

Against School Aggression Partnership (ASAP Collaboration)



School Aggression and Bullying

National Research Report Bulgaria

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

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 interactions 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 organisational 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 programmes 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 programmes, 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 organisations from Hungary, Bulgaria and Malta joined forces to launch a pilot project with the **aim of developing and testing a community based complex school programme for effective prevention and treatment of aggression and bullying, 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 bullying, school conflicts and decrease of aggressive and other risk-related behaviour.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research intends to carry out an initial assessment of the level and scope of aggressive behaviour and bullying in 6 pilot schools – one in Hungary, one in Bulgaria and 4 in Malta, which have expressed readiness to participate in the ASAP project and more importantly, to implement a model programme for prevention and effective management of incidents of bullying or aggressive behaviour. A starting point of this work is to examine the situation prior to the intervention, identifying the real dimensions of the problem and collecting the opinion of teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents.

More precisely, the study in the target schools aims at:

- examine the overall climate in the participating pilot schools in Hungary, Bulgaria and Malta;

- gather data on the prevalence and different forms of aggression and bullying in the schools;
- identify the level of awareness of teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents towards the problems at hand;
- examine the most common locations where incidents of aggression and bullying take place;
- gather data on the level of and mechanisms for reporting of such incidents at school level and how much are they being used by students, schools staff and parents;
- outline the level of preparedness and capacity of those involved to prevent or intervene effectively.

This initial phase of the research will serve as a baseline assessment and later will be complemented with an endline assessment as an attempt to capture the changes that will have occurred as a result of the implementation of the project.

In addition to evaluating the project's impact, the research will provide data to compare results related to the scope of the problem and the perception and attitude of key stakeholders at school level across different school settings in three different countries. Therefore, the results will be helpful to the administration of the participating schools in shaping an effective response to bullying and will inform the project partners in formulating evidence-based recommendations for policy improvement in the respective countries.

The proposed research methodology is designed to examine the variety of themes of interest to project partners and school administration. Thus the methodology designed by project partners can be promoted as an useful tool to other civil society organisations and teaching institutions, which have interest and need to assess the phenomena in detail.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Definitions

When it comes to concepts such as aggression, conflict or bullying, there are various definitions, however the ASAP project partners have decided to use concepts that are generally accepted by researchers and practitioners.

Aggressive behaviour

Aggressive behaviour is identifiable with negative actions, such as when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another. Under the generally accepted definition of aggressive behaviour: 'aggression is any behaviour enacted with the intention to harm another person who is motivated to avoid that harm'.¹ One characteristic of aggression might be the fact that it is an intentional behaviour and not accidental, as it is intended to hurt

¹ Wayne A Warburton and Craig A Anderson, 'Social Psychology of Aggression', *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, Volume 1, p. 373, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.24002-6>

another person. By the fact that there are more than one people involved it also becomes a social behaviour.²

Types of aggressive behaviour:

- physical aggression, i.e. hitting, biting, kicking, stabbing;
- verbal aggression, i.e. screaming, yelling, swearing, name calling;
- relational aggression, i.e. when the behaviour is targeting another's person reputation or relationships
- direct aggression, i.e. when the targeted person is physically present
- indirect aggression, i.e. when the targeted person is not present
- active aggression, i.e. when the aggressor responds in a hurtful manner
- passive aggression, i.e. when the aggressor fails to respond in a positive manner such as intentionally not delivering an important message to the targeted person and withholding information
- displaced aggression, i.e. when a substitute target becomes the target of aggressive behaviour³

Bullying behaviour

The most widely accepted definition for bullying behaviour is the one coined by Dan Olweus who is also the creator of the first prevention programme, Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme, in Norway. The definition proposed revolves around three characteristics, which delimitates bullying behaviour from other negative or unwanted behaviour: 'a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time (1), to negative actions on the part of one or more other students (2)'⁴ and there is an imbalance of power between the actors involved (3).⁵

Negative actions, such as when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another, fall under what was previously mentioned as aggressive behaviour. Thus, bullying can be considered as aggressive behaviour, but it is also repeated over time and there is an imbalance of power between the persons involved.

As there are different categories of aggressive behaviour, bullying also can be classified in different types, however it happens often that an incident can be a case of verbal, physical or sexual bullying at the same time.

Types of bullying

a/ Direct and indirect bullying

Direct bullying – bullying behaviour which involves a face to face interaction with the target.

² Brad J. Bushman and L. Rowell Huesmann, 'Aggression', *Handbook of Social Psychology*, 2010, DOI: 10.1002/9780470561119.socpsy002023

³ Johnie J. Allen and Craig A. Anderson, *Aggression and Violence: Definitions and Distinctions*, p. 11, <https://public.psych.iastate.edu/caa/abstracts/2015-2019/16AA.pdf>

⁴ Dan Olweus, 'Bullying at School What We Know and What We Can Do', (Oxford:Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1993), p 9.

⁵ The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, 'Research Study on Violence, Harassment and Bullying in Schools A qualitative perspective', 2016, p. 11. <http://victimsupport.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Report-Violence-Schools.pdf>

Indirect bullying – bullying behaviour when there is manipulation of social relationships to hurt (gossiping, spreading rumours) or exclude the individual being victimized.⁶

b/ Types of bullying behaviours

- Physical bullying includes any physical act, which results in hurting or injuring the target or any of his possessions⁷
- Verbal bullying occurs when the use of rumours, name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation and racist remarks are involved⁸
- Cyber bullying are all the actions that are being conducted through the use of technology or social media, such as: flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery or cyberstalking⁹
- Discriminatory bullying or racial and religious discrimination and sexual bullying. It is defined by Eshel Elimelech as a form of abuse and victimisation linked to disability, gender, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation that occurs repeatedly in the course of time by one or more companions. This definition encompasses as an umbrella term types of bullying that are referred to as either religious and racial discrimination or sexual bullying which happens when 'sexuality or gender is used as a weapon by boys or girls towards other boys or girls'¹⁰

3.2. Thematic areas

Based on the objectives of the research several important themes related to bullying and aggression have been identified and considered important to assess within the research framework, namely:

School climate

- What is the quality of relationships in the school? Does the school respect differences with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, religion etc.?
- Is the school environment perceived as positive and stimulating for both teachers and students?
- Do parents perceive the school as a safe place for their children?
- Do parents feel that their child is respected and valued at school?
- Do students feel safe at school?
- Do students feel respected and valued by adults at school?
- Do students feel respected and valued by other students at school?

⁶ Wendy Craig¹, Yossi Harel-Fisch, Haya Fogel-Grinvald, Suzanne Dostaler¹ et.al., 'A cross-national profile of bullying and victimization among adolescents in 40 countries', International Journal for Public Health 54 (2009), p. 217, DOI 10.1007/s00038-009-5413-9

⁷ The Ministry for Education and Employment, 'Addressing Bullying Behaviour in schools' policy, 2014, p. 12

⁸ *ibid*, p. 12

⁹ Nancy Willard, 'Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats', Center for Safe and Responsible Use of the Internet, p. 2, <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/School-Safety/Safe-and-Supportive-Learning/Anti-Harassment-Intimidation-and-Bullying-Resource/Educator-s-Guide-Cyber-Safety.pdf.aspx>

¹⁰ The NSPCC working definition of Sexual Bullying, http://w1.qehs.net/moodle2/pluginfile.php/10744/mod_resource/content/1/Sexual%20bullying.pdf

- Are adults at school perceived as a role model for students in terms of respect, responsibility, cooperation etc.?
- Are there positive and mutually beneficial conflict resolution models that are encouraged at school?

Awareness

- Can students recognise aggression and bullying when they happen? Do students understand that aggression and bullying are a problem?
- Do students understand if their teachers are aware that bullying occurs at school?
- Are parents aware of aggression and bullying faced by their children at school?
- Do parents, teaching and non-teaching staff understand why some students engage in aggressive and bullying behaviour and their impact and consequences on the students and school climate?
- Do students understand why some students engage in aggressive and bullying behaviour and their impact and consequences on the students and school climate?

Frequency, level and scope of aggressive behaviour and bullying

- Is there bullying, aggression and conflicts in the school?
- How often do such incidents concerning students take place?
- What are the forms of these behaviours?
- Where do these happen?
- Who is involved in these incidents?
- Are teachers target of aggressive behaviour at school?
- Are there bystanders and who are they? What are their reasons for not intervening?
- Where children are most vulnerable to aggressive and bullying behaviour at school?

Reporting

- Do students report cases of aggression or bullying to their teachers or other school staff? Who are the people students feel comfortable to speak about bullying?
- Do students inform their parents about cases of bullying at school?
- Does the school inform parents if their child is involved in bullying?
- Are there special occasions at school when teachers regularly discuss aggression and bullying with their students?

School support and response to bullying

- How are cases treated in the school after being reported?
- What is the way to intervene when adults at school witness bullying?
- Are teachers equipped with instruments and procedures to effectively address bullying incidents?
- Does the school use an anti-bullying policy?
- How do parents respond if their child is involved in bullying /in each situation as a victim, perpetrator or bystander/?
- How do parents respond if their child is a bully?
- Are parents satisfied by the measures the school takes to address and prevent bullying?
- Can students get support, if they are faced with aggression/bullying?
- Where do they get it from?
- Are bystanders encouraged to intervene when bullying incidents happen?

- Do teachers feel supported to act accordingly when they need to address incidents of bullying at school?
- Does the school have a way to support the victims and to work with perpetrators?

Capacity

- What are the school staff's needs in relation to aggression/bullying?
- What are the students' needs and expectations in relation to prevention of bullying?
- What support can be given to students who witness bullying behaviour at school?
- Do parents receive information or participate in school events that make them aware about aggression and bullying, diversity and intercultural communication?
- How parents can be encouraged to cooperate with the school in order to reduce the bullying behaviour?
- What positive models, policies and procedures of addressing the bullying behaviours do the schools implement already?

The questionnaires were common for all three countries and were administered in the pilot schools.

Each of these questionnaires have between 16 and 18 questions. In addition, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, child's grade, level of education and profession for adults' respondents are requested in the introductory part of the questionnaire. The questionnaire ends with an invitation to respondents to share additional comments, if they have any.

Most questions provide a multiple choice of answers and instruct the respondents to give one or, in some cases, more than one answer. A couple of open questions have been included in the questionnaire in order to provide the opportunity for free flowing answers and comments.

For a detailed overview of the three types of questionnaire refer to **Annex 1 and Annex 2**.

3.3. Research methodology

According to the rationale of the project the framework of the research includes a baseline and endline assessment in the target schools in Bulgaria, Hungary and Malta.

The **baseline assessment** aims to shed light on the existence and scope of bullying and aggression in the pilot schools by surveying the perception of students, teaching and non-teaching staff and parents. It provides valuable information regarding the occurrence and frequency of undesirable behaviour and incidents; looks into the capacity of those involved to intercept such incidents; and analyses their perception of the seriousness of the issue. On one hand, the baseline allows the pilot schools to become aware of the exact dimensions of bullying and aggression and on the other hand, it provides project partners with a clear picture of the starting point for the implementation of the Model programme.

Once prevention and interception measures have taken place in the schools within the project framework, the **end-line assessment** helps evaluate the changes in the themes identified under the baseline and additionally, it helps assess the effectiveness of the model programme.

3.3.1. Baseline research

According to the description of the project, the research should attempt to encompass 2500 respondents (teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents) in the pilot schools, i.e. 1200 respondents in Hungary, 305 respondents in Bulgaria and 1000 respondents in Malta.

Table 2. Research Sample

	Hungary	Bulgaria	Malta	
Total N of teaching and non-teaching staff	109	28	214	351
Total N of students	566	203	603	1372
Total N of parents	290	15	299	604
Total N of respondents	974	246	1116	2327

Reaching the total number of respondents described in the project corresponds to the overall objective of the research, i.e. assessment of the level and scope of aggressive behaviour and bullying in 6 pilot schools in Hungary (one institution with 3 sub-schools) with , Bulgaria (one school) and Malta (4 schools).

The research intends to address a supplementary objective, which is to evaluate the impact of the specific interventions that have taken place in the framework of the project. In order to do this, project partners should consider the changing size and composition of the research sample, specifically regarding the student and parents. Therefore, project partners and pilot schools should ensure that there is a set group of respondents available both for the pre- and the post-intervention assessment in order to allow for a comparison and evaluation of the project's impact.

Data collection

The methodology of the research encompasses a questionnaire data collection. The entire baseline research consisted of three questionnaires (see Annex 1 and 2): one for students, one for parents, and one for teaching and non-teaching staff. The questionnaires were developed by the partners research team in English. The students', teachers and parents' questionnaires were subsequently translated into Bulgarian. The questionnaire was piloted with 20 respondents, the results discussed among ASAP partners and then the final version was prepared.

The questionnaires were delivered as hard copies by the request of the school administration. The PBF researchers worked with the school to deliver the questionnaires' among students, parents and teachers. The school psychologists and the school administration facilitated the process. Students were given the questionnaires for their parents in envelopes and were asked to take them home and return them within a week.

The questionnaires were developed via QuickSurvey technology and each questionnaire was manually introduced to the electronic platform by the PBF staff. Even though the platform was not used for data collection it provided useful way for data analysis.

Ethical standards

The administration of the questionnaire among students and adult was based on **Ethical standards** and with the necessary sensitivity. The questionnaires were delivered for anonymous filling among children and adults, and did not contain names or other personal traits, which might make surveyed individuals identifiable in the research reports.¹¹ In addition, parents' consent form was prepared and delivered before the administration of the questionnaire.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1.1 Demographic characteristics

Teaching and non-teaching staff: 28 members of teaching and non-teaching school staff took part in the research which was conducted in 130 SOU Stefan Karadzha school in Bulgaria. Most of them are teachers. The director of the school as well as some other professionals – psychologist, nurse, social worker also responded to the questionnaire. Most of the adult school respondents are in age range 45-55 years old (42 %) and 19% are between 65 – 60. The range of subjects taught varies and includes Chemistry, History, Geography, Music, Philosophy, Mathematics, and other. Only two respondents (7%) are male.

Students: 203 students took part in the research. The majority of them (75 students - 35%) are 11 years-old, followed by 13 year-old students (13%). The other ones are almost evenly distributed in the range between 12-18 years. Boys and girls are represented in the research with 52% and 48% respectively.

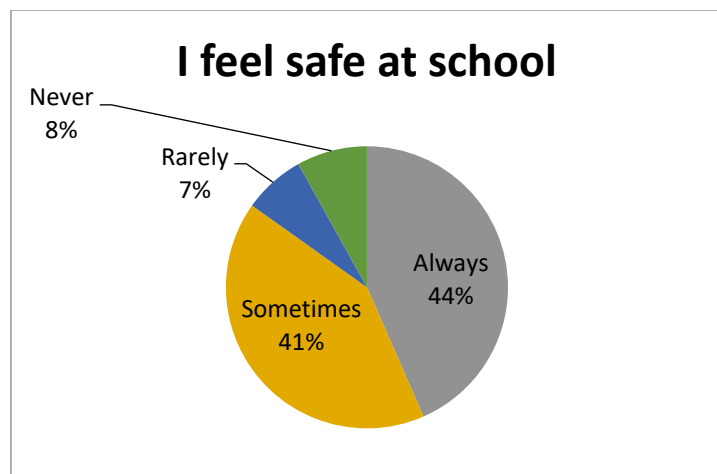
Parents: 15 parents took part in the research, the bigger part of them being in the 36-40 year-old range (47%). Only one male parent responded to the questionnaire. Most parents have their children in the fourth grade (53%), followed by the parents of students in the seventh grade (20 %). Parents practice different professions, among which driver, teacher, cook, salesmen, interpreter, nurse, scientist, consultant, doctor, etc.

4.1.2. School climate

The school environment is reported by students to be relatively safe. 43% of them state that they always feel safe and 41% point that they sometimes feel safe. There are students who never feel safe at school (8%) or only rarely feel safe (7%) which means 15% of all students experience uncertainty and worry about their safety at the place they get their education.

¹¹ Protection of the respondents' confidentiality, as well as ethical reaction in case of disclosure of sensitive information, is detailed in the **Ethical Code for conducting research with children. (See Annex 3)**

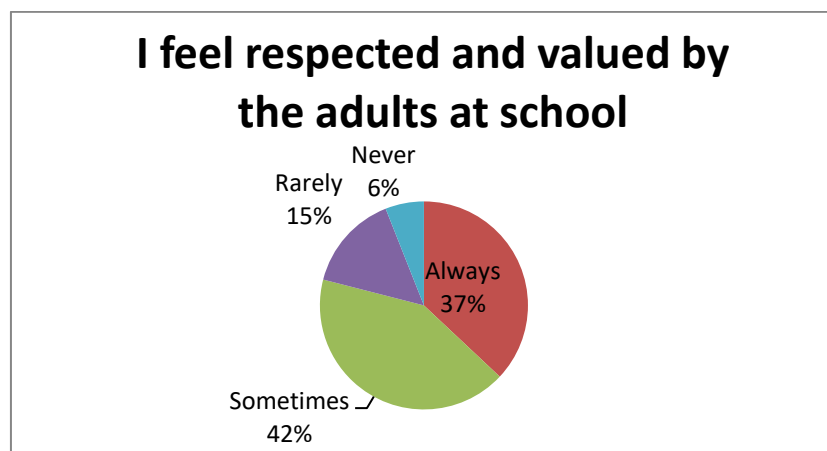
Students' perception of school safety



At the same time none of the parents who took part in the research reported their child never feels safe at school. Majority of parents, 53% stated their child always feels safe and the other 47% answered their child sometimes feel safe. The number of parents' respondents is too small to make conclusions but it is worth looking into the difference between parents and students perception of school safety.

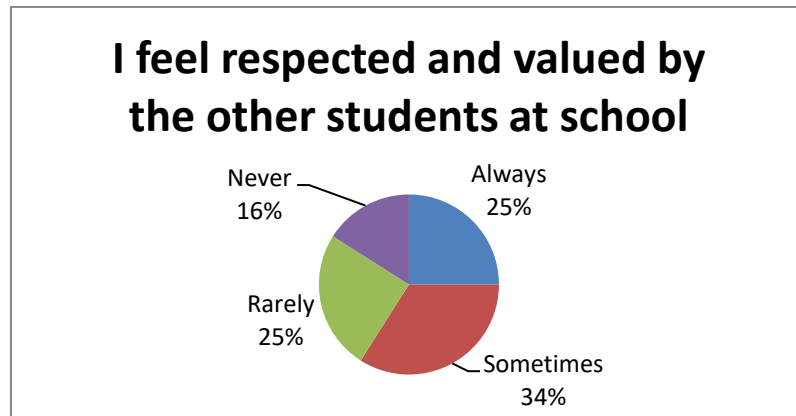
The overall opinion as regards **whether students feel respected by the adults at school** is positive. Most students responded positively: 37% of them stated they always feel respected and 42% "sometimes" feel respected by the adults. There were 16% of students who said they rarely feel respected by the adults at school while 6% said they never feel adults' respect. Again, there is a different report by the parents: all parents responded their child "always" (60%) or "sometimes" (40%) feels respected.

Students' perception of adults respect towards them



Regarding getting their classmates' respect and positive evaluation less students feel positive. Only 25% of students said they always feel respected by their peers, 69 (34%) said they sometimes do. Another 25 % point out "rarely" as an answer and 15% of students said they never feel respected or valued by their classmates. This shows that peer relations feel more problematic and tense at school.

Students' perception of their peers' respect towards them



Parents again responded more positively regarding their child feeling valued by his/her classmates. 47% of parents stated their child "always" feels respected and 40% point that their child "sometimes" feels respected. Two parents (13%) picked the child "rarely feels valued" answer.

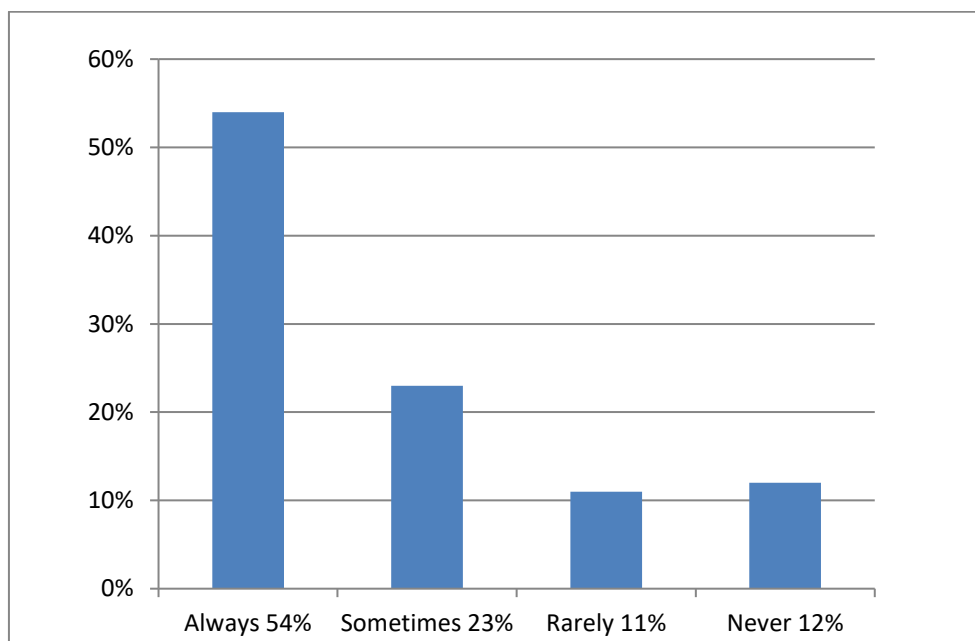
The teaching staff and non-teaching staff was asked if the school provides stimulating school environment. The answers show that the staff believes that the school environment is stimulating and encourages personal and professional development. 36% of teachers strongly agree with this statement while 50% agree. Only 14% of the school staff did not agree with this statement.

Do adults set a good example for students? The majority of the school staff 96% responded that they /the adults at school/ set good example in terms of respect, responsibility and cooperation. Only one person disagreed with this statement.

Teaching students in tolerance. Both parents and school staff perceive positively adults efforts to teach students to respect each other's differences with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Almost all parents (93%) said adults at school always teach the above-mentioned principles only 7% marked "sometimes" as an answer). All the teachers without exception were positive that they teach students in tolerance and respect to differences.

At the same time, students' perception to their school education in tolerance is quite different. While 54% of students answered with "strongly agree" to this statement and 23% answered with "agree", there were 33% of students who feel that this happens rare (11%) or never (12%). It is clear that there is a marginalized group of students that do not feel positive about the school environment and experience difficulty to adapt to it.

In my school adults teach us to respect each other's differences with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, etc.



Conflicts as a common part of human co-existence are important test about the ability of the school to manage differences and to peacefully resolve disputes. To check if the school is well equipped to deal with conflicts all respondents have been asked to agree or disagree with the statement that the adults encourage students to resolve disagreements or conflicts in a mutually beneficial way. This was another question where adults (parents and school staff) respond, without exceptions, in an affirmative way they all “strongly agree” or “agree” that adults encourage conflict resolution in a mutually beneficial way.

However, not all students share the same opinion as adults. Although a bigger part of them have answered positively (61% of them have picked the “always” answer and 22% - “sometimes”), still there is a number of students who feel that adults rarely (10%) or never (14; 7%) encourage students to resolve disagreements in a mutually beneficial way.

These differences in perception show that although adults are paying efforts to ensure a more secure and stable school environment by teaching tolerance, acceptance, constructive solving of disagreements between students, etc., there are students who feel unsafe and alienated from these efforts. This is an area which needs more exploration especially in terms of finding more adequate and efficient measures to engage students in question.

4.1.3. Awareness

There is plenty of evidence that students engage in aggressive and bullying behavior and one of the important issues is to recognize these forms of behavior, understand their motives and the function or students' needs behind these acts.

In order to explore the **reasons behind students' aggressive and bullying behavior** all respondents have been asked to evaluate different statements explaining such a behavior. There is a consensus between teachers, parents and students that the main reason for aggressive and bullying behavior is attracting others' attention, getting into the center of events and becoming known. 71% of students, 71% of teachers and 87% of parents agreed with this statement.

Others reasons, according to **parents**, ranked by their popularity are:

1. Attracting other's attention (87%)
2. Demonstration of power (60%);
3. Emotional and behavioral difficulties (47%);
4. Students observe similar behavior at home (40%);
5. Students witnessing similar behavior from TV and social media; (40%);
6. They think they are better than others (27%);
7. They have been victims of aggressive behaviour themselves (27%);
8. They can get what they want this way (20%).
9. They do not like those who are different (7%)
10. They discriminate against individuals based on their race (7%).
11. They discriminate against individuals based on their religion (7%).
12. They discriminate against individuals based on their nationality (7%).

It seems that parents are well aware about the function of the children's aggressive behavior as manifestation of their needs for attention, control, identity. They also understand that many children have emotional and behavioral difficulties which if not properly addressed may develop to destructive behavior that affects others and deepens child troubles leading at some point to isolation and exclusion.

Parents did not show awareness about incidents of aggression that include teachers or other adults. The question "Are you aware about other aggressive incidents at your child's school – for example involving adults" received only negative answers by parents. But more than half of the parents are aware that bullying behaviors do occur in their child's school (57%).

The way teachers' rank the reasons for bullying behavior is emphasizing the family influence. Their ranking is as follows:

1. Attracting other's attention (71%)
2. Students observe similar behavior at home (71%);
3. Emotional and behavioral difficulties (50%);
4. Students observe similar behavior from TV and social media (43%);
5. Demonstrate power (36%);
6. They do not like those who are different from them (29%);
7. They think they are better than others (25%);

8. They can get what they want this way (21%).
9. They have been victims of aggressive behaviour themselves (21%);
10. There is no specific reason (18%);
11. They discriminate against individuals based on their nationality (7%).
12. They discriminate against individuals based on their race (4%).

When asked “How often do teachers become aware of bullying behavior at school?” most teachers (75%) think that they almost always **become aware** about the aggressive behavior of students or about different incidents that involves aggression. Every fifth of teachers (21%) feel that they only “sometimes” know about the students incidents of aggression. One teacher said that he/she almost never become aware of students’ aggressive behavior at school.

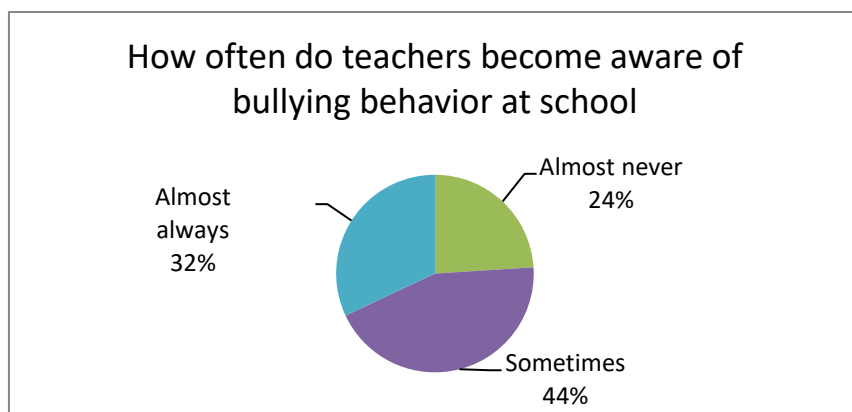
Students have different explanations about the reasons for aggressive and bullying behavior at school. While “attracting attention” is again the favorite answer among students, more than half of them perceive the bullying behavior of their peers a manifestation of superiority complex or bullies thinking that *they are better than others* (68%) and because they do not like those who are different (58%). Many students connect the bullies with their need to demonstrate power and control over the situations and on other students (57%). For many students bullying is a strategy to get what they want (38%). Some students complain that bullies discriminate others on the basis of ethnicity (30%). Some students also realize that those who behave as bullies may have been victims of aggressive behaviour themselves (29%), they constantly observe similar behavior at home (28%) or they witness aggressive behavior from TV and social media (25%).

The students ranking of reasons for aggressive and bullying behaviors are below:

1. Attracting other’s attention (71%)
2. They think they are better than others (68%);
3. They do not like those who are different (58%);
4. Demonstrate power (57%);
5. They can get what they want this way (38%);
6. They discriminate against individuals based on their race (30%);
7. They have been victims of aggressive behaviour themselves (29%);
8. Students observe similar behavior at home (28%);
9. Students observe similar behavior from TV and social media (25%).
10. Emotional and behavioral difficulties (23%);
11. They discriminate against individuals based on their religion (22%);
12. They discriminate against individuals based on their sexual orientation (17%).

When asked “How often do teachers become aware of bullying behavior at school?”, students answers divide as follows: most of them (44) believe that teachers only sometimes understand about bullying incidents at school; 32% of students think that teachers “almost always” know about the bullying incidents at school; and 24% are sure that teachers almost never become aware about the bullying incidents at school.

Students' perception about teachers' awareness of bullying behavior at school



Students believe that teachers understand about the bullying behavior mostly by the reports of other students witnessing the events (73%) or by the victim of bullying (66%). Almost half of students (47%) are positive that teachers themselves become witnesses of bullying. One third of students think that teachers receive information from other adult (33%) and one third of students (33%) believe that teachers are informed by parents. Other ways to get knowledge about bullying is “*when teachers see the wounds and bruises*” and when “*the perpetrator admits what he did*”.

4.1.4. Frequency, level and scope of aggressive behavior and bullying

Types and frequency of aggressive behaviour have been explored by a series of questions. The question: “Which of the following behaviours do you witness by students?” aims at collecting data about the most common manifestations of aggressive behaviour at school.

Staff report of frequency of bullying at school

	Towards other students				Towards a teacher				Towards non-teaching staff			
% answers	always	frequently	occasionally	never	always	frequently	occasionally	never	always	frequently	occasionally	never
a) calling someone bad names	4%	48%	48%	0%	0%	0%	61%	39%	0%	0%	61%	39%
b) making fun of someone	4%	42%	54%	0%	0%	0%	65%	35%	0%	0%	62%	38%
c) gossiping about someone	0%	24%	72%	4%	0%	0%	79%	31%	0%	0%	65%	35%
d) hitting or kicking someone	0%	23%	77%	0%	0%	0%	6%	94%	0%	0%	13%	87%
e) getting in a physical fight	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	0%	0%	7%	93%
f) fighting back when someone was hit first	22%	39%	39%	0%	0%	0%	7%	93%	0%	0%	7%	93%
g) encouraging someone to fight	0%	21%	58%	21%	0%	0%	7%	93%	0%	0%	7%	93%
h) acting passive aggressively	0%	32%	58%	10%	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	8%	92%

The **school teaching and non-teaching staff** believes that many of the types of aggressive behaviour does not happen frequently and in most cases never happen especially when teachers and administrative staff is concerned. The frequency is higher when verbal aggression among students is counted (calling someone bad names or making fun of someone). 39 % of teachers think that bullying happens frequently and 22% think that it happens always as a self-defence strategy when kids fight back when someone hit them first. The physical aggression such as getting in the physical fight or hitting or kicking others happens only occasionally according two thirds of teachers (75%). Students can occasionally encourage others to fight though according more than half of the teachers (58%). According to teachers, social bullying such as gossiping also occur rather occasionally according 72 % of teachers.

The staff is rather affirmative that witnessing students' bullying behavior towards teaching and non-teaching staff is not common or does not happen frequently. For most of them it “*never*” happens but there are some exceptions: 79% of school staff thinks that they are *occasionally* an object of gossiping; 65% report that students occasionally make fun of teachers and of school staff or call them names.

When asked about the reasons for aggressive behavior of students at school, most of the school staff (68%) points once again at the home environment. Next popular reasons mentioned by the school professionals are: students are attracting attention; they are suffering from emotional and behavioral difficulties; students' previous victimization and assuming the aggressive model; influence by TV and social media aggressive content.

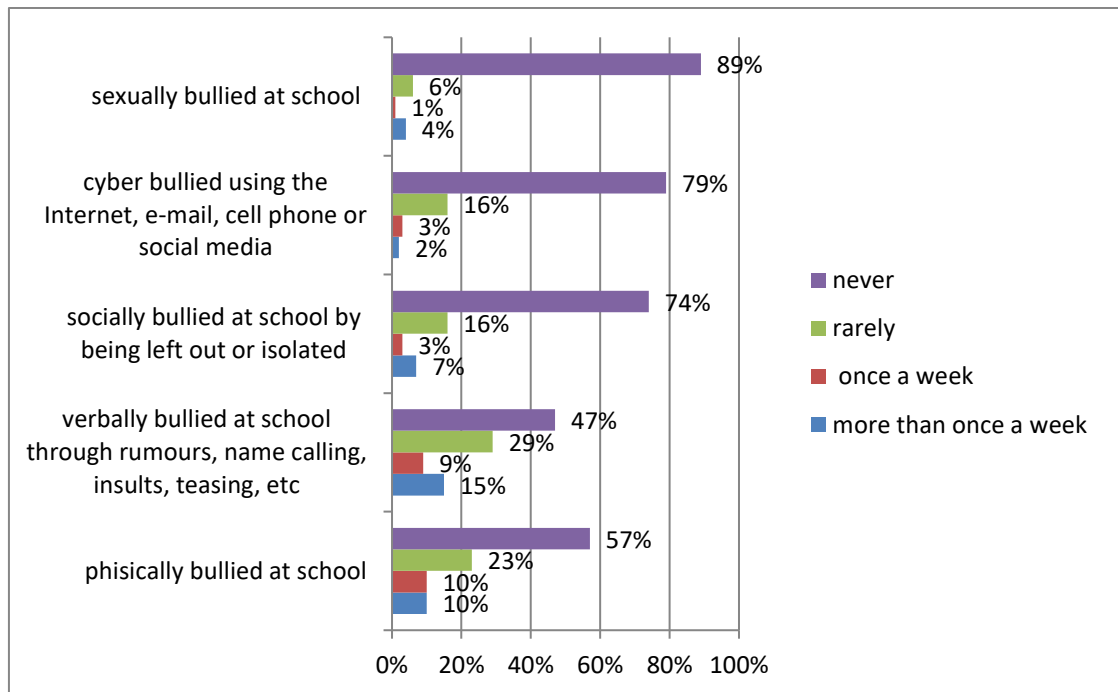
The school staff has also been asked if they have been a target of aggression from anyone in school during the last school year. Even though the majority of 58% state that they have not been object of aggression during the last year, some teachers experienced aggression towards them: 23% shared that they have been object of aggression from students and 19% shared that they experienced aggressive behavior from parents.

Witnessing of bullying. 57% of the schools staff admits that they have been personally witnessing bullying behavior of student towards another student. In terms of frequency, most teachers think that incidents of bullying happen rarely (71%), only 11% point out that these incidents happen more than once a week and 18% admit the incidents happen once a week.

When asked how often they believe the different types of bullying behavior occurs at their school the staff points out that the verbal bullying is the most spread and happens more than once a week (40%) or once a week (16%). Less respondents point that physical, social and cyber bullying happens more than once a week or at least once a week, most of them think that these forms of bullying happen rather rarely. The sexual bullying is considered as something that appears only rarely (40%) or never (60%).

Majority of **students** shared that they have never been victims of physical, social, cyber or sexual bullying. Regarding the verbal bullying less than half (47%) admit that they have not been bullied through rumours, name calling, insults, teasing etc. The reported incidents of bullying are most frequently related to verbal bullying but physical bullying is also significantly present. If the results are correct, the table below shows that for some students being bullied on a weekly basis is a permanent situation. These results correspond with the previous finding about a group of students who feel that the school is not a safe place for them.

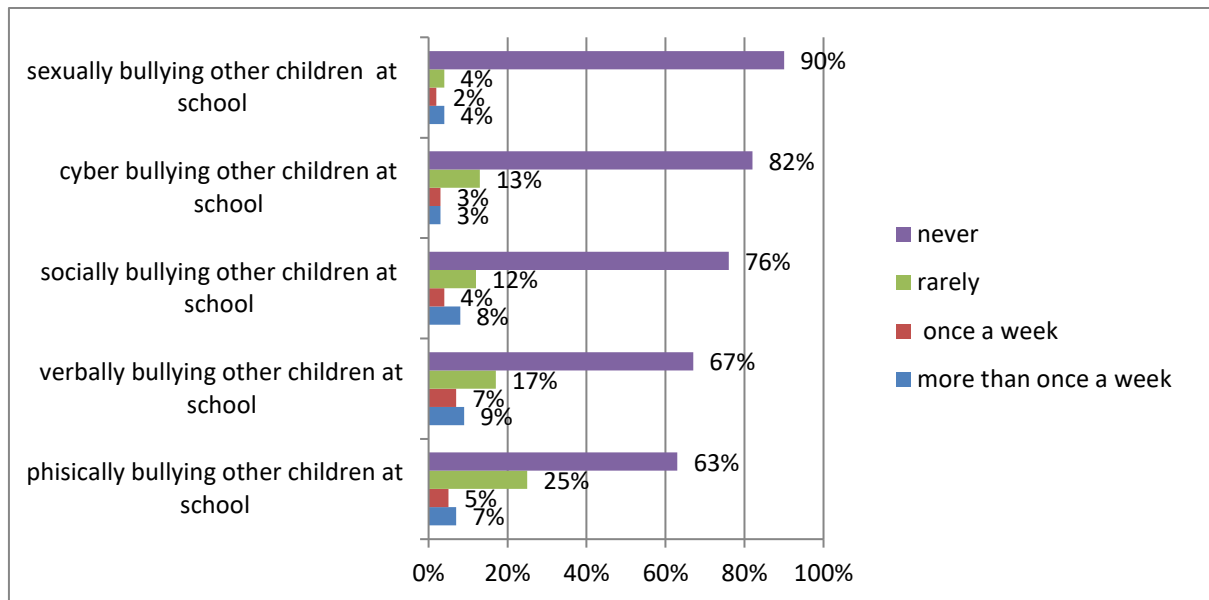
Students: In the last school year and this current year, have you been



Parents, who answered similar question about the frequency of their child being bullied at school, generally do not admit that their child has been bullied. It seems that the parents results are not corresponding with the results of the students because of the disproportionate small number of parents who took part in the research. Similarly, the parents group that took part in the research was 100% affirmative that their child never took part in any form of bullying behavior towards other students. This is confirmed by the answers of the question “Has your child been involved in bullying (as a perpetrator, victim or bystander)?” where 71% of parents answer negatively, 29% confirm that their child has seen someone else being bullied and no one admit that their child has been in a situation of a victim or a perpetrator. At the same time most parents feel that they are informed about the bullying situation at school. 80% of participating parents explain that their child do share information at home about bullying behavior of other students and most of them sometimes (27%) or rarely (33%) share that they have seen bullying behavior of other students at the school of their children. Only 14% of parents think that bullying never happens at their child’s school.

Another question to children explore if they have been involved in bullying behavior as perpetrators. The results bellow show that while 63% have never been in this role, the rest of them rarely or weekly have engaged in such activities.

Students: In the last school year and this current year, have you been part of



Where children are most vulnerable towards aggression and bullying at school? Parents, students and teachers have been asked to choose among several locations and answer whether students are never, occasionally, frequently, or all the time, bullied there. The classroom, the school yard, the school corridors and even the bathrooms can be places for aggression and bullying “sometimes “, according to majority **of teachers**. Those who feel that cases of bullying happen “often” point out locations such as the school yard (33%) and the corridors (33%).

Majority of students admit that bullying is present in their school life and associate it with places at school or outside school. For example, bullying happens in the classroom “always” for 8% of students; “often” – for 23%, “sometimes” for 48% and “never” for 21% of students. More students feel that bullying in the school yard and in the corridors happens “often” /37% and 30% respectively) or “always” (13% and 9% respectively).

Where children are most vulnerable towards aggression and bullying at school?

Teaching/non-teaching staff	Parents	Students
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social media 2. School yard 3. School corridor 4. Bathroom 5. Classroom 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom 2. Social media 3. Bathroom 4. School yard 5. Outside school /bus, school excursions/ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.School yard 2.School corridor 3.Social media 4.Classroom 5.Bathroom

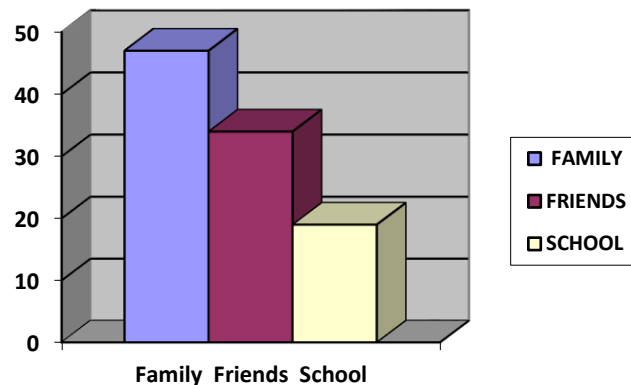
It is interesting to notice that the three groups have different perceptions where the aggressive and bullying behavior occurs most frequently. While most students point out that the school yard and the corridors are the most frequent places for bullying, parents feel that the classrooms are the places where bullying happen most frequently. On the other hand, most teachers agree that the social media tops the ranking while the classroom has a lower frequency and it is more under control. In any case all mentioned locations need attention and special measures to make them safer. The significance of cyber bullying has been emphasized by all groups so it seems that the existing measures to make internet safe for children are insufficient.

4.1.5. Reporting

The question “Is there anyone that you feel comfortable speaking to about bullying?” gave students possibility to freely list people they can turn to when experiencing or witnessing bullying. Most students who responded to this question have referred to their family (47%): their parents, mostly their mother, but also their father, grandmother, sister or other relatives. The second group of people students feels comfortable to talk to are their friends. 34% of students mentioned that they would talk to their friends /best friends, boyfriend, girlfriend, class friends/. Around one fifth of students (19%) point out that they talk to teachers, the school psychologist or the headmaster.

The results indicate that while majority of children do have support system at home or at school, a big part of them avoid sharing to adults and prefer to talk to friends. There were also a number of students (6%) who did not respond to this question and it may be a result of having nobody to comfortably speaking to or other reasons we cannot clarify at this point.

Where do students turn to when they are experiencing or witnessing bullying?

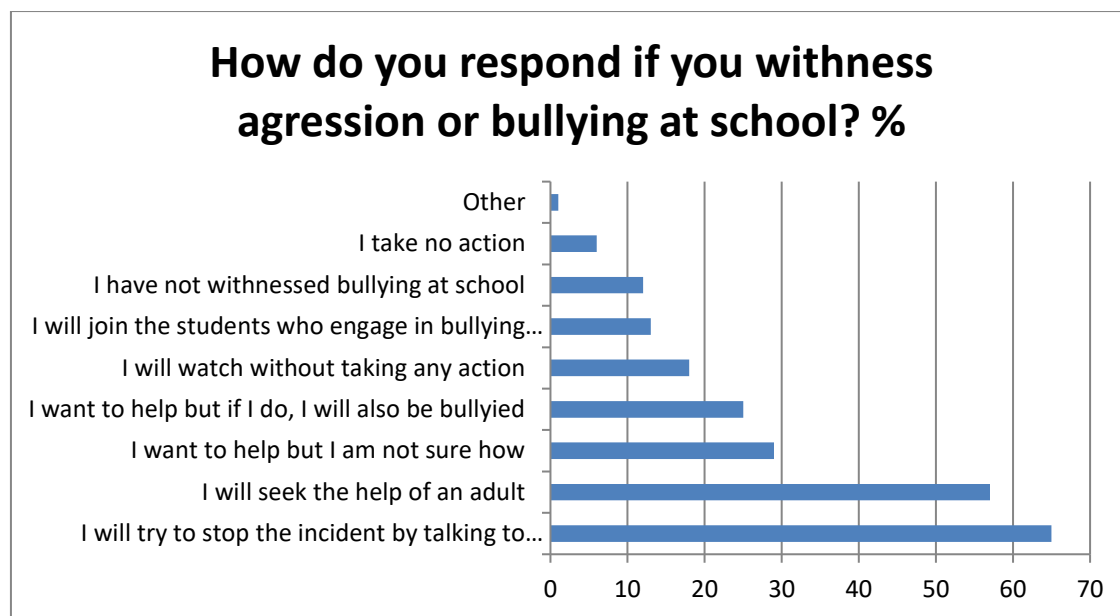


The low number of students pointing the school as a place to find support in case of bullying is a matter of concern and needs attention. Parents also do not feel well connected to the school, for example in case a child is involved in bullying incident, 75% of parents find information about that from their child and no one pointed that the school provides information to them.

4.1.6. School support and response to bullying

Students have been asked how they respond if they witness aggression or bullying behavior at school. Most students engage in active position by trying to stop the incident by talking to those involved (65%) or they seek help of an adult (57%). There is a substantial portion of bystanders who want to help but they are afraid that if they intervene they may also be bullied (25%). Others are not sure how to help and what to do (29%), and some observe without intervening (24%). Only 12 % share that they have not been witnessing any bullying at school. At the same time, it is striking that 13% (25 students) point that they would join the students engaged in bullying behavior.

Students 'response to bullying at school



All teachers, without exception, respond that they will act and stop bullying if they witness such an incident. The most popular ways teachers handle bullying are as follows:

- Stop what is happening and speak to the students involved (79%)
- Stop what is happening and contact parents (54%)
- Stop what is happening and inform the guidance teacher (50%)
- Stop what is happening and contact the headmaster (48%)
- Stop what is happening and contact the person responsible for handling bullying behavior at school (38%)
- Stop what is happening and let students know they will discuss this event later in a bigger circle. (18%)
- Stop what is happening and contact authorities outside school – police, social services (11%)

Only in rare cases teachers would contact authorities outside school – the police, social services (11%). It seems that most teachers feel confident to handle the situation themselves but informing parents and shearing the information with more senior or qualified colleagues is a common strategy. Small number of teachers (18%) acts by stopping what is happening and let students know they will discuss this event later in a bigger circle.

When the school teaching and non-teaching staff was asked how they would respond if a student shared with them that they have been bullied, the majority of teachers (71%) respond that they would inform the school administration (head master, deputy head master) or they would contact parents (64%). Still a big number of teachers (61%) state that they will take action themselves with students involved in the incident. It seems that many teachers are used to deal with cases of bullying themselves but at the same time they will inform parents and/or the school administration.

Teachers were also asked if they have witnessed bullying behaviour and addressed the situation, what would be their next step. According the answers, most teachers follow up the event and only 4% of them said that they leave it to dissipate. Teachers follow up the event with the students in question (85%), they follow up it with the school authorities (41%), with other school professionals (37%) or with relevant external institutions (11%).

Parents have not been very responsive to the question what their reaction is when their child has been involved in a bullying incident (as a victim or a perpetrator). Only a few answers point out that they would contact the guidance teacher to ask for help or they would contact the parents of the other child involved. Other parents said that they would deal with the case themselves by talking to their child and trying to figure out where the problem comes from.

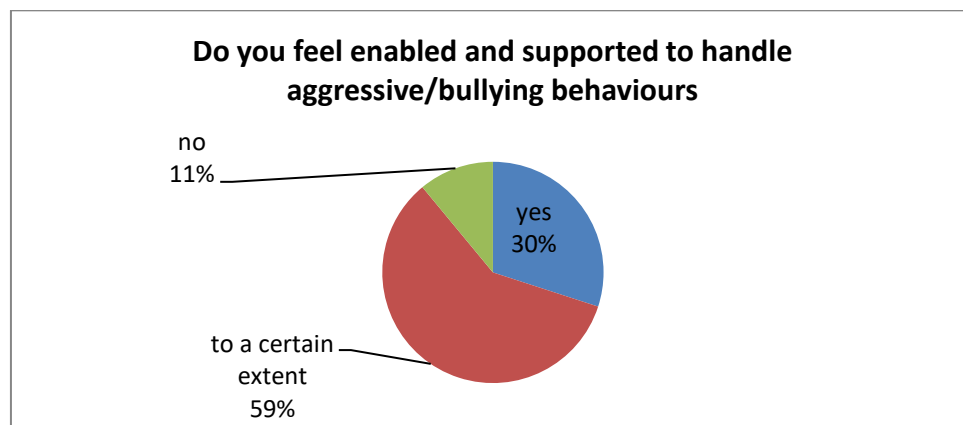
It is interesting to note that more than half of parents expect the school to handle the bullying behavior. 53% of parents believe that the school would act, e.g. the administration will be informed, the school psychologist will be involved or other measures in place will be implemented. At the same time 47% of parents do not know if the school will take any measures. Similar division between parents is related to their evaluation of measures to address bullying behavior implemented by the school: half of parents believe the measures are excellent (14%) or good (36%), the other half (50%) thinks the measures are satisfactory. Some of the latest suggested that more control over the entry regime at school (the building and the school yard) should be introduced. Others think that the reaction of the school staff is not immediate or timely and more attention should be paid to manifestation of bullying behaviors. In any case, a parent pointed that “many things can be done but it depend on cooperation between teachers and parents”.

4.1.6. Capacity

The 130 school St.Karadjap in accordance with the National Mechanism to Combat School Bullying, has annual plans to raise awareness, educate students about the problem of bullying, and decrease the number of violence and aggressive incidents through specific measures. According to 75% of teaching and non-teaching staff the school has official procedure to deal with aggressive and bullying behavior. There are teachers (11%) who claim that the procedure is not fully enforced and it is only partly implemented, while another 11% do not know about such procedures.

Most teachers (75%) confirm that they do have a special occasion when they discuss aggression/bullying or conflict with their students. They discuss these issues in the classroom especially during the so called “hours of the class” once a week giving the topic 30-40 minutes. Topics of discussion can be specific incidents of bullying, the risks of aggressive behavior and its consequences, human relationships, diversities and tolerance, how to react and where to find support when experience and witness bullying and others.

The teachers were asked if they feel enabled and supported to handle aggressive and bullying behavior. Positive answer gave 30% of teachers, 11% gave negative answer, while 59% felt that they are supported only to a certain extend.



Students have been asked write down what can help their class or school to reduce aggression and bullying and some of their answers included the following:

- To report to a teacher or to the headmaster. (2)
- More serious punishments. (8)
- To put cameras in school corridors, the yard, in the rooms. (2)
- To have conversations and discussions about these topics, including with parents. (15)
- To increase the role of the school psychologist. (4)
- The perpetrators to be suspended from school.
- To introduce responsible people in charge in the corridors who should monitor the students.

- Nothing can be done (6). A student explained that “even if a student stops bullying other students, sooner or later he picks up another one at school or bullies students outside school”.
- Some aggressive students need more attention and understanding in order to find the core of the problem.
- “Teachers are afraid from some students and they cannot stop the bullying. There are students who behave badly with other students as well with the teachers. Teachers should stay silent, they have to report them. There are students who have to be suspended”.
- Teachers should be more interested what happens among students.
- To stay close to teachers, “not to go alone in the school yard”.
- School rules should be followed.

Parents have been asked if they participate in events organized by the school about bullying/aggression/ intercultural awareness and diversity. All of them answered with no (64%) or said that the school does not organize events like that (29%). The table below shows how parents describe their relationships with the school.

Types of relationship with the school	% answers
We communicate openly about my child's wellbeing	54
We are in contact when there is a problem.	31
It is an equal partnership with shared responsibility.	15
There is little contact between us.	0

4.1.7. Conclusions

The baseline research at the 130 school in Sofia provides data to analyse the existing situation, as well as resources and challenges to address and prevent bullying behaviour at school. The results correspond with other similar studies related to Bulgarian school. All respondents, adults and children, teachers and parents, admitted in one way or another, that aggressive behaviour and bullying are part of the school life.

Even though the school is perceived as a relatively safe place by most of students, there is a group of victimised children who report that they have been regular victims of bullying and never of rarely feel safe. Their voice is important to be heard and specific measures to protect them and change their situation should be put in place. There were children who reported they did not feel enough respected and valued at school, especially by other students. Moreover some teachers also reported that they have been targeted as an object of students’ bullying, mostly verbally but also physically, and do not always feel safe at school. While the bullying intensity and frequency are

not that high, the reported incidents, some of them on a weekly basis, should inform the improvement of the school policy, including evaluation of existing measures and reinforcing those which obviously work, adopting new ones and dropping those practices that do not provide safety or the intended effect. In any case, even though the school is perceived as a tolerant and liberal organisation, the sense of helplessness and frustration in relation to security and justice can be heard from some participant. One specific complain from students has been related to the lack of proper punishments for bullies and their repetitive aggression without consequences.

There was a small percentage of children who freely reported that they have been engaged in bullying activities towards other children. Additional information about why they got involved in such activities is needed. In any case it is clear that the school would benefit from individualised support program for each of these students aiming at changing the destructive behaviour. A restorative practice model would be beneficial for the school as well as procedures like mediation and other means of peaceful resolution of conflicts. Activities encouraging friendship and collaboration should find place in the new anti-bullying measures.

There is a need for introducing a program that can address the existing challenges and help to improve the school climate. One possible direction is related to improving the relationships and communication through targeted activities, training programs, awareness rising campaigns and new educational tools that empower both teachers and students to build a more friendly and respectful environment. The big number of bystanders and silent observers (both among students and adults) should be treated as a resource that can be engaged in a more powerful school response against bullying. Parents have to be treated as a significant stakeholder with a vast interest in the school safety and wellbeing. Increasing parents' involvement in the school matters can help overcome some of the issues such as overcoming discrimination based on race and ethnicity by providing examples of positive collaboration between various groups. Parents can be helpful in finding solutions how to make the schoolyard and the areas around the school safer for children, as well work with their children to ensure their safety at the cyber space and social media. There are specific activities planned within the project that target safer internet for children and provide simple tools for parents and teachers to address challenges for security for children in the cyber space. The Model program of the ASAP project provides unique opportunity the school to become more equipped to handle aggression and bullying at school.

5.End-line survey results

The end-line assessment took place in April-June 2018 aiming at evaluating changes in the school climate and anti-bullying practice and evaluate the effectiveness of the Model programme. Hard copy of the end-line questionnaire was given to students, teachers and parents. Significantly fewer questionnaires have been filled in comparison with the baseline assessment.

5.1.Demographic characteristics

Students. Hard copy of the end-line questionnaire was delivered to students, teachers and parents. The questionnaire was completed by 70 students, age varying between 12 (27%) and 18 (7%), one student was 19 years old in his last grade of the high school. The bigger number of students was among the 13 years old (22). Most students were at 6th grade of the secondary school, (37%), followed 7th grade (29%) and 10th grade (23%). Other grades were represented with smaller sample of students.

Boys who responded the questionnaire were 54%, while girls were 46%.

Parents and Teaching and non-teaching staff. Twelve respondents from the teaching and non-teaching staff responded the questionnaire, 10 of them females – teachers of history, technology and entrepreneurship, primary school teachers, the school Head Master, the nurse and others. Age was ranging from 41 to 65 years old. Twelve parents completed the questionnaire, age ranging from 35 to 60; 50% were females.

5.2.School climate

Majority of students feel always (29%) or sometimes (43%) safe at school, while 19% feel safe rarely and 10% - never. The responses of parents were also scattered between “sometimes” (50%), “rare” (25%) and “never” (25%).

Many students feel valued by adults at school – 37% feel they are always respected; 39% feel they are sometimes respected while 24% feel they are rarely or never respected. Parents are more optimistic in this matter – all of them think that their child is always or sometimes respected.

Fewer students feel respected by their peers – only 20% feel always respected, 48% - “sometimes” respected, while 22% feel respected rarely. 10% said they are never respected by their peers.

These results show that a big number of students do not find respectful relationships at school with adults or with their peers. The results are similar to the baseline research which means that a longer period of improvement in school climate is necessary in order to register positive changes.

At the same time most teachers who filled the questionnaire “completely agree” or “agree” that the school environment is stimulating and encourages their personal and professional development. Only one of them “disagrees” with this statement.

There was an inquiry about how much the adults teach students to respect differences in relation to ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability etc. 62% of students were positive that the school function as role model for them. Smaller percentage (14%) said that it never happens. Most of parents also believe that the school teaches students in respect to differences.

In terms of conflict resolution strategies, the study inquired whether adults encourage the students to resolve their disagreements or conflicts in a mutually beneficial way. 74% of students said that “always” or “often” adults do encourage differences to be resolved in a beneficial way for all parties. Only 10% of students responded that it was never the case. Most parents and almost all teachers were also positive in their opinion of school encouragement of students’ solutions to conflicts. These results are very similar to the baseline assessment. It seems that even though the schools introduced new conflict resolution methods, there is still small part of students that feels that conflict resolution among students is not encouraged.

It can be said that parents, teachers and most students find the school environment generally positive. But there is a constant part of students, a quarter of them, who find the situation at school unsatisfactory.

5.2.Awareness

The question related to reasons why the parents, students and teachers think students engage in bullying or aggressive behaviour against their peers brought almost identical answers among all respondents. A big majority of students (77%), parents (75%) and teachers (88%) show that reason number one for perpetrators is that they “want to attract attention/ become more popular”. Other popular reasons among students are “they think they are better than the others” (51%), “they do not like those who are different” (47%), “they want to demonstrate power” (37%) and they “discriminate others in relation to their race” (37%).

Teachers believe that children who commit acts of aggression witness similar behaviour at home (63%), they have been victims of aggression themselves (63%), or they have emotional and behavioural difficulties (50%). Popular answers among parents are that “they want to demonstrate power” (50%) and “they do not like those who are different” (50%).

The popular answers among each group of respondents were very similar to the baseline assessment. While teachers think that the family and home environment are among the main reasons for students’ aggression and bullying behaviour, parents point out reasons like demonstration of power and dislike to those who are different. The aggression against those who are different was pointed out by almost half of students as well.

When asked “How often do teachers become aware of bullying behavior at school?” most teachers (63%) think that they almost always **become aware** of students bullying behavior. At the same time only 28% of students believe that teachers always become aware of students bullying behavior, 46% think teachers only sometimes become aware and 26% think teachers are never aware of bullying behavior. These results are again similar to the results of baseline assessment.

According to students, the way teachers learn about bullying incidents at school is mostly by reporting of another student (74%), by teachers witnessing the incident (51%) or by reporting by a student victim of bullying (49%). 75% of teachers do admit that they have been witnessing incidents of bullying at school.

Regarding parents most students (60%) think that they only sometimes become aware about bullying behavior; while 20% are confident that parents never understand about bullying at school.

All parents at the same time declare that their child shared about bullying at school and so they believe that there is bullying behavior at school. 75% of them share that they personally sometimes witness bullying behavior at school. Most parents refuse that their child have been involved in bullying, but some share that their child have been witnessing it.

Even though the results seem similar to those in the baseline assessment, there is a slight increase in awareness about bullying behavior. Fewer respondents from all groups seem unaware about bullying and aggressive behavior at school.

5.3.Frequency and scope

The results show that verbal aggression and bullying are among the most frequent among the students. Students were asked if they participated in different situations last 7 days and almost half of them (49%) said that they called other bad names once or more times. Other 42% declare that they made fun of other students to make their peer laugh. It is interesting to notice that a big part of students (62%) have been angry to somebody once or more times during the week. The same percentage of students declares that they have been angry during the bigger part of the day.

It seems that almost quarter of students experience strong feelings of anger most of the time – 5 or more times during the week. Only 16% of students declare that they participated in physical fights once or more times during the week.

Regarding the frequency of bullying at school, 60% of students think it happens more than once a week while only 16% pointed it never happens.

When asked if they have been personally **physically bullied** during the last school year, 46% of students answer “never”, 37% - “rare”, 6% - “once a week” and 10% - “more than once a week”. Fewer students answered “never” when the question was about verbal bullying (32%) and 10% of students answered with “more than once a week”. The same percent of students (10) said that they have been object of social bullying “more than once a week” while 69% of students have never been socially isolated or excluded. Only 8% of students report cyber bullying “more than once a week”. Most students’ decline that they have been an object of sexual harassment (81%) but 15 % said that they have been once or more than once a week. It seems that victimization among part of students is real and constant and it needs to be addressed.

The questions related of students participation in acts of bullying as perpetrators have shown that most students (between 61 and 86%) decline that they have committed any acts of bullying – physical, verbal, social, cyber or sexual/. 12 % admit that they have been engaged in physical

bullying once or more than once a week; 14% - in verbal bullying; 11% in social bullying; 8% in cyber bullying and 6% in sexual harassment.

Teachers report that most frequent form of bullying that happens more than once a week is the verbal bullying (38%) and there are fewer incidents of physical, social and cyber bullying. Spreading rumors, mocking others, telling bad names, or being passive – aggressive are among the most spread forms of bullying, according teachers. Half of teachers notice that some students encourage others to fight. More than half of teachers also admit that acts of bullying towards teachers or other professionals happen, mostly verbal bullying, and only sometimes. Some teachers said that they have been object of aggression by a student (25%) or parent (38%).

Parents generally decline that their child has committed acts of bullying – verbal or other form.

The space that seems less safe, according to students is the corridor, because 60% of students said that this is where children feel most vulnerable to aggression and bullying. Next are the school yard (38%) and the social media (34%). Similar answers have been given by teachers and parents.

5.4.Reporting

Most students have written that they have somebody to talk to if they have been part of witnessed bullying. The family members, especially the mother and then father, brother, sister are among the most mentioned. The second place is taken by friends. The third group is teachers as people they share their bullying experiences. Parents learn about bullying mostly by their children and only rarely by the school.

5.5.School support and response

Students were asked how they would act if they witness aggression or bullying at school. Many of them (46%) said that they will try to intervene to stop the fight. The same percent (46) answered that they will look for help from adult at school. 30% reported that they would monitor the situation but would not intervene, 19% said they do not know how to help, and 16% reported that they would not do anything. The last group gave usually explanations that they would not like to get in trouble.

Teacher's report (88%) that there is a formal procedure to react when incidents of bullying and aggression occur. They said that the school has a designated time to discuss such topics and it is usually the so called "hour of the class" where they can talk about different topics including incidents of bullying. They can use the parents' meetings or teachers' conferences to discuss actual incident and how to address it. Most of the school staff finds that they have support by the school to manage the aggressive behavior of children.

Parents are generally dissatisfied by the measures the school takes in order to reduce the scope of aggression. They find the measures "weak" (75%) and unsatisfactory and insist for more strict and effective measures towards perpetrators. Most of them do not attend school meetings related to the topic of aggressive behavior and share that the school contacts them only when there is a problem (75%).

5.6.Capacity

Teachers' recommendations in relations to capacity building were related to build awareness among parents and support them to deal with children with challenging and aggressive behavior. Another strong recommendation was related to training of teachers, availability of resource teachers and psychologists, as well as better coordination among the school, parents, municipal services (social services) the Ministry of Education and Science and its regional inspectorates.

Conclusions and the way forward

It was evident that even though many of the results in the end – line assessment were similar to the base line assessment, there is an increase in awareness of respondents. Bullying and aggression have been recognized as a problem and many of its aspects – types, scopes, frequency etc, have been addressed. It is clear that the Model program introduced a better understanding of these phenomena and the school sensitivity towards them increased. This can be seen in the various suggestions for improvement of the school climate, measures and policies.

Students proposals in the last section of the questionnaire vary show their need for a safer and child friendly environment at school. They say *“we have to talk normally and understand each other”*, *“some student must stop making themselves interesting by spoiling the atmosphere”*, and *“teachers have to try to understand us better”*. Some students recommend the corridors to be always monitored by teachers because these are places where incidents happen. Others demand cameras and security men in the school yard. Some insist for stronger disciplinary measures toward those who are bullying others, even suspension and exclusion from school when nothing else helps. It is interesting to see how much students insist rules of co-existence at school to be in place and to be actively reinforced by adults.

The model program reinforced school rules and engaged students to think about ways to manage their relationships and disputes in a none-violent way. Even though the changes are still not that visible it takes years to see the culture of peaceful conflict resolution in place.

A number of recommendations have been prepared in order to engage educational authorities in conflict prevention and anti-bullying policy. The project has shown that the cooperative efforts to promote a child friendly environment at school are the right way to stimulate learning and ensure wellbeing of all involved in the school system. The school educational process should accommodate measures and activities focused on solutions concerning relationships. In short, students need to learn how to co-exist with others in a peaceful way and embrace their diversities. As the results have shown, dislike of others, who are different, is a common reason for bullying and aggression. That is why academic achievement has to be accompanied by a strong school culture of human rights, solidarity, cooperation and civility. This was the main message of the Model program and the instruments developed by partners are working in such a direction.