



Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

The European Situation on the Bullying Phenomenon Transnational Report



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This report presents the collection and the analysis of the case studies of all partners created in the frame of the "I Am Not Scared" project, funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (KA1 Policy Cooperation and Innovation), which intends to identify the best European strategies to prevent and tackle the bullying phenomenon. Each partner states some information concerning the target groups that have been addressed, the recruiting strategy, the evaluation of the recruiting strategy, as well as the results that came out.

For a detailed description of the cases please refer to the individual country reports.

Dott.ssa Adriana Battaglia



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

Table of Contents

A COMMON SITUATION IN THE PARTNERS' COUNTRIES	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Participants involved.....	4
3. The recruiting strategy	4
4. Evaluation of the recruiting strategy.....	5
5. Results of the recruiting	5
DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDIES.....	6
1. The Bullying Events	6
2. The Participants	7
3. The Parents' Reaction.....	8
4. The Response Brought By The School	9
5. The External Counsellors' Contribution.....	10
6. Policy makers' contribution.....	11
7. Conclusions And Recommendations	11
VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND TRANSNATIONAL DISCUSSION	15
1. Comments	15
CONCLUSIONS	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES.....	29



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

A COMMON SITUATION IN THE PARTNERS' COUNTRIES

1. Introduction

The second part of the National Situation Report with regard to the bullying phenomenon in each country aims at reviewing and analyzing the national case studies in order to highlight some main similarities and differences in the points of view of bullies, victims, teachers, school administrators, policy makers and everybody else, affected one way or another from situations of aggression and violence in school. The transnational discussion is one of the best features of the process of analysis of the case studies since all European teachers from the countries, involved in the project, shared their practice and gave recommendations and suggestions to their European colleagues about how to react in situations of violence, what instruments could be of help, what policies and strategies could work, the main topics of further education of teachers and school staff, so that they would be prepared and react in the best way when a situation of bullying appears.

2. Participants involved

The recruiting strategy took a multi-component approach: the target group includes people with similar needs and problems, people who are at greatest risk in the school community (i.e. students), who need the information to face the problem (teachers and, especially, parents) and who have the experience and resources to work with it (experts, public authorities). So the partners carried out the involvement not only of students and teachers, but also other main participants in the prevention of bullying, such as policy makers, parents and experts, because the lack of awareness and national attention to stopping the spread of the phenomenon hinders the successful implementation of prevention programs.

Policy makers' relationship with school bullying phenomena is direct via the decision making, the support of school units with experts, the gathering of useful information and data regarding school bullying, the evaluation of the already implemented supportive measures, the exploitation of new data in the fields of school bullying and the continuous update of the educational stakeholders on school bullying issues.

In Greece, for example, the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE – Patras), the Greek partner of the “I Am Not Scared” project, addressed various schools from the wider area of Patras (Western Greece). The aim was twofold; to address various types of schools and from various socio-economic districts as well.

From an in-depth examination of the national situations, the partners concluded that the bullying events occur especially in secondary schools placed in the small and rural areas. In fact, young people who attend these schools experience bullying, directly or indirectly, at least once a month, not only because of their personal characteristics, but also because of their lifestyle. These schools never developed a bullying prevention project before: this stated that these schools do not have preventive measures.

3. The recruiting strategy

It includes the following points:

- Several face to face meetings to present the project and to invite schools, principals, teachers, counsellors and public authorities to get involved in the project.
- The invitation was sent to the schools with high rates of bullying or to schools with relevant strategies developed for preventing bullying events. Also schools have been selected due to their interest in the field and their wishes to get involved in developing a European Strategy for preventing Bullying.
- Sending the selection and participation forms to the schools and discussions with the stakeholders on the recruiting criteria and responsibilities.



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

4. Evaluation of the recruiting strategy

There are conclusive deductions between the results of the recruiting and the results of the activity in which the recruited were involved. The information collected above will be presented in an analytical way in order to highlight main information about the causes of the bullying phenomenon, what has worked and what has not in the behaviour of all the actors in order to reduce the impact of what was happening.

5. Results of the recruiting

In Belgium as well as in other countries, schools were reluctant to mention harassing situations occurring within them in order to protect their reputation.

In Greece a school director did not want to collaborate because she believed that her school would be exposed. In this case, reassuring her the anonymity of the participants, the headteacher finally accepted to participate.

Furthermore, some teachers were unable to compose a real case study of bullying because while there were some bullying indications, nobody wanted to talk about it. In some cases, teachers created a hypothetical scenario that was thematically similar to a real one.



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDIES

This section of the National Situation Report covers the ten 'real life' Case Studies produced by EU schools and uploaded on to the project portal. Each of our schools had to set the scene of the bullying event e.g. direct bullying, indirect bullying or cyber bullying and then to identify the cause of the situation.

A factual description of each case was then drawn up and the response implemented by the school (e.g. by teachers, the Headteacher, parents etc) was also given, together with details of the impact of the bullying action, e.g. the effect on learning of the participants, student motivation, the school environment, changes of policy etc.

Once each case study had been agreed and names changed to protect the identity of individual students and staff the cases were circulated to other schools for comments from the point of view of the bully, the victim, other students, teachers, the school head teacher, parents of students (saying how they would have felt if the event had happened to their child), counsellors and policy makers.

1. The Bullying Events

Most of the reported facts are real bullying events and correspond to the definition commonly admitted: "repeated physical, verbal or psychological violence, committed by a bully (or a group of bullies) towards a victim who cannot defend himself (weakness). The bully acts with the intention to harm".

Bullying can have different forms: verbal and psychological aggressions (mockeries – unpleasant remarks or rumors, insults, vexations, threats), physical aggressions (unappropriate gestures), sexual abuse (touching the breast, the sex), insulting drawings, robbery of personal items, racket, aggressive text messages, cyber-bullying.

The causes are related to specific traits of the student's age: they respond to challenges to seem strong; puberty is the period when young people tend to demonstrate superiority over others (power, authority, timeliness of responses, the courage to fight back), but also a period of extreme fragility and of being easily influenced by others (friends group).

Most of the times bullying events are targeted towards people who are different – in appearance, attitude, character or socio-economic background.

For example Bulgarian society has a history of problems with discrimination of various types, problems with people, who are different and it is not a surprise that these attitudes are also met in school. The results show the highest degree of intolerance in society towards homosexuals and people with AIDS, the highest discrimination between groups in society seems to be along ethnic lines and in particular intolerance of other ethnic groups against the Roma.

In Greece ethnic-cultural differences are often the cause of incidents, which is a result of the whole community's intolerance to immigrants. This attitude is much more common in small cities and villages and is usually transferred to school. On the other hand, girls seem to get engaged mostly in indirect types of bullying, such as teasing, threatening, humiliating and offensive comments. Also, the two case studies that refer to cyber-bullying both involve girls and they were very severe, since one led to the victim's drop-out and the other caused a suicide attempt. It is evident that girls can be really hard on their electronic messages and cause intense psychological pressure.

A common aspect in all case studies is the common method of bullying, the bully students use. It is mainly emotional abuse. With the means of emotional abuse bullies aim to control and subjugate another human beings through the use of fear, humiliation, intimidation, guilt, coercion, manipulation. Emotional abuse is any kind of abuse more of emotional rather than physical nature. It can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics, such as constant disapproval. Emotional abuse is characterized by systematical affection of victim's confidence, and sense of self-esteem, trust in their own perceptions and autonomy. Eventually, the victim of the abuse loses all sense of self and personal value. The main reason for



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

the demonstration of aggressive behavior is the desire of the person to feel important and dominating his/her fellow students.

From the Lithuanian case studies it emerges that, mainly, boys and girls use mostly verbal bullying: the most common form of bullying among girls is gossip and psychological violence, while among boys is teasing and name-calling. Besides, it comes out that the adolescence is still a problematic transitional physical and psychological development of a human-being and it is likely the period to be engaged in various risk behaviours, such as bullying.

The case studies show that in Lithuania the cyber-bullying is not so wide like online harassment, but the most common form of cyber-bullying is the dissemination of insults or rumours via mobile phone.

In some cases the harassment seems to be linked to a difficult family or relation context: juvenile delinquency background, person who suffered harassment, family honour to defend.

The educational level concerned is mainly the second degree (3rd, and 4rd years of secondary education, youths aged of 14 up to 16).

The location and the disposition of the classroom (building apart, out of sight, small classroom, not very soundproofed...) can be aggravating factors. They favour the occurrence of the events or amplify them.

Aside from the influence of their peers, families also play a tremendous part in personal development by promoting a certain type of behaviour that shapes the child during his process of growth.

Finally, school-family collaboration can help so that such conflicts can be prevented.

2. The Participants

The bullies

Their motivations are various: need to dominate, superiority feeling, need to be the leader within a group (to be bully not to be bullied – to be on the “right side” – to be the strongest and not the weakest), jealousy, defence of family honour, reproduction of behaviours seen on the Internet, play, good joke, desire to form a closed circle.

Most of the time, they show no or less remorse. They do not seem to feel empathy towards the victim.

They do not always seem to be aware of the seriousness of their actions (term undefined by school, probably with various meanings) and thus they do not understand the sanction and judge it unfair.

The bystanders

Students stay and watch what is happening without doing much to help the victim. Even if there are direct witnesses they prefer to pretend they have not seen anything and were unwilling to be revealed. According to some of the witnesses they did nothing while the bullies were harassing their victims, because the bad boys were going to turn on them and start bullying them as well. Most of the time, they have acted because they fear reprisals, they fear to be themselves the victims. They feel powerless to oppose the bully.

The victims

In certain cases, the victims deny the events. They minimize the events because they fear reprisals. That makes the identification of the bullying event difficult. They closed themselves. The victim has low motivation, low self esteem, is discouraged toward school and afraid to participate in them, absenteeism, somatic complaints such as stomach aches, anxiety are frequent, and in conclusion there is the decline in



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school performance. They tend to isolate themselves and think they do not understand why these things happen, causing all this a sense of loneliness.

Usually they do not share with anyone about the problem. They share after time, when there are serious damages on their self-esteem and they do it only because it is getting hard to hide the consequences. The victims usually share with their closest friends, only few of them shared with their parents or teachers.

In other cases, the victims express directly their ill-being (most of the time to their parents) or through the adoption of inappropriate behaviours (extreme nervousness, destruction of works, school dropping-out).

In infrequent cases, the victims themselves favour and support bullying through their clumsy attitude (refusal to be set apart from a group, desire to be righter of wrongs).

Some victims accept a psycho-medical follow-up, others refuse or benefit from a follow-up outside school.

Some victims never come back to school again but most of them stay in the school.

3. The Parents' Reaction

The bullies' parents

Some parents take side for their child, do not admit how wrong the action is, put the blame on the victim, put pressure on the victim's parents, reject the sanction but keep their child at school.

Other parents trust the school and accept, sometimes even approve of the sanction.

In very few cases, the parents merely take notes of the sanction (overwhelmed by their child's behaviour or because he is over eighteen).

Bullies' parents generally try to reduce the importance of the incident and justify their children, sometimes blaming the school or the victim's parents. It is difficult for them to accept that their child has bullied a schoolmate and thus they usually accept their child's perception that "it was for fun".

The victims' parents

As soon as they are apprised of the facts by their child, they notify the school and press charges at school.

They wait for the reaction of the school and the sanctions.

In some cases, they say they are satisfied with the sanctions.

Depending on the seriousness of the actions or their emotional state, they take legal action. This is sometimes suggested by the school itself.

They rarely try to settle things themselves through contacts with the harasser and his family (which might turn out to be counter-productive).

On the other hand, parents are most of the time critical of the school handling when their child is bullied, but in the great majority of the case studies they had not noticed any signs of bullying until their child had been prominently hurt. Even in some cases that they had heard some complaints from their child, they believed that it was something temporary and they could not consider that their child was under a bad psychological situation due to bullying.

In general it comes from the case studies that parents have no sufficient communication or cooperation with the school. And this fact without doubts makes the treatment of the bullying phenomenon even harder. The absence of parents of the school life is much greater in the event of divorced parents, which is very common nowadays.



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4. The Response Brought By The School

In the majority of the schools of secondary education there is no permanent post for psychologists or social workers, so teachers are expected to play this role as well.

The solution is entrusted to the teaching team (in the broad sense), following a specific process.

With reference to the way of handling the situation in each case, we can see that punishment was imposed mostly by expulsion from courses (three to five days) and expulsion from school complex. In some cases this treatment was accompanied with the imposition of extra-curricular activities. In other cases some discussions about the incidents among the school teachers, the students and their family was preferred as well as a rebuke to the bully.

In all cases, the parents have been informed of the events and the victims have been supported. The bullies not always.

The sanctions imposed are disciplinary (disciplinary contract, suspension, exclusion) or educational (awareness of the seriousness of the events, reminder of the values...). Most of the schools associate both types of sanction.

In general, the sanctions come with organisational, material or other measures: reminder or rewriting of the school rules, reminder of the internet risks, arrangements for more security (change of classroom, definition of forbidden zones, installation of shutter), reinforced monitoring devices (pupils set apart, great attention asked to the teachers, monitoring of the common spaces during some time slots).

One school in Belgium has set up a specific device, "citizenship school" by involving the pupils in the solution of bullying problems.

The common procedure is the following one:

First teachers act for immediate clarification of the situation. The students are being questioned in order for the truth to be found. What follows is psychological and advisory work with the entire class, separately with the bullies and with the victims. Some of them need to overcome their aggression and to understand that they cannot humiliate the weaker students, and the other boys and girls to overcome their fear and to become brave and self-confident. The next step is a discussion with the parents, who are the leading authorities in the formation of the boys' and girls' personality. They should be encouraged to participate adequately in the solving of the problem and not engrave it even further. Then should come the report from the head teacher for imposing a punishment for the organizers and initiators of the problematic situation. Usually the pedagogic council implements the punishments. The headmasters and the school psychologists speak with the head teacher and the other teachers who go to the class, where the bullying event has happened. Teachers usually also share with the other colleagues what was happening in their class.

Usually the headmasters also have pretty similar response to the bullying events. They conduct discussions with the head-teachers, the involved students (bullies and victims) and their parents. Usually school directors initiated a pedagogic council, which to work more thoroughly on the case and issue a punishment decision if considered appropriate.

It is interesting to note that in all UK cases there were trained staff on hand to deal with the situation. It is clear that UK teachers still have a pastoral role and are willing to help and support students outside the normal parameters of teaching and learning. Most UK schools have a Student School Council which represents the student voice and has access to decision making which impacts on student life.



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UK Headteachers like to be informed but they tend not to get actively involved in the day to day issues of the school unless they become particularly serious. Headteachers can rely on the support of members of staff that are perfectly capable of dealing with most situations involving bullying.

5. The External Counsellors' Contribution

Experts stake on individual and group therapies in order to work on the problems bullies and victims have – forming of self-respect, acceptance of the way that he/she is, acceptance of one's strengths and one's spheres of development. Usually pedagogical advisors try to make the people involved in the bullying event to think positively – for the opportunities, not for the limitations. The conversations are focused on building up a tolerant manner of behavior towards the so called "different" one. Experts supported and advised bullies for proper behavior, lowering the levels of aggression and seeking right behavioral solutions.

In Belgium different types of services are activated to solve the bullying problem (by the victim, or by the school): Most of the times, they are services of the Ministry of Education: Psycho-Medico-Social Centres, School Mediation services, family planning services, youth help associations.

The interventions are various:

- Support to the teaching team management (advice for problem solving, suggestions of additional measures, information on the phenomenon of harassment and setting up of a prevention system).
- Solving the problem on the request of the school, overwhelmed by the events. In one of the suggested cases, the external advisors took over from the school. They carried out a mediation task between the families and with them, found appropriate solutions.
- follow-up of the group-class (reminder of the school rules and values),
- follow up of the bully (or bullies): awareness of the seriousness of the committed acts, reparation...
- support to the victim and his/her family (psychological support),
- mediation between the pupils or information sessions within the classes (self-esteem, respect of the others,...).

The psychologist is asked to discuss with the pupils every time such incidents occur. The specific methods used by psychologists and their openness make possible the settling of all conflicts and the reconciliation of all parties involved.

It is very important that students attend counselling sessions accompanied by a parent. School counsellor tries to identify the reasons that led the students to such facts, if there is a family violence situation (physical, verbal, psychological, etc..), if the parents support, guide and correct their child's school activities not only in terms of results in education, but also in terms of behaviour within the school and everyday life. It is also important to notice if parents supervise their children and if this deviant behaviour was more influenced by a negative environment.

In Belgium the schools regularly call for external counsellors (most of the time for the Psycho-Medico-Social centre – CPMS), even for the police according to the seriousness of the events.

Although the UK experts were generally complimentary about the way the schools had tackled the issues, they felt that effective schools constantly remind students that they have a choice and this will empower them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Many schools in the Case Studies made reference to the use of school assemblies and PSE lessons for getting the message across. The experts cited a much wider range of strategies.



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6. Policy makers' contribution

Policy makers consider that the school administration should respond to bullying events adequately and promptly. However since this is not always possible school directors should contact the authorities in charge in order for a better response to the bullying situation to be taken.

What is interesting in the reactions of Bulgarian policy makers is the fact that they encourage school directors to punish also the teachers responsible for their inadequate reactions to the aggressive behavior of bullies. Since there is a small amount of schools in Bulgaria who have a pedagogical advisor "at their hand", we can say that if they could work full-time in the school (considering the escalating number of violence in schools), teachers could become better qualified and be able to recognize different types of aggressive behavior acquiring basic skills to deal with such types of situation at their beginning, not allowing the bullying events to escalate in time and actions.

In the UK the final and probably most effective way of combatting bullying in UK schools is illustrated by the effective pastoral care system that features in each and every Case Study. Although UK schools are moving towards a greater focus on teaching and learning; they still have a tradition of pastoral care and there are still staff with responsibility for student welfare in the majority of UK schools. The work that these teachers and Pastoral Managers do probably has the greatest impact on reducing bullying statistics throughout the country.

7. Conclusions And Recommendations

Harassment affects students' values, creating a climate that fosters demotivation, low self-esteem, fear of speaking in class and performance; in conclusion it is an unpleasant environment. Peers seem to learn to follow the rules "of the fittest", regardless of whether they are fair or not. As to whether the conduct is sanctioned, it will be transmitted the opposite idea, such as the acceptance of differences as enriching value. Teachers will focus on the problem of bullying and in developing their own classes. Some students believe that these problems do not influence the teaching and learning process. Others think that above all it affects the victim, affecting the performance of it. Bystanders cannot speak freely for fear of becoming a victim and create aggressive models affecting learning in the social competence of all students.

It seems important that the whole school staff (not only the educational staff but also the administrative and technical staff,...) are made aware of this issue and of their power of action in that field.

It will be important to achieve a work with the whole class when the events occur within a class-group: reminder of the rules, the framework, the values (right to well being and to security for everyone), but also listening to the pupils, to their expectations, to their suggestions (especially concerning the school rules, and they could take part in the writing of these rules).

The Belgian team adds that this is the meaning of «*école citoyenne*» ("civic school") (suggested by the MIEC - Mouvement des Institutions et Ecoles Citoyennes – Civic Schools and Institutions Organization) successfully tested by one of the schools involved, and of the several "peer mediation" systems, suggested notably by Université de Paix.

It seems important to be able to refer to specialists. It seems relevant for the school to call for external workers: Psycho-medico-social centres, school mediation services, mobile teams, youth help services, re-schooling services, mental health services, family planning services, police... These workers could, in particular, carry out activities on the relationships between boys and girls (in order to deconstruct the balance of power and the phenomena of discrimination), on non-violent communication or on the intercultural relationships.

The Italian concellers involved say that the sanction is only a part of the response. The sanction alone is not sufficient if it is not understood! He is at risk to bully again in other places, especially if he does not perceive the seriousness of his acts.



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Thus, it is fundamental that the bully has the opportunity to understand why his behaviour is inappropriate and to find alternatives.

Main principles of a rebuilding: involving the two protagonists in expressing and understanding what was experienced and finding solutions; to emphasize the behaviour and not the person; to consider the pupil as a person also able to act positively, able to change, able to unlearn bullying; to lead him in a more responsible and repairing approach.

Both dialogue and cooperation need to be reinforced between the school and the parents, who have strong expectations (no absolute trust in the school), and thus avoid escalation (going to court, counter-productive attempts to settle things between parents, withdrawal of the child from school).

Definitely students involved should be given assistance and guidance by an expert, so that an analysis of the causes of their behavior and the consequences of their actions can lead them to a deeper understanding of themselves, as well as of the necessity for co-existence and confrontation of the new social conditions which are imposed on them, aiming not only at the correction of their behavior but also at their smoother induction in the reality of the present society they live in. It is imperative that the school should provide an education policy which would aim to reduce racism and create a climate of cooperation by encouraging a positive attitude towards any social and cultural differences among students. In addition, it is necessary for the School Counselor to have individual discussions both with the student-abuser and the student-victim. If necessary they should be advised to see a school psychologist. Another point that was stressed out is that unfortunately the security in our schools is inadequate and while there are school security guards, they are few and not trained to identify early effects of bullying and violence among students. There is also a need for organisational or structural replies (premises, supervision, rules and regulations ...) if the school wants to tackle efficiently and durably the harassment acts.

Although in some cases the director's handlings were approved by the policy makers, in many other cases they found the intervention by the teacher and the school community incomplete and ineffective and emphasized the failure to inform and educate teachers, parents and students on issues of learning difficulties, acceptance of differences and dealing with bullying.

What has worked and what has not

It is doubtless that when a bullying event takes place it upsets the school community in many ways. School life has been disrupted often by students' violent behavior and thus these incidents triggered teachers' worrying on the subject. As a result, the respect of children's rights became a subject of discussion in many classes, especially in those where the phenomenon is more intense. Teachers' punishments became more often and severe and enhanced the adherence to school rules. The supervision during the breaks became more intensive and teachers' attitude became stricter. In some lessons, such as "Sociology" and "Politics and Law", there were some didactical hours spent in studying matters of equal rights and violence. It is very hopeful that when asked to, students agreed eagerly to take initiatives to solve such problems in their school, in order to improve the communication and cooperation among schoolmates. This is the most important impact coming up from the unpleasant events that have been described. Especially the older children decided to become more active in social school life and take initiatives for school's sake. The role they were given made them feel more mature and responsible about their school.

On the other hand, the analysis of the case studies collected pointed out the lack of trained staff in schools that can efficiently handle such situations. In the few cases that there were sessions carried out by a psychologist-counselor involving the two students, the feed-back was very helpful. The permanent existence of a counselor or other expert concerning these issues, and the organizing of seminars on the topic of school bullying and ways to confront it, which was carried out at some schools, all contributed in an effective way for the restoration of the smooth running of the school.

But, as already mentioned, there were some cases really severe, some leading to the victim's drop-out and others that caused a suicide attempt. This implies that steps have been omitted here and have been made



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mistakes. It is best to be proactive before we get to extremes to cure the condition. So it would be better if there was stricter adherence to the law in schools, such as the prohibition of using mobile phones at school, which would be very helpful in tackling cyber-bullying as well. Also, it has been proved that the security in our schools is inadequate and while there are school security guards, they are few and not trained to identify early effects of bullying and violence among students. On the other side, teachers seem to be incapable to take care of everything in school, especially since they have not been trained to handle such situations. The lack of teachers' training on the one hand does not allow them to act efficiently. On the other hand, bullying facts are so insidious that it is very difficult to detect them and thus to deal with them efficiently in overcrowded classrooms. And talking about helpless teachers and schools, there are institutions in Greece that could help effectively. But what has been proved from the present analysis is that these agencies are not so approachable nor so well known to the school community.

It is clear though that the phenomenon of violent behavior can be prevented only if people act in collaborative networks, and not lonely. Parents have a great share of responsibility, not only for the lack of attention of any signs in their children's attitude, but also for the lack of cooperation with the school. There should be a constant feed-back between teachers and parents, in order to detect any changes in the child's behavior and handle the situation at an early stage, before things get worse. Another detection is that it is important that there is agreement between teachers, directors and parents about the treatment of the situation. In many cases parents are negative in acknowledging their children's possible bad behavior and try to defend them, even though they have harmed physically or emotionally another student. So the bully receives mixed messages and cannot correct his/her attitude. Furthermore, the disagreement between directors or teaching staff about the actions that should be taken has been proved detrimental and should be avoided in any case, or at least not be disclosed to the students.

In the majority of the case studies, the handling of the situation involved traditional ways of punishment, such as expulsion from courses for some days or even from school. This can lead to bully's drop-out. In such cases, the approach has been rather one-sided, not considering as carefully as necessary all the parties involved in the problem. Bully is also a student that needs our help, even more when he/she comes from a negative family environment that enhances the display of violent behavior. It is evident that the traditional sanctions are inefficient and that instead of "police action" it is better to strive to implement programs to strengthen positive attitudes of the positive characteristics of children. Students are very willing to take part in extra-curricular activities and to have an active role in school life and this is an opportunity to enhance their cooperative and communicative skills through team work.

Some case studies indicate that the reaction of the victim goes against the mainstream. In fact, in general the victims show the unwillingness to share their bullying experiences with others, especially with adults, and they refuse any help. Instead, in these case studies it is shown that the victims try to talk to parents, teachers or counsellors because they want to look into the situation, understand the reason and find a solution. Unfortunately, many did not find a good solution or they did not want to change the way they live and behave if the cause of the bullying was their responsibility and went to another school.

Finally from these case studies we deduced that all victims have something in common with each other: everyone was devastated by going through it, by being misunderstood and not valued by classmates: they went through rough time, they felt hurt and upset.

Various activities aimed at solving and preventing bullying:

- **Students** who have started the incident was **called in the office of school director, together with their parents**, where they were invited to speak freely about the reasons which led them to commit these grave actions, to submit their views and, finally, to find a path of reconciliation and amicable settlement.



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

- The school board called **emergency council teachers** where he discussed the incident and where students have analysed the facts and the measures to be taken to suppress any similar situations.
- **Counselling sessions** (group and individual, with or without the parents) trying to understand students' behaviour and why they become involved in such violent situations, improving the self-image of the actors involved, preventing negative effects, autonomy development and self-control.
- **School safety procedures** (the school entrance door to be closed all the time, the access to school to be allowed by the teacher's security guards, identification cards for school students, video system, etc.).
- **Develop a school-wide bullying policy to:**
 - o Raise awareness of teachers and students
 - o Create a framework for responding to bullying
 - o Develop classroom rules against bullying
 - o Develop cooperative learning projects that encourage teamwork and reduce social isolation
 - o Create activities or assignments that teach problem-solving or conflict-resolution skills
 - o Participate in role-playing or other activities to help students understand the effects and consequences of the violent behaviour



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND TRANSNATIONAL DISCUSSION

After the development of the case studies by each teacher, there were held 3 virtual meetings (the 1st on March 26, the 2nd on April 23, the 3rd on May 07) with the participation of the project team and some of the teachers of each country participating in the project. The aim of these meetings was the presentation of the case studies by each country and a discussion over them.

The transnational discussion of the case studies was held in two ways: on the one hand teachers from the other partner countries commented on the cases of bullying occurred in the own country and on the other they shared their opinions during the virtual project meeting, which was specifically dedicated to the discussion of the national collection of cases.

All the partners introduced themselves and the teachers and had a short presentation of their role in the project (during these meetings each partner country involved project team members and teachers who have been involved in developing the case studies and provided comments/suggestion on the school bullying situations collected).

Each partner started with a brief presentation of each case study and highlighted the comments received. At the end of the presentation, some statistics information on the number of comments received for the national case studies and the number of the comments done by the teachers to other case studies was provided.

All partners appreciated participating in this project and being involved in dealing with this very serious problem (the school bullying phenomenon). They mentioned about the importance in discussing the comments produced by the teachers and sharing experiences, ideas. The partners were very eager to participate, they shared ideas and it was important because the teachers became more and more involved and aware and shared things with colleagues. It was good to find similarities between case studies and comments from different countries and that different educational systems offer different solutions to the same problems.

Some partners appreciated the opportunity to work in these kinds of projects that can bring changes to the educational worldwide, the impact of bullying.

1. Comments

Many case studies refer to cyber-bullying, but we know that the responsibility of the school in such cases is a matter for debate because as we all know cyber-bullying usually takes place outside the premises of the school.

Regarding the reference made by the Greek teacher for the responsibility – or not – of the schools in cases of cyber bullying, the English spoke person said that schools indeed are responsible in case of cyber bullying regardless if the incident takes place outside the premises of the school. Thus, it is strongly recommended that school districts incorporate prevention and education strategies into safe schools plans to address cyber-bullying and related online risks and that the planning activities involve school employees, law enforcement, community organizations, parents, and students. This may be accomplished through an amendment to a state statute addressing safe schools planning.

Some countries state that the financial crisis is affecting all the social structures. Unemployment, the reduction of the salaries, the poverty, among others have created an explosive mixture in the society and the students could not of course stay unaffected.

Another element: most of the bullies come from problematic families, divorced parents, etc., which indicates the importance of communication between school and family.

The lack of a counselor in every school is a problem regarding school bullying.

A big difference is that, for example, in Greek schools there is no permanent post for counselors contrary to what is happening to the other countries participating in the project (except for Italy). A counselor displays an essential role regarding the prevention and - if this is not possible - the timely confrontation of a bullying



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

incident. Thus, in most of the cases in Greece and Italy, the handling of a difficult situation is being made by the school director or the teachers and this sometimes can worsen the problem. Indeed, the school director is responsible for the handling of a situation and the imposition – or not – of sanctions, but an expert in the field of school bullying can act proactively in cooperation with the other stakeholders in order to help students behaving more appropriate.

Another issue that was discussed in the virtual meeting was that of the ethnic-cultural differences as a possible factor for the increase of bullying incidents in Greek schools the last years. A spoke person cited that in such serious cases, the intervention of police and in turn, of justice, is necessary because the impunity of the bullies sometimes produces more violence and he also said that the lack of an anti-bullying policy gives place to illegal acts.

Possible themes, which should be taken into consideration are:

- relationship with the child in the family and in school:
 - o overprotective parent;
 - o passive parent;
 - o selective attachment to the child;
 - o relationships in the family with one parent;
 - o neglected child;
 - o help wanted;
 - o parental model;
 - o intervention of the school and family psychiatrist – areas of expertise;
 - o optimizing the relationship between the teacher and the student;
- communicating with the child:
 - o destroying communication barriers;
 - o assertive communication;
 - o positive feedback;
 - o active listening/ good listener;
- giving trust:
 - o developing the decision making capability;
 - o barriers in making decisions;
 - o not knowing themselves, own insecurities;
 - o not accepting the negative consequences of their decisions.
- steps in making a decision:
 - o clear hypothesis;
 - o expressing the existing possibilities;
 - o listing advantages and disadvantages;
 - o talking about the past;
 - o projecting into the future [if possible];



Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

- o choosing a convenient option;
- o accepting the option with all the implied consequences;
- a clear self image – the role of the parents:
 - o physical, psychological and social image;
 - o the social self;
 - o self observation of their own personality;
 - o looking at themselves in relationship with others (parents, friends, colleagues);
 - o knowledge/self-knowledge through psychological testing (personality, temperament, professional interests, individual values, cognitive capacities-intelligence, memory, imagination);
 - o collaboration with counselor;
 - o psycho-pedagogic assistance;
 - o role of counselor/family psychiatrist;
- knowing the personality traits of the preadolescent and the adolescent:
 - o need for independence, denying mentalities, prejudice of the adults;
 - o need for affection;
 - o need for acceptance in a group of peers;
 - o revolt against adults;
 - o intuitive differences between the sexes;
 - o developing an imagine/self esteem;
 - o forming an individual style of learning;
 - o planning the time for individual studies;
 - o the big temptations: smoking, alcohol, drugs, etc;
- solving the conflicts with the child – education through nonviolent methods:
 - o main cause for conflicts;
 - o conditions that prompt the appearance of conflicts between parents and children;
 - o ways of talking about the conflict;
 - o how to solve conflicts;
 - o role of the school and family psychiatrist; complementing each;
 - o children's rights – respecting them in the family.
- Teachers have to be trained well in order to be able to face difficult situations
- The most useful training for teachers would be based on experiences of other colleagues in other schools in order to compare the strategies and thus find the most effective remedies.
- Try to make the students see that violence will not lead anywhere and that they should discuss with the teachers if they have problems



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- Conversations, alternative behaviour discussion with students. They are encouraged to speak to teachers or specialists at school if they are experiencing bullying.
- Working sessions with students to achieve their awareness of the use "proper" social networks, the rules of use, risks, and issues to consider....
- Regarding the extracurricular activities with the students - Unfortunately this kind of activities is quite difficult to take place in rigid education systems that are very stacked to the curriculum and the examinations. Bureaucracy is also a disheartening factor that makes the implementation of such actions even harder. But it's really worthwhile trying!
- Mediation is a good solution
- Teacher watch students during breaks at school.
- create interest through cultural activities that can involve students
- You must create a climate of trust between teachers and students and organize a "protocol" so that any pupil can report incidents without fear
- Training for teachers on using social networks and the risks involved.
- Information and training to families on the same topic.
- parents club in the school
- Very good cooperation between school staff and the parents.
- parents have to devote more time to their children
- Cooperation between family and school on a long-term and consistent basis is considered indispensable on such occasions.
- Both teachers and parents have to cope with this problem because they are both responsible for the well-being of our teenagers.
- It is important to take into account one's family background, relationships and parent's attitude that reinforce and perpetuate these behaviours. It is necessary to evaluate and identify the problem rather than view only part of it to explain. Otherwise there will be a temporary solution which reinforces violence and bad behaviour.
- sanctions are good only if they are combined with positive incentives for a change of the behaviour and discussions with professional psychologists and pedagogical and experts
- The importance of having counsellors in schools
- Opposite activities – involve the aggressive students in promoting among other students a program of psychosocial support to raise awareness about the consequences of violent behaviour. It will help him understand the meaning of the rules and limits that must be a member of a set of such school.
- there is apparent demand, not all schools have been staffed by special experts such as psychologists or other counselling services, to help raise awareness of the phenomenon and to train teachers and students to both handle such situations effectively.
- Involvement of the police would have educative effects

As to sanctions combining disciplinary and educational sanctions is considered by several partners as the best way to solve conflicts, for instance when the girls are dominated by the boys in the classroom.

Some partners advocate for strong disciplinary sanctions against the bully/ies, where instead our schools rely more on educational sanctions.



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For example, in the case of mocking and insulting drawings: In the UK, these situations would certainly have led to a temporary exclusion, or even definitive of the leader.

On the other hand, many partners find that the reaction of Belgian schools too often consists only in taking penalty (the worst being the exclusion) while an in-depth work with all actors is essential to solve the problem in the long term.

A disciplinary measure, such as expulsion for instance, could have been implemented, because physical violence is unacceptable; it should be proportionate to the seriousness of the case, the degree of involvement and the background of each person. The punishment is not effective unless accompanied by a discussion with each person individually about the causes that led to the incident as well as on ways of avoiding it. Generally, there should be an effort so that students understand that such events and behaviour are socially reprehensible. Many teachers believe that we cannot treat our younger generation from the beginning of their life as criminals; if they did something wrong we have to explain them the consequences of their actions, the impact of such behaviour to all community and how they should have acted during the same event. We should prevent all bad behaviour from happening not by condemning or punishing children, but by helping them to be better human beings and to giving them a possibility to a recovery. Also, a lot of teachers believe that school administration should not intervene in the salvation of minor bullying cases in a greater way in order to make an example, to remind pupils about their authority and school rules – children should be the victims of a showcase.

Other measures of a disciplinary, organizational or other type are suggested. Such as:

- Making the bully be followed by a counsellor at his return from exclusion ("reintegration meeting" with the promise not to repeat such acts), for a probationary period.
- Changing seats in the class or change class students.
- Increasing supervision of the bully, via a notebook ("report card") which will be reviewed daily by the referent educator.
- Call the parents to inform them of the problem and maintain contact with them until their child's behaviour again became satisfactory.

In terms of **pedagogical sanctions**:

- Mediation between the parties and the signing of a "gentlemen's agreement" is seen as a positive approach to solve the conflict. "Communication is the key".
- The partners enjoy the way Belgian schools work: to have a dialogue with the protagonists (victims, offenders, parents, teachers...), then find with them a solution to the conflict and prevention measures to be developed at school.
- In Romania for instance, the school psychosocial advisor makes the mediation.
- Similarly, for example, it is suggested to monitor the two players via a "supervised meeting" to give them the opportunity to hear the point of view of the other, better understand him, demonstrating empathy. Both actors are victims and need monitoring.
- The reparation of the fault, "restorative justice", is also suggested. In the case of overweight classmate victim of bullying by a classmate, the UK, for example, the student who has adopted an improper conduct toward the vulnerable student could be punished through a kind of sanction, to spend his lunch time for a week to help students who have special needs.

The particular device "citizen school" involving students in problem solving is seen as a proper answer:

- It allows a resolution of the problem step by step, with patience.
- There is no stigmatization of the bully. Instead, he is given a chance to understand his mistakes and adopt new behaviours.
- The Director follows the device throughout the process.



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

- Finally, allowing students to participate in the "council of citizenship" makes them more aware of their responsibilities to others.

The partners report similar devices in their countries:

- For example, the "civil community" in Bulgaria, of which most students are members and who works with clearly defined rules and responsibilities.
- Or, the "Student council" or "anti-bullying group" in the UK where there is also for students with special needs for integration ("students with" Special Educational Needs ") a system of "buddy" (a trusted other student), a pupil of trust, with whom they can talk to and to whom they can confide in the few months of their arrival.

Generally, partners emphasize the need to develop preventive and training measures aimed at pedagogical teams, as well as students and parents.

Schools feel the need to develop prevention strategies (information campaign, lectures, workshops, actions such as the "Childline Organisation" in Lithuania...) for all the school protagonists (students, parents, teaching teams ...).

There are indeed in most countries laws regulating the use of internet (photo, audio, video ...). In Romania for instance, filming a teacher without their consent can lead not only to the expulsion from school, but also to legal proceedings.

As to the analysis of the Bulgarian case studies we stress the importance of having in the school life extracurricular activities help the students and the general atmosphere in the schools. These activities help the students to know each other, to see what they are good at, highlight the positive aspects, and everybody, sooner or later, will find the place where to be the star and to be appreciated. Because, in fact, this is what bullies are looking for, appreciation and attention.

Discussing the Romanian case studies the only difference that can be mentioned is the involvement of the police. In the Bulgarian school extracurricular activities the school invited the police to discuss with children on topics of bullying and violence, providing examples of real situations. So this could be a strategy in involving the police in schools.

Actually the Police should have a permanent involvement in the school activity, monitoring the potential cases and engaging periodically or whenever a problem arises in preventing and combating school violence. If a policeman enters the class room and explains that if the rules and laws are not abided by, together with a list of examples of punishments, effects from not observing these rules, I think this would play a major role in the students' behavior.

Police is a great help in this range. At this moment their function is not to punish but to consult and help in the school. Officers are not only lecturing children, attending their events but also when there is a need for advice on solving the questions about bullying. They are consulting parents of both the abuser and the victim, informing about the help opportunities and responsibilities. If necessary they visit families with representative of school, follow up on children who behave negatively, organize different activities for them outside the school.

Generally speaking, in the UK the police are only involved as a last report unless the incident is really serious and perhaps involving physical violence or the use of weapons. This variance across Europe will need resolving but it was very much a shared view that, if young people thought that it was okay to bully, they would carry this through into adult life. Action at school age is really important because bullying or being bullied can shape the person you become in later life.

Another positive suggestion to come out of the transnational discussion was the use of advertising campaigns to raise awareness in schools. It would be interesting to explore ways in which the advertising campaign could have a European flavour with common elements running through the different national school systems.



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There was a universal concern over the increase of cyber bullying that we are all witnessing. Suggestions were made that parents should be taught how to use the technology so that they can monitor their children in their own homes. Bearing this in mind the UK idea for an annual 'Safer Internet' day may be worthwhile taking up across Europe. Cyber bullying is certainly a major issue which must feature prominently in the planned European Report.

There are preventive discotheques for 1-4 and 5-8 grade students every month in the school. There are not a lot of opportunities to dance for children of such age in the city, therefore these discotheques are very likeable and popular not only between the students from our school but from all neighborhood schools. These kind discotheques always have a theme, title, clothing and the music code. The students, who did not follow these requirements, have to make accessories for themselves when they arrive with the material that is given. During the discotheque children play funny games, pick the best dressed up by the theme students. The students who break the rules cannot be allowed. There are discipline, relationships and belonging to the group problems that are being solved in these discotheques. This prevention means was initiated by students themselves and because of enthusiastic teachers it has become one of the most interesting ones. The most interesting about this, is that children who have behavior problems are the ones who initiate that.

Another solution could be imposing sanctions on the parents of children who regularly break the rules. In Bulgaria there are parents' school led by a psychologist, but they are not visited enough. Bulgarians do not seem to have the necessary mechanisms to make the parents come to such schools and the psychology of the Bulgarian considers this unnecessary and useless. In Italy this possibility is not present. There are not schools for parents.

The Lithuanian team points out that from the virtual meetings from partners' discussions the useful thing to prevent bullying is protocols (which also is used in most of the Lithuanian schools), just the problem is that most of the participants does not know that it exists. After case studies presentation, as during the first virtual meeting, it was emphasised, that the problem is that teachers recognize and usually react when the problem is really high; they are oriented to intervention, not to prevention. Most common is the mediation, to move the bullying student or the victim to the counsellor, or to try to develop restorative, educational measures.

In some countries, for example in Italy, schools do not have a national protocol on bullying. Within the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, there is no intervention protocol to solve harassment situations between students, apart from a recent circular (may 2012) regarding the sanction and content of the rules and regulations. Consequently, many initiatives were developed in schools. Rules and procedures have been laid down by the school authority, based on specific situations they had to solve.

In the Spanish comments we have learnt that direct bullying is less frequent today in Spanish schools because there is a commission of Coexistentia, a permanent body that monitors and prevents conflicts, whose aim is to reeducate the offender and to treat the assault as part of the educational work.

In the UK the support of the Pastoral systems (Heads of Year, Pastoral Manager and Assistant Head in charge of safeguarding) have the task to identify the problem and deal with it immediately. In Italy the religious congregation is not considered reliable by families and few families attend Church. There is an increasing loss of religious consciousness and need.

It can be concluded that the victims are not always the weakest or the ones with any kind of physical differentiation. At the same time, the bullies are not always the lively or vivid students, but could be the "good" students as well. Every situation is unique and must be treated as such.

All in all, the teachers agreed that the transnational discussion proved to be very effective. They said that it was very important that they saw an alternative view regarding the tackling of bullying incidents. They also said that the transnational discussion made them see from another viewpoint previous school bullying



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phenomena they had faced. In other words, they admitted that in the past maybe they had underestimated some indications that could lead to violent actions. What is more, they all said that the presence of an expert in every school unit is necessary and that the implementation of a clear and specific anti-bullying policy is very important.

Finally, the transnational discussion proved to be a very useful and necessary tool. The transnational exchange of views helped us in diverse ways: First of all partners were informed about other forms and cases of school bullying. Secondly, they were informed about different approaches with reference to tackling school bullying phenomena and thirdly, the participation in the project raised the awareness of the participants in the field of school bullying.



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CONCLUSIONS

Fears of school violence have always been of major concern for teachers, parents and students as they begin a new school year. The fact is, violence and bullying are part of many European schools today. Fortunately, this usually involves a small group of people fighting amongst themselves. Just as it is a problem we all must deal with, it is also a problem we all must work to solve. The community, the administrators, the teachers, the parents, and the students must come together and make schools safe. Otherwise, prevention and punishment will not be effective. With the project "I am not scared" and the analysis of the case studies in particular we hope to help schools improve their policies and strategies with regard to bullying. Currently what schools are doing is to react for every case as it happens, while the goal of all measures should be simply to stop it from happening in the first place.

Prevention efforts should ultimately reduce risk factors and promote protective factors at multiple levels of influence, including the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. What came clear from the analysis of the national case studies and their transnational discussion is that there is a serious need for uniform school policies and teachers' training with regard to the phenomenon of bullying. The experience of our European colleagues shows that universal, school-based prevention programs have been found to reduce rates of aggression and violent behavior among students. These programs should be delivered to all students in a school or a particular grade and focus on many areas, including emotional self-awareness, emotional control, self-esteem, positive social skills, social problem solving, conflict resolution, and teamwork. Many of these programs help children learn social skills by having them observe and interact with others. Some programs incorporate didactic teaching, modeling, and role-playing to enhance social interaction, teach nonviolent methods for resolving conflict, and strengthen nonviolent beliefs among young people. Furthermore it would be good some parent and family-based interventions to be designed to improve family relations. Prevention should be based on training teachers in active, experiential teaching methods that foster attributes such as teamwork, cooperation and aiming at fostering self-esteem of the student and build empathy. It is evident that the traditional methods of sanctions have failed in general, and thus we should search for alternative and more efficient ways of handling children's problematic attitudes.

There is growing evidence that these interventions, especially those that start early and recognize the diverse factors that influence a family, can have substantial, long-term effects in reducing violent behavior. Community level strategies could also be helpful. Strategies at this level focus on modifying community characteristics, including school settings that either promote or inhibit violence. Schools have made numerous efforts to improve the overall environment and to reduce negative outcomes, such as violence. These include improved classroom management practices, promoting cooperative learning techniques, teacher/staffing practices, student monitoring and supervision, and reducing bullying by involving parents/caregivers. Schools are imbedded within a larger community environment by which they are influenced. As a result, broader efforts to change the physical and social environment of communities can also benefit schools. Strategies to change the broader community environment include increasing community participation; providing more formal and informal supervision for youth through afterschool programs and recreational opportunities; reducing youth access to alcohol and drugs; and improving financial, housing, and employment opportunities in impoverished areas.

This experience was very useful and interesting and the project results are aimed at creating a new law in Europe concerning bullying, a phenomenon which is incredibly widespread in Europe. The national reports and the publications we uploaded on the website can be useful for the members involved in order to improve strategies to face the problem.

The National Reports that include the analysis of the European case studies and the outcome of the transnational discussion will be necessary to define both the National Strategy and the European Strategy to tackle school bullying. As we are responsible for the development of the European Strategy, we hope that all the partners will be ready to contribute.



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It's a fallacy to believe that the school bullying phenomenon starts and ends in schools. It has deep roots which are destructive for the society since these behaviours tend to be repeated within the family, the workplace etc. Stakeholders don't need to start with the hypothesis that bullying is something that is impossible to take place in the school premises. Instead, they need to consider it as something very possible to happen, therefore it is imperative to develop a detailed plan in order to prevent and tackle efficiently this phenomenon.

Communication and cooperation among our students should be improved by using a different model of teaching. New trends in teaching and learning, such as collaborative learning and working a project, could help to change the situation. It is well known though that teachers are not adequately trained to do so and this must be a priority for the policy makers and the educational agencies.

Cyber-bullying has also occurred in the school community, with severe consequences. The new technologies deeply modify the relationship and communication mode between the pupils, the educative team and the family. It is important that the educative teams are aware of this evolution and are trained to better tackle it. School can play a big part in reducing the number of cyber-bullying incidents through a proactive educational campaign. This can be achieved by informing the students, preferably before or even after the incident, about the appropriate behavior on the internet and the right use of it.

The responsibility falls on the parents as well. They should undertake immediate measures concerning any worrisome signs in their children's behavior. We cannot be indifferent when a young student hurts another child who needs and has the right to be protected from the society and be rehabilitated. The perpetrators have also the right to be adequately treated, because they are children who try to draw our attention in a wrong way and they need adults to set the limits and show them the right direction. The school has to be involved in this procedure. It is an educational institution, which other parents have also trusted with their children, feeling calm about their education and safety. If we don't pay attention to what is happening, if we stay silent about it and cover it up, the guilty ones would continue their actions towards the chosen victims.

Finally, we can notice the positive impact of the project to make the teaching staff aware of the important issue of school bullying and the ways to tackle it. Transnational discussion about the subject has been more than beneficial, since bullying is a phenomenon that concerns all European countries and there is no better way to handle it than sharing our experiences and knowledge about it. A progressive cooperation and the establishment of a shared European strategy can eliminate this phenomenon both now and in the future.

Using information gained from the Case Studies and from the transnational discussions the conclusions are:

- A clear definition of 'bullying', and a clear whole school anti-bullying strategy known to all staff in the school is required. The Headteachers who commented on the Case Studies were pretty universal in their view that schools should have approved policies and procedures in place and that they should have senior, well trained, key staff involved in the day to day running of their Anti-bullying policy. This ensures that incidents are dealt with professionally and consistently.
- Schools should be pro-active as well as re-active in dealing with bullying e.g. identifying areas of the school grounds where bullying may occur and ensuring that such areas are closely monitored during break and lunch, train student anti-bullying mentors; have a 'buddy system' etc.
- Early intervention gives the best chance of success and the best chance of a long-lasting solution
- Good training for teachers and support staff on how to identify 'signs' and respond to bullying incidents is of vital importance. Teachers should never be afraid to ask for help to deal with a bullying problem and channels for them to refer matters upwards should always be open
- As well as training school based adults, some form of guidance for students themselves is also required, to guide them to know what is acceptable and what isn't, how they can minimise risks to themselves and protect themselves against cyber bullying, and that bystanders who simply 'look on' or who actively encourage participants cannot abdicate from all responsibility etc.



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

- Training for parents / carers is also a good idea to help them spot signs of a child being bullied and particularly to understand how to protect their children against cyber bullying
- Of equal importance is the need to have good lines of communication which allow students and their parents the opportunity to raise concerns and have them treated seriously. In this connection having some form of student council in the UK, the students themselves are often the first to know of the problem
- There appears to be a difference between the UK and some of our EU partners because UK teachers still have a pastoral role and are willing to help and support students outside the normal parameters of teaching and learning and are expected to play an active part in the fight against bullying whereas this is not always the case elsewhere
- Similarly in the UK, the police are not called in except as a last resort but again this is not the case elsewhere
- 'Let the Punishment fit the Crime' and 'Justice must be seen to be done' are two phrases often used in the UK and which apply well to bullying situations. It is important that schools have a range of effective sanctions available and that any punishment imposed is proportionate to the incident. It is also important for students to know the likely consequences of their actions
- Not all bullying situations will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties e.g. what is satisfactory to the parents of a bully may not be satisfactory to the parents of the victim
- The use of trained counsellors can have a very beneficial long term effect both on bullies and their victims. All our experts see early intervention as the key to dismantling potential bullying scenarios
- The role of Policy Makers and Head Teachers varies from country to country but Headteachers should have a close monitoring role, that they should be informed but not directly involved in day to day incidents.

As evidenced by the various national reports, all the partners in the project have underlined the following common themes and suggest some solutions and best practices, which are duly referred here below.

All partners have highlighted the difficulties which can be summarized as follows:

- The analysis of the case studies collected pointed out the lack of trained staff in schools that can efficiently handle such situations.
- There is no strict adherence to the law in schools, such as the prohibition of using mobile phones at school, which would be very helpful in tackling cyber-bullying as well.
- There is little active cooperation on the part of everyone involved, families, schools and institutions
- It's a fallacy to believe that the school bullying phenomenon starts and ends in schools. It has deep roots which are destructive for the society since these behaviors tend to be repeated within the family, the workplace etc
- The school plays an important role in the socialization of students, teachers are educational agents, directly responsible for student behaviour; and together with the school management and responsible public authorities should be more involved in ensuring safety and protection in schools and also to influence the development of nonviolent behaviour among students.
- There is not a general policy addressing to this phenomenon and there is no education about this in school. The actual situation system needs a bottom up approach.



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

- Despite several great initiatives, the bullying prevention program has some difficulties in school. There is no mechanism that would connect everything into one ordered systematic activity. The school's administration's role in this process is too passive, it appears just as a onlooker in this activity.
- There is no a clearly established strategy that would tell what and who should do when they notice the bullying. The opinion that dominates is that this is normal appearance and there are no opportunities to influence that.
- There is also a number of teachers who are not reacting to bullying at all, unless it menaces student's health. If there is an opportunity to not solve the problem, they take it.

In order to build a prevention system, there are many different strategies to handle the bullying problem, as they emerge from the National reports of the partners. Below here is a critical comparison of the contributions of all partners and a list of best practices:

- The school response time in front of a bullying event, the attention paid to the request as well as the place dedicated to emotion seem to be factors that favour the problem resolution and allow to limit the negative impact.
- It seems important that the whole school staff (not only the educational staff but also the administrative and technical staf,...) are made aware of this issue and of their power of action in that field.
- The pupils' integration into the implementation of devices aiming to prevent or to fight violence favours a progressive decrease of violence and an emergence of democratic practices within the school.
- It seems important to be able to refer to specialists.
- It seems important to achieve a work with the whole class when the events occur within a class-group:
- There must be underlined the importance of a reconstruction work both for the bully and for the bullied one.
- The dialogue and cooperation need to be reinforced between the school and the parents, There is also a need for organisational or structural replies (premises, supervision, rules and regulations)
- The best strategies seem to be those that combine disciplinary and educational sanctions.
- Soliciting external aid to the mediation is advised.
- A close cooperation between all the internal and external protagonists is a guarantee for success.
- Involving students and parents in the system is essential.
- The school culture cannot accept any form of harassment.
- The school must carry out a clear and fair "no harassment" policy.
- Early detection and prevention are crucial.
- Trainings need to be offered to teaching teams, students and parents.
- Universal, school-based prevention programs have been found to reduce rates of aggression and violent behavior among students
- Prevention programs must focus on many areas, including emotional self-awareness, emotional control, self-esteem, positive social skills, social problem solving, conflict resolution, and teamwork. Many of these programs help children learn social skills by having them observe and interact with others. Some programs incorporate didactic teaching, modeling, and role-playing to enhance social interaction, teach nonviolent methods for resolving conflict, and strengthen nonviolent beliefs among young people.
- Prevention should be based on training teachers in active, experiential teaching methods that foster attributes such as teamwork, cooperation and aiming at fostering self-esteem of the student and build



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Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR

empathy. It is evident that the traditional methods of sanctions have failed in general, and thus we should search for alternative and more efficient ways of handling children's problematic attitudes.

- It would be good some parent and family-based interventions to be designed to improve family relations. There is growing evidence that these interventions, especially those that start early and recognize the diverse factors that influence a family, can have substantial, long-term effects in reducing violent behavior
- Strategies to change the broader community environment include increasing community participation; providing more formal and informal supervision for youth through afterschool programs and recreational opportunities; reducing youth access to alcohol and drugs; and improving financial, housing, and employment opportunities in impoverished areas.
- Communication and cooperation among our students should be improved by using a different model of teaching. New trends in teaching and learning, such as collaborative learning and working a project, could help to change the situation. It is well known though that teachers are not adequately trained to do so and this must be a priority for the policy makers
- Try to make the students to see that violence will not lead anywhere and that they should discuss with the teachers if they have problems
- Conversations, alternative behaviour discussion with students. They are encouraged to speak to teachers or specialists at school if they are experiencing bullying.
- Involvement of the police would have educative effects
- Very good cooperation between school staff and the parents.
- The importance of having counsellors in school
- Create interest through cultural activities that can involve students
- When in class you see a tense situation between several students get them to talk and resolve their differences before they leave the centre to avoid greater evils.
- The most useful training for teachers would be based on experiences of other colleagues in other schools in order to compare the strategies and thus find the most effective remedies.
- Information and training to families on the same topic.
- Potential for preventive actions with students and families.
- Action protocols for when these situations occur
- Working sessions with students to achieve their awareness of the use "proper" social networks, the rules of use, risks, and issues to consider....
- It is important to take into account one's family background, relationships and parent's attitude that reinforce and perpetuate these behaviours.
- Sanctions are good only if they are combined with positive incentives for a change of the behaviour and discussions with professional psychologists and pedagogical and experts.
- It seems useful to combine disciplinary and educational sanctions.
- Active participation in different activities always brings students together and strengthens their cooperation
- More involvement of the parents. I think it is really important in this situation to help Nick's parents get a better understanding about the possible consequences that could have happened if Nick hadn't ran away so quickly.
- Soliciting external aid to the mediation is advised.



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- A close cooperation between all the internal and external protagonists is a guarantee for success.
- Involving students and parents in the system is essential.
- The community, the administrators, the teachers, the parents, and the students must come together and make schools safe. Otherwise, prevention and punishment will not be effective.



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