accesses. Not surprisingly, there is evidence that suggests that there is a digital divide that still separates the more from the less developed word, the higher from the lower social class and also the younger from the older generation, in terms of Internet access and Internet literacy.

The Internet provides a wide range of *benefits and advantages* but of course there are also *limits and dangers* its users are confronted with. On the positive side, the Internet is a medium that ensures easy access to an almost unlimited amount of information at comparatively low costs. Furthermore users have the possibility

to spread information and to interact with others, on a yet unprecedented scale. However, there are limits and even dangers. There are characteristics of the Internet like the anonymity it ensures to its users that promote new forms of Internet-based anonymous bullying such as cyberbullying or happy slapping (cp. chapter 1). Apart from this many users can't cope with the information flood, the sheer amount of web sites on SBV, and they have problems with finding and selecting the information they need for their purpose. Another considerable cause of concern is the quality of information that is available in the WWW. There is a danger that there are sites that provide inappropriate information or also online counselling by counsellors that lack of certified qualification. It remains subject of future debates and initiatives to develop strategies and mechanisms such as the foundation of national or International certification groups or the creation of quality label, trustmarks or at common code of conducts for web sites on SBV.

What do we need?

The summary above already indicated what current challenges are. For a better overview, we sum up the main points of the discussion and add suggestions on what aspects need to be deepened in future:

- We need to know more about users of web sites on SBV, about the ways these web sites are used, whether they are perceived as being helpful and where their benefits and limits are. This is essential as otherwise there is a lot of time and money wasted in creating sites that might of limited use.
- Users of web sites on SBV are overwhelmed by the amount of information available. Therefore they need guidance, orientation and tools that help them finding the information they need for their purpose. Portals and web sites, that structure information, that involve users in rating the content of their and other sites and that give users guidance and advise on where to find what, might be helpful.
- For many users it's hard to judge the quality of a site, whether the information they find is appropriate and up to date or whether for instance an online counsellor is reliable. User need clear orientation that could be given in form of quality labels or trustmarks issued by an International quality initiative. Also a common code of conduct, web sites on SBV are committed to, could give users a valuable orientation.
- Though on the rise the number of web sites offering forums, blogs or other *sites* where users can interact with others is still rather low. Also, compared to other fields there are still relatively few online communities that focus explicitly on SBV. Information on SBV is certainly helpful for people in need. Nevertheless, when affected by SBV it is often also helpful to interact with others, both people who share the same problems or professionals. The involvement of interactive elements and the setup of protected communication spaces might contribute to making more users interact and form up to communities.
- There is still an obvious "digital gap" between developed and less developed countries that of course widely depends on economical and political factors.

However, increased International cooperations and partnerships that promote for instance promote sites from less developed countries in terms of content for the site or technical solutions will make a contribution for bridging the gap.

What will near future bring?

Predicting what the future might bring is always a challenge and bears certain risk especially when talking about a medium like the Internet that is in constant change and hard to grab. However, it is worthwhile taking a look at what developments and solutions are already in near sight or the ones that are already getting realised.

Finding appropriate information and judging the quality and credibility of a site will presumably be much easier in future. There is a new generation of search engines that are trying new ways. Some of them build on the "semantic web", an extension of the WWW that allows intelligent software agents to "understand" and search queries in natural language and thus permitting them to find, share and integrate information more easily (Wikipedia, 2007). As mentioned previously in this chapter new tools allow users to tag and rate web content, what also helps structuring information and thus ease the finding of information that is needed to solve a certain problem

Developments that go along with Web 2.0 promote an *increased interactivity* and an extended *involvement of users*. There are already a few web sites on SBV that allow their users to contribute content such as videos, music, pictures, poems or stories. Others offer tools that can be used for rating or tagging content such as links to other web sites so that more and more content on web sites on SBV is made or evaluated by its users. Furthermore, the first projects and initiatives make use of virtual worlds such as "Second Life", like for instance the EU-funded project aVataR@school that will offer virtual role plays for pupils in "Second Life" in near future.

International networks on SBV still mainly address to researchers. Yet, the first online conference VISIONARIES-NET to which we referred repeatedly in this chapter, target representatives of web sites on SBV, and several rather informal contact sustained the conference. It's envisaged to establish an *International network of web sites on SBV* that support each other.

In this context and resulting from our online conference as well there have been discussions about establishing an *International quality initiative* that works out a common code of conduct for web sites on SBV and that issues quality labels basing on certain quality criteria. A first attempt for getting this initiative – the QUALIVISION project – funded, failed, but further attempts will be made in future as the necessity for having such an initiative is obvious.

A final word

In this chapter we only managed to scribe some selected aspects that are of importance when analysing the role the Internet plays as a resource for tackling and coping with SBV. There are a number of questions that are of interest as well such as what makes a good web site on SBV, how web sites for different target groups have to look like or how web sites on SBV can contribute to cope with new forms of SBV that are promoted by the Internet.

Readers interested in these questions are advised in taking a look at our report related to our online conference "Coping with School Bullying and Violence Using the Internet" (Jäger, 2006) in which we also summarise outcomes of discussions related to questions we didn't manage to discuss in this chapter.

As mentioned repeatedly several aspects we scribed in this chapter will – hopefully – deepened by future research activities. Considering the increasing impact the Internet has for persons searching for information and seeking help and advice related to SBV, this seems to be both necessary and rewarding.

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LOCAL AUTHORITIES COPING WITH SBV

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- 1. INTRODUCTION
- 2. WHY LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE FIELD OF SBV?
- 3. WHAT KIND OF ACTIONS DEALING WITH SBV LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN BE INVOLVED IN?
- 4. THE MAIN QUESTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES DEALING WITH SBV
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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Forum for Urban Security, NGO of 300 local authorities, believes in the involvement of local authorities to deal with school bullying and violence (SBV).

This work is the result of both the past experience of the FESU and his partners on the subject and the outcomes of an online Conference, part of the Visionary-net project ("Violence in school – intelligence on the net-applying resources for youngsters", supported by the European Commission within the framework of Socrates/ Minerva).

The second online <u>Conference of the Visionary-net project entitled</u> "<u>local/regional authorities dealing with school bullying and violence</u>" (SBV) aimed to point out the main matters on the subject. During 4 weeks, from October 24th to November 18th, 2005, the 34 participants from all over the world exchange on their questions about the involvement of local authorities dealing with SBV. We will refer to the outcomes of this discussion all along the different chapters.

Besides, one of the aspects of the on-line Conference was the faculty for the participants to present their practices on local SBV prevention. We try, here, to give an example of practice for each subject handled.

2. WHY LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE FIELD OF SBV?

Thinking globally to act locally

"Acting locally" is important because people know their own towns or regions. Citizens' commitment to the local area also tends to mean that they would like to see something done about the problem and, resource issues aside, are likely to be prepared to help with this process.

"Thinking globally", however, is equally important. While problems identified at the local level have significance for the lives of people in that area, many problems have parallels elsewhere, both nationally and internationally. An understanding of how local problems may be similar to others elsewhere means that mechanisms developed for dealing with the problems can be shared. Perhaps school bullying prevention programs developed in Bergen have some relevance for dealing with bullying problems identified in Paris, or in Korea.

Thinking globally to act locally on the territory in which the school lies, i.e., the city; responding to violence not with violence but with understanding and communication (with young people as well as between adults): such is, now, considered a responsible, fair and democratic attitude for responding to a phenomenon present in most European cities where a portion of the youth—and thus the future of those cities—having lost references, identity and moral values, is undergoing a profound crisis.

However, a good number of European cities have not waited ten years to become concerned in and react to this phenomenon. Interesting experiments, often in order to heighten the awareness of students to the question of violence or encourage them to adopt peaceful behaviour that is respectful of their schoolmates and teachers, have been carried out by local authorities in several European cities, beginning in the late '80s.

Today, faced with growing aggressiveness in certain neighbourhoods and schools of their cities that they sometimes no longer succeed in controlling, politicians, municipal technicians in charge of questions of education, security or youth, such as teachers, social workers or students' parents are, more than ever, seeking solutions and new ideas for containing a phenomenon that affects the whole community or for preventing this phenomenon that they observe with their neighbours.

School violence is violence above all. School bullying and violence (SBV) are part of violence in the town. Violence at school can not be tackled on an exclusive way, particularly from the family and neighbourhood environments. This notion of "establishment's porosity to violence" seems quite essential to justify the involvement of local authorities.

For many parents and students, the fact that schools are "relatively safe" provides little relief given the widespread expectation that schools are supposed to be safe, and therefore should not be judged on the same standard that people use to gauge security in other public or even private places. Schools are "controlled institutions", public spaces where individuals sacrifice a measure of individual

liberty in exchange for the opportunity to learn. Schools are to be safer than other places.

Violence in school is a social phenomenon that developed in the 1980s and 1990s, and has two origins: the street first of all, and then the classroom. In both cases the media have magnified the issue (cp. Chapter 4). The term "violence in school" is ambiguous: prevention of street violence in school, and reducing violence in schools.

Local educational projects mainly succeed if they are closely organised with the projects of municipalities, and conversely, if the necessary complementarily of all local public policies is organised: family, justice, town and country planning, infancy, health, urbanism, architecture, housing, transportation, employment...

Municipalities should develop a global approach to urban safety problems, and implement an inter-disciplinary plan of actions based on risk-reduction, strengthening of social and territorial prevention".

"Thinking globally to act locally" supposes that national and local governments have to be complement interventions. If this concept is quite easy to understand, it appears that in most countries, the relationship between local authorities and national government about the role that each one should play is either not really established, effective or efficient.

Box 1: EXAMPLE OF SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES: FROM THE NATIONAL TO THE LOCAL LEVELS PORTUGAL: "ESCOLA SEGURA"

Key words:

Prevention and struggle against school violence; School community; Local community; Security at school; Delinquency of minors.

Background:

The Portuguese programme "Escola Segura" has started in 1992, based on the partnership between the Home Office and the Ministry of Education, with a view to face the increase in the number of acts of violence in some schools, located in the large cities of Lisbon and Setúbal. The complaints reported thefts, muggings (on teachers, pupils and assistant staff), and vandalism on the equipment, either inside the schools buildings or in the neighbourhood of those schools.

From 1992 to today, the program has been reinforced and has evolved:

- From an intervention which only targets concrete complaints in "problematic schools" towards a prevention and proximity logic intended for every school (except universities);
- From an intervention supported by the strictly necessary partners Home Office/ Police and Education/ Schools towards the progressive increase in

partners – City Councils; Other public entities (e.g. Social Aid, Employment, Youth); Civil Society Associations, NGOs, pupils, parents, teachers, school professionals;

- From an intervention focussed on police authority towards an intervention focussed on school authority, which responsibility is to be shared with local actors.

Territory:

National level (general coordination), Cities and Schools (local coordination)

Purpose of the action:

- Evaluating, preventing and struggling against dangerous behaviours, offences and crimes within schools and in their neighbourhood.

Promoting a culture of security which could favour the adoption of civic procedures and attitudes preventing violence, within a school background.

- Developing partnerships and trainings, heightening public awareness to ensure on the one hand a transversal look and treatment of the security problems and on the other hand the commitment of the whole community.
- Researching, analysing and treating information, promoting studies (taking into account notably violent incidents, insecurity feelings and victimization) in order to ensure an objective evaluation of the threats as well as the updating of the concerned strategy.

Action Pilot and coalition:

Coordination of the Home Office with the Ministry of Education, ensured by representatives nominated by the respective Ministers (currently being redefined). Several entities have committed:

- The police for public security
- The constabulary
- The governmental agency in charge of youth questions
- The governmental agency in charge of prevention and struggle against drug addictions
- The confederacy of the parents unions
- The national association of the town councils
- The local authorities
- The schools

Strategy:

- Collecting indicative information on violent incidents within the school background, according to a 'situation map'.
- Visible and continuous police surveillance around schools.
- Facilitating 'School/ Police station' communication, notably with a direct telephone line.
- Establishing a specific functional profile of the "Escola Segura" policeman. It turns out to be an important tool to direct the selection and training processes of those officers.
- Planning the training of school community actors, by giving the priority to teachers in order to prepare them to manage situations of threat and also to create a security climate within schools.

- Setting up a national and centralized system enabling the recording, the analysis and the data processing. This is necessary in order to manage and evaluate the violence phenomenon within the school background.
- Promoting partnerships with universities and governmental or non-governmental organisations.
- Communicating/ spreading projects and activities led by schools, security forces, parents, and city councils among others, and which purpose could be adjusted to the aim of this programme.

Evaluation:

The programme has been evaluated on the initiative of the Ministry of Finance as well as the two other Ministries who are in charge of the project. Two evaluation reports have been published; the first one resulted from the work of a team integrated by inspectorate entities from the three ministries (Home Affairs General Inspectorate, School Inspectorate and Tax Inspectorate), and the second one was produced by a workgroup composed of the implementation agents.

Budget:

The cost of the actions has been taken care of by promoters. The precise quantification of the whole cost is not possible as it is scattered among different entities and split up into various budget headings.

Significant impacts:

- A better characterisation of violence related acts, which occurred within the schools buildings or in their neighbourhood.
- Increase in the quantity and the quality of available information for the school and the local community as regards security questions and several aspects linked to it.
- Progressively giving responsibilities and taking care of the problems and themes related to security, by the school community.

Obstacles and/or insufficiencies:

Lack of a real management logic for this programme, as regards whether the coordination pattern, or the planning of the actions, the resources quantification and the result evaluation.

Prospects:

Re-defining the programme, this is fundamental in order to overcome the perceived insufficiencies.

Is local authority part of the whole school community?

The concept of "school community" is often used but its definition does not obtain unanimity. Does "school community" include the persons who are inside the school but who do not necessarily get involved directly on facing violence,

particularly the non-teaching staff (supervisors and employees of the social and medical service)? Does it include the persons outside the school who may intervene on school violence (police, justice...)?

It appears form the 2nd Online Conference of the Visionary-net project, that every participant has his own definition of school community.

This lake of unanimity about the definition of the whole school community must not be an obstacle to establish a partnership. The question about which main local partners must be involved to tackle school bullying and violence is more essential. The best interventions involve partnerships between groups that can bring different perspectives and different degrees of authority to a particular problem.

A distinction is often made between "inside school" and "outside school" to determine who should be the local partners involved in dealing with school bullying and prevention. As Maureen Logelain (from the city of Brussels, Belgium) stated, "bullying can happen in and outside the school. It needs different action strategies. Outside the school, it depends more on police action. Inside the school, I join the point of view to work with an external expert." The best interventions are those which involve the local community, those people who know the area, its problems, and which actions are likely to have an impact.

A list of the partners, who should be involved, has risen from the discussion:

- local politicians, whether elected or technicians in the departments of education, youth, security and prevention, mediation, justice or cultural and social actions;
- the academic community as a whole: the students themselves, teachers and their representatives as well as all the non-teaching staff present in the establishments (supervisors and employees of the social and medical services);
- the regional and national authorities concerned by the questions of education and the well-being of young people at school and, more generally, in the urban environment;
- the association sector and civil society (socio-cultural associations and non-governmental organisations, as well as those dealing with education, rehabilitation, mentoring or mediation, and associations of student parents or former students...);
- the family, particularly for younger children (i.e. primary school ages);
- the peers. As Oana Mateescu (Concept Foundation, Romania) said, "in some projects, the most efficient transfer of information and know-how is from

peer to peer". "The peer-help-method" appears as a first step, mostly for teachers, to get "realistic, concrete and recent information about one another".

In implementing any prevention strategy, it is appropriate to have a clear procedure aimed at defining each person's role and responsibility, and the role and responsibility of the community as a whole¹⁰. In this respect, any prevention strategy should be conducted in a context of democratic dialogue that respects the players' cultural, economic and sociological diversity.

Clear co-ordination of activities is needed, in order to avoid the phenomena of bureaucratisation and conflict of interests. The training of the protagonists concerned should be included in this process.

The role played by each level at school is difficult to determine. This vagueness is not a guarantee of efficiency. Indeed, in those circumstances it is not easy to design each one's responsibility.

One of the difficulties that remain in some countries is to establish a partnership with some specific local actors, for instance the Research sector.

Box 2: EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIP: THE RESEARCH, A USEFUL LOCAL PARTNER LIVORNO, ITALY

Key words:

Questionnaires/interviews, secondary school, emotional skills; social skills; disease.

Background:

We decided to investigate the bullying problem because bullying is a serious form of aggressive or abusive relationship among peers. The seriousness of this form of behaviour is shown both by its diffusion (Fonzi, 1997) and by its long effect. Children who bully others are more likely to have antisocial problems as adults and be convicted of crimes more than their non aggressive peers (Olweus, 1993; Coie & Dodge, 1995).

At the same time negative experiences, founded on different mixture of rejection, withdraw and loneliness, can strongly influence victims' cognitive attitudes and beliefs and represent a potent risk factor for their subsequent development. Livorno may be considered as an average/big town in Tuscany and is not so different from the others city, girls and boys could be involved from the same problems; we wanted to know in what way and to what extent we are involved

¹⁰ Local partnerships for preventing and combating violence at school Council of Europe Strasbourg (France)2-4 December 2002 Conference organised by Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

with this problem. There had never been in-deep scientific research about the issue of bullying before this one in Livorno, but bullying has shown to be a relevant problem in our schools

Territory:

We have chosen two different schools placed in different areas: one is in the north and one is in the centre. In that way they represent different kinds of people and different way to live.

The first quarter, named Corea, was built during the fifties (public houses) and it has been a subject for a large programme of regeneration during the last years, though it is still presenting critical aspects and social disease.

The second quarter is the historical centre: a part of its inhabitants belong to middle classes but there are also a lot of immigrants from the poorest countries.

Objectives of the action:

Bullying is characterised by the fact that there is a social interaction between child and a group of children who intentionally cause hurt to another child or a group of children. This unbalanced relationship can happen in different contexts and in different situations.

It's important to know bullying by every single aspect to do something to help all the girls and the boys who are involved in.

Bullying is a combination of elements that involve not only the bully and the victim, but all the girls and the boys who around them.

Pilot of the action:

Comune di Livorno CIAF (Centro Infanzia Adolescenti, Famiglie) "Edda Fagni"

Coalition:

Comune di Livorno, University of Florence (Dep. Psychology), city secondary schools

Strategy:

Questionnaires and interviews, analysis and socialization of results. There are four instruments:

- Questionnaire on the social competence (Olweus 1978, in Menesini, Ciucci and Tomada, 1997);
- SPI-R Seattle Personality Inventory, Greenberg (Tani and Schneider, 1998) that investigate anxiety, behaviour problems, depression and "somatization;
- Questionnaire that investigate emotional intelligence (Schutte, 1998);
- Two instruments that investigate the capacity to recognize the emotions and the capacity to control one's own emotions (Caprara, 2001).

These instruments have been chosen by Ersilia Menesini and Simona Pagnucci, who represent the University of Florence.

Simona Pagnucci with some collaborators gave the instruments, during the class time but without the presence of the teachers. Each questionnaire was anonymous. The instruments were analysed by Simona Pagnucci and two university students who were finishing their studies.

Budget:

4.800 for the research.

Costs for printing research results are not yet known

Significant impact:

Planning and organizing promoting and contrast actions. We are going to propose some activities to control and prevent the bullying. These activities want to involve all the classes that are present in our research. Agreement with schools and teachers. Indeed, all the teachers understand the importance of these investigations, to know the children's relationships.

Obstacles and/or inadequacies:

Narrowness of analysis. For this first step we can be satisfied, but to know Livorno's girls and boys reality in its totality, we need to have more schools.

Perspectives:

Enlarging research and intervention zone, activating suitable strategies.

3. WHAT KIND OF ACTIONS DEALING WITH SBV LOCAL AUTORITIES CAN BE INVOLVED IN?

Local authorities may raise locally the subject

This point was stressed out by the participants of the 2nd online Conference. First, local authorities have to convince other to do something. This means alerting and convincing. First of all, it is important to give the necessary knowledge to teachers and parents to recognize episodes of bullying and also not to manifest and to interact with local authorities (social services, police). It is about:

- giving information about the "first signs" of bullying and violence and to look for a common culture of what is school bullying and violence. In the project set by the city of Livorno presented by Fabio Ferronni (Livorno, Italia), "the purpose is a joint training (directors, teachers, parents, social services, and police) to give common instruments to interpret this problem and to get a coherent and integrated intervention against SBV";
- stimulating the cooperation between all partners, inside and outside the school.

Here, one of the remaining questions is how to get in touch with the school as tackling bullying can appear too big a challenge for a start? The participants adopt different strategies of approach.

One of them consists in starting the cooperation with an easy project, and later to make progress.

Sander Flight (DSP-group, Netherlands) exposed that: "In our approach, we always start with a discussion with the principal and a few involved teachers. The main point in that discussion is not what the problems are, but how we will go about gathering information on what really happens. Mostly, they will come up with a problem that happens a lot (e.g. theft of cell-phones) and we start from there. After two months of registration, we make an analysis of the problem (how much, where, when, by whom?) and think of a way to solve it. After that, you can move on to other incidents, such as robbery, vandalism or even bullying."

Another solution can be to found one or two key-persons from the school to enter the institution.

As Christine Boeckmann (NGO Miteinander. Germany) said "I prefer not to waste my time and energy with reluctant head teachers or bad conditions. Instead I try to encourage and support the teachers open for change or cooperation, even if they are very few or only one. When they successfully change their behaviour and/or teaching, others will notice and start asking..."

Tamar Hosennen (National Coalition Building Institute, Switzerland) talked about gaining confidence, particularly as there is a large offer on programs, theories or strategies against school bullying and violence. Nevertheless, a relation based on individual confidence could be frail, particularly when one of the parties leaves. As Agnès Pradet (French Forum for Urban Safety, France) argued "the turn over in the institutions can ruin all the previous work done so far."

Local authorities can be partners of the action

Then, local authorities can help to do something about it. This means being involved in actions dealing with school bullying and violence. This refers to the different actions local authorities can set up. This will be discussed later.

It is commonly admit to divide school violence-prevention methods into three modules:

• School-management-based programs. These programs focus on establishing school discipline policies and procedures that pertain to

student behavior, creating alternative schools, and developing cooperative relationships with police and other government agencies.

- Environmental modification. These programs focus on either the social or physical environment This includes installing CCTV (closed circuit television) and hiring security guards, but also includes larger-scale programs like setting up after-school programs and increasing or decreasing school size.
- Educational and curriculum-based programs. These are programs based on teaching students behaviour-management skills and non-violent conflict resolution.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

In the second and third week of the conference we focused on actions that can be set up at a local level and by local authorities. The topics that were chosen for this second week of the conference were inspired by issues that came up in the discussions of the first week.:

- **1.** Training, as it is one of the first and maybe easiest actions to be set up.
- **2.** Mediation as it is a common action which is set up.
- **3.** CCTV as it is a sensitive action which could be more and more developed.

Training

Training is one of the common answers to the question: how to sensitise and alert teachers, students or parents to one problem - to recognise it when they see it?

It is the first step in order to raise a common interest, to give common instruments to interpret the issue and finally to make a coherent and integrated intervention against SBV

Training can be either targeted to a specific public (parents, teachers or students) or dedicated to a joint public composed of teachers, directors, and parents...The choice depends on what is the overall problem and context and what is expected from the training.

Local authorities are not often involved in continued training but more in sporadic actions.

From the 2^{nd} online Conference, it appears that several goals can be attributed to trainings:

- make people reflect on what SBV is;
- identify different types of SBV and increase awareness of SBV;

- learn about sources and consequences of SBV;
- study the characteristic bullies, victims and bystanders;
- reflect own experiences and strategies of coping with SBV and discuss with others;
- study different approaches for tackling SBV and their effects;
- get aware of differences and similarities of how SBV is tackled in other countries (in society, school etc.);
- apply the strategies which have been taught in the course and discuss them with other participants.

Box 3: EXAMPLE OF TRAINING PROGRAM: HILDESHEIM, GERMANY, "FAIRTRUST"

Key words:

Trainings, Prevention of Violence, School, Socialisation

Background:

The roots of this project can be found in the working group "Against violence in schools" of the crime prevention council of the city of Hildesheim. The aim of the concept is to build a team which has a representative of the local youth welfare office, the local police and a school who takes part.

Territory:

Hildesheim, Germany

Objectives of the action:

The action days aims for the promotion of the socialisation and acceptance of norms as well as the feasibility to change the perspective, increase empathy and self-reflection. Moreover, there should be a time of self-experience and where participants may self-correct their own behaviour. Likewise there is an emphasis to learn rhetorical self-defence.

Pilot of the action:

Youth welfare office of Hildesheim, youth-work department (Jugendamt Hildesheim, Fachdienst Jugendarbeit)

Coalition:

Actors: A social-educationalist of the youth welfare office of Hildesheim, a professional of the police direction in Hildesheim, a teacher for each class.

Strategy:

Concept: The days of action imply theoretical and practical contents to the subject, values and norms – social sensitisation. In special trainings the participants will learn about alternative ways of behaviour and how to correct their structure of behaviour.

Concept of the training: Definition, experience of Violence and expectations.

1rstday: values and norms (sensitisation, definition, empathy);

2ndday: alternatives of violence (self-reflection, role of perpetrator-victim, exercises in Communication);

3rdday: promotion of self-confidence (conditioning, stabilising, and awareness of border experience).

Target groups:

Pupils in their 8th year of school in High school, with a high rate of foreigners.

Level of action:

High schools, youth welfare, police

Instruments of action:

Introducing of the subject, visualisation of behaviour, role-plays on the behaviour of perpetrators and victims.

Duration:

The project takes 3 days, on each 5 school-lessons. In each school-level 6 projects will be run. During 1 year there will be therefore 18 days of action, each with 2 actors. That means the project has no high expenses.

Communication:

Crime Prevention Council of the City of Hildesheim

Side action:

Sometimes a teacher with the function of the counsellor/advisor takes part in the project.

Budget:

The cost of each project is of about $100 \in$. The project is funded by the resources of the youth-work department of the youth welfare.

Significant impact:

The project was evaluated in the frame of a final dissertation of a student of the University of Hildesheim. The results are that a significant decrease of aggressiveness is given, with statistical proofs. Furthermore, the number of victims and perpetrators has decreased.

Element of success:

The success can further increase, when the teachers deal continuously with the subjects of the project, and when sustainable changes are given.

Obstacles and/or inadequacies:

The need of running this project is higher than the human resources.

Location:

Germany, Lower-Saxony, Hildesheim

Mediation

School mediation aims at reducing or stopping a conflict inside school between two persons. The conflict can be either be among two pupils or students, two teachers, a teacher and a pupil/student, a teacher and a parent. Mediation helps both participants in the conflict to clarify the situation and by means of mutual agreement helps to find possible solutions to satisfy both sides in the conflict. The process of mediation is considered successful if both sides are satisfied with the outcome and if they learn something out of the situation.

Mediation is based on a free adhesion of the protagonists, or what some of the participants call a voluntary agreement. "Goodwill is one of basic principles of mediation and when ignoring it mediation loses its role and purpose" according to Nada Glusic (Ljubljana, Slovenija). It is also defined by the guaranty of a certain neutrality, impartiality and confidentiality.

Is school mediation an alternative to some other measures, particularly to a discipline and penal measure?

To some participants the answer is yes. Here school mediation has one of those three main roles in relation to discipline measures:

- Mediation is offered to pupils as an alternative to discipline measure if the pupils are successful in the process of mediation, discipline measure is no required;
- After a discipline measure is given, mediation is offered as an opportunity to solve the relationship, but has an effect on the disciplinary measure;
- A discipline measure is given, and after that mediation is offered and if it is successfully performed, the disciplinary measure is cancelled.

For other participants, the mediation is not an alternative to the disciplinary or penal proceedings. According to Louis Leblevec (La Rochelle, France), "mediation does not regulate the problems instead of the protagonist and does not replace the proper authorities (social Police forces, Justice, social workers".

Mediators can be professionals but not necessarily as it is the case for of peer mediation. Peer mediation is introduced in schools to encourage and develop skills of pupils/students to solve problems in a tolerant and constructive way.

It is the process in which a conflict, quarrel or misunderstanding among at least two pupils/students takes place. Both sides have to be ready to solve the situation in a calm, tolerant and productive way which can lead to a concrete voluntary and responsible decision.

Both sides agree that by means of communication the conflict will be solved. To reach such solution a third, neutral peer is needed, who by means of various skills, knowledge and techniques helps to explain different views, express the participants' wishes and needs to find the best outcomes.

The mediator appears as a third party who facilitates the dialogue between the protagonists; the conflict resolution still belongs to the two parties of the conflict. The several missions of the mediators are the following: helping the pupils/students in a conflict, clarifying their aims, means and possibilities, helping them to understand and take into consideration the opposite side and finally to shape clear decisions, acceptable for both sides.

One of the components of mediation success is the development of the network between all the partners dealing with school bullying and violence. Working within a network guaranties the diffusion of the conflicts case both on the school level and outside of it. This can be fundamental when a conflict cannot be regulated by the mediator who needs then to seize the proper authorities. As Louis Leblevec (La Rochelle, France) mentioned "a large majority of the situations met by mediators is regulated thanks to the work in network".

Box 4: EXAMPLE OF SCHOOL MEDIATION. SAINT-GILLES, BELGIUM

Key words:

School mediation/youth/ prevention and accompaniment

Territory:

Students of all the schools of Saint-Gilles (denominational or local education) and students living in Saint-Gilles but enrolled in schools outside the city (those two 'conditions' are accepted with pliability by school mediators).

Objectives of the action:

Answering the requests of the students

Pilot of the action:

The Saint Gilles security and prevention contract (SPC) has two school mediators, whose office is located within the Youth Local Mission (YLM) premises.

Coalition:

Besides, the school mediators work in collaboration with the other plans of action stated in the security and prevention contract as regards particular situations (consulting one department or another: frontline legal assistance, social mediation, street educators...) or collective work situations (meeting of the contract staff on special themes, meeting on the school engagement plan of action organised by the deputy mayor for public education, and finally, collaboration with the local community sector during information campaigns).

Strategy of implementation:

Therefore, school mediators are "external" to the various educational establishments. The articulation between the mediators financed by the SPC and the mediators internal to the various schools takes place as follows: when the problem is more inherent to the internal dynamics of the school, then the internal mediators take care of it (they are financed within the framework of the French community, of the positive discrimination policies or on the school's funds). When the problem is a situation of an important conflict (and that both parties requested it), then the external mediators take care of it. As those criteria are not exclusive regarding each other, the SPC school mediator's intervention will also be based on the explicit wish and request from a youth.

The basis of their work takes the form of individuals on duty, to which the youths can go and explain their problems (essentially in relation to their schooling). These duties take place on Mondays from 9 to 12, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 4.30. The persons who are interested can also call to make an appointment. This information request is more important at the beginning of the school year than at its end, because of the situations generally linked to it (refusal of enrolment, appealing against the decision of a staff meeting).

With the problems brought to the fore, notably during the duties, the school mediators set up more collective actions such as information sessions (on various themes like education structure, subject guidance, school difficulties, grants) or meetings for examples between some youths and the members of the psychomedico-social centre.

They are also in charge of ensuring the repercussion of the ground acknowledgements on other levels, notably through the participation to various colloquiums. Following the intervention of the school mediators, different devices of collection of information linked to schooling (notably in relation to existing duty schools, and to the 'shortcomings' of this field) are also being set up.

Budget:

The plan of action of the school mediators (2 mediators + running expenses) is financed by the Region of Brussels-capital within the framework of the security and prevention contract of the city of Saint-Gilles.

Significant impacts:

The most frequent types of request (at least along those four months, since the priority requests vary according to the period of year considered) are: school guidance, life projects (28 situations); information on schooling (25 situations); miscellaneous on schooling (17 situations) and appealing against decisions of staff meetings (15 situations).

The statistics that have been set up by the service enable to give some details as regards the youths who talk to them. From February to August 2002, out of 110 persons who went to this service for schooling matters:

63 were males, 47 were females;

14 were in nursery or primary school, 78 in secondary education, 18 in higher education and of social advancement;

60 were under 18 and 50 were between 18 and 21.

Besides these situations linked to schooling, school mediators also take into care – only occasionally – some requests issued by adults (questions linked to trainings, administrative assistance, and health). Nevertheless, a reduction in this sphere of activity is being carried out.

Perspectives:

The community service for school mediation will maintain its activities (individual and collective approach) while developing particularly the last two work lines, that is to say:

- The main line of collective prevention: implementation of information campaigns for social contributors in contact with the school public (youth centres activity leaders...). These information sessions mainly concern the statutory and legal regulations as regards schooling and education structure, as they are characterized by their complexity and are in constant evolution.
- Collecting reflections and ground acknowledgements and passing them on to the authorities concerned as regards some themes such as the social contributors' perception of the factors of school success or failure (setting up of a questionnaire, analysis of the answers of the social contributors, and reflection with the guarantors on the possible results and actions to be implemented) and of the problematic situation of pupils over 18 within the school system.

CCTV (video camera)

To implement or not CCTV in and around school to deal with school violence is a question that can not be evaded as it is really a very sensitive. The assumption behind video cameras is that violence is less likely to occur if it can be seen CCTV will certainly be introduced some day on a "broad" scale. Even if today and in most countries, the number of schools which have implemented CCTV is still extremely limited, the number of discussion about introducing CCTV at school is increasing on a political level.

Local authorities can be involved in such projects by giving their agreement, material or human helps, and funding...

Today, the preoccupations are less about ethical issues than about the real effectiveness of CCTV, even if it is admit that eexcessive surveillance could raise privacy concerns where people have reasonably expect privacy (like near lockers or in bathrooms).

At best CCTV can only be part of the solution. Technical or even human monitoring can not be the fundamental and the unique solution. One of the worry is about the fact that schools may look at CCTV as a definitive solution and rely on it to prevent bullying without going on or developing other measures.

Based on the participant's experiences of the 2nd online Conference, CCTV does not increase student safety feelings since CCTV is mostly introduced because management wants it, not because students think it will promote safety.

CCTV is above all a good way to get evidence after the fact. An American Criminal Justice Policy Review is quite formal:

"Although it is well known that cameras are useful for documenting events after the fact, further utility of the various school safety technologies is virtually unknown. In other words, a "comprehensive report on the effects of security cameras in high schools" has probably not been produced."

This lack of scientific and realistic information is regretted. In that context, decision makers can not base their judgement on a reliable argumentation.

Indeed, there is not much information on the effectiveness of cameras, but that is not only true for schools. A large-scale UK evaluation of CCTV¹¹ concluded:

"Assessed on the evidence presented in this report, CCTV cannot be deemed as a success. It has cost a lot of money and it has not produced the anticipated benefits. (...)

The majority of the schemes evaluated did not reduce crime and even where there was a reduction this was mostly not due to CCTV; nor did CCTV schemes make people feel safer, much less change their behaviour. The use of CCTV needs to be supported by a strategy outlining the objectives of the system and how these will be fulfilled. This needs to take into account local crime problems and prevention measures already enforced.

Too much should not be expected of CCTV. It is more than a mere technical solution; it requires human intervention to work to maximum efficiency and the problems dealt with are complex. If properly managed, it has the potential – alongside other measures and in response to specific problems – to help to reduce crime and to boost the feeling of safety; and it can generate other benefits. For these to be achieved though, there needs be greater acknowledgement that reducing and preventing crime is not easy

 $[\]underline{^{11}}$ Home Office Research Study 292, "Assessing the impact of CCTV" by Martin Gill and Angela $\underline{\text{Spriggs}}$

and that ill-conceived solutions are unlikely to work no matter what the investment is."

It seems that the biggest advantage of having CCTV at school is a decrease in damaged property and vandalism within the school (and hence cost-effective) but not necessarily a safer school environment for children. But do the advantages of having CCTV outweigh the ability to maintain the system and outweigh its bad effects and costs?

Sander Flight (DSP Groep, Netherlands) gave this example: "One school installed 16 cameras outside the school. The costs were $16.000 \in$, but the system has reduced the damage caused by theft and damage to zero. Last year, the school suffered from theft to the amount of $40.000 \in$, according to the school. So in this case, the benefits outweighed the costs".

One of the main worry about implementing CCTV concerns the non-physical and more subtle forms of bullying (such as verbal and social types including social exclusion). With CCTV implemented, they may be ignored or given less attention. These types of bullying may become more prevalent within schools due to the difficult nature of detecting them with CCTV.

If schools are going to implement CCTV, it is essential for them to know what the advantages as well as potential negative effects are. As Linda Finger (SELF Center, Australia) argued "schools still need to take responsibility for tackling bullying using other means. I don't think CCTV is a magic ingredient for the prevention of bullying but it is more like a tool."

A tool which, like any other, needs management. Indeed, if, for example, because of tight budgets, no one is available to actually watch the screens, and if this becomes known, video cameras might lose their deterrent value. Unmonitored cameras are said to be one of the least-effective

4. THE MAIN QUESTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES DEALING WITH SBY?

How to get a local diagnostic on SBV?

Very often today, programmes in schools or communities still get initiated without knowing what the problem is exactly. This matter of fact is acknowledged, deplored and taken more and more into consideration by practitioners.

To get a diagnosis, police and staff reports are not sufficient sources. Sander Flight (DSP Groep, Netherlands) related that in the survey he had conducted "It has been also asked whether the incidents had been reported to a member of staff or even the police. About one in every six incidents (15%) was reported to a member of staff and about one in every hundred incidents was reported to the police (1%)".

Therefore, it seems that surveys will always give a better picture of reality than the other two sources. But if you accept the limitations of other sources (and make some kinds of correction to them), you can also use staff-recorded incidents or police-records. He warned us "just be aware that you miss roughly 85% or 99% of what really goes on. On a more promising note, however: the more "serious" an incident, the greater the chance that staff or police were told about it. So you can use any of the three sources to get a picture of what problems should be tackled first. As long as you know what you don't know".

Surveys have different benefits:

- The outcomes can help to create awareness about the bullying problem;
- they help to raise motivation and justify intervention efforts;
- they can identify the extent of the problem and can contribute to discovering key problems;
- they make it possible to judge later on if a program was successful or not;

Nevertheless, getting more information than only police and staff reports can be very expensive. As Oana Mateescu (Concept Foundation, Romania) explained, "as my expertise is in Communication Sciences, I know in this field the research is utterly important, that a survey when starting planning a project is a must and that, on the other hand, there are lots of voices saying that there is not enough budget for such a research. It seems every discipline has its actors of constraint."

A presentation Prof. Peter Smith made at the OECD conference <u>"Tackling School Bullying and Violence"</u>, overviews some methods that are applied for sampling aggression and victimization in school settings:

- Adult (teacher and parent) reports: Limited values as adults are only aware of a fraction of what is going on;
- self-reports: widely used in anonymous questionnaires, e.g. Olweus;
- peer nominations: maybe most reliable method for class based work;
- direct observations: avoid reporting bias but is difficult and time-consuming;
- other methods: in-depth interviews, focus groups, incident reports, etc.

One critical issue is to know the differences between those methods and which one is the best.

Does a survey give the same results according to who is asking and collecting the data? In conformity with most of the online Conference, the best method is self report As Thomas Jaeger (ZEPF, Germany) explained during the 2nd online Conference "the most common form of getting information is self-reports by students; the optimal situation is when the survey itself is supervised by the researchers themselves or students workers who are present when the questionnaires get filled in".

According to an article, Pellegrini, A. D., & Bartini, M. (2000), an empirical comparison of methods of sampling aggression and victimization in school settings - Journal of Educational Psychology, 92, 360-366: "self-report measures are just as effective as most of the other methods employed. I believe they should be the basis of any study. Observer ratings should be also followed with self-report measures".

Box 5: POINT OF VIEW: WHAT ABOUT ONLINE SURVEYS, BY SANDER FLIGHT

This is a good way to reach students (secondary schools). They spend a lot of time on computers and apparently feel free to tell the truth. Maybe even more than in a classroom setting, which we also tried.

The main question, however, is how to reach the right students? What we do is open up a survey and ask the school-teachers to encourage their students to fill in the questionnaire - either at school or at home. This works fine, as long as the software is safe and people can only enter the answers once. This on-line tool for measuring problems at school has a lot of advantages: it's fast, it's fun, it's easy to repeat and the results are available for analysis immediately.

A good security diagnosis can take between 6 months and 1 year to complete. This careful analysis allows for the development of targeted strategies and plans.

How to establish a longlasting partnership?

Defining communities and developing and sustaining partnerships are not simple tasks. Much can be learned from past successes and failures. Including community partnerships, understanding the links to underlying problems, looking at the strengths and assets of communities and individuals as well as risk factors, working on the analysis and planning process rather than focusing solely on programs that provide quick results, and addressing funding and evaluation are important activities that must be thought through.

Mayors are strategically placed to make a difference in these endeavours. They can provide leadership to identify and mobilize key partners; authorize development of a rigorous safety audit that includes an action plan with short- and long-term goals; assign staff to implement, monitor, and evaluate the plan; and act as a conduit for exchanging expertise and good practices.

The willingness to cooperate on school bullying is often the fruit of a long process. At the beginning, schools do not automatically perceive the urgent necessity for that kind of help and connection. Furthermore, the school principal may fear the spreading of the issue and so "may worry that the problems of the students of the school could be known by the public and then the school would begin to have a bad reputation" noticed Thomas Jaeger (ZEPF, Germany).

The process by which the partnership to deal with school violence becomes formalized is the same, in several countries. It is only after some rather severe incidents in schools and a somewhat broader public discussion that the running of anti-bullying programmes in these schools is more frequent.

Partnership is not that formalized in every country. Some of them may appear to be like an "example" to others. Indeed, in some countries, partnership is almost compulsory whereas in other it can not be mentioned.

For instance, in France, a lot of cities has implemented what is called "educationl watch", run by a co-ordinator, in the framework of structures or arrangements that already exist in the city and which appear the best adapted.

In Germany, violence prevention on a municipal level is well organised. In most bigger communities they have crime prevention councils in which representatives from schools, local authorities, youth welfare, police etc. come together and plan problem-oriented activities.

In Amsterdam, they divided the organisation into two levels: "In school" and "around school". At the "in school" level, they orgabize two monthly meetings, one for safety-coordinators of schools and one for principals. The safety-coordinators talk mainly about current issues and use the group to talk about incidents that occurred. The principals mostly talk about safety-policy, cooperation with others (e.g. the police) and funding. At the "around school" level, there are two-monthly meetings where two representatives of the "in school" level meet with a group of representatives from local government, the police, health-care, public transport, etc. This level is less successful: once you've discussed the main problems and (tried to) solve them, the discussion can become a bit empty.

On the other side, in Korea, they have problems to have a regular meeting within the school.

Even when there is a structured partnership, the question remains about the gap between the theoretical scheme and the practical aspects.

One issue is quite fundamental for the participants: how to stimulate partnership? Even when there is a structured partnership, the question remains about the gap between the theoretical scheme and the practical aspects. Above all partnership may suffer from the lake of participation of some partners.

How to measure the effectiveness of the different actions?

Many prevention programs are demonstrating signs of success, although schools frequently developed them without evidence of their potential, since empirical data on effectiveness is lacking; collecting such information has not been considered a valid use of scarce resources.

Now, in order to increase the probability of program success, schools are rethinking this position.

Also, as communities struggle to support their schools with decreased budgets, the need for additional assessment has increased. But financiers will not provide resources for programs, violence prevention included, without quality evaluation data demonstrating their effectiveness and promise.

Determining what type of program, or combination of program components, is best for a particular school requires an assessment of the school's circumstances, student body, and resources. How designing an intervention which involves community and school in order to be able to identify whether this does indeed make a difference?

Assessing an action means either determining "Do training, mediation or CCTV reduce or not school bullying and violence?" or "how do they work"?

Assessments must continue as the program operates so that changes can be made to account for new developments and to improve outcomes.

Such evaluation data can then be used to support requests for funding the program's continuation. This digest examines the role of evaluation in understanding what works in violence prevention, and offers some guidelines for conducting a basic evaluation of school-based violence prevention programs.

But this issue is not well settled by the specialist of evaluation, the debate being still open.

It appears that:

- whole school is defined differently by every study;
- there is no consistent strategy used in only one study. From the individual actions carried out to the research designed employed, including measurement of bullying;

It is not that there is limited interest in determining the effectiveness of efforts to reduce school violence, but that there are often limited resources for doing so. A common observation from school administrators is that there is little justification for using scarce resources on evaluation when the funds could be spent on the provision of programs and services.

In any intervention program, the three most basic questions asked are:

- What are the program's results and what does it change?
- What program qualities make it work or be effective?
- Is the program cost effective?

Four basic types of evaluation can be integrated into the existing structure of most schools and programs to address these questions. They are needs assessment, outcome evaluation, process or monitoring evaluation, and costbenefit analysis.

Needs assessment:

A needs assessment (or formative evaluation) helps a school determine its needs regarding violence reduction and prevention. Many schools might skip this first type of evaluation, believing that knowing they need to do something to reduce violence is sufficient. However, asking several questions first might help a school develop a more effective long-term strategy.

For example: What is the nature and prevalence of violence and victimization at the school or in the neighbourhood? What is the impact of violence on child adjustment and mental health and learning?

Outcome evaluation:

The second type of evaluation is called outcome evaluation. It answers the question « what changed because of the intervention?" "Did the program reduce the children's problem behavior, aggression, delinquency, or violence?" "Did the program increase student attendance and improve school grades?" "Did it result in reduced discipline visits to the principal's office?" "Did it result in increased social competence or improved social skills?"

All of these are appropriate outcome evaluation questions. Being clear about what the program is meant to address (and not address) is essential to measuring its effectiveness.

Process evaluation :

Process evaluation attempts to address the question "what works best about our program and why does it work?" Is program effectiveness related to quality of teacher or staff training, the number of years an individual has been teaching, strong administration support for the program, scope of the program (i.e., school wide or confined to lessons in one classroom), or active parent involvement in program implementation and support?

Cost-benefit analysis:

The last type of basic evaluation is cost-benefit analysis. A cost-benefit evaluation answers the question "is the program cost effective?" It might include

an assessment of how much the program costs to implement per student or school, or how much the program saves in other related costs (e.g., vandalism).

How to involved European institutions according to local authorities?

School bullying and violence has become a global problem in recent years. As Mona O'Moore mentioned during the first European Seminar on School Bullying of the OECD conference in Stavanger "a global response is necessary that is both unified and co-ordinated".

Taking advantage of having a lot of representatives from different European countries, the issue of a European policy of SBV prevention rose.

What would be the expectations of local authorities in this field? Would it be more money, more practices exchange, or a European guide about SBV?

A European policy would have the advantage to accelerate the progress of National legislations, particularly those which are late to tackle bullying and violence at school.

But there is not today a specific European policy for the majority of social issues and it seems that this kind of legal regulation will not come soon. Civil Law is a very nationalist area, and European policies are mostly focussing for the moment on commercial, financial, etc. regulation.

International initiatives such as networks, cooperation, projects etc. may inspire or on the contrary may dissuade others to set up more or less the same action.

As Thomas Jaeger (ZEPF, Germany) said, "sometimes there are extremely creative and innovative ideas from which we never heard about before maybe because of the simple reason that we don't know the language of this country".

The first step can be to give the opportunities of platforms, such as forums, conferences etc, to the targeted people in order for them to exchange experiences.

Box 6: POINT OF VIEW: A REVIEW OF SCIENTIFICALLY EVALUATED GOOD PRACTICES OF PREVENTING AND REDUCING BULLYING AT SCHOOL IN THE EU MEMBER STATES, BY THE EUROPEAN CRIME PREVENTION NETWORK

In terms of legislature and policy training, it is possible to say that recent and existing directives have helped raise awareness on the issue of school bullying.

However, little can be said about which measures are the more effective in dealing with the problem. In order to enforce the policies that currently exist in many European Union member states, further training of the relevant people and the provision of support services is necessary.

Whilst it should, of course, be acknowledged that not one policy works everywhere, the success or failure of legislative and policy directives is probably dependant on a number of factors, including the cultural and social history of the individual states and their regions.

It is, however, possible to recommend that a far greater exchange of information between states [should exist] both on an official and private level, of the policies and their effects, which should help to stimulate discussion on those that can work.

The exchange of information, expertise and even resources within Europe have facilitated the development of the knowledge basis that exists within this continent as regards our understanding of the prevalence of the bullying behaviour in schools, the development of intervention programmes against it, and researchers' ability to inform legislators and policy makers concerning this issue.

The European Commission has played an active and important role in this bringing together of knowledge and skills.

According to Louis, a multilingual guide on European practices would be a good tool for the development of network. Besides, the programmes of youth exchanges should not be neglected as they widen the representation that the young people have of the world. A guide of the various programmes of youth exchanges existing on an European level would be also very useful.

5. **CONCLUSION**

The question about why local authorities have to be involved in the field of SBV seems to be less and less asked, as the answer is more and more obvious in every European country.

Constraint or volunteer, the school ask more and more external resources. The educational community has started to constitute itself, initially around the staff working in the same buildings, then by incorporating external professions and institutions, such as local authorities.

The work with parents, groups of inhabitants has been multiplied but with always a weakness due to the lack of methodology and people relay.

Today, everybody agree on the principle "thinking globally to act locally" even if it appears difficult to put it in action.

If local partnership is looked nowadays as an inescapable way to deal with SBV, it appears that it is not so easy to maintain it, as partnership is often a

question of individual will. Local authorities are often the junction between the different partners; they convince, coordinate, animate, initiate...The intervention of local authorities is extensive, and can go through several fields such as trainings, mediation or even cameras.

Whatever the way the local authority chooses to intervene, one issue remains; the assessment of the action: does that work or how does it work?

It is probable that the role of local authorities in SBV is going in the next few years to be more pregnant. It would be furthermore efficient if they get answers to their few questions and why not from the European Institutions.

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SCHOOL BULLYING AND VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF MEDIA

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- 1. INTRODUCTION
- 2. MASS MEDIA AND SBV
- 3. CONCLUSIONS
- 4. REFERENCES

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will try to make an overview about the role mass media has in school bullying and violence.

The chapter will presently briefly the mass media industry and its main functions. Moreover it will point which are the mass media that young people frequently interact with as well as which is media's role in shaping teenagers' behaviour and attitudes. It will also introduce some research studies findings regarding the effects of violence in the media and it will discuss the way media influences the development or prevention of violent behaviour on children. The chapter will try to make a short presentation of media education and how this field could contribute to raising awareness about and at the prevention of this phenomenon.

The chapter is in connection with the fourth online conference, SBV: the Role of Media, which was developed under the project VISIONARIES-NET. An overview about the online conferences can be found at http://www.bullying-in-school.info/en/content/forum-conferences/online-conferences.html

The fourth online conference of the VISIONARIES-NET project aimed at bringing together participants from several European countries who were interested in the way School Bullying and Violence (SBV) is reported by the media. The conference also hosted SBV experts who shared their knowledge and experience, and provided professional advice on how the information about SBV should be treated.

The conference focused on a couple of topics like what is the role of media in School Bullying and Violence, how can media participate at the prevention of SBV, how do the media report on SBV influence the development or prevention of SBV.

It was one of the conference's purposes not to restrict it to a limited group of experts but to include a broader audience of Internet users. For this purpose selected outcomes of the conference were published in a web log on the VISIONARY portal in order to inform the users of the blog about the conference's outcomes and above all in order to continue the discussions with a broader public. The conference blog is available at http://blog.bullying-in-school.info/

MASS MEDIA AND SBV

Small introduction in the mass media field

Mass media represent the main means of mass communication which are conceived and designed to reach a very large audience.

Thus, the word mass media may refer to:

- Internet
- Television
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Magazines

Short history

Although the dramas played in the Ancient World and the books printed in Asia around 800 AD or even earlier, might be considered as the first mass media, due to the small audience reached, the occurrence of mass media is considered to be around 1400 when the first European printings appeared. It is worthy to point out that in 1453, using a printing press, Johannes Gutenberg printed the first book. This machine revolutionized the way printed materials were received by people.

The first newspaper appeared in English in 1620 though opening the road to the huge industry that has become today.

In the 17th and 18th century the written press developed enormously. England is the first country who issues a daily newspaper and also the first country who issues a newspaper that become a standard for journalistic professionalism – the Times. The 19th century brought the photographs, telephone, cinematograph and telegraphy.

The 20th century was the period when mass media reached its currents state of development, helped by the huge technology discoveries. Also this century brought the duplication of information in electronic format, such as radio and television.

Another great discovery of the past century in terms of mass media was the appearance of the Internet. The WWW gives anyone the possibility to address a global audience. The invention of the Internet has allowed breaking news stories to

go around the globe within minutes. This rapid growth of instantaneous, decentralized communication is often deemed likely to change mass media and its relationship to society.

Main functions and theories

Main functions of mass media are:

- information
- advertising
- propaganda
- entrentainment
- education

The effects of mass media have been studied for a long time. Denis McQuail, one of the leading authors and researchers in mass communication, says that there are various forms of mass media messages effects. There can be effects at institution or collectivity level or effects at individual level; there can be slow or quick effects, usual, normal effects or effects obtained by controlled action.

Some of the most important **theories** that have been studied in connection with mass media effects are briefly described below:

- Mass media "hegemony" model the main idea is that the dominant classes use the mass media and the educational system to impose their own ideology and values thus making mass media the instrument of hegemony tendencies. The model states the idea that messages transmitted through mass media have significant influence on the public (Gramsci, 1971)
- "Dependence" model people depend on mass media on various ways because they are part of social systems that can't work without the information given by this communication channels (De Fleur & Ball – Rokeach, 1976)
- "Spiral of Silence" model the theory says that mass media has in general a special force on influencing people's opinion controlling in fact their behavior. The people who share the dominant point of view (presented by the mass media) talk about it unlike others who have a different opinion and are quiet because they are afraid they might be isolated, publicly sanctioned (Noelle-Neuman, 1974)
- The two-step flow of communication theory (or "minimal effects" theory) –
 mass media information is channeled to the "masses" through group
 opinion leaders. The content of media messages is explained and diffused to
 others by those people who have more access to the media and the
 capability of better understanding media content (Lazarsfeld & Katz, 1955)

- Cultivation of Perceptions: cultivation is the extent to which media exposure, over time, shapes audience perceptions as for example prolonged exposure to violence on TV or movies may affect the extent to which people think community violence is a problem, though that belief is also conditioned by other factors (Gerbner, 1976)
- The agenda-setting theory represents in a way the generation of awareness on different issues (more or less salient) by mass media, thus mass media can influence and shape the public agenda. Media agenda is the set of issues addressed by media sources and public agenda is the issues the public consider important (Miller, 2005). Agenda-setting theory was introduced in 1972 by two scholars, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. The two scholars studied the role of the media in the 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and found that the media influenced the public on what issues to think about. The study was groundbreaking and has been influential in the field of communication. The theory explains the correlation between the rate at which media cover a story and the extent that people think that this story is important. This correlation has repeatedly been demonstrated to exist. "Here may lay the most important effect of mass communication, its ability to mentally order and organize our world for us. In short, the mass media may not be successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about." (Shaw & McCombs, 1972: 176)

Media entertainment is big business

In 2001, people around the world spent US\$14 billion going to the movies. The largest global media sector, music, reached in sales in 2000 US\$37 billion, with music consumption high among young audiences everywhere. Video games are not far behind: global sales for 2002 were approximately US\$31 billion.

The complex and more educational products are abandoned by the media industry in favor of easy products that bring a lot of money.

It is very well known, especially in the communications industries, that children and young people represent a huge market. In September 2000, a US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) report revealed that U.S. media corporations were routinely ignoring their own rating restrictions and actively marketed violent entertainment to children and teens. The report revealed a number of standard (though illicit) practices for marketing to kids media products designed for adults. Also, it has been noticed that the content for different media programs is no longer marked adequately in order to increase profits and sales.

Follow-up reports from the FTC indicate that the film and gaming industries have improved their practices somewhat. The music industry has done little. The majority of labels continue to advertise albums with explicit or violent content on

television programs and in magazines that have substantial consequences on kids under the age of 17.

The media is currently without doubt the main means of cultural expression and communication. Many people say that teenagers' shootings, bullying and violence expressed by youngsters are somehow connected to harmful media content exposure. In the following section we will try to draw a picture of the broad implications of media's influence on people's lives.

Media products consumed by teenagers

Television programs

The television is currently the main media people interact with. A survey made in 1998 by UNESCO on children in 23 countries around the world showed that 91% of children had a television in their home -- and not just in the U.S., Canada and Europe, but also in the Arab states, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The study *Generation M: media in the lives of 8- 18 years old* made by the Kaiser Family Foundation in March 2005, showed that young people are using media 6 hours and a half per day. 81% of the interviewed people said that in a typical day they are watching TV, in an average of three hours a day.

The National Audiovisual Council in Romania made a study in December 2005 regarding the children's viewing behaviour of audio-visual programs. The study made a comparative analysys for three age groups 7 – 10, 11 – 14 and 15 – 18 years old. The results showed that for the lowest age group the most watched TV program is cartoons (24%) followed by shows for children (10,5%). On the second age group the most watched TV program was also cartoons (12%) but followed by movies (11%). For the last age group the preferences were towards multiple types of shows like movies (12%), news (11%), entertainment (9,5%).

Music and Music Videos

Recently researchers have showed that the music images and lyrics are increasing in violence and are on the first places in the audience preferences of teenagers.

The music sector is one of the most expended industries. For example, the music distribution via Internet developed a lot. A study conducted in the US by Pew Internet & American Life Project revealed that artists and musicians have embraced the Internet as a tool that helps them create, promote, and sell their work. Another research study conducted by the same institution showed that 27% of American Internet users say they download either music or video files. The sources used to download music are: peer-to-peer networks or paid music and

movie services, MP3 players, e-mail and instant messaging, music and movie websites, blogs and online review sites.

Video Games

Though there are many challenging non-violent computer and video games, in the last few years video games have become almost synonymous with violence. The movie-like realism, combined with enormous marketing budgets, has made this entertainment industry the second most-profitable in the world. The current trend in video games is to position players as bad characters and they act out criminal fantasies and earn points for attacking and killing innocent bystanders.

Web Sites

Virtual violence is also easily available on the World Wide Web. Children and young people can download violent lyrics (including lyrics that have been censored from retail versions of songs), and visit web sites that feature violent images and video clips. Many kids view these sites as the online equivalent of harmless horror movies.

According to statistics the number of teenagers using the Internet has grown in the past four years and 87% of those aged between 12 – 17 years are online (Pew & Internet, 2005).

Among the teenagers preferred activities online are sending instant messages (66%), downloading music (64%) and creating a personal web site (32%). The data was presented in the study *Generation M: media in the lives if 8-18 years old* made by the Kaiser Family Foundation in March 2005.

Children and Violence in the Media

Here are some statistical data and public asserts with regard to this subject:

- By the time a child is 18 years old, he or she will witness on television (with average viewing time) 200,000 acts of violence including 40,000 murders (Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Feshbach, Katz, Murray, Rubinstein, Wilcox & Zuckerman, 1992).
- Children, aged 8 to 18, spend more time (44.5 hours per week- 61/2 hours daily) in front of computer, television, and game screens than for any other activity in their lives except sleeping (The Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005).
- Since the 1950s, more than 1,000 studies have been done on the effects of violence in television and movies. The majority of these studies conclude that: children who watch significant amounts of television and movie violence are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior, attitudes and values (The US The Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 1999).
- Media violence affects children's behavior states The American Medical Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American

Psychological Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, and The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (Congressional Public Health Summit, 2000).

- Children are affected at any age, but young children are most vulnerable to the effects of media violence content (Bushman & Huesmann, 2001). Young children:
 - o are more easily impressionable
 - o have a harder time distinguishing between fantasy and reality
 - o cannot easily discern motives for violence
 - o learn by observing and imitating

It is worth pointing out that media violence programs are especially damaging to young children (under the age of 8) because they cannot easily tell the difference between real life and fantasy. Violent images on television and in movies may seem real to young children. They can be traumatized by viewing these images.

Media violence programs often fail to show the consequences of violence. This is especially true of cartoons, toy commercials and music videos. As a result, children learn that there are a few if any repercussions for committing violent acts (violence can be presented either in a context where there is a story and a framework established or out of the context like new technologies such as mobile phones allow).

- Young children who see violence in media have a greater chance of exhibiting violent and aggressive behavior later in life, than children who have not witnessed violence in media (Congressional Public Health Summit, 2000).
- Violent video games can cause people to have more aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and decrease empathetic, helpful behaviors with peers (Anderson, 2004; Gentile, 2003).
- Children who watch more TV and play more video games are not only exposed to more media violence content, but are more likely to act more aggressively with peers and tend to assume the worst in their interactions with peers (Buchanan, Gentile, Nelson, Walsh & Hensel, 2002).
- Violence (homicide, suicide, and trauma) is a leading cause of death for children, adolescents and young adults, more prevalent than disease, cancer or congenital disorders (The American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001).

What is the role of mass media in SBV

No doubt to this extent mass media influence young people's life. Media influence refer to the way in which the mass media in all their forms (television programs, movies, commercials, Internet pages and similar forms) affect the way we, as an audience, behave and act in our everyday lives.

Talking about the role of mass media in SBV means mainly talking about the influence mass media has over children and young people.

There are multiple theories which try to explain the media influence on audience. Some theories suggest that the extent to which an audience is captured by media text can be roughly split into three degrees. The first of these is primary involvement, in which the audience is solely concentrating on consuming the media text. Secondary involvement is when an audience's concentration is split between the media text and another distraction. Tertiary involvement is when the media text is merely in the background, with no real concentration upon it at all.

Another theory, which is probably the most widely accepted theory on audience reception, is Denis McQuail's "Uses and Gratifications" model. This places emphasis on why the audience consumes media. The first reason outlined in the model is the need to reinforce your own behavior by identifying with roles and values presented in the media. Secondly, we need to feel some kind of interaction with other people. The third reason is the need for security in our lives. Media offers a window to the world that allows education and the information gathering. The final reason is the need for entertainment. A strength of this theory is the fact that it suggests that the audience is active on selecting media content. However, this would suggest no passivity within the audience whatsoever. A person for example may be too lazy to turn off their television and so consume any media program that is available. Another disadvantage is that this theory pays little attention to the short term and long term effects of media on the audience.

This subject was also discussed during the online conference SBV: the Role of Media. The idea stated by the participants was that the audience has a media competence and, consequently, it "uses" media to get specific gratifications. Members of target groups are aware of their information needs, are active and use media to answer those needs, they evaluate how satisfied are and use different media to answer those needs.

The target group of a medium is considered to be very important so that to formulate and send a message as effectively as possible. Without knowing who to address we do not know how to talk. Understanding the target groups, knowing their characteristics and information needs help at making the communication activity more relevant.

Connected with this idea is identifying the medium that is most popular among the target group that must be reached. This does not mean that other forms of media are ignored, but that the major emphasis is put on the first to reach maximum audience. Prior to choosing the media, the message must be defined due to various reasons; including the fact that there are theories saying that also the channel influences the message credibility.

How violence in the mass media influences aggresive / violent behaviour

Many research studies findings show that there is a correlation between the violence presented by the mass media and an aggressive / violent behavior. A review of studies conducted by Wartella in 1995 summarizes: "More than a thousand studies in the United States and dozens within Europe have been devoted to this topic ... Distilling decades of laboratory, survey and field experimental studies, the current reviews conclude that there is a correlation between violence viewing and aggressive behavior, a relationship that holds even when a variety of controls are imposed (e.g. age of subject, social class, education level, parental behavior, attitudes towards aggression)..." (1995: 306)

The question of violence in the media and its influence on children is probably the most widely researched domain of media influence. Studies over a span of three decades, beginning in the early 1970s, have shown that significant exposure to media violence increases the risk of aggressive behavior at certain children and adolescents. Research studies have also shown that news reports of violent crimes can traumatize young children.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), "Children are influenced by media - they learn by observing, imitating, and making behaviors their own" (2001: 1224).

A growing body of research studies supports theories that explain how exposure to media violence would activate aggressive behaviors or attitudes at some children. Humans begin imitating other individuals at a very early age, and young children learn many motor and social skills by observing the behavior of others (Bandura, 1977). Social interactions shape the scripts for behavior that children acquire, but observational learning is a powerful mechanism for acquiring social scripts throughout childhood (Huesmann, 1998). Most researchers agree that such observational learning is probably the major psychological process underlying the effects of media violence on aggressive behavior. This same process could explain how pro-social behavior depicted in the media might encourage positive behavior in children (Friedlander, 1993; Harold, 1986; Mares, 1996).

The main ideas on this issue could be summarized as follows:

- ➤ One of the largest European studies conducted in 1978 by Belson shows that there is a relation between watching violence in the media and serious, criminal behavior of adolescent boys (Belson, 1978);
- ➤ If children are living in violent homes and environments they are more likely to be influenced by the violence in the media;
- An important general finding from experimental studies is that not all teenagers seem to be affected equally by media violent content. Effects seem to be strongest on young people who are predisposed to be aggressive for some reason or who have been aroused or provoked;

➤ According to the US Public Health Service – US Surgeon General Report – exposure to TV violence is an additional factor shown to play a role within the category titled "early risk factors" for those who commit violence at the age 15 – 18.

In the context of the ongoing debate on the effect of violence in the media on children and youth, the U.S. Surgeon General's report summarizes the following major research studies findings on the topic:

- Exposure to media violence programs can increase children's aggressive behavior on a short term. Media aggressive programs increase attitudes and emotions, which theoretically are linked to aggressive and violent behavior. Evidence for long-term effects of media violence is inconsistent;
- Violent behaviors occur infrequently and are subject to multiple influences.
 Existing evidence is insufficient to describe accurately how much exposure to media violence of what types, for how long, at what ages, for what types of children, or in what types of home settings will predict violent behavior in adolescents and adults.

Many other studies, laboratory and field experiments made public their conclusions about the effect of media violence content on children and youngsters. Different points of view, sometimes totally opposite came out of these various sources. One could observe that there are even considerable disagreements between them.

A number of laboratory and field experiments over the past half-century have examined whether children exposed to violent behavior in movies or television programs behave more aggressively immediately afterwards. Many studies have also examined the immediate effect of media violence programs on aggressive thoughts or emotions, which have been shown to increase the risk of aggressive behavior.

A substantial body of studies now indicates that exposure to violence in the media increases children's physically and verbally aggressive behavior on the short term (within hours to days of exposure). Violence in the media also increases aggressive attitudes and emotions, which are theoretically linked to aggressive and violent behavior. Findings from a smaller body of longitudinal studies suggest a small but statistically significant impact on aggression over many years, but evidences are rather inconsistent.

Some studies show that television violence is influential, as many as 25% of children watching it may be affected. Other studies undertaken had shown that from over 300 studies using numerous amounts of children, there was no direct effect of the violence portrayed through mass media on the teenagers of contemporary society. For instance it could be concluded that violence in the media can never be considered the sole cause of delinquent behavior, it may possibly just act to reinforce or affect those that are already prone to such

tendencies.

Mass media and imitation behavior

Experiments realized in 1963 by Albert Bandura (Bobo-doll studies) showed that a child can learn new attitudes and behaviors from TV programs just by observing different symbolic models. It is possible for a child to learn an aggressive form of behavior by observing and imitating. The ability to imitate does not mean automatically a violent behavior. If what it has been observed will be imitated in a new situation similar to the one observed it depends on a series of personal and situational factors. These studies were the basis for the social learning theory which tries to explain the mechanism through which people gain new forms of behavior, adopt action models and transforms them in personal ways of action as a consequence of observing the way in which other people act.

Some say that the connection between media violence programs and aggression is a psychological one, rooted in the ways we learn, for example the fact that children develop cognitive scripts that guide their own behavior by imitating the actions of media heroes. As they watch violent shows, children learn to internalize scripts that use violence as an appropriate method of problem-solving.

Research studies conducted in Australia, Finland, Poland, Israel, Netherlands and the United States showed that a child could be aggressive when he would watch violent television programs most of the time, he would think that the programs are a reflection of reality and he would identify with the characters in the shows.

A study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2003 found that nearly half (47 %) of parents with children aged 4 and 6 report that their children have imitated aggressive behaviors from TV. However, it is interesting to note that children are more likely to mimic positive behaviors — 87 % of kids do so.

Decades of social science research has shown that since violence is mostly a learned behavior, non-violence can also be learned. Psychologists have recently applied these findings towards teaching non-violence to young children and their caregivers. Their research studies reveal that since violence is learned, nonviolent ways of interacting with the world can also be thought.

All these suggest that due to violence in the media children will increasingly develop anti-social and aggressive behavior; children may become less sensitive to violence and those who are aggressed. Furthermore, children may view the world as violent and mean, becoming more fearful of being a victim of violence; children will view violence as an acceptable way to settle conflicts.

Effects of mass media

Good effects of mass media for young people

Beneficial effects include early readiness for learning, educational enrichment, opportunities to view or participate in discussions of social issues, exposure to the arts through music and performance, and entertainment. Harmful effects may only result from sensationalism of violent behavior, exposure to subtle or explicit sexual content, promotion of unrealistic body images, presentation of poor health habits as desirable practices, and exposure to persuasive advertising techniques targeting children.

In the context of the discussion on media influence on children, educational programming is without question the source of the most significant and long-lasting positive effects.

An important distinction has been made at the Congressional Public Health Summit regarding effects of violence in the media on children: "It is not violence itself but the context in which it is portrayed that can make the difference between learning about violence and learning to be violent." (Congressional Public Health Summit, 2000)

A research study made by the Kaiser Family Foundation, on parents with children aged 6 month to 6 years old and focus groups, showed that 66% of the interviewed parents think their child imitates positive behavior from TV, such as sharing or helping. Also 38% of them think TV mostly help children's learning while 31% say TV has bad influence and 22% say it doesn't have much affect either way. The study revealed that parents' feelings towards the benefits of TV are related to the amount of TV their child watches. Children whose parents say that TV mostly helps learning spend an average of half an hour more per day watching TV than children whose parents think TV has bad influence. The things mentioned among the benefits brought by TV are: spurring imaginative play, teaching letters and words, and learning a foreign language (The Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006).

Negative effects

Research studies have identified the following features of media content that have negative effects on children: violence and aggressive behavior, sexual content, aggressive / violent body image, aggressive language. These are influencing mainly children's self-esteem, and physical health and school performance.

Effects of television

While discussing the media effects participants of the online conference SBV: the Role of Media discussed on different studies: some said that TV programs have a small influence, others state that TV programs influence the violent behavior a lot.

One of the participants mentioned an article which reviewed a research about the TV influence on violent behavior which showed that the violent behavior increased at 70% of the studied people after TV exposure and that the influence of TV was relevant with previously aggressive people, which is also the conclusion of a couple of studies that have been presented above.

One of the conclusions that most participants adhered to was that parents have a crucial role in shaping media habits of their children and that parents should choose what their children are allowed to see on TV.

One of the firsts authors who initiated studies on media effects research said "... for some children, under some conditions, some television is harmful. For some children under the same conditions, or for the same children under other conditions, it may be beneficial. For most children, under most conditions, most television is probably neither particularly harmful nor particularly beneficial" (Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961: 11).

A study made in 2005 by the University of Washington said that the more television 4-year-old children watch the more likely they are to become bullies later on in school. The study concluded that bullying can be one of the consequences of watching too much television programs.

Effects of video games

Recent research is exploring the effect of new media on children's behavior. Craig Anderson and Brad Bushman of Iowa State University reviewed dozens of studies of video gamers. In 2001, they reported that children and young people, who play violent video games, even for short periods of time, are more likely to behave aggressively in the real world. Another study made by Craig Anderson in 2000 suggests that violent video games may be more harmful than violent television and movies because they are interactive, very engrossing and require the player to identify with the aggressor. Children repeat the violent behaviors from the video games over and over as they play (Gentile & Anderson, 2003).

Anderson's and Gentile's research shows that children are spending increasing amounts of time playing video games – an average of 13 hours per week for boys, and 5 hours per week for girls (Gentile, Lynch, Linder, & Walsh, 2004). A 2001 content analyses by the research organization Children Now shows that a majority of video games include violence, about half of which would result in serious injuries or death in the 'real' world.

Furthermore, playing violent games is also related to children being less willing to be caring and helpful towards their peers. Importantly, research has shown that these effects happen just as much for non-aggressive children as they do for children who already have aggressive tendencies (Gentile, Lynch, Linder, & Walsh, 2004).

Effects of violent music

In 2003 Craig Anderson, Nicholas Carnagey and Janie Eubanks realized a study to find out how violent music lyrics affect children and adults. The study involved college students and it showed that songs with violent lyrics increased aggression, related thoughts and emotions and this effect was directly related to the violent content of the lyrics. "One major conclusion from this and other research on violent entertainment media is that content matters," … "This message is important for all consumers, but especially for parents of children and adolescents." (2003).

Mobile telephony

There is growing evidence that mobile telephony may cause harm through the creation of fear and humiliation as resulting from bullying, for example. Although it is evident that new communication technologies are being incorporated into practices of bullying, harassment and other forms of malicious peer-to-peer communication, it is not yet clear that these technologies are responsible for an increase in the incidence of such practices. This is an area where the lack of research evidence is especially felt.

Interactive media

Some research studies show that the development of the new media has expanded the opportunities for children to be exposed to media violence programs at home. Current psychological theory suggests that the interactive nature of many of these new media products (Internet web pages, computer and video games) may affect children's behavior more powerfully than passive media such as television.

According to the Office of the Surgeon General, children are theoretically more susceptible to behavioral influences when they are active participants than when they are observers. To further legitimize these concerns, the American Association of Pediatrics reported that initial studies of interactive media show that the element of child-initiated virtual violence may result in even more significant effects than those of passive media. Because research has already shown that passive media violence has significant influence on children, the implications of the increased effects from interactive media are troublesome.

The report identified the following major effects of watching violence on television:

- Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others;
- Children may be more fearful of the world around them;
- Children may be more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward other people.

Long term studies on the effects of violence in the media and violence in school

A couple of researchers made some long term analyses regarding the effect of violent television on children. They studied the same target group over a period of many years. Here are some of the conclusions:

- Target group: 856 3rd grade students living in a semi-rural community in Columbia County, New York; Year: 1960; Conclusion: children who watched violent television at home behaved more aggressively in school. Target group: same children; Year: 1971; Conclusion: boys who watched violent TV when they were eight were more likely to get in trouble with the law as teenagers (Eron, 1960, 1971);
- Target group: 8 years old children; Year: 1971; Conclusion: boys who watched more violent TV were more likely to act aggressively in the real world. Target group: same children; Year: 1981; Conclusion: the more violence a boy watched at eight, the more aggressively he would act at the age of 18 (Lefkowitz, 1971, 1981);
- Target group: 707 families in upstate New York; Period: 17 years, starting with 1975; Conclusion: the effect is not limited to violent shows, children who watched one to three hours of television each day when they were 14 to 16 years old were 60 % more likely to be involved in assaults and fights as adults than those who watched less time the TV (Johnson, 1975);
- Children who watched many hours of violence on television when they were in elementary school tended to also expose a higher level of aggressive behavior when they became teenagers. Research on the same youngsters observed as adults showed that the ones who'd watched a lot of TV violence when they were 8 years old were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts as adults. Interestingly, being aggressive as a child did not predict watching more violent TV as a teenager, suggesting that TV watching may more often be a cause rather than a consequence of aggressive behavior (Huesmann & Eron, 1983).

Another research made on the long term showed that a TV show influenced the children in the communities so much that they created rival gangs (copied after the show) and the conflict between the two seriously disrupted the local show (Granzberg & Steinbring, 1970, 1980).

The findings mentioned above were condemned by some other researchers who argued that the studied groups were too small to be relevant and that in some cases the data collected was insufficient.

It may be concluded that exposure to media violence influences three categories of people:

- the aggressors;
- the victims;
- the society (as aggression, and fear of aggression become more widespread).

How SBV is presented in the mass media

In many countries, the SBV issues are reflected as isolated cases, they are not regular subjects for the media. The SBV issues appear in media only when sensational things happen. This is due to the fact that mainly media presents issues that are meant to sell, so small cases which don't have 'dramatic' facts don't help achieving this aim.



There are different ways of media reactions among countries. As one participant at the online conference SBV: the Role of Media pointed out, in countries like Moldova there is no interest in issues like SBV, probably due to the fact that home violence is such a common fact that other associated issues are still considered taboo.

In Norway for example, the media focus on SBV was enormous, and researchers believe that media focus contributed at the decrease in the number of victims. However, as one participant commented when media focus stopped, the SBV control was lost again.

The newspapers, radios and televisions present SBV cases in their news rarely, when dramatic things happen, like for example shootings. The Internet as a medium offers a much more various resource on SBV. There are either web sites entirely dedicated to this issue, or web sites that represent organizations / persons that are involved in the prevention of this phenomenon. There are also online editions of mass media which include more news and information on SBV than the printed or televised format (like BBC news for example).

The Internet news and articles about SBV are rather hugely numerous. For example only the Yahoo news full coverage on SBV archive has over 650 news on the topic.



There is still a number of media which frequently approach this issue, reporting both about the big and small cases of SBV, sometimes even prevention initiatives of different social actors.

According to the research study *Mass media and violence* (The US National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969) the violence on TV is presented like an efficient way to solve conflicts, unlike alternative methods such as debate, negotiation, compromise. Another finding of the study showed that there is a strong connection between violence norms and the measure in which such an experience is known directly. The persons who experienced violent

situations were disposed to agree, to approve such behavior. On the long term, exposure to TV violence can not only lead to activating predispositions, but it could also affect the normal behavior: so violence on TV can both activate and create a violent behavior. Another long term effect demonstrated by the research is that media violence is so wide spread that consolidates the belief that the world we live in is one of violence, thus leading to accepting violence as a semi-normal situation.

This is also shown by a couple of studies that say that people who are repeatedly exposed to violence in the media tend to be less disturbed when they witness real world violence, and have less sympathy for its victims. They also showed that children are more likely to tolerate aggressive behavior in the real world if they first watch TV shows or films that contain violent content (Molitor & Hirsch, 1994).

The notion of violence as a means of problem solving is reinforced by entertainment in which both villains and heroes resort to violence on a continual basis. The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA), which has studied violence in television, movies and music videos for a decade, reports that nearly half of all violence is committed by the "good guys." Less than 10 % of the TV shows, movies and music videos that were analyzed contextualized the violence or explored its human consequences. The violence was simply presented as justifiable, natural and inevitable -- the most obvious way to solve the problem.

Problems very often are solved rapidly and violently, and violent or other anti-social behaviors go unpunished. The good guys are very often no more appropriate role models for young children than the villains themselves. The result is that many children are more familiar with violent, aggressive, and anti-social approaches to solving problems than they are with nonviolent and pro-social ones.

When peaceful options such as negotiation and other collaborative problem-solving techniques are not covered, or their successes are not reported, they become invisible and are not likely to be considered or even understood as possible options in the management of a conflict.

Too many reports on SBV are as bad as the absence of news on SBV due to the fact that the general public might lose interest on the subject. But it is also important the fact that the high number of news on the subject means that the phenomenon of SBV is widespread which could be a signal of alarm.

There are theories underlining the fact that the increasing number of information does not necessarily have the estimated effect. Among the existing theories of mass communication there is the so-called "paradox of abundance". It says that the increasing quantity of information doesn't lead to a better degree of information that people have.

The participants at the online conference considered that the role of media reports in the development or prevention of SBV really depends on the content of

the report. The message is the one that defines the line whether it is something that would help understanding the phenomenon and its bad effects or it would lead to spreading it.

"What is more important than the dosage, is the way the topic is dealt with, not making it sound sensational but being discussed in an open clear and unbiased way, with an emphasis on self help and other solutions rather than accusations. Whilst the topic should be given its due importance, too much often will reduce the interest of the general public on the issue." (Raymond Portelli, Malta, conference3.bullying-in-school.info)

Other discussions during the conference revealed that in the participants' opinion the best way for the media to help is to adapt the message by taking into consideration the target group. It is also important that the reports include facts that will make them more credible and trustworthy for the target groups, like for example statistics on SBV, testimonies of people involved and both pros and cons in connection with the issue reported. The information has to be checked and neutral, offering a broad perspective.

The reports on SBV presented by media also depend on the information sources. The information sources concern both the journalists (how do they get information on SBV and where do they look for information) and the people working with journalists (information they shared with the journalists when asked).

Within the online conference SBV: the Role of Media the following information sources were identified: schools, statistics of reported bullying, officials, victims of bullying, parents, teachers, students and police.

An important issue related to the media reports on SBV and the information sources is the "media relation skills". "The most frequent reaction is "we don't talk" - which is tantamount hiding the dirt under the carpet. The journalists are persistent creatures, if they cannot talk to expert sources they will talk to whoever wants to talk to them - hence the distorted message." (Ioana Avadani, Romania, conference3.bullying-in-school.info).

From journalists' point of view, according to a couple of studies presented by Cristina Coman (2000), there are a couple of expectations that journalists think people dealing with media should have:

- a. to be a good communicator and have social skills;
- b. to have good written and oral communication skills;
- c. to have good memory and the synthesis skill;
- d. to be a good organizer;
- e. to have the ability to adapt to journalists' working hours;
- f. to know the mass media and to understand it's way of functioning;
- g. to know well the subjects he/she presents;

h. to have the sense of "news".

Box 1: EXCERPT FROM DELPHI QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED TO IOANA AVADANI, ROMANIA, PARTICIPANT AT THE 4TH ONLINE CONFERENCE: SBV: THE ROLE OF MEDIA

1. In your opinion, how is School Bullying and Violence reflected by the media in your country?

The coverage of the topic is almost non-existing as such. There are stories about serious cases, when serious violence acts are registered and kids have to suffer physically. Unfortunately, the permanent, low-level (read non-sensationalistic) bullying is overlooked and it is not perceived even as a problem. School violence is dually reported: both with teachers as perpetrators and as victims. Violence in the ranks of the students is not sufficiently reported. As a rule, the media cover "cases", not the phenomenon.

2. Which do you think are the benefits and/or disadvantages of the media involvement in SBV?

By not covering properly the issue, media waste a big chance to properly fulfil their role as a public interest guardian. Emphasizing the violent aspects and the separate incidents, it creates the wrong impression that these are separate events, not part of larger phenomenon, with deeper roots and requiring a systemic answer.

3. How do you think media may contribute at reducing/preventing SBV?

The media can do what they do best: raise the awareness of the public, prepare the possible "targets" and their parents, help them understand their rights and advertising the institutions that can provide assistance and redress. They can make people understand that SBV is not a given and that they don't have to put up with it.

Victims and bullies in the media

Another issue on this subject is related to the way victims' and bullies' points of view are presented in the mass media

Participants discussed that from the victims' point of view media can be considered a vector of safety feeling depending on the degree in which their rights are respected when exposed by media. It is the right of the victim to decide whether his/her name should be published in the media and if he/she wants to make his/her story known to the public.

Conference's discussions showed that people think victims of SBV should be counseled / advised before being exposed to media in order to be informed about their rights and risks. An important aspect that must be taken into consideration is what benefits a victim can obtain by being exposed in the media and what is the most appropriate media channel to be used. Persons who are exposed should be strong enough to deal with the media, to cope with the pressure and the exposure and they should also be able to pass the message along.

Participants in the conference suggested that bullies should appear in media programs, although would expose them and place them in a high risk situation. However it was considered that testimonies on how and why they stopped being a bully might bring a positive effect for the audience.

As a conclusion it may be underlined that a deontological code could be of great help in the relationship of media with persons involved in SBV cases as well as some "social responsibility training" for journalists.

Media literacy

The Center for Media Literacy says that a person who is media literate can "access, understand, analyze and evaluate the images, words, and sounds that make up our contemporary mass media culture"

Media literacy education is a necessary component of violence prevention for young people. Experts say that "media literacy education must be a necessary component of any effective effort at violence prevention."

Young people need to be taught how they can wisely be media consumers. Media literacy means understanding how mass media work, how they construct reality and produce meaning, how the media are organized, and knowing how to use them wisely.

New skills must be developed in order to fill people's needs like for example information literacy. This means teaching about the Internet and equipping people to assess the value of the sources they encounter, teaching children responsible behavior when they are online, collaboration between key actors in order to enhance awareness of web-related safety issues, security services and hotlines.

Media literacy curricula provide a variety of teaching tools to deconstruct the techniques used to stage violent scenes and decode the various depictions of violence in different media genres — news, cartoons, drama, sports and music. It is important for children to learn early on that media are different from reality and to know how costumes, camera angles and special effects can fool or mesmerize them. Research studies shows that critical skills of media analysis can be taught from the earliest years and, through guided practice, can become everyday habits for both children and adults.

Parents' role in media literacy education

Different institutions have offered recommendations to address the issues of media influence on children. Included in these recommendations are suggestions for parents, educators, and health care professionals to advocate for a safer media environment for children through media literacy. They urge media producers to be more responsible in their portrayal of violence. They advocate for more useful and effective media ratings.

A consistent recommendation in studies, however, is proactive parental involvement in children's media experiences. By monitoring what children hear and see, discussing issues that emerge, and sharing media time with their children, parents can moderate the negative influences as well as increase the positive effects of media in the lives of their children.

A number of studies suggest that media are only one of a number of variables that put children at risk of aggressive behavior, but are deeply related to them and the way one deals with all of them.

For example, a Norwegian study that included 20 at-risk teenaged boys found that the lack of parental rules regulating what the boys watched was a more significant predictor of aggressive behavior than the amount of media violence they watched. It also indicated that exposure to real world violence, together with exposure to media violence programs, created an "overload" of violent events. Boys who experienced this overload were more likely to use violent media images to create and consolidate their identities as members of an anti-social and marginalized group.

Techniques for teaching children positive, nonviolent ways of dealing with everyday problems are therefore in critical demand.

The role of parents is essential in teaching children how to react to violence in the media. "Active parental involvement in children's media usage-including discussing the inappropriateness of violent solutions to real life conflicts, reducing time spent on violent media, and generating alternative nonviolent solutions to problems - all can reduce the impact of media violence on children and youth" (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth & Wartella, 2003).

Parents can help children develop media literacy skills by:

- Helping children distinguish between fantasy and reality;
- Teaching them that real-life violence has consequences;
- Watching television with children and discussing the violent acts and images that are portrayed. Asking children to think about what would happen in real life if the same type of violent act were committed. Would anyone die or go to jail? Would anyone be sad? Would the violence solve problems or create them?
- Asking children how they feel after watching a violent TV show, movie, or music video;
- Teaching them different alternatives to violence like conflict resolution skills and anger management skills.

Different prevention initiatives for parents / families to shape their children media habits have been presented in various works. A couple of them are:

- ➤ Attempting to reduce the amount of media violence programs and children's access to it (for example, calls for media self-regulation and violence ratings);
- ➤ Encouraging and facilitating parental monitoring of children's access to media (for example advisory labels on music and video games);
- Educating parents and children about the potential dangers of violence in the media (for example, media and empathy educational programs); and
- ➤ Targeting children's views about violence to reduce the chances that they will imitate the violence they see.

Media literacy education and media providers

In the report "Youth media education survey 2001" made by UNESCO in 35 countries it is showed that partnerships between media education and media providers are regarded as a necessity for the future development of media education in most, though not all, contexts. There were many positive examples of media producers working successfully with educators. These partnerships offered clear gains in terms of providing access to knowledge, institutional practices and arrangements, in terms of sharing expertise and resources, and occasionally in offering some pre-vocational training. The development of media education frequently depends upon the initiative of committed teachers, often working in isolation. The most urgent need identified in the survey is for sustained, in-depth teacher training. In some countries, there are well-established partnerships with media producers and regulators, and successful instances of peer-training (e.g. New Zealand, Australia, the work of the CBFA in South Africa). Even in countries where media education is less well developed, there have been productive relations with broadcasters (e.g. Hong Kong); and publishing companies have been willing to publish textbooks and classroom resources (e.g. China, Japan, Malta).

Examples of a violence prevention programs in which media got involved

Adults and Children Together Against Violence (ACT Against Violence) is a US nationwide violence-prevention project that applies social learning theory and insights from developmental psychology. Unlike many violence prevention programs, ACT Against Violence targets very young children (ages 0 to 8) by addressing their caregivers and teachers. ACT includes a national multimedia campaign and a community-based training program. The multimedia campaign spreads the message that adults' words and deeds—especially aggressive and angry words and deeds—strongly influence children's words and deeds. The community-based training program teaches professionals who work with teachers and caregivers how to implement violence prevention skills for themselves and for their children. These skills include anger management, effective discipline, conflict resolution, and wise media consumption. Both parts of the project teach adults how to be positive, nonviolent role models for the children in their lives.

The research of Olweus, along with that of other psychologists such as Susan Limber, Ph.D., of Clemson University, is being used as part of a bullying prevention campaign launched in 2004 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, "Take A Stand. Lend A Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" (see http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov). The campaign also features television and radio public service announcements (the website includes also activities guide and video toolkit on DVD, information on SBV and tips for adults). The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about the issue of bullying and reduce bullying among "teens."

On the campaign's website are listed the following necessary elements for a successful community-based campaign for preventing SBV

- ✓ Cohesive, consistent, coordinated efforts that include a long-term strategy to prevent bullying;
- ✓ Consensus on goals, messages, prevention tactics, follow-up, enforcement and evaluation factors:
- ✓ Engagement by relevant, diverse audiences;
- ✓ Family, school-community, law enforcement, policymakers, and youth working together to get the message out;
- ✓ Local media involvement.

Government and Media Industry Responses to Violence in the Media

In the prevention field one of the most important parts is that of governments and media industry. A couple of examples of the situation from some countries are listed below:

- in the U.S. government intervention in the operation of media organizations is made harder due to the First Amendment which ensures free speech and freedom of the press;
- in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and many European countries, television followed on the heels of state-owned radio and began with the

premise that any enterprise using public airwaves had a social responsibility. This premise from the 50s may seem somewhat archaic in today's competitive media environment.

In order to be less aggressive some programs combine entertainment and education to help children learn to identify characters, shapes and colors, sequence numbers and letters, practice beginning phonics skills, learn the vocabulary and sounds of foreign languages, and more.

Other ideas on what media could do related to prevention are presented below:

- presentation of violence long term effects in the mass media;
- presenting educational programs for young people that could fulfill the informational and educational needs of children aged 16 years and under, in any respect, including children's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Media Violence Debates

The issue of media violence just doesn't go away. And the recent rash of high school shootings in North America and Europe has fuelled the debate anew.

Research regarding the media violence and aggressive behavior has often been hampered by emphasis on the question of whether media violence actually promotes aggressive behavior or, in contrast, whether aggressive children simply prefer media violence programs, consistent with their behavioral style. Research tends to suggest that both processes are in motion, and the effects of media violence programs are indeed heightened for children who already struggle with aggressive tendencies.

The conclusions of the research studies developed so far are divided in two: some say that children's exposure to violence in the media makes them behave more aggressively and affects them as well years later. Other studies concluded that viewing violence doesn't necessary make a child adapt an aggressive behavior or make him / her less sensitive to violence.

Some specialists argue that it's up to the viewer to decide what to watch. If you don't like television violence, they say, then turn off the TV. Some researchers argue that the audience of a TV show is given by the scheduling time and not by its content.

To what extent violence in the media affects children and teenagers is still subject for future research studies, which are of great importance in order to

better understand the phenomenon so that prevention actions can be implemented successfully.

Mass media and SBV

Mass media have developed a lot in the past few decades. They offer access to an abundance of information, entertainment and games through TV, films, radio, books, newspapers, Internet and other new digital technologies. This access to a wide range of services is recognized as an important factor in the development of the society.

The new technologies such as the Internet and mobile telephones have opened the doors for new types of aggression such as bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, happy slapping and other forms of malicious peer-to-peer communication. The offline bullying and violence can now be continued online.

Prevention methods for SBV that media could use haven't been really researched. Few preventive efforts have been studied systematically. Although many violence prevention programs address a complex array of risk and protective factors in the lives of young people, they have not yet addressed the role of the media. This gap needs to be filled.

There are multiple opinions regarding media's role. One of the ideas is that media's role is to inform and not to give solutions or make accusations, because as the theory of agenda setting says 'media don't teach us how to think, but they tell us what to think about'. It is up for the other social actors to act on this issue.

From a social / civic responsibility point of view the mass media could help preventing SBV by getting involved in awareness and information campaigns about this phenomenon. By raising awareness they can mobilize the other social actors including governments to look for solutions of preventing this phenomenon.

Families play a critical role in guiding their children's exposure to the media, including television programs, films and videos, and computer and video games. Community groups - such as schools, faith-based organizations, and parent-teacher-student organizations – can teach parents and children how to be more critical consumers of media. In addition, state institutions can encourage research, share research findings with the public, encourage increased interaction between violence prevention researchers and media researchers, and create networks for sharing solutions to social and public health problems.

Through media literacy education the young people can be given the necessary tools and skills in order for them as media consumers to respond thoughtfully and critically to media content. It can help to have an objective overview over violence in the media. Media literacy education can help young people understand their attitudes and feelings towards violence.

As it has been discussed in the lines above there are many debates over the influence mass media has on young people and what and how big are the effects. From our point of view mass media does influence the behavior of young people thus affecting the way they act and relate to their peers. But also we think that due to its power mass media could be of great help in the prevention field of SBV.

Good collaborations between the media and those involved in the fight against SBV can contribute a lot to the process of preventing this phenomenon. It also necessary that media knows its responsibility as a social actor in the world.

It seems clear that in a globalized, increasingly unregulated world, the protection of children is going to rely increasingly on the vigilance of media-aware parents, public pressure from consumers and professional groups, and the responsiveness of a responsible media sector.

We hope that this chapter could be regarded as a starting point for further research on mass media and SBV. There are still many aspects that can be researched and discussed on this field.

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