

# Combating Bullying in Bulgarian Schools

Policies, Challenges and Good Practices

National Report

## Community Based Complex School Programme for Effective Prevention and Treatment of Aggression and Bullying

An Inter-sectoral approach from best practices to policy making



## NATIONAL REPORT BULGARIA

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The topic of violence and aggression in school is highly debated in recent years and has become one of the most serious challenges faced by schools in Europe. Aggressive behaviour and bullying accompany the daily lives of a large percentage of school children, leaving lasting consequences for their future development, social life and growth. School bullying and aggression are phenomena that are not confined just to one country or region, but are international in scope, making them a problem studied by scientists and experts from around the world. Dealing with the problem itself is a challenge that requires comprehensive action, targeting all participants in cases of violence, and collaboration at all organizational levels.

Although there have been numerous fruitful initiatives, the problem has not been significantly reduced for a number of interrelated reasons, i.e. lack of coherent nation-wide policies, adequate training and support to teachers and parents, absence of positive role models, legitimating effect of the media, unhealthy political climate, etc. New approaches are needed to make aggression unacceptable, to help children deal with their emotions, create a culture of nonviolence and empower schools and societies by providing them with new conflict management methods.

Nevertheless, it is also worth noting the existence and application of various prevention programs and initiatives, which can be labelled as good practices in the field. Awareness raising campaigns, teacher-parent cooperation, capacity building initiatives for both school personnel and students, access to support services and counselling, etc. have all proved to be not only an invaluable part of comprehensive prevention and intervention programs, but also the road to a positive school climate and culture that is safe, fair, and stimulating for staff and students alike.

In 2015 three organizations from Hungary, Bulgaria and Malta joined forces to launch a pilot project with the **aim of developing and testing a secondary school model programme contributing to systemic crime prevention and reduction in schools, which is based on alternative conflict resolution methods**. The long-term goal of Partners Hungary Foundation, Partners Bulgaria Foundation and SOS Malta is to achieve cultural change in schools through the dissemination of nonviolent communication, introduction of

alternative conflict resolution practices, prevention of school conflicts and decrease of aggressive and other risk-related behaviour.

In addition, the partnership pays special attention to the importance of a comprehensive network of supporters, including parents, civil society organisations, youth and social workers, local or governmental services supporting teachers' work, police, public administration, and employers. This is considered a prerequisite for the achievement of a positive and encouraging environment at school where students are able to articulate their needs and interests, accept and value each other's needs, develop empathy and learn to take responsibility for their actions, which helps them integrate in society and succeed in their life.

## 1.1 Aim of the National Reports

When the three implementing organizations designed the project's outline and rationale, the research and analysis of the current situation of school aggression and bullying became the first logical stage of implementation. The National Reports conducted in Hungary, Bulgaria and Malta not only allow thorough review of gaps and needs within the area, but they also identify policies and practices that have already been tested and can be considered as lessons learned and know-how for future initiatives.

On the basis of the three National Reports from Hungary, Bulgaria and Malta, the partnership managed to

- compare the landscape of actors, policies and practices in the field of bully prevention and intervention in the three countries;
- review and present effective good practices in the field, which can be of help to policy makers and practitioners in other countries and contexts;
- design a model program that provides complex answers to the issues of school aggression and bullying taking into account its content and environment;
- formulate specific recommendations to policy-makers with regard to strengthening current measures to prevent aggression and bullying at school.

## 1.2 Definitions

In order to have a better understanding of the topic addressed throughout this paper, a set of definitions is provided regarding types of behaviour such as bullying, aggression, violence and conflict. These definitions will apply for the whole report and the Model Programme, which will help avoid any ambiguity that might be generated by the differences between the terms that define these notions in English, Hungarian and Bulgarian.

The most widely accepted definition for bullying behaviour is negative actions on the part of one or more other students directed repeatedly at a victim which includes an imbalance of power between the actors involved [emphasis added]<sup>1</sup>. Aggressive behaviour is a more specific term, referring directly to any behaviour enacted with the intention to harm another person who is motivated to avoid that harm.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, aggressive behaviour can take many forms. It can be direct or indirect, physical, verbal, or relational.

Another term that becomes relevant here is conflict, which can be defined as an incident in which two parties oppose each other, and its resolution implies stopping the oppositional exchange. The reason that this term is made relevant here is, as research has shown, there is a tendency for children to resort to violence as a way to solve problems since they may lack adequate conflict resolution skills (see Joseph P. Forgas, Arie W. Kruglanski and Kipling D. Williams)<sup>3</sup>, thus highlighting the need for assertiveness and conflict resolution skills. This leads to the final definition worthy of clarification here, violence. Violence is defined by the World Health Organisation, as an intentional use of force or power, against another person, a group of persons or oneself, which 'results in or has a high likelihood in resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation'.<sup>4</sup> For ease of reference these behaviours will be referred to as the targeted behaviours.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Olweus, 'Bullying at School What We Know and What We Can Do', Wiley-Blackwell: October 1993, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne A Warburton, Craig A Anderson, 'Social Psychology of Aggression', International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition, Volume 1, 2015, p. 373; [<https://public.psych.iastate.edu/caa/abstracts/2015-2019/15WA.pdf>].

<sup>3</sup> Jesse A. Brinson, Jeffrey A. Kottler, Teresa A. Fisher, 'Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution in the Schools: Some Practical Intervention Strategies for Counselors', *Journal Of Counseling & Development*, Volume 82, 2004, p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organisation, 'World report on violence and health: summary', Geneva, 2002, [[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/summary\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_en.pdf)], p. 4.



### 1.3 Definitions in the context of Bulgaria

Under the Bulgarian legislation **physical violence** is considered “causing bodily harm, including the infliction of pain or suffering without health disorder”, while **psychological violence** covers “all actions that may have adverse effects on the mental health and child development, such as underestimation, derisive attitude, threats, discrimination, rejection or other forms of negative attitude, and the inability of the parent, guardian or custodian to provide appropriate and supportive environment”.

Bullying is one of the most common forms of violence; it has an enormous impact on children and can have severe consequences for them. Besides the threat of physical injury, psychological harassment can oppress children and provoke them to leave school, run away from home or, at the very least, impede their communication with peers and adults. Both physical and psychological harassment can cause fear and depression in children to the level of pushing them towards self-injury or even suicide.

The official definition and characteristics of **bullying** used in Bulgaria is provided in the “Mechanism to Combat School Bullying among Children and Students at School”:

- It is a malicious act that aims to hurt or humiliate a child;
- It stems from the position of power, where one party uses its dominant position to hurt the other physically or mentally, to humiliate or isolate it from social life;
- It is repeated over time, i.e. it is not a single and isolated act of aggression.

Bullying can generally be divided into the following main groups:

- **physical** – pushing, pinching, demolition, hitting, inflicting pain, tripping, and restricting the freedom of movement, etc.;
- **verbal** – remarks, mockery, humiliation, threats, insults, etc.;
- **psychological** – mockery, larking, talking down, threats, extortion, property damage, theft and throwing things, threatening glances, unfriendly tracking, etc.;
- **social** – avoiding, ignoring, exclusion from activities, slander and spreading vicious rumours, pressure on others not to enter into friendly relations with the harassed children, isolation, etc.

With the development of new technologies, the so-called **cyber bullying** emerged and gained increasing momentum. It consists of disseminating insulting or threatening texts on the Internet or via mobile phones, e-mail, Skype, Facebook or other social media; sharing derogatory materials; taking photos and videos of a child with a cell phone and disseminating them on the Internet without his/her consent; spreading rumours, gossip or threats on social networks, etc.

In every situation of bullying, each participant plays a role. In general, these roles are six:

- **bully** (tormentor, aggressor) – an initiator and performer who invites others to join; a leader who invents new ways of outrage;
- **assistant to the bully** – a person who helps to obtain the approval of the tormentor, joins the harassment once it's started;
- **supporter of the bully** – a person who is always present, even if not actively intervening; they mock the victim, encourage the tormentor, invite others to entertain;
- **advocate of the victim** – a person who tries to tell others to stop, looks for help, protects or encourages the victim;
- **bystander** – a person who stands aside, pretends not to notice, does not take part and does nothing;
- **victim** – the subject of harassment

## II. RATIONALE

When the three implementing organizations designed the project's outline and rationale, the research and analysis of the current situation of school aggression and bullying became the first logical stage of implementation. The National Reports conducted in Hungary, Bulgaria and Malta not only allowed thorough review of gaps and needs within the area, but they also identified policies and practices that have already been tested and can be considered as lessons learned and know-how for future initiatives.

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- review and present effective good practices in the field, which can be of help to policy makers and practitioners in other countries and contexts;
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## 2.1. Scope of the problem

According to the survey "The level of violence in Bulgarian Schools" (2007) by UNICEF Bulgaria, 25% of children believe they are victims of violence at least once a week, or more often, while 10% of children admit that they have committed some form of bullying over their classmates. Some of the consequences of the inflicted violence, especially the long-term ones, are common for both subjects and perpetrators. For example, susceptibility to depression, having difficulty forming relationships with others, presumption of transmitting aggression to the next generation, etc.

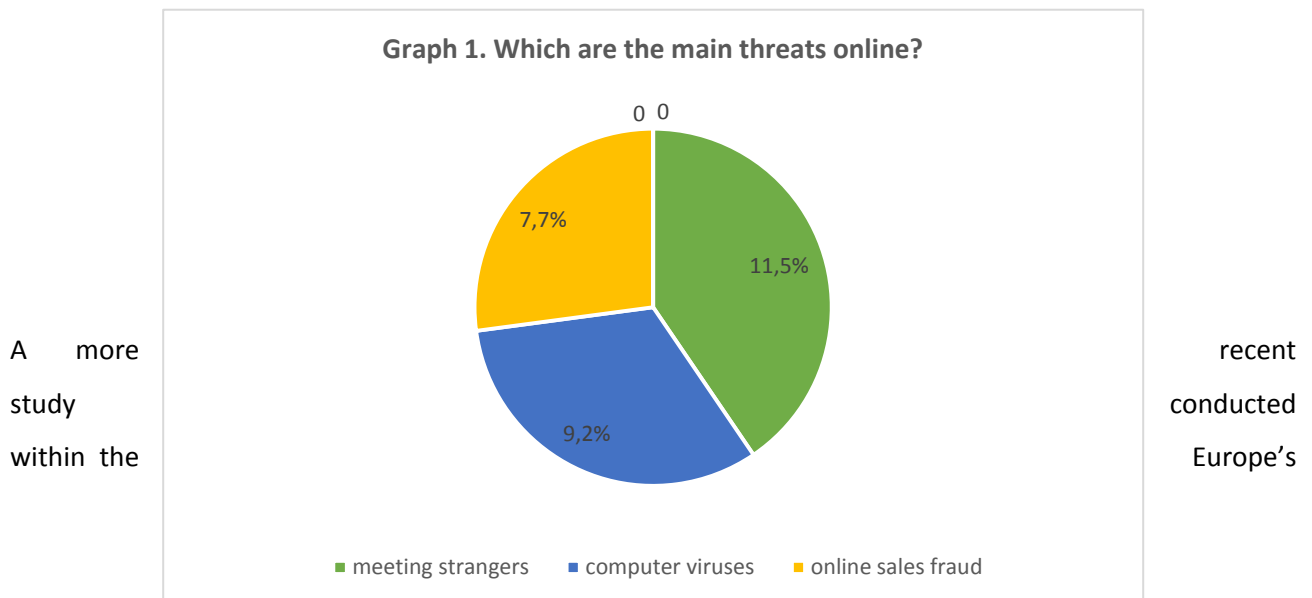
Furthermore, it is noted that cyber bullying shows a growing tendency due to the wide spread and application of information technologies, and the easy access to social media. Data on cyber bullying presented by UNICEF Bulgaria and the Society of Psychologists, outlines the seriousness of the problem in the virtual environment. According to the survey:

- 1/3 of violence in schools happens via mobile phones and Internet according to students at the age of 14 years;
- 23% of the students, aged 10 – 14 years, admit they have been subject to cyber bullying within one school year;
- 13% of the students admit that within one school year they have committed cyber bullying against someone;
- 3% of students admit that they commit cyber bullying against someone every week.

Another disturbing trend made obvious by the study is the level of underreporting of violent incidents. Only 24% of children victims of bullying and violence shared their story and experience with teachers, while most often at home they share the incident with their mothers. During the focus group discussions the majority of teaching professionals confirmed that cyber bullying has been a challenge due to the fact that children nowadays spend increasingly more time online and are becoming more technology savvy. It continues to be an acute problem, which is difficult to tackle effectively because it remains invisible to the adults for a fairly long period of time until eventually the cyber bullying incident escalates critically or it transforms into an altercation in real life.

According to another study<sup>5</sup> on bullying in 2008, nearly 76% of children between 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade have witnessed violence in their schools. 35.1% of children admit they were involved in some form of violence at school – 18.8% of them indicate they were in the role of the victim, 16.7 % admit they were more of initiators, and 58.6% remained observers.

Although not directly associated with cyber-bullying, 54.8% of the children that took part in the study believe that the Internet is a dangerous place and they state three major threats:



<sup>5</sup> The study was conducted by the Applied Research and Communications Fund Foundation and Parents Association Foundation in five schools in the capital city (Sofia) with 350 students.

Antibullying Campaign Project (2012)<sup>6</sup> reveals that the problem with bullying is still a grave one with changing dimensions. The survey reached 1067 secondary school students in Bulgaria and according to 44.8% of them bullying is mostly seen in the classroom, followed by areas outside the school (33%) and school corridors (28.4%).

Table 1. Where did bullying occur?

	Percentage
In the classroom	44.8%
Outside school	33.0%
On the corridors	28.4%
On the web	19.0%
In the playground/park/neighbourhood	14.9%
On the way to and from school	11.2%
Other	9.8%
At home	7.2%
In the dinner hall	5.7%

According to the results, more than a third of all surveyed children in Bulgaria (34.66%) report that they have been a bullying victim, with boys constituting a slightly higher percentage than girls (36.36% and 32.84% respectively). This study as well looks into the issue of reporting incidents of bullying – data shows that 63.71% of the victims shared their experience with bullying, quite often with a friend or classmate (33.68%) or with their parents (28.87%).

It becomes apparent that teachers and other adult professionals (social services, non-governmental organisations, etc.) are not well recognised or not identified as desirable source of support. Even more so to the rest 36.29% of students who did not report the bullying experience at all. During the focus group discussions some of the teaching professionals shared that students do not necessarily talk about their

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conflicts with classmates in an effort to resolve them on their own; it is often when the conflict intensifies and children resort to aggressive behaviour (either verbal or physical) that teachers become knowledgeable about the situation and intervene. The most widely applied method in such a case is for the teacher to intercept the incident and explore the reasons for the bullying behaviour by listening to the arguments of the two sides. Following this initial “investigative” phase, teaching professionals inform the parents and apply immediate measures to resolve the bullying incident.

A commonly shared opinion among the teaching professionals who participated in the two focus group discussions is the positive impact of extracurricular activities, clubs and other groups by interest or hobby. Although these activities might not necessarily be directly focused on aggression and bullying prevention, they are seen as an excellent platform to help students enhance their social and interpersonal skills, including team work, cooperative decision making and peaceful conflict resolution. Some teachers shared examples of extracurricular activities, which have been implemented within the "School of Self-affirmation and Training to European Horizons" (SUCCESS) Project.<sup>7</sup> The SUCCESS Project made available resources for the establishment of different clubs and interest groups, which were open to students to participate voluntarily. Despite the fact that there are no official impact assessment, the professionals who participated in the discussions are certain that these activities have influenced the class environment in a very positive way.

## 2.2. Contributing factors

In order to understand better the problem, one must take a closer look at the root causes. It must be noted that bullying behaviour is a complex issue and research in the area does not identify one specific cause of the problem. Often children who bully their peers do not recognise their actions as a form of bullying, they do not consider their behaviour disruptive and unacceptable, and usually are not fully aware of the serious physical and psychological consequences experienced by their targets.

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<sup>7</sup> The project is managed by the Ministry of Education and Science and is implemented with the financial support of the Operational Programme Human Resources Development.

The socio-psychological roots of aggression are examined in various national studies and publications in the country, placing the main focus on several basic premises:

- the role of the family and their models of upbringing and educating their children;
- the process of social learning of aggressive behaviour as a form of imitation;
- the repetitive behaviour towards aggression by peers;
- the models of behaviour observed and adopted by TV and Internet/social media content.

The literature review indicates that aggression can be well connected with the instinct of self-preservation (Pirvov, G. 1993; Stamatov, R. 2000) and as such it can be considered an innate predisposition. However, the forms of manifestation of aggressive impulses depend entirely on the models of behaviour by those who raise and educate children, i.e. parents, teachers, other relevant adults. Another study (Kalchev, P. 2003) examines the relation between increasing levels of delinquent behaviour by children and their prior experience as victims of violence at home or in school. There is also literature dedicated to the study of the personal traits of children with delinquent behaviour (Kriviradeva, B. 2000, 2002) and the factors, which provoke aggression and violence in a school setting, i.e. aggression related to one's own temperament, which can be acutely expressed during adolescence; previous experience or being witness to violence and aggression; lack of other methods for non-violence conflict resolution; drastic changes in the value system with empathy, solidarity and willingness to help becoming less important. In addition, Partners Bulgaria Foundation's own study on children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Hristova, M. 2013) indicates the important role of the relation between parents and the institution (school), with active and meaningful involvement of the former in the process. Often strained or missing interaction prevents professionals and parents alike to offer adequate and timely support to the child with challenging behaviour, thus increasing the risk of intensification.

According to UNICEF Bulgaria, one can summarise the specific risk factors, which might increase the probability for aggressive behaviour, in the following manner:

Home environment:

- reserved emotional attitude displayed by parents, showing no or little emotional warmth and responding inadequately to the needs of the child;
- overly permissive parents who do not set clear boundaries and do not follow a certain set of rules and order;
- parents who do not show much interest in their child and leave him/her without parental control;
- parents who tolerate aggressive behaviour;
- parents who apply physical punishment

Personal traits:

- children with a more lively, rampant temper;
- impulsive children;
- aggressive children;
- children who constantly need to feel powerful and keep things under control;
- physically stronger children;
- children who have not fully developed empathy and compassion

Influence of the peer group:

- decrease in restraining unaccepted behaviour;
- decrease in personal responsibility

## 2.3. Predictors of bullying

The article “Predictors of Bullying and Victimization in Childhood and Adolescence: A Meta-analytic Investigation”<sup>8</sup>(2010) by Cook et al. examined 153 studies from the last 30 years, covering both the United States and Europe in an attempt to understand better what individual and environmental characteristics predict the likelihood of becoming a bully, victim or both. According to the study, the typical bully has both social competence and academic challenges, difficulty with solving problems with others and lives in a family environment where conflict is present. They tend to show strong externalizing behaviours in contrast

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<sup>8</sup><http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/07/bully-victim.aspx>



to the typical victim who is likely to demonstrate internalizing behaviour, inadequate social skills and negative self-related cognitions.

Moreover, UNICEF Bulgaria draws the attention to the different experiences of boys and girls in a situation of bullying. If one examines the role of the victim, it can be noticed that relatively equal number of boys and girls become victims of bullying. A clear distinction is that boys suffer more often from physical violence, while girls are more often subject to indirect bullying. Both boys and girls experience similar levels of verbal harassment – both receive unpleasant nicknames, mockery, threats, etc. If one examines the role of the bully, it is observed that boys more often resort to physical and verbal aggression. Meanwhile, indirect aggression, which is traditionally considered more of a “feminine” tool, is equally used by boys and girls.

Regarding the age characteristics of the victims, the general trend is that with the increase of age, lower levels of violence are being reported. While this appears to be a positive tendency, in practice this data can be misleading. Usually young people, entering puberty and later – adulthood, want to show maturity and stability when facing and dealing with problems. Therefore, they often do not confess, even to themselves, that others have behaved badly towards them. For them and for others, for whom violence lasts for years, the situation continues to deteriorate and eventually they not only get used to the role of victims, but do not know how to get out of the situation.<sup>9</sup>

As with regard to some common traits that can be helpful in identifying potential victims and bullies, the Europe’s Antibullying Campaign offers the following personal characteristics of the two groups:

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<sup>9</sup> Violence among children: what you should know about it. (2007) Brochure for parents, Sofia, project "Prevention of School Violence", implemented by the State Agency for Child Protection, and supported by UNICEF

Table 2. Traits helpful to identification of potential victims and bullies

The child victim of bullying might exhibit	The child who bullies might exhibit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ inability to solve problems</li> <li>▪ signs of depression</li> <li>▪ emotional problems</li> <li>▪ feeling of loneliness</li> <li>▪ low academic achievements and absenteeism</li> <li>▪ behavioural disorders</li> <li>▪ psychological/psychosomatic problems (headaches, abdominal pains, bed-wetting, sleeping disorders)</li> <li>▪ stress</li> <li>▪ phobias</li> <li>▪ inability to stay alone</li> <li>▪ avoidance of eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a need for domination over others</li> <li>▪ inability to control impulses</li> <li>▪ reduced ability for self-control</li> <li>▪ inability to comply with rules and limitations</li> <li>▪ unusually low anxiety</li> <li>▪ inflated self-image</li> <li>▪ lack of sense of measure</li> <li>▪ average to below average popularity</li> <li>▪ hostility towards its environment (especially towards parents and teachers)</li> <li>▪ absolute lack of empathy</li> <li>▪ It is possible that they are surrounded by fellow students who do not bully themselves directly but reinforce the child who does (bully)</li> </ul>

## 2.4. Conclusions

In addition to the overview of the scope and dimensions of the problem in Bulgaria, the research provided a useful opportunity to draw few rather general but crucial conclusions. It is apparent that the formal research of thematic areas, such as violence against and among children, aggression and bullying at school, is carried out in a rather sporadic, initiative-driven manner. There is a certain difficulty to compare results across age groups and gender; make observations of trends in types of violence or bullying or get an overview of research covering a national representative sample of children.

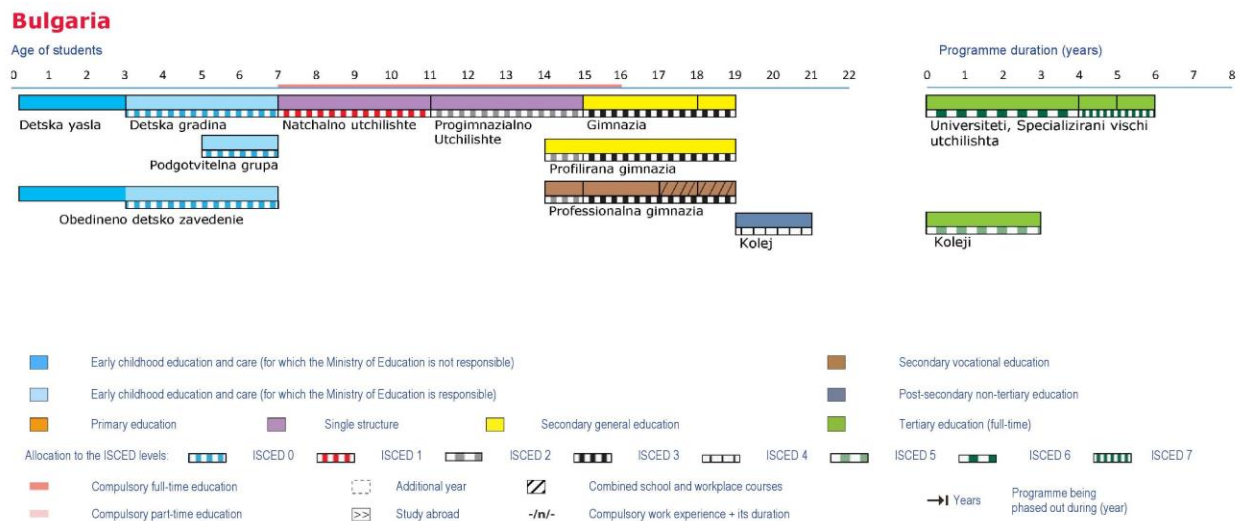
It must be acknowledged that official data on violence against children is gathered and analysed on a regular basis by state bodies entrusted with a child protection mandate, as it is the case for example with the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP), the Child Protection Departments (CPD), the Ministry of Interior (Moi) and the Central Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (CCPJD) among others. Nevertheless, these institutions do not share a common methodology and gather data in accordance with the institution's profile and contact with children. What is more, bullying as a separate research theme often appears only as part of a project implementation process, which is carried out by non-governmental organisations and at the very best serves the purposes of the specific initiative. This can be challenging as both policy makers and professionals do not have access to current, comprehensive and representative information, which covers wide range of aspects about the issue – vulnerability factors, dimension and scope, trends and patterns, etc.

Last but not least, in the course of elaborating the National Report in Bulgaria, the research team identified various good practices and initiatives, which have been developed and implemented by non-governmental organisations and schools. It became apparent though that they do not necessarily receive wide dissemination and further application by other organisations/schools, exchange of experience and practices does not happen intensively, thus, lessons learned are not fully available to benefit a wider network of key stakeholders in the field of bullying prevention.

### III. NATIONAL BACKGROUND

School education in Bulgaria is compulsory for children from seven to sixteen years of age and is free within the state school system. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is the state authority, which creates and implements the national education policy and organises the long-term education development. School education is divided in two major stages, i.e. basic education (grades 1-8) and upper secondary education (grades 9-12/13). The latter can be obtained at three types of schools – comprehensive secondary schools, profile-oriented schools (e.g. mathematics & natural sciences, foreign languages, etc.) and vocational secondary schools. The school curriculum for all educational levels and grades is unified and includes at minimum subjects like Literature (Bulgarian, English, French, German), Mathematics, Foreign Languages, History, Geography, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Psychology, Ethics and Law, Philosophy, Music, Arts, Vocational Training, and Physical Education.

Graph 2. Education System in Bulgaria<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2016). The Structure of the European Education Systems 2015/16. Schematic Diagrams

With regard to formulating policies and applying practices to prevent violence in schools, the relevant and responsible institutions can be summarised at four different levels:

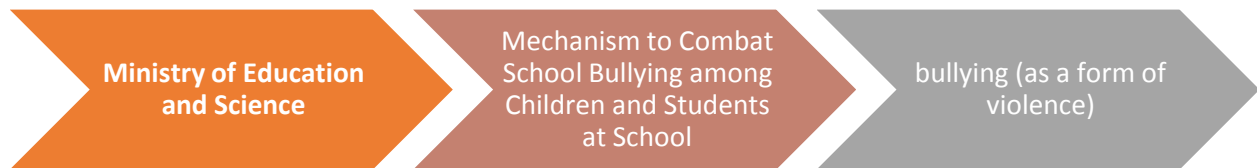
- national level – Ministry of Education and Science, State Agency for Child Protection, Ministry of Interior
- regional level – Regional Inspectorates of Education in each region
- municipal level – Municipality, Child Protection Department in each municipality
- individual/school level – schools, non-governmental organisations

At state level the State Agency for Child Protection was established in 2001 under the Child Protection Act. The SACP is the specialised body of the Council of Ministers for management, coordination and control of the implementation of the state policy for child protection in Bulgaria. As part of its mandate the State Agency adopts annual National Programme for Child Protection, which sets out priority areas of work with prevention of violence being one of the main priorities of the programme. A National Council for Child Protection comprising of both state and non-state representatives advises and supports the work of the State Agency for Child Protection, and monitors the implementation of national, regional and international programs among other duties.



The Ministry of Education and Science together with the Regional Inspectorates of Education are the bodies which manage and supervise the educative, cultural and educational institutions in the country. Since the Ministry is the main policy making authority, it is also in its mandate to adopt and monitor the implementation of norms and practices related to the positive, constructive and nurturing school environment. That is why in 2012 the Ministry adopted a national “Mechanism to Combat School Bullying among Children and Students at School” which is mandatory for all the schools (both state and private) in the country and gives the basic outlines and definitions on how to recognise and act in cases of violence or

bullying. The Mechanism uses the whole school approach and requires the involvement of the whole school and community in the process of preventing and combating violence in schools.



At municipal level the administration follows the priority areas set by the National Programme for Child Protection, develop their own strategies for child protection and implement different initiatives targeting the problem. The objectives of these programs are most often focused on developing information campaigns to prevent violence among children and bullying at school, training of professionals working with children on preventing violence, psychological and educational services for informing and consulting assistance to children at risk, etc.

At school level, in accordance with the National Mechanism to Combat School Bullying, school develop their individual annual plans for different types of activities and campaigns with the aim to raise the awareness, educate students about the problem of bullying, and decrease the number of violence and aggressive incidents.

Valuable support is often being provided by different non-governmental organisations, which apply and test different anti-bullying models, provide capacity building trainings and seminars and offer direct support to the student body. The non-governmental organisations presented in the current National Report have developed experience in implementing and supporting programmes and projects to prevent violence among or against children. Their initiatives can be considered good practices, which can be useful to other interested stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing future anti-bullying measures.

#### **Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (Sofia, Bulgaria)**

Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (WCIF) is a non-profit organisation in public benefit. Its mission is to encourage different communities to take responsibility and to work actively for social development

utilising fully local resources. Together with the support provided to different community organisations WCIF is funding youth initiatives and campaigns (as it is the case with few Youth Banks in the country) targeting the topic of school aggression and bullying. (<http://www.wcif-bg.org/index.php>)

### **Equilibrium Bulgaria and Complex for Social Services for Children and Families (Ruse, Bulgaria)**

Equilibrium Bulgaria is a non-profit organisation, a licensed provider of social services for children. Its main mission is the development and validation of a physical and spiritual personal development and discovery-based experience of the natural world as an important component of children's education and a key aspect of awareness of adult. The Complex for social services for children and families in Ruse is a service delegated by the state to support children and their families as an alternative to institutional care for children at risk. (<http://eq-bg.org/bg/>)

### **UNICEF Bulgaria**

Within its programme of cooperation with the Government of Bulgaria and as part of its mission, UNICEF Bulgaria relies on the protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse as one of its priority areas for work in the country. In 2007 a two-way strategy was developed to ensure better protection of children. At national level, the efforts of UNICEF are focused on strengthening the capacity of the system for child protection, to identify and respond appropriately in cases of violence against children, by opening a National hotline for children, launching the School without violence project, both in 2007, and conducting different awareness raising campaigns. (<http://www.unicef.bg/>)

### **Centre Nadya Foundation**

Centre Nadya is a psycho-social centre for help and support for people in need. A specialized team supports victims of domestic violence, trafficking, child sexual abuse, children at risk and their families. Its main purposes include provision of qualified and professional services in accordance with the highest standards and criteria; meeting the needs and expectations of the clients, women and children victims of violence. (<http://centrenadja.org/#>)

### **Animus Association Foundation (AAF)**

Animus Association Foundation was established in 1994. The Mission of AAF is to promote healthy communication between people and gender in Bulgarian society. It is achieved by developing affordable psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic services and programmes offering professional and competent help, creating public attitudes of tolerance diversity, respect for the suffering and rejection of violence, promoting the values of dynamic and psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis to promote democratic change in the Bulgarian family and society, developing and implementing projects and programmes to support people who need help. (<http://animusassociation.org/en/>)

### **Bulgarian Psychologists Association (BPS)**

The Bulgarian Psychological Society is the oldest (est. 1969) and largest professional association of psychologists in Bulgaria with more than 1000 full members - Registered Psychologists, nationally Representative member of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA), IUPsyS, and other international associations of psychologists in research, academia and applied practice. After the first stage of the "School without violence project" BPS takes the full responsibility for the implementation and dissemination of the results of the project. (<http://www.psychology-bg.org/>)

### **Association Roditeli (Parents Association)**

Association Roditeli is established in 2001 as a non-government, non-profit organisation of public benefit under the Bulgarian law for organizations with non-profit purposes. Since 2007 together with the Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund) coordinates the Bulgarian centre for safe internet. (<http://www.safenet.bg/en/>)

### **Applied Research and Communications Foundation (ARC Fund)**

The Applied Research and Communications Fund is the premier Bulgarian innovation policy and research institute established in 1991. ARC Fund's activities serve a wide community of policy-makers and practitioners in central and local governments, businesses, industry associations and civil society. Over 5,000 client organizations currently benefit from ARC Fund's innovation incubation and business support services. (<http://www.arcfund.net/>)



### National Network for Children

The National Network for Children is an alliance of civil society organisations and supporters, working with and for the children and families across the whole country. The promotion, protection and observing the rights of the child are part of the key principles of the network. The network plans and implements advocacy campaigns in order to guarantee the rights of children and improve the well-being of Bulgarian families and children. (<http://nmd.bg/en/>)

## IV. METHODOLOGY

The main goal of this National Report is to a) present the current dimensions of bullying and violence among children in school in Bulgaria, and b) identify and present good practices and models to prevent, intercept and respond to incidents of bullying, aggressive behaviour and violence against children in school.

Within the broader framework of the Against School Aggression Partnership– ASAP Collaboration, the Bulgarian National Report serves as a valuable input in the process of elaborating a common model programme for prevention of school violence, which at a further stage of the project is piloted in a secondary comprehensive school in the capital city Sofia. The identified risk factors, prevalence and scope of the problem, as well as the good practices implemented in Bulgaria are taken into consideration in the design, development and implementation of the model programme; thus, ensuring that it is relevant and consistent with current policies and practices in the country.

The National Report has been elaborated on the basis of the following research methods:

- 1) **preliminary desk research**, including literature review of relevant state policies, strategies, and regulations, as well as academic materials on the topic; literature review of policies and practices implemented by schools, civil society organisations and youth organisations; existing survey data
- 2) **focus group discussions** with teaching and non-teaching staff, n=2 in two secondary education schools in Sofia and Dupnitsa, to gather detailed information about the understanding of these professionals about bullying, their perception of the different forms of bullying they might have

identified in their work environment, the frequency and reasons causing the issue, as well as the measures and practices employed to handle such incidents.

- 3) **interviews** with school professionals, n=3. The respondents (e.g. psychologist, school counsellor, and school principal from two secondary education schools in Sofia and Dupnitsa) shared their opinion on the prevalence of aggression and bullying in their respective school environment, as well as their observation of the measures carried out by the school community to prevent and counteract such incidents.
- 4) **identification and collection of best practices** in accordance to a set list of criteria common to all partner organisations within the ASAP project, including online review of published measures and practices and distributed best practices description form to civil society organisations across the country.

## V. BEST PRACTICES ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

### 5.1. Background information

Throughout the research carried out for this report, there have been identified many practices, initiatives or projects that can be considered to be best practice in terms of prevention and tackling of, or raising awareness of, bullying behaviour, violence and aggression.

Programmes, established to address school aggression, are the first attempts to control this specific issue. In English literature the term "psychology of peace" is built around the idea that one can live in a non-conflict manner as required, but for this purpose there is a need to create group and individual skills for cooperative life.

German literature (D. Sauter et al., 2006) emphasizes the need to build an understanding of individual motives of the student that lead to the appearance of aggressive behaviour, and to work for integration of specific operational techniques for teachers to deal with each individual case. It is increasingly widely accepted that it is more important to learn skills how to build constructive aggression, than to decompose the destructive aggression. New ways to address the educational knowledge "out of the classroom - closer

to life" are needed, in order to deploy the social skills and children's creativity for practical application of knowledge.

Aggression in school environment is a manifestation of individual students, but dealing with it is a cause for all teachers to work as a team or individually. As commented by M. Deutsch (1993), best results come when "the terrain for the manifestation of aggression is blocked" and when "children learn to live in a united and unified world, where conflict resolution is done in a constructive, and not destructive way." According to M. Deutsch (2000) and J. P. Lederach to achieve this, efforts on 3 levels are needed:

- a) building school culture;
- b) modelling of professional behaviour of teachers;
- c) work on communication skills of children.

School culture presumes presence of media to raise awareness and sense in children of belonging to a particular institution. The atmosphere of school holidays and thematic competitions with other schools and institutions, for the glory of their own school, sets up the social identity of the student. Creating a sense of pride, "I am a student of this school, class, teacher, etc." and satisfaction of the achievement, completes the picture of school culture. "Being a student of this school" is a mind-set that is built upon continuous disclosure of the specifics of the school: through presentations to the public, parents and students of best practices and a good model, withstood the time.

To successfully reduce and overcome the aggression and violence in schools, one socio-ecological model has been proven as very strong and steady. It is based on the world-class practices and research model of Dan Olweus and Ken Rigby, and on the Bulgarian adaptation of the model, applied by the project of UNICEF "School without violence". Generally, it is based on the understanding, that to overcome this specific issue, a holistic approach that addresses the causes, is required. The model focuses on four levels of understanding violence, in order to apply the strategy for prevention of violence at different levels. The model refers to how individuals connect with people around them and how they function in this environment. Each level of the model is a separate level of response and implementation of preventive strategies. Generally, these four levels of impact are:

**1) Individual level**– personal characteristics, biological factors, social status, education, behaviour and personal experience.

- Strategies and programs to assist teachers in monitoring and analysis of behaviour;
- Programs to help students to develop social skills, self-control and positive behaviour;
- Strategies for partnership with parents;
- Programmes supporting academic performance;
- Group and individual techniques to improve the understanding of the behaviour of others;
- Strategies and programmes to support individual sources to manage stress

**2) Interpersonal level**–analyses the relationships relevant to the increase of risk of aggression - relationships with peers and with adults. Sample strategies and programmes at this level can be:

- Strategies and programmes for mutual support among teachers, for group activities with children to form positive group relations, to support families, to develop mentoring for children at-risk;
- Group activities among children to provoke positive norms of behaviour;
- Art-therapeutic programs for emotional support for children

**3) School community level** – factors in the school community that increase the risk of aggression and put in the role of victim. Sample strategies and programs at this level can be:

- Development of trust and openness in staff;
- Mutual support for teaching and sharing new ideas;
- Implementing school prevention practices;
- Attracting parents as partners;
- Self-learning and development of activities relative to the ambience

School mediation is seen as a contemporary method to prevent aggression and violence by which students engage more actively in the fight against aggression. This type of mediation to resolve conflicts is applicable by creating a school climate where students learn to listen to each other and resolve their differences peacefully.

#### 4) **Wider context** – social-economic and health factors

- Strategies and policies in education system sustaining values of support, cooperation and creativity, by developing a positive school culture
- Formation of parental societies and encounter groups;
- National media campaigns

In Bulgaria, public awareness of the problem with violence in schools noticeably increases. Still, actions taken to counteract this phenomenon are not unified. Despite the common model for cooperative work at school level, given by the "Mechanism to combat school bullying among children and students in school" - 2012, a national plan to resist violence in school and to serve as a strategy to prevent the problem, still does not exist.

## 5.2. Good practices in Bulgaria – Summary

### 5.2.1. Mechanism to Combat School Bullying among Children and Students at School

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the Bulgarian Government adopted the first "Mechanism to Combat School Bullying among Children and Students at School", which aims to support schools in their efforts to deal with violence and to provide a basic mechanism to counteract bullying. The adoption of such a document is based on the need to implement a coherent and purposeful policy towards combating school violence, which encompasses measures and activities for prevention and intervention, as well as written mechanisms and responsibilities for action in situations of violence. All guidelines and procedures laid down in the mechanism are common and valid to the whole school community.

The document was developed by the Ministry of Education and Science with the participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), the Social Assistance Agency (SAA), the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP), the Central Commission for Combating Juvenile Delinquency (CCCJD) and non-profit organisations – the National Network for Children (NNC), Steps of the Invisible Children in Bulgaria Foundation, Animus Association Foundation, Association of Psychologists in Bulgaria and UNICEF Bulgaria.

The Mechanism consists of several main parts, which generally clarify the terms "violence" and "bullying", behaviours that they include, and mandatory elements at school level to combat bullying.

In addition to providing detailed specifications and definitions of violence and bullying in schools, the Mechanism sets down essential elements how to treat it. Firstly, it provides for development and implementation of preventive measures in order to reduce factors that contribute to aggression and to affirmation of aggressive models within the school environment. The basic principle of countering the problem is the adoption of a whole school approach, investing coordinated and consistent efforts to prevent bullying and create a safer school environment.

### 5.2.2. School Free of Violence Project

During the period 2007 – 2008 UNICEF Bulgaria together with the State Agency for Child Protection, Sofia Municipality, and the Ministry of Education and Science initiated a project for prevention of violence among children. The aim was to create a safe and supporting school environment through direct interaction with children, teachers and parents in the school. Specialists worked with teachers, children and the school community, demonstrating new methods for communication and dealing with problems without aggression. The entire school community was involved in the project. School Free of Violence Project creates an opportunity for lowering the level of school violence – teachers and students together set clear rules, which in no case allow the expression of aggression or harassment. It is a Bulgarian version of the anti-bullying programme designed by Dan Olweus.

The school transforms into a place, where children learn that violence is unacceptable and know how to deal with problems peacefully. The project led to the formation of an overall school policy, based on values, attitudes and rules for behaviour as fundamental elements of a long-term strategy for violence prevention. The project started in 6 schools in Sofia and included children from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. For the school year 2007-2008, the project will also be adapted for children from the 1st grade. Besides Sofia, four more municipalities – Pernik, Vidin, Shoumen and Targovishte, have been invited to join the project „School Free of Violence” for the next school year.

### 5.2.3. All Children Have Rights. Everyone Can Help.

The initiative was realised with the special participation and support of Dimitar Berbatov, Bulgarian soccer player, Goodwill Ambassador of UNICEF for Bulgaria. The campaign was launched on 20 November – the day of the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is to make people think about children rights as a problem that requires their personal involvement and active participation and also to convince them that everyone has responsibility to the children of Bulgaria. The campaign is considered a good practice because it is well-rounded example of a wide public campaign with the involvement of a celebrity person.

### 5.2.4. National Helpline for Children

In 2007 the first national helpline for children (0800 19 100 – "Talk to a Friend")<sup>11</sup> was opened jointly by UNICEF Bulgaria, the SACP and "Centre Nadya" Foundation. It was free of charge and followed strict confidentiality and anonymity. The helpline provided crisis intervention, consultancy, and specialized information for child rights and also directed children to the appropriate social services. The helpline helped strengthening the capacity of the National Child Protection System and harmonized national practices with recognised international standards in the field of child protection and care.

Since the fall of 2009 the helpline changed its number (116 111) but never ceased to operate and offer counseling, information and help for children and adults, if they call in relation to a child. Monthly about 9 000 calls are received and about 1000 psychological consultations are carried out. The helpline is used mostly by teenagers who seek help for various problems – interpersonal issues, family conflicts, psychosocial problems, violence and abuse. More adults have sought help at the helpline in 2015 which shows both the increasing popularity of the programme, as well as the need for more and specialized community services for both children and parents.

Information for children at risk can be received and referred quickly on the helpline and in 2015 649 such cases have been received and referred to the Child Protection Units that can assess them and intervene directly. That is a raise of nearly 200 such cases in comparison to the previous year and testifies to the

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<sup>11</sup><http://www.unicef.bg/public/files/press/11.pdf>

popularity and accessibility of the helpline as a channel to refer information for at-risk-children and a to receive psychological support. The helpline team consists of specifically trained professionals in the spheres of psychology, social work and special pedagogy, who work on shifts to guarantee the non-stop functioning of the line.

#### 5.2.5. Zippy's Friends – the Future Citizens of Bulgaria

Zippy's Friends is a programme lead by Animus Foundation Association. A curriculum of 24 lessons teaches children between the age of 5 to 7 years how to cope in a healthy and successful way with problems and crisis situations at this time of their lives or in the future by learning to solve specific problems and understanding and controlling their emotions. The programme so far has covered 10 schools and kindergartens, 14 classes, 24 specialists in the schools and 300 children.

The entire programme lasts one academic year. It is constructed of a series of illustrated tales of the insect Zippy, kept as a pet, and his friends – a group of young children. While listening and discussing the issues presented in the tales, children develop positive coping strategies, which make them feel better and do not feel the need to hurt themselves or others. They express their thoughts and feelings, and are encouraged to look for more than one solution to a particular situation or problem. Evaluation data shows that teachers believe that the programme has a positive impact on children's communication skills and their abilities to solve problems within the group.

#### 5.2.6. Train Me and Pass It Forward – Conflict Prevention and Resolution

The activity of Equilibrium Bulgaria is focused on prevention of violence and conflict management among children through positive methods of education, targeting educational specialists and parents. The campaign "Train Me and Pass It Forward" has the following main activities: training courses, scout camps, participation in the "I win – you win" club, holding regular meetings with the resource group (school counsellors and psychologists from schools in Rousse), accentuating on the topic of violence in its different expressions, discussing and exchanging experiences among teachers participating in the group for parental



support (parents of children with behavioural deviations) on their opinions for the reasons and ways in which violence can be diminished.

#### 5.2.7. National Centre for Internet Safety ([www.safenet.bg](http://www.safenet.bg))

The project started in 2007 with the goal to promote safer internet among families, educators, children and teenagers through educational materials, popular articles, open lessons, technical and emotional support at the Bulgarian Helpline for Online Safety, lobbying for legal regulation of crimes against children in the virtual world. The Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre works for the protection and empowerment of children and young people in Internet by awareness raising, training, consultations and acting on reports from the public about online sexual abuse and exploitation of minors. By increasing digital literacy among children and youth we have been promoting the positive, safe and responsible use of Internet and information and communication technologies since 2005.

The Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre is also the organisation that stood behind the Virtual and Real Violence – Prevention through Interactive School Education Project. The project included the elaboration of a methodical guidelines with 25 modular lessons, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as the training of 49 teachers – practitioners and students. 10 schools in Sofia joined the implementation of the initiative. From November 2008 until the end of June 2009 the teachers who have already gone through the capacity building phase delivered 600 free lessons, with more than 3000 students on various topics. Microsoft Bulgaria and the children's portal dechica.com supported the initiative.

#### 5.2.8. Youth Banks Initiatives

A YouthBank is a youth-led grant-making organisation or programme within a host organisation, which channels money into projects that will improve the quality of life of local communities. It is also a process and way of working with young grant-makers that encourages and trains them as they develop essential life skills as well as increase their employability capabilities. Local YouthBanks are run by young people for

young people wherever they are.<sup>12</sup>Currently in Bulgaria there are 13 Youth Banks, which operate with the support of the Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation.

In 2016 nearly 5000 students aged 10 to 18 years have become part of the campaign "NO to Violence in Schools" realised by Youth Banks in Shumen, Burgas, Gabrovo and Pazardzhik. Thanks to the campaign, students from 80 schools in four cities learned about the types of violence and its consequences, and participated in various initiatives, provoking them to offer solution of the problem.

In Burgas nearly 300 students, aged 11 to 18 years, from three schools participated in informative meetings and discussed the types of violence and the ways to overcome it. In Shumen more than 2400 students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade learned how to overcome aggression through sport. The core of their campaign "It's not you when you're rude" was a punching bag called by the young people "the anger bag", which toured five Shumen schools for over a month. In Pazardzhik 24 youth "Peace Ambassadors" met with more than 500 students from 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade to discuss different ways to deal with school violence. In Gabrovo 50 students aged 8 to 16 years submitted their art works to the contest "I say STOP": poems, stories and drawings, expressing in a creative and unconventional way their attitude towards the problem with bullying at school and gave suggestions for resolving it. The winners were announced at the closing event organized on the Day of pink shirt, and all the works of contestants from the team of Youth Bank Gabrovo were collected in a book.

The Youth Banks' initiatives on raising awareness and opening a wider dialogue with children about the problem of bullying are considered a good practice due to the fact that they are youth-driven, peer-led and easily replicable in other settings by other groups of children and young people. Additionally, the benefit of such initiatives is the potential to involve external professionals, who can provide specific expertise and support, and the fact that they do not require extensive financial and material resources.

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<sup>12</sup><http://youthbankinternational.org/what-is-a-youthbank>

## VI. DEFINITION OF BEST PRACTICES

Upon research, we found that a great number of projects were created to fight school aggression and bullying. Many of these were funded by various projects and their depths vary according to the project period and the available funding, and only a few of them are implemented in a sustainable, long-lasting way. It has been found that programs that are not sustainable and run only for a shorter period of time may immunize participants against bullying, violence, aggression and conflict, rather than sensitise them and provide methods to deal with such situations.

Relying on studies and experience, we define sustainable best practices according to the below criteria.

### *Increases public awareness*

Since only a fragment of aggressive and bullying cases reach teachers' and parents' attention, it is vital that a program aiming at reducing such cases focuses on awareness raising. Even more so because there is no common knowledge and understanding regarding the notions of aggression, bullying, violence and conflict. Every case is different and its perception relies heavily on participants own perception. Quality information and special case management leads to better understanding of the problem and taking actions against it. It is also important that even if one program was started in a specific pilot school, the work under this project or initiative should be able to continue and involve a wider scope of beneficiaries. For the sake of sustainability, it is beneficial if the initiative is supported by public institutions and professional societies so that a better result can be achieved.

### *Holistic approach*

In order to successfully reduce and overcome aggression and violence in schools, the socio-ecological model based on Dan Olweus's and Ken Rigby's research model has been proven strong and steady. Generally, it is based on the understanding that a holistic approach is required, that to address and overcome this specific issue. Thus, a desirable good practice in our understanding is one that directly involves all stakeholders – teachers, students, parents, technical staff of the

school and other related experts – to promote cultural change. The direct involvement of children aims at enhancing the sense of belonging to the school, and a sense of ownership of decisions they are involved in. The relation between the school and the parents is promoted as a partnership, where the parents should be involved both in the decision making and in the contribution to different activities. We also consider it important that the initiative is supported by public institutions and professional societies so that a better result can be achieved.

*Promotes a sense of community and personal responsibility*

School culture presumes the presence of mediums to raise awareness and a sense of belonging to a particular institution. The atmosphere and the activities of the school set up the social identity of the student. Creating a sense of pride, "I am a student of this school, class, teacher, etc." and satisfaction of the achievement, completes the picture of school culture. "Being a student of this school" is a mindset that is built upon continuous disclosure of the specifics of the school: through presentations to the public, parents and students of best practices and a good model, withstood the time.

*Promotes social-emotional learning*

Teacher training in modern society requires competences in two directions: universal professional conduct of the teacher as a lecturer on a specific school subject, and secondly, behaviour as an educator in an adequate and contemporary manner. Teachers' ability to assert standardized professional behaviour for conflict-free communication among colleagues, between themselves and children, and between the students, guarantees the lowest level of aggression in school and outside.

*Methodologically precise and adequate*

According to the World Health Organization, a national plan to prevent violence in school should include the following elements<sup>13</sup>:

- Review and reformation of national legislation and policies;
- Capacity building;

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<sup>13</sup>[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/wrvhrecommendations.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/wrvhrecommendations.pdf)

- Support services, helping people who have experienced violence;
- Development and evaluation of preventive practices;
- Schedule of activities;
- Development of an evaluation mechanism;
- Establishing organizations to monitor progress;

This systematic approach can also be applied on project based anti-bullying programs. Further aspects to consider might be:

- The representatives of the target groups are trained and take part in the development of training materials, strategies and measures for preventing violence in schools;
- The program clearly differentiates among disruptive behaviours and offers methodologically founded solutions
- There should be no gap between the practices to be used and the actual knowledge available or persons trained on how to use the practices in a safe and suitable way.
- The policy supports the inclusion of restorative justice approaches at school level which is identified as a long term solution.
- The use of appropriate and innovative methodologies for the target group such as ICT and audiovisual tools for young people

## VII. BEST PRACTICES OF PARTNER COUNTRIES

### 7.1. Hungary

Within the research of this report, 13 good practices on managing school aggression, violence, bullying and conflict were identified in Hungary. There is no unified, national approach to tackle this specific issue, and this is reflected in the heterogeneity of the projects running in this topic.

There is an overall tendency whereby anti-aggression and anti-bullying projects run only for a shorter period of time, with a limited number of activities, with only a few teachers or students involved, thus leaving no long term impact.

In many cases, the organization or team managing the project dissolves after the project is finished. The rest of the staff are often not even aware that there is a team/class working on a project to prevent or deal with bullying. It is highly questionable how these ad-hoc programs can prevent bullying and aggression in the long run. There is a risk that these kind of projects immunize instead of sensitize both teachers and students. Effective prevention programs that run in various countries (Restorative techniques, KiVa, OBPP) involve all stakeholders' participation and their implementation is systematic and requires several semesters.

Safe internet use has been in the spotlight in the last years. Overall, we found 16 websites that offer programs, activities and applications to prevent cyberbullying (see Annex), which is an impressive number. However, like offline projects, they usually reaching a smaller number of students, parents and teachers and their use is very sporadic.

Increasing the sense of community and responsibility is of key importance. It is important that the school staff actively participate in the implementation process and they have their say regarding the necessary adjustments and amendments during the implementation process and the activities included, so that the school's specificities can be addressed appropriately. This is an integral part of programs that go with the holistic approach. Contrary to this, upon informal discussions on several occasions with teachers on the relevant topic, it came out that many of them prefer to have quick, ready-made solutions that can be easily implemented in the curriculum. This does not mean that they want to choose the easy way to magically get rid of the problem in an instant; this rather reflects the challenging conditions that prevail in Hungary:

- Teachers are overburdened due to the increased number of lessons; thus, capacity building needs to be ensured for the sustainability of programs.
- There is a high need for working solutions that show their effect quickly because teachers are expected to meet several demands including progressing with the curriculum in a timely manner, which might be hindered by discipline issues, conflicts and aggression.
- Although basic psychology is included in teacher training in Hungary, this does not accommodate social-emotional aspects of the teaching profession itself (assertive communication, conflict resolution skills, strong interpersonal skills, self recognition, etc.) Teacher trainees usually report lacking means to tackle situations that fall out of the scope of the school subject.

However, there are actually five working programs in Hungary which are based on the holistic and the involvement of all stakeholders for the sake of sustainability:

- Restorative practices by IIRP
- Re-Education by No Bad Kid/Pressley Ridge Hungary
- Peaceful School Programs based on the book “Why school anti-bullying programs don’t work” by Twemlow, Stuart W. and Sacco Frank C (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (August 15, 2008)
- Alternative Head Teacher System
- KiVa Program

Although there is no unified policy to handle school aggression, the National Crime Prevention Council of Hungary recently set forth a national strategy, which hopefully contributes to the decrease in such behaviours on the long run. In 2016, Partners Hungary Foundation trained over 200 teachers, school related professionals, social workers and secondary school students on mediation within the framework of the National Crime Prevention Strategy that set out as a goal to have at least one teacher who is a qualified mediator in every school. Participants were highly motivated and enthusiastic. Our experience shows that:

- It would be desirable to have a mentoring period after the trainings have finished the learning process still continues as cases arise.
- Communication and dissemination about mediation as a method is very important so that cases of aggression and conflict reach the mediator.
- There is a need for a solid network for teacher-mediators to support the above mentioned learning process. Also, it is advised that the impartiality of the mediator should be conserved, so instead of treating cases in their own schools, teacher-mediators could rely on their network to find a colleague from a different school.
- Training for student mediators and setting up a student mediator network would highly support this initiative, since students open up easier for their peers. Also, only 10% of aggressive cases is reported to the teachers.
- Although there is a great need for tools that tackle challenging situations, is very important to keep in mind that not all of them are conflicts, contrary to common belief; thus, conflict

management methods are not always suitable for preventing bullying, aggression, violence and conflict, as in many cases the roots of bullying do not lead towards a conflict.

The trainings within National Crime Prevention Strategy continue throughout 2017.

## 7.2. Malta

Throughout the research carried out for the compilation of the Maltese National report, there have been identified many practices, initiatives or projects that can be considered to be best practice in terms of prevention and tackling of, or raising awareness of, bullying behaviour , violence and aggression.

The Anti-Bullying Service, provided under the Safe Schools Programme by the Students Services Department in the Ministry for Education and Employment, is a national intervention service that assists all State schools that provide compulsory education. This can be considered as a strategic intervention service that deals mainly with prevention and tackling of bullying. The Anti-Bullying Service provides advice and support in developing school-based responses to bullying, according to the needs of each school. It provides support to the staff of the school, the students, and the parents by raising awareness of the issue of bullying, formulating and implementing strategies for situations of bullying behaviour, staff/school development, class intervention, individual cases and parents' meetings. Launched in 2000, the Service has, as its main aim, to help create appropriate responses to bullying and to promote pro-social behaviour in schools. Another important role is to help schools implement national policy, such as the 'Addressing Bullying Behaviour in the School' policy, by delivering training and information sessions to school staff, parents and the students themselves.

The Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools' policy lays the foundation for a national strategy against bullying and violent behaviour. It stresses the importance of the school environment and ethos in promoting and providing a safe space for all, students and school staff alike. It promotes relationships based on respect, inclusion and diversity among all the school community, thus, students are exposed to positive examples. More than that, a whole school approach is taken, recognising the importance of including, not just children, teachers and the psycho-social teams of the schools, but also non-teaching staff members, parents and the whole society. Moreover, the policy supports the inclusion of restorative justice at the school level that may



be included as a long term solution. More information regarding the implementation of the policy can be found in the report analysis regarding 'Tackling bullying, aggression and violence in Maltese State schools' emerging from the survey conducted for the purpose of ASAP project.

Other practices identified are:

-Specialised services: Kellimni.com project and KID's – the kids in development programme developed by the Richmond Foundation.

-Curricular or cross-curricular approaches: Personal Social and Career Development (PSCD) curriculum, Stop the Violence – non-formal curricular adaptation - by the Malta Girl Guides, Rescur – a resilience curriculum for early years and primary schools

- School level initiatives: The Buddy System at San Anton independent school.
- Awareness raising and prevention projects: Together Against Bullying by Victim Support Malta and The BeSmartOnline! project.

### **Kellimni.com (<http://kellimni.com/>)**

Kellimni.com is a free anonymous online support service available through e-mail, chat, online forum and smart messaging and provided at national level in Malta. It is a joint effort between SOS Malta, the Salesian Pastoral Youth Service, AgenzijaŻgħażaġh and AgenzijaAppoġġ, with the guidance of Child Helpline International. Apart from direct support to youths, Kellimni.com also provides educational material, through articles and video clips that address themes relevant to young people. These serve as initial information and support to young people as well as a resource for PSCD teachers, leaders within youth organisations or other youth workers. The issue categories discussed with the Kellimni.com operators are bullying, parent/child relationships, partner relationships, problems with friends, bereavement, friends and friendship, depression, self-harm, fear and anxiety and loneliness. This project is highly innovative as it manages to reach youths through communications that they know and are most comfortable with.

### **Kids In Development (KIDs)**

(<http://www.richmond.org.mt/kids-in-development/>)

KIDs is a residential programme designed for helping children who have experienced severe emotional and behavioural difficulties; it helps them in their personal development in order to develop healthy attachments and a sense of self worth. In other words, the programme helps children recover and/or develop social and emotional skills, thus helping to prevent them becoming vulnerable and to avoid victimisation through bullying, aggression and violent behaviour.

### **Personal Social and Career Development (PSCD) curriculum**

PSCD is part of the national curriculum, and is taught at both primary and secondary levels of education. It involves imparting to children the 'skills and processes involved in becoming happy and fulfilled individuals in a healthy and supportive environment.' This subject helps to shape the social and behaviour skills of children covering different aspects of life, relationships, communication, self-recognition, etc, according to specific ages. Some of the objectives are to enable students to recognise the different forms of communication (non-verbal, verbal, assertive and non-assertive) and develop good listening skills, enabling them to reflect on positive traits in friendship while also reflecting on the negative effects of bullying and developing the necessary skills to cope with the negative feelings this causes.

### **Stop the Violence - non-formal curricular adaptation - The Malta Girl Guides** (<http://www.maltagirlguides.com/>)

VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE is an international campaign which includes the Stop the Violence non-formal badge curriculum, created by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in collaboration with UN Women. The curriculum is designed to include a series of topics, all concerning different types of violence against women. It takes the form of series of workshops, and upon completion, participants receive badges – thus following the Girl Guides and Scouts system. The curriculum includes strategies, lesson plans, games and materials for a better delivery in the workshops. The curriculum was adapted by the Malta Girl Guides for the

school environment and a series of in-service training sessions are offered to teachers, counsellors or PSD teachers, who are encouraged to include such training in their daily activities and lessons at school.

### **Rescur - a resilience curriculum for early years and primary schools**

Rescur is a project that was implemented between 2012-2015 in Europe, coordinated by the University of Malta with the participation of the University of Zagreb (Croatia), the University of Crete (Greece), the University of Pavia (Italy), the University of Lisbon (Portugal) and Orebro University (Sweden). It presents a resilience curriculum for early and primary schools in Europe, which provides students with the key tools to overcome the disadvantages and obstacles in their development and to support their academic, emotional and social learning. The target group includes children who are considered to be at risk of early school leaving, absenteeism, school failure, social exclusion and mental health problems, bullying, discrimination, violence and social exclusion. The main goals are to develop and enhance children's social and emotional learning and resilience skills.

### **The Buddy System - San Anton Independent School (<http://www.sananton.edu.mt/seniorsector/BuddySystem/default.html>)**

'The Buddy System' is a peer support system, developed and adapted at San Anton School in Malta by School Counsellor Ian Refalo, in 2009. The system proved to be successful and became regular practice for students in the secondary school. Because the system was so successful with the older children, it was replicated at primary level as the 'peer mentoring system'. The targets of the buddy system are students in Form 4 - aged between 14 to 15 years old - who are assigned as buddies for students who are in Form 1 - aged between 9 and 10 years old - with the aim of helping them integrate and adapt easier in their first year of Secondary School. The participation in the programme is on a voluntary basis and, every year, a high number of students look forward to participate. The practice is carried out on the school premises and students who are to become the 'buddies' - the older students - are trained and prepared for their role from when they are in Form 3. The Buddy System has helped to reduce bullying, and to ease the transition for students who would have moved from junior to the senior classes.

### **Together Against Bullying - Victim Support Malta (<http://victimsupport.org.mt/bullying/>)**

‘Together against bullying training package’ is a preventive tool developed as part of the broader ‘Together against bullying’ campaign. The aim is to enhance knowledge about bullying and promote best practices among teachers, parents and peers, through specialized training. Main activities involve presentations delivered to teachers, parents and students. They are both informative and interactive, and they use and promote the SWAP psycho-social strategy, an essential tool to empower those who are being bullied, as well as bystanders, to take control of the situation and seek support. Since April 2016 VSM has delivered talks and trainings for various summer schools, dance schools and football clubs, with the overall aim of raising awareness about bullying in and outside of school, and facilitating prevention.

### **BeSmartOnline! Project (<http://www.besmartonline.org.mt/>)**

BeSmartOnline! is a project financed through the European Union, coordinated by the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) in collaboration with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. Other partners: Kellimni.com, Secretariat for Catholic Education, Personal, Social and Career Development Unit, Cyber Crime Unit (Malta Police Force), University of Malta, AgenzijaZghazagh, Independent School Association. The main objective of this project is to raise awareness and educate children and teenagers, carers and educators, on safe use of the Internet. The project includes reporting facilities for internet abuse and support services for respective victims, mainly through AgenzijaAppogg. The activities carried out include training, talks and presentations to students and teachers regarding the safe use of the internet and the risks and consequences of cyber bullying.

## VIII. BEST PRACTICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### 8.1 I Am Not Scared Project<sup>14</sup>

The project is funded by the European Commission “Lifelong Learning” programme (KA1 Policy cooperation and innovation), aiming to identify the best European strategies to address and prevent the phenomenon violence. The platform “I’m not scared” provides access to:

- Review of publications related to school violence;
- Best practices for prevention and combating school bullying;
- Situational analysis of cases of school violence;
- National reports and transnational report on school violence;
- European strategy to combat school violence.

The project intends to identify the best European strategies to prevent and combat the bullying phenomenon. The purpose of the project is to involve vocational education teachers, directors, pupils, parents, counsellors and key policy makers in the field of education in a common reflection on the issue related to school violence.

The project is based on bottom-up approach for a transnational sharing of the dynamics that can cause the emerging and consolidating of the bullying phenomenon and of the most effective strategies to tackle it.

### 8.2 KiVa Program – Let’s Make It Together!

KiVa Programme is developed by the University “Turku”, Finland, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The effect of this programme is proven with multiple randomized controlled researches. In Finland, KiVa is a sought-after program: 90 % of all comprehensive schools in the country are registered KiVa schools and are implementing the program.

KiVa is an evidence-based program to prevent bullying and to tackle the cases of bullying effectively. The former is crucial but also the latter is important, as no prevention efforts will make bullying disappear once

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<sup>14</sup><http://iamnotscared.pixel-online.org/>

and for all; there need to be tools to be utilized when a case of bullying comes to light. The third aspect of KiVa is constant monitoring of the situation in one's school and the changes taking place over time; this is enabled by the online tools included in KiVa. These tools produce annual feedback for each school about their implementation of the program as well as the outcomes obtained.

KiVa includes both *universal* and *indicated actions*. The *universal actions*, such as the KiVa curriculum (student lessons and online games), are directed at all students and focus mainly on preventing bullying. The *indicated actions* are to be used when a bullying case has emerged. They are targeted specifically to the children and adolescents who have been involved in bullying as perpetrators or victims, as well as to several classmates who are challenged to support the victim; the aim is to put an end to bullying.

KiVa has three units of which Unit 1 and Unit 2 are currently available outside the borders of Finland. Unit 1 is designed for children of 6–9 years of age. Unit 2 is suitable for children of 10–12 years of age. Unit 3 is meant to be used after the middle school/lower secondary school transition. Currently, Unit 3 is only available in Finland. KiVa has licensed partners in many countries within and outside Europe. In Hungary, the program started in 2016 September, in 3 schools: Papkeszi Bocskai Primary School, Hungária Primary School of Kispeszt and Kelenvölgyi Primary School.

Results of the program:

“In Finland KiVa has been evaluated in a large randomized controlled trial including 117 intervention schools and 117 control schools. The program has been shown to reduce both self- and peer-reported bullying and victimization significantly. It influences multiple form of victimization, including verbal, relational, physical, and cyberbullying. In addition, positive effects on school liking, academic motivation and achievement have been reported. KiVa also reduces anxiety and depression and has a positive impact on students' perception of their peer climate. A remarkable 98% of victims involved in discussions with the schools' KiVa teams felt that their situation improved. Finally, Finnish data from more than 1000 schools that started the implementation of KiVa in fall 2009 showed that after the first year of implementation, both victimization and bullying had reduced significantly. KiVa is now being evaluated in several countries: the first international

studies from the Netherlands, Estonia, Italy, and Wales are emerging, showing that KiVa is effective outside of Finland as well.”<sup>15</sup>

### 8.3 Olweus Bullying Prevention Program - OBPP

The whole-school approach based on Dan Olweus’s anti-bullying model is considered to be the most significant ‘evidence-based’ prevention programs that has been running in Norway and in the United States for more than fifteen years now.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop. The program targets the school itself as a whole, the classes and the individual as well. On the school level, a coordination committee manages the project (principal, school psychologist, teacher, parent, student representative). All staff members receive the training in groups of 15, for 3 semesters. They are mentored by 2 trainers, supported by regular supervision and a handbook.

The specific actions required are split into three sections: Measures at the School e.g. Initial Questionnaire to determine the extent of the problem, School Conference, improved supervision especially during breaks and lunchtime, parent circles, etc.; Measures at the Class Level e.g. Class rules against bullying, regular class meetings, etc.; Measures at the Individual Level e.g. Serious talks with bullies, victims and parents, Help from 'neutral' students, discussion groups for parents of bullies and victims etc. Students targeted are between 6-15 years old but the program can be adjusted to include secondary school students up until the age of 18.

Project results include a decrease in bullying and antisocial behaviours by a stunning 50% and a better school climate overall where positive emotions and peer relations dominate.

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<sup>15</sup><http://www.kivaprogram.net/is-kiva-effective>

## 8.4 'One week without bullying'- Lithuania

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference of the European Anti-Bullying Network, Robertas Povilaitis, from Child Line Lithuania, said that around 26% of girls and 31% of boys in Lithuania were being bullied at school, which made Lithuania one of the European countries with the highest level of bullying. In order to reduce these high rates, in 2004 the **Child Line Ngo**(Vaiku Linija) has developed and implemented the Campaign **'Without Bullying'**, having as its goal to make the schools a safer place, without bullying and violence. This campaign involved action over the years including:

1. The creation and dissemination of **bracelets 'Without bullying'**.
2. **Cards showing famous people, in Lithuania who manifest their support for the campaign distributed in all schools.**
3. The publication of three books, on bullying for schools staff.

In 2010, the same NGO, Child Line, initiated the **'One Week Without Bullying'** project which takes place throughout the country and involves all the school communities and a large number of different stakeholders. The main aim is to promote friendly relationships through different activities supported by many partners such as local authorities, NGOs, the Swedish embassy and the Vilnius International Film Festival.<sup>16</sup> Thus, one of the biggest successes of the campaign is the fact that the event is followed by the entire society. All 60 municipalities, 1147 educational institutions - from kindergartens to universities – many organisations, government representatives, pupils, students, parents, school staffs, companies and celebrities take part and collaborate in this national campaign against bullying. For instance, this year, the President Dalia Grybauskaitė participated by visiting some schools and talking to students.

The event not only enjoys widespread national the participation but also welcomes foreign organisations and actors such as the Embassies of Norway and Sweden participate in, the programme, underlining the relevance of the anti-bullying campaign beyond Lithuania. In addition, close collaboration came about between the Child Line and the Swedish organization FRIENDS through the implementation of Swedish programmes in Lithuania.

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<sup>16</sup> '„The Anti-bullying week 2014“ in Lithuania', [[http://www.vaikulinija.lt/media/filer\\_public/8c/be/8cbef9dd-a3b5-4369-970b-ee965df2f36d/the\\_anti-bullying\\_week\\_2014.pdf](http://www.vaikulinija.lt/media/filer_public/8c/be/8cbef9dd-a3b5-4369-970b-ee965df2f36d/the_anti-bullying_week_2014.pdf)]



Some of the activities that took place since inauguration in 2010 were:

- **The creation of an anti-bullying website** (<http://www.bepatyciu.lt/>)

One of the main tools of the campaign and the Child Line itself is the website which hosts information gathered throughout all campaigns and disseminates information on bullying to the different actors, including victims, perpetrators, bystanders, parents, teachers and professionals.

The website is also used in order to promote the campaign and as a registration platform for different competitions and events, as well as to display content created as a result.

- **Extended working hours for The Children Line**

The Children Line, which is a specialised help line, is usually available for a limited time per week, however during 'One Week Without Bullying' is functioning every day. This allowed in the previous year to receive around 3380 calls only throughout that week.

- **Competition for students**

As direct victims, witnesses and perpetrators, children and students were involved in the project through competitions. In one of them, they were asked to relate their experience of bullying in a three minute audio or video recording uploaded on YouTube.

- **Production of various tools and outputs such as:**

- Production of **prevention films** some of them showing celebrities in order to increase their attraction, especially on social media.
- Publication of various **books** for use by teachers in class. For instance, in 2012, Child Line published "Cyberbullying and its Prevention", a manual on electronic bullying, with information and recommendations for children, parents and educational staff. One publication was issued in 2011 with the aim to provide answers to parents' questions "how can I help my child? Answers to parents' questions".
- Production of **free access leaflets**.

- Creation of **the online Museum of Bullying** which shows art themes related to bullying in art form and sets up a platform for fundraising.
- Production of **social actions** such as carnival parades (e.g. the friendship carnival on Vilnius).
- Production of **social advertisements** on radio, television and social media and posters displayed in many places. For instance, the social commercial “Mishandled Internet Space – like a weapon in the child’s hands”, created in 2014 by Child Line, was shown for two months in Lithuanian cinemas before adult movies and on national television in the evening.

## 8.5 Restorative approach – International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) works with a whole-school approach in various secondary schools in the United States, Asia and Europe. The program has helped very challenging schools improve their teaching and learning environment through restorative practices. Besides containing straightforward methods, it is rather a proactive approach based on the sense of community and responsibility, focusing on relationship building among students, staff and parents. It improves student behavior, reduces violence, conflict and bullying. IIRP provides a comprehensive two-year school implementation program. Experts of the institute help the school leadership and staff develop a customized plan based on their own needs, delivers onsite professional development and assists with evaluation. Everyone in the school staff is involved in implementation, which serves as a base for committed cooperation. Staff members are also trained as professional development instructors to ensure sustainability.

80% of restorative practices are proactive, so once the approach is implemented in the school culture, only 20% of the work needs to focus on reacting to incidents. According to the restorative approach, conflicts are regarded as possibilities for development and stabilization – provided they are treated with a future-oriented strategy.

When a conflict arises, the trained facilitator – a teacher (or student) identifies the people affected in the conflict; does a preparatory one-on-one meeting with the participants; then summons the conference. The victim and the offender can invite supporters if they wish (friends, family members etc.). The facilitator (teacher) sets the framework for the conference and they operate with a set of questions whose order is fixed; the order of speakers is fixed as well. All participants benefit from the free exchange of emotion that happens in a restorative conference or in a restorative circle. Offenders come face to face with their victims

and directly hear the impact of their actions so they gain understanding on the harm caused. Victims have a chance to tell offenders how they have been affected.

## 8.6 Shield My School

The 'Shield My School' self-evaluation tool is a component of the ISPCC Shield Campaign, which aims to protect children from bullying. The tool consists of ten statements, referred to throughout the document as Shield Statements. Each of these shield statements is based on international evidence in relation to the management of bullying. The series of questions that follow each shield statement reflect evidence informed practice that has been shown to have a positive impact on bullying.

The self-evaluation tool asks a group of teachers to consider a set of evidence informed statements and questions about their schools approach to bullying. The questions are designed to act as evidence informed prompts to the school to facilitate a self-assessment of where they are in relation to the statement and known evidence based approaches to bullying. The process encourages participants to reflect on their approach to bullying, to identify the aspects where they are strong and the areas they would like to improve upon. The self-evaluation tool includes an action plan for schools to record the outcome of their evaluation, their proposed actions, time frames and review schedule.

The self-reflection component enables schools to measure where they are in relation to meet the core elements of an evidence informed approach to bullying and the built-in evaluation focuses efforts towards acknowledging strengths and identifying areas for improvement.

The overall aim of the self-evaluation tool is to help schools identify how effective they are in dealing with, and reducing, incidences of bullying within the school and community environment. To be effective the self-evaluation tool relies on honesty and trust within the group and therefore individuals require a secure setting where difficulties can be raised and opinions challenged in a constructive manner. Within this safe group setting teachers are encouraged to consider their personal and combined approach to bullying, and

the systems they have in place within the school, while being mindful of the available evidence and best practice research.

## 8.7 The Siren Project - Social games for conflict Resolution based on natural interaction

The Siren Project was a European funded project implemented cross-nationally between 2010 and 2013, aimed at creating serious games which complement and support teachers in their efforts to educate young people how to understand and resolve conflict.

The researchers who took part in this project were from Greece, Denmark, Portugal, UK and the USA. They succeeded in producing a series of mini games that can automatically generate different scenarios that include different types of conflict to be resolved by the players, while also adapting to the maturity level of players, their cultural background and the intended learning outcome set by the teachers, who can use the system without any special technical training.

Two types of games were created through the project: Village Voices, a collaborative farm game similar to games available on social networks, and My Dream Theatre, a role-playing game in which the player is the director of a theatre, in charge of assigning roles to be carried out by non-playing characters, while attempting to resolve their conflict. The games are played through successive stages, each scenario gradually becoming more complex. The games also set several targets that are to be achieved and obstacles to be overcome and feature different methods that can be used. Scenarios and conflicts in the games vary according to the particular age group of the children, who would be between 10 to 14-years-old.

The games were tested in Greece, Portugal and UK and results indicated a positive impact on the children. After completing several sessions of Village Voices, they were found to have improved their conflict resolution skills; they managed to collaborate and to develop strategies among themselves in order to achieve a positive outcome in the virtual village life.

The games were developed through this project and the positive feedback they generated among the student and teacher population that participated in the pilot phase, proved that innovation can enhance the educational experience of students. Such games can be used as training tools for teaching students alternative conflict resolution skills in an attractive and exciting way that, at the same time is, not too complex for schools to implement.

The games can be used as part of the curriculum - for example the, driving PSCD lessons in the Maltese context – or as part of specific training organised outside the mainstream educational curriculum.

## 8.8 Violence in Schools Training Action (VISTA, 2004 - 2006)<sup>17</sup>

This project under the European Union Comenius 2 programme is implemented in partnership with another 5 European organizations and universities. The aim of the project is the preparation of teaching materials that address violence and peaceful conflict management for schools. The expected results include an electronic textbook (translated in Bulgarian) and book.

The VISTA project is a joint initiative based on the previous work on school violence (CONNECT, 2002). The training has been developed by experts with a different background in research, practice and training from variety of disciplines of sociology, psychology, education and criminology. The VISTA training is designed to benefit and inform not only the teachers and educators but also local education authorities, policy makers in Europe and the young people themselves.

The training resource addresses the issue of school violence through a whole school approach (WSA). The focus of the WSA is on both the school as a formal organisation (i.e., the institutional aspects of the school) and the school as a community (i.e., the informal relationships and networks). VISTA recommends that schools work through the WSA to help children, parents and teachers prevent violence in school and create an environment that promotes non-violent attitudes.

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<sup>17</sup><http://www.vista-europe.org/>

The VISTA training activities include:

- Information on current research and practice about violence reduction and prevention
- Needs analysis including preparation and planning, implementation, and review and evaluation
- Pupil and school self-audit, and strategies for improving the school and classroom climate
- Exercises on conflict resolution, mediation, restorative practice, peer support
- Exercises for integrating a WSA with political initiatives

The training kit consists of five modules:

1. Module A: Definition, Context and Knowledge of School Violence.
2. Module B: VISTA: A Whole School Approach (WSA).
3. Module C: Responsibilities and Rights.
4. Module D: Managing and Evaluating Change.
5. Module E: Preventative and Integrative Practice.

Each module includes from two to six units and implementation procedures. Moreover, they are available as open source (anyone can download any unit, even in different languages, without the need to pay a fee). This gives everyone access to be informed, to implement procedures and policies and to put the training materials into practice.

The VISTA programme provides efficient and effective perspectives which can easily be implemented in European schools.

## IX. SUMMARY AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

It can be seen that the issues of school violence and aggression are serious in all the three participating countries. The level of dealing with such problems differs however. Therefore we are going to provide here a short summary of the needs or gap areas of the three countries as it relates to our topic.

## Hungary

As we have seen from our report in Hungary there is no unified national approach for preventing and tackling bullying and aggression. In addition, we lack a regular measurement of the situation in schools. There is a pressing need for the clarification and definition of a common terminology to be included in the Public Education Act and a national strategy for action in the area. There should be a general shift from the punitive to the restorative approach and a continuous quest for finding the best pedagogical tools for tackling these issues. Teachers should receive relevant training pre-service and in-service as well. Awareness raising efforts should be nationwide and encompassing all stakeholders including parents. Cooperation of different types of stakeholders should be encouraged.

When implementing our programme we also have to take into consideration some general characteristics of the Hungarian school system such as the fact that teachers usually have low salaries but high workload and a „reform fatigue” from the often changing central policies that happened in the past decades. It is also important to note that in most schools there is still a Prussian style educational approach in place which puts the teacher in the centre, expects the children to be obedient and uses punitive measures to resolve conflicts.

In order to achieve our goals, we believe we are going to have to build up our model programme from the foundation. We are anticipating the following needs:

- Drawing an exact map of the scale and specificities of the problem in the school
- Raising awareness of school staff as well as other stakeholders
- Investing enough energy into creating buy in and maintaining motivation especially from the part of teachers and school leadership
- Creating a high quality and complex programme that includes tools for the development of organizational culture as well as social emotional learning of the participants
- Paying continuous attention to change management
- Taking adequate steps to ensure sustainability

## Bulgaria

The National Report on the current situation of school aggression and bullying in Bulgaria revealed that the country has an appropriate level of response to these specific issues concerning children and adolescents. On a state level one notices the political will to apply nation-wide measure to counteract bullying and aggressive behaviour by adopting a corresponding normative framework (e.g. the Mechanism to Combat School Bullying among Children and Students at School), which could be described as adequate enough to include both prevention and intervention measures. The issue with aggressive and/or bullying behaviour is also to be understood within the context of the overall strategy to prevent violence against children, which the country implements through its framework normative acts (e.g. the Child Protection Acts, annual National Programmes, etc.).

In the same time, the institutional framework is also quite advanced, including relevant state actors mandated to work towards prevention and interception of violence among or against children, i.e. the Ministry of Education with its Regional Inspectorates of Education, the State Agency for Child Protection, the Social Assistance Agency and its Child Protection Departments, specialised municipal departments and units among others). In addition, there is also a fairly well developed network of non-governmental organisations, which carry out prevention programmes, pilot innovative models and offer support at the level of intervention. Last but not least, school administrative and teaching staff, as the frontline professionals to confront bullying and aggression, also constitute a quite experienced structure and a key actor in prevention of aggression and bullying.

Bearing in mind that coordinated and targeted initiatives (both at policy and practices level) started taking place less than a decade ago, the overall system of measures to prevent aggression and bullying is at an earlier stage of its development. This fact calls for the need to streamline the efforts by all the stakeholders in order to achieve an effective and sustainable culture of tolerance and understanding at schools, and reach an environment that does not allow for aggression and bullying to arise in the first place.

The piloting phase of the model programme in Bulgaria is planned to take place in a secondary education school, which has already identified the need to develop and incorporate a system of preventive measures, as well as to enhance the already existing set of procedures to deal with incidents of aggressive



and bullying behaviour. Therefore, the model programme is seen as a valuable opportunity to strengthen the overall response to bullying in the pilot school.

At the level of **prevention**, potentially beneficial actions should include:

- Self-assessment tools for both teaching/non-teaching staff and students in order to assist them in evaluating the current situation of aggression and bullying, and existing capacity and resources to tackle the issue
- Capacity building programmes for teaching staff in order to achieve good understanding of the problem and its consequences by a wider network of adults
- Interactive and engaging, age-appropriate activities for all school grades, which could be easily organised and carried out by teachers during the so called “class hour”
- Innovative models for increased parental involvement in the school life

At the level of **intervention**, potentially beneficial practices should include:

- Introduction of restorative practices as a novel approach in contrast to the punitive measures currently applied
- Development of a peer mediation programme as an alternative way to reach a mutually beneficial solution to a challenging situation

Malta

Bearing in mind the different levels of intervention to tackle bullying, aggression and violence, one can easily state that Malta is fairly well advanced, as there are many initiatives with similar goals at different levels within the education system.

On one hand there is the top down approach managed by the Ministry for Education and Employment together with the PSCD curriculum which is already fully implemented already in the Education System, while on the other hand there are many project-based initiatives led by independent entities, civil society and even various governmental agencies. The list is comprehensive and not limited to these findings.

Throughout the consultation meetings carried out to gather data for this report and through feedback emerging from the questionnaires, a number of recommendations were identified. One outcome

of the consultation session with the Anti-Bullying Service was that initiatives by civil society are not always in line with the work of the unit; however, NGOs and other entities implementing projects related to bullying, aggression and violence in schools found it difficult to collaborate with the State schools and State services in view of insufficient access to information regarding their work are found. While this appears to be a common scenario where discrepancies are found between civil society and governmental services, it also demonstrates that interest in this subject is high on both sides, and better communication channels and opportunities for collaboration would have a positive impact in any initiative.

Another finding of this report is that national policy implementation is not yet finalised and there can still be brought into discussion new elements such as a monitoring system for the implementation process and better delineation of responsibilities among all stakeholders. A model programme could complement policy implementation and the work carried out through the Anti-Bullying Service, by:

- introducing innovative practices and consolidating existing practices such as restorative justice;
- targeting stakeholders that are not sufficiently involved at present, such as parents and the community, which prevents the implementation of a whole school approach;
- implementing a self-measurement system for the schools themselves to evaluate the level of bullying, violence and aggression;
- performing of activities without a direct focus on negative behaviour but, rather, which promote friendship and a positive approach to problem solving;
- enhancing relevant training resources to teach restorative justice and conflict resolution skills;
- creating a synergy between different stakeholders that are working closely within the same student community, in order to prevent conflicting initiatives as well as maximise results.

Although the three countries are not at the same level with tackling school aggression and bullying, the ASAP partnership has to create a model programme in a way that it is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of all the partners. There are some features identified across different models or intervention programmes developed over time and these have been well described by Peter K. Smith, Debra Pepler, and Ken Rigby in their publication 'Bullying in schools: how successful can interventions be?'. These are:

- Adopting a whole school approach, which requires co-ordinated actions among different stakeholders.

- Developing a school policy, which usually includes a definition of terms and types of anti-social behaviours and the actions which are to be taken when they occur: procedures and guidelines for teachers and staff, designation of roles.
- Relevant training for teachers and school staff on bullying or similar behaviour.
- Tools to measure the prevalence of the unwanted behaviour which is targeted through the programme.
- Preventative and interventional procedures – such as creating a positive environment in the classroom and the school.
- Inclusion of certain lessons and training in the school curriculum such as assertive communication, the behaviour of bystanders and its impact, conflict resolution.
- Surveillance and monitoring students' behaviour when not in class.
- Peer mentoring or peer mediation.
- Defined procedures to be used when dealing with bullying or other anti-social and unwanted behaviour, such as the no blame approach, restorative justice, well established penalties against perpetrators – zero tolerance or a punitive approach.

The model programme for the ASA Partnership will include these features, and will be designed as a set of tools which address both awareness raising and interventions in cases of aggression, bullying, violence or conflict behaviour. This will give the schools or implementers the flexibility to choose from different elements in order to build a suitable strategy and pilot programme in a given school environment. We also consider important to mention here that we believe the quality of implementation is essential from the point of view of the success of our project. We are conscious of the complexity of the task and plan to combine project management and change management tools for the effectiveness and sustainability of our programme.

## XI. APPENDIX

Mechanism to Combat School Bullying among Children and Students at School	
Name of the organization	Ministry of Education

Homepage	<a href="http://www.mon.bg/">http://www.mon.bg/</a>
Who is targeted	children, students, parents, school staff, whole school approach
Where is the location	Bulgaria
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, violence
Main activities	<p>Evaluation of the problem</p> <p>Definition of the elements of school competence</p> <p>Creation of a school coordination council to deal with violence</p> <p>Activities at class level</p> <p>Activities at school level:</p> <p>Introducing a safety network – Rules for the obligations of all employees regarding the topic, involvement of parents</p> <p>Establishing clear procedures in cases that are specific to each school, district or community</p> <p>Elaborating an annual overall policy on school violence</p> <p>Formulating and implementing strategies in situations of bullying behaviour</p>
How long does it take to adapt	The Mechanism is easy to adapt. In the Bulgarian case it was elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Science together with other stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Mechanism serves as a guidebook for the teachers and school staff in combating and tackling different forms of aggressive behaviour in the school.
Main outcomes	<p>On a national level:</p> <p>Comprehensive policy document regulating the issue, i.e. nation-wide coverage</p> <p>Clear and state-approved (i.e. mandatory for each school) guidelines how to tackle/prevent the problem</p> <p>On a school level:</p>

	<p>Annual school policy against school violence</p> <p>Guidelines on how to tackle bullying and violence in school</p> <p>Survey questionnaire for teachers and students in schools</p>
Main challenges	<p>In order to be implemented effectively and mitigate any challenges, the Mechanisms requires:</p> <p>Regular training and support of school staff directly involved in the implementation of the Mechanism</p> <p>Regular monitoring and evaluation of its implementation</p> <p>Exchange of good practices and initiatives implemented by the schools</p>
Capacity needs	<p>The Mechanism provides the basic information and guidance on how to tackle bullying and violence in schools. Therefore, the staff involved in the implementation includes:</p> <p>School administration</p> <p>Teaching and non-teaching professionals</p> <p>School psychologist</p> <p>The Mechanism also provides for the involvement of external experts when circumstances require such an intervention, i.e.</p> <p>Social workers (e.g. from Child Protection Department)</p> <p>Education experts (e.g. from Regional Inspectorate of Education)</p> <p>Parents</p>
Resource needs	n/a
Adaptation possibilities	It can be easily adapted to different conditions and national situations by adjusting its content in accordance to the needs of the school system in the particular country.
Contact person	Ms.Milena Damyanova
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School Free of Violence Project	
Name of the organization (who is hosting this practice)	<b>UNICEF Bulgaria</b>  <b>Association of Bulgarian Psychologists</b>  <b>State Agency for Child Protection</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://www.psychology-bg.org/antibullying/">http://www.psychology-bg.org/antibullying/</a>
Who is targeted	students, teachers, entire school community, parents
Where is the location	Bulgaria
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, cyber bullying, conflict, violence
Main activities	<p>The main project goal is to support for prevention of harassment among children in schools and establishment of a safe and supportive school environment.</p> <p>School policy for action against violence and harassment in school is adopted.</p> <p>Independent surveys among students, parents and teachers conducted by the centre show that the school is a safe place for children.</p> <p>Implementation of social workshops for 1-7 grades on an annual basis.</p> <p>Parents and local community are involved in the process. Organization of at least two parents' meetings and one public school event devoted to violence prevention.</p> <p>Parents and teachers cooperate while implementing the activities.</p> <p>Cooperation with social service centres, police, and non-governmental organizations working with children is established.</p> <p>Membership in the "School without violence" national network.</p>

How long does it take to adapt	
Main outcomes	The proposed good practice is considered quite interesting due to its very well organized character, the fact that it encompassed a number of schools and young children – even starting at 1st grade. The project could be continued with involvement of schools throughout the country. The project provides a number of guide-books, brochures and informative materials, which can be consulted by different kinds of users. All materials are available in a user-friendly format online pages.
Main challenges	
Capacity needs	
Resource needs	
Adaptation possibilities	
Contact person	<a href="http://www.psychology-bg.org/antibullying/">http://www.psychology-bg.org/antibullying/</a> Ivan Igov, Plamen Dimitrov
Phone number, E-mail address	<a href="mailto:igoff@abv.bg">igoff@abv.bg</a> , <a href="mailto:office@psychology-bg.org">office@psychology-bg.org</a>

All children Have Rights. Everyone Can Help.	
Name of the organization	<b>UNICEF Bulgaria</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://www.unicef.bg/">http://www.unicef.bg/</a>
Who is targeted	children, students, young people
Where is the location	Bulgaria
What is the main context	child rights, awareness raising
Main activities	The campaign was launched on 20 November - the day of the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.  Through an extensive media campaign, the whole society to be

	<p>prompted to think about the rights of the child as something requiring special attention and consideration, and to convince that everyone has responsibility to the children of Bulgaria</p> <p>Each child received a small booklet with adapted text, including all 40 articles of the Convention.</p> <p>An awareness raising campaign realised with the special participation and support of Dimitar Berbatov, Bulgarian soccer player, Goodwill Ambassador of UNICEF for Bulgaria.</p> <p>Within the campaign different Bulgarian celebrities visited schools in the country and presented to the children the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
How long does it take to adapt	This good practice can be adapted easily in a matter of few months up to a year.
Main outcomes	<p>Awareness raising on a national level</p> <p>Printed materials</p> <p>Promotion in schools</p>
Main challenges	<p>Involving famous people who are considered role models by children and young people;</p> <p>Involving “Goodwill ambassadors” on a long-term basis</p>
Capacity needs	<p>Socially engaged PR/Advertising company</p> <p>Professional staff</p>
Resource needs	<p>Financial resources</p> <p>Good relations with the media</p>
Adaptation possibilities	It can be easily adapted to different conditions and national situations.
Contact person	
Phone number, E-mail address	+359 2 96 96 208



National Helpline for Children	
Name of the organization	<b>UNICEF Bulgaria</b>  <b>"Centre Nadya" Foundation</b>  <b>Association Animus Foundation</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://animusassociation.org/en/bulgarian-national-help-line-for-children/">http://animusassociation.org/en/bulgarian-national-help-line-for-children/</a>
Who is targeted	children, students, teachers, parents, community
Where is the location	Bulgaria, nation-wide
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, cyber bullying, conflict, violence
Main activities	<p>24-hour hotline for children: 0800 19 100 "Talk to a friend" (changed to 116 111 - European number)</p> <p>Hotline consultants provide crisis intervention, support, counselling</p> <p>Hotline provides safe space for children in need/at risk to discuss their concerns and problems</p>
How long does it take to adapt	
Main outcomes	<p>Nation-wide, free of charge, confidential hotline targeting children and young people only</p> <p>Professional support and counselling provided in cases of emergency calls</p> <p>First contact point for children in need/children at risk and adequate referral to the most adequate support service in the city/community of the child</p> <p>Opportunity for early prevention of harmful incidents and violence</p>

	<p>against children</p> <p>Opportunity for adequate intervention in cases of already ongoing harmful incidents and violence</p>
Main challenges	<p>Case-by-case nature of the practice, impact only on an individual level</p> <p>Difficult (if not impossible) to follow up the case</p>
Capacity needs	<p>Trained professionals (psychologists, social workers)</p> <p>Regular training and supervision (support) to hotline consultants</p>
Resource needs	<p>Long-term financial resources</p>
Adaptation possibilities	<p>The practice can be easily adapted and applied in the national context of another country.</p> <p>The practice is state-owned initiative, which enables its sustainability; however, the practice needs to be on the agenda of relevant state authorities in order to be implemented.</p>
Contact person	
Phone number, E-mail address	

Zippy's Friends – the Future Citizens of Bulgaria	
Name of the organization	<b>Animus Association Foundation</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://animusassociation.org/en/">http://animusassociation.org/en/</a>
Who is targeted	children between 5 and 7 years old
Where is the location	Bulgaria
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, social skills
Main activities	<p>A program promoting the mental health of children aged 5-7 was implemented in 14 pre-school groups and classes from schools and kindergartens in the city of Sofia;</p> <p>300 children participated in Zippy's Friends program. In 2015-2016</p>

	<p>school year the program continued in four new classes</p> <p>Study was conducted to assess the program's impact on children and on the climate in the classroom which will function as the basis of a report</p> <p>The program has six modules:</p> <p>Feelings</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Creating and relationship and breaking up relationship</p> <p>Conflict Resolution</p> <p>Dealing with change and loss</p> <p>"We deal"</p> <p>Zippy's Friends teaches young children to:</p> <p>Better coping strategies: Positive ways of coping with difficult and daily problems</p> <p>Better social skills: How to communicate better with others;</p> <p>The activities are taught by the class teacher.</p>
How long does it take to adapt	
Main outcomes	<p>New experience for Bulgaria Program for mental health promotion that does not set ready answers and encourages children to look for solutions, to learn how to recognize and control their emotions and participate in improving the emotional atmosphere in the class</p> <p>A change in terms of the children's activity - to express themselves, to express an opinion</p>

	<p>The teachers acquire psychological skills to enable and encourage children to find their own ways to cope in difficult situations</p> <p>Children exercise to choose solutions that not only help them, but do not interfere with others and communicate without stress</p>
Main challenges	
Capacity needs	
Resource needs	
Adaptation possibilities	
Contact person	
Phone number, E-mail address	<p>animus@animusassociation.org</p> <p>+359 2 983 52 05</p>

Train me and pay it forward – conflict solving and prevention of conflicts	
Name of the organization	<b>Equilibrium Bulgaria and Complex for social services for children and families, the town of Rousse (CSSKF)</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://eq-bg.org/bg/">http://eq-bg.org/bg/</a>
Who is targeted	parents, students, young People
Where is the location	Bulgaria, Rousse region
What is the main context	aggression, conflict management, violence, prevention
Main activities	CSSKF works actively for prevention of violence and aggression and conflict resolution through conducting the following kinds of activities with children and parents:

	<p>training courses;</p> <p>scout camps,</p> <p>participation in the club “I win – you win”,</p> <p>conducting regular meetings with the resource group /pedagogic advisors and psychologists from the schools in Rousse/</p> <p>accentuating on the topic of violence in its different expressions;</p> <p>discussing and exchanging experiences among teachers participating in the group for parental support /parents of children with behavioural deviations/ on their opinions for the reasons and ways in which violence can be diminished.</p> <p>The campaign has two stages:</p> <p>dissemination of flyers, brochures and armbands around the city.</p> <p>“Mine – yours – ours: a shared right to safety”. The idea was to enter schools and other institutions in Rousse to demonstrate interactive workshops and launch a method of providing children with the personal skills needed to curb aggressive behaviour. About 150 children at the age of 9 to 18 took part in the events.</p>
How long does it take to adapt	<p>This good practice can be adapted easily in a matter of only few months.</p> <p>The campaign could be adapted to different cultural contexts, taking some of the activities and practices and adding new applicable for the new context</p>
Main outcomes	<p>The practice leads to an active educational position on the problem of violence among children and youths:</p> <p>it provides opportunities for application of untraditional communication methods</p> <p>it provides information to the parents</p> <p>it creates opportunities for group work</p>

	<p>it supports both the parents and the children</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <p>Counselling</p> <p>Parent training/meetings</p> <p>Playground supervision</p> <p>Information for parents</p> <p>Cooperative group work</p> <p>Videos</p> <p>Peer support</p>
Main challenges	<p>The financial sustainability of the initiative.</p> <p>Another challenge relates to assessing the long-term impact of the initiatives (as no such component is part of the initiative itself).</p>
Capacity needs	Human resources (NGO professionals, trainers/facilitators, psychologist, youth workers)
Resource needs	<p>Adequate facilities for the meetings/sessions/trainings;</p> <p>Training materials;</p> <p>Audio-visual materials</p>
Adaptation possibilities	<p>Other organizations/institutions willing to multiply and adapt the practice;</p> <p>Presenting the used model by Equilibrium Bulgaria to any interested parties;</p> <p>Provision of funding/support of the activities by the organizations/institutions willing to multiply the model;</p> <p>Training to specialists;</p> <p>Support and methodical help provided by Equilibrium Bulgaria for the implementation of the activities;</p>

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Safenet /National Centre for Internet Safety/	
Name of the organization	<b>Applied Research and Communications Fund, Association Parents</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://www.safenet.bg/en/">http://www.safenet.bg/en/</a>
Who is targeted	students, children, young people
Where is the location	Bulgaria
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, cyber bullying, sexual abuse and exploitation of minors
Main activities	<p>The Bulgarian Safer Internet Centre works for the protection and empowerment of children and young people in Internet by:</p> <p>Awareness raising;</p> <p>Training;</p> <p>Consultations;</p> <p>Acting on reports from the public about online sexual abuse and exploitation of minors.</p> <p>The Safenet platform offers trainings for <b>students</b>:</p> <p>Cyberscout training programme (for 12-15 years olds);</p> <p>“Online risks and coping skills” (for 15-18 years olds);</p> <p>“Online risks and responsible behaviour” (for 12-16 year olds);</p> <p>“Safe on the street, safe online” workshop (for 9-11 year olds);</p> <p>“Be a friend online” workshop (for 9-11 year olds);</p>

	<p>“Who am I online” workshop (for 11-14 year olds);</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b></p> <p>“Prevention of virtual and real violence through interactive education in school”;</p> <p>“Empowering fathers, empowering children”</p> <p>“Children, parents and teachers against hate speech and discrimination.</p> <p><b>Parents:</b></p> <p>“Risks and opportunities online” (evening session for parents)</p>
How long does it take to adapt	
Main outcomes	<p>Hotline</p> <p>Awareness raising</p> <p>Prevention</p>
Main challenges	The guarantee of a sustainable funding for an online platform like this can be an issue
Capacity needs	Experts who are trained on how to deal with cases of
Resource needs	
Adaptation possibilities	
Contact person	
Phone number, E-mail address	<p>hotline@online.bg</p> <p>helpline@online.bg</p> <p>+359 2 973 300</p>

“Virtual and real violence – prevention through interactive school education”	
Name of the organization	Association “Parents” and Foundation “Applied research and



	<b>communications”</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://www.roditeli.org/">http://www.roditeli.org/</a>
Who is targeted	student, teacher, parents, community
Where is the location	Bulgaria
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, cyber bullying, conflict management, violence
Main activities  <i>maximum 1 page – focused on form, content/ method and structure of the activities</i>	<p>Elaboration of a methodical guidelines for educators with 25 modular lessons, which was reviewed by the Institute of psychology of BAS (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) and officially approved for usage in schools by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science.</p> <p>A training of 49 teachers – practitioners and students.</p> <p>10 schools – volunteers from Sofia – joined the implementation of the good initiative with educational and social effect</p> <p>The requesting and announcing of the lessons takes place through a dedicated internet-based platform. The automatic online system provides opportunities to the headmasters to secure very quickly a substitute teacher. The system accepts online orders from all schools for the availability of free lessons – for each class and hour. The next option is the sending of e-letters and SMS messages. After the acceptance of an order, the trained teachers select the most convenient school, class and hour. A class, which is already taken is immediately blocked for the respective teacher. The system also accepts online reports for the implemented courses in accordance with different indicators.</p> <p>The platform allows maximum flexibility and adaptability to the schedule of the teachers and immediate reaction with the appearance of a free class in school – the plague of modern secondary school. The teachers are being trained and supervised by the project team, which supports them to the maximum in their activities.</p> <p>The Centre continues to carry out trainings of teachers, psychologists</p>

	and school councillors to apply the methodology.
How long does it take to adapt	
Main outcomes	<p>Help-line/counselling</p> <p>Parent training/meetings</p> <p>Teacher training</p> <p>Student training</p>
Main challenges	
Capacity needs	
Resource needs	
Adaptation possibilities	The methodology is suitable for the prevention work with young persons, aged between 12 and 18 years.
Contact person	
Phone number, E-mail address	<p>+359 2 944 17 99</p> <p><a href="mailto:office@roditeli.org">office@roditeli.org</a></p>

Youth banks initiatives	
Name of the organization	<b>Youth banks, Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation</b>
Homepage	<a href="http://www.wcif-bg.org/index.php?lang=en">http://www.wcif-bg.org/index.php?lang=en</a>
Who is targeted	children, students, parents, the community
Where is the location	Bulgaria, various cities
What is the main context	aggression, bullying, violence
Main activities	<p>Informative meetings and discussions on the types of violence and the ways to overcome it;</p> <p>Overcoming aggression through sport - a campaign "It's not you, when</p>

	<p>you're rude";</p> <p>International Day against violence in schools (Day of pink shirt);</p> <p>Open lesson of self-defense, which included more than 100 students;</p> <p>Students - "ambassadors of peace" meeting more than 500 students</p> <p>The project started in November 2015 with the;</p> <p>Contest for a poster on the theme "Bullying stops here."</p> <p>Training of 24 volunteers, called "ambassadors of peace".</p> <p>Writing of poems, stories and drawings, expressing in a creative and unconventional an attitude to the problem with bullying at school</p> <p>Creative approaches to dealing with violence in schools</p>
How long does it take to adapt	<p>The initiatives are planned and implemented by the students themselves. In this case the Youth bank comes up with an idea and presents it to a local NGO that works on the topic. The forms of the initiatives are different depending on the need of the community and the interest of the children. If the micro project of the Youth bank is considered good, they receive funding for it.</p> <p>This good practice can be adapted easily in a matter of only few months up to one year, depending on the following factors:</p> <p>Is there an already established (formal/informal) group of children/young people? Have they already identified a common problem they would like to address?</p> <p>If yes, does the group has capacity to implement their initiative (i.e. skills, resources, support, etc.)</p>
Main outcomes	<p>Awareness raising</p> <p>Child participation</p> <p>Networking among schools and student bodies</p> <p>Outputs:</p>

	<p>School visits</p> <p>Facebook pages</p> <p>Promotion in schools</p> <p>Youth fairs</p>
Main challenges	<p>One of the main obstacles for the Youth banks is finding financial support for their initiatives. In this case the idea of the initiatives comes from the children but the funding is provided by a NGO.</p> <p>Another challenge relates to assessing the long-term impact of the initiatives (as no such component is part of the initiative itself) and the sustainability of the practice.</p>
Capacity needs	<p>Human resources (NGO professionals, experts with a specific area of expertise, teachers, parents)</p> <p>Volunteers (children, teachers, parents)</p>
Resource needs	<p>Depends on the initiative the Youth banks want to carry out</p> <p>Financial support</p>
Adaptation possibilities	<p>Youth banks exist in many countries. What can be done is that an NGO working on the topic with school violence can make a “call for proposals” targeting Youth banks in different cities and communities in the country and support the best ideas on the topic</p> <p>For more information: <a href="http://www.youthbankinternational.org/">http://www.youthbankinternational.org/</a></p>
Contact person	
Phone number, E-mail address	<a href="http://www.wcif-bg.org/index.php?lang=en">http://www.wcif-bg.org/index.php?lang=en</a>