

# ***Coping with school bullying and violence at the local/regional level***

**International Online Conference for persons involved  
in a communal/regional level on School Bullying and Violence**

**October 24 – November, 18, 2005**

## **Conference Report**



Education and Culture

**Socrates**  
Minerva



## Contents :

Introduction.....	3
The on-line conference.....	4
Week 1: The involvement of local authorities /Non Governmental Organisation dealing with school bullying and violence.....	5
Topic 1: Why coping with school bullying and violence can also be a local competence?.....	5
Topic 2: What is the role of local authorities/NGOs compared to other partners?.....	6
Topic 3: How do local authorities get a diagnosis about school bullying and violence?.....	10
Topic 4: What is the extent of the local partnership in school bullying and violence?.....	13
Week 2 and 3: Different kinds of local actions that can be set up.....	14
Topic 1: Training on school bullying and violence.....	14
Topic 2: School mediation.....	16
Topic 3: CCTV or not at school?.....	17
Topic 4: What makes the difference?.....	19
Week 4: The role of European institutions in the field of local SBV prevention.....	20
List of the participants.....	21

## Introduction

### The project.

Over the past decade, school and juvenile violence have been rising constantly and have had wide-ranging implications in our societies (cp. Jäger, 2002, Jäger, Bradley and Rasmussen, 2003). The growing number of national and international conferences on school violence points out to **the importance of meetings and networks**. Nevertheless, it is obvious that only a very limited number of experts and practitioners get the chance to participate in conferences and to exchange their experiences with others, especially on an international level.

Internet offers new possibilities: one of the benefits of online discussions or conferences is their potential of bringing together users with different backgrounds – e.g. in terms of culture, education, experiences or citizenship – who would **hardly meet in real life**.

VISIONARY is an acronym for "Violence in school – intelligence on the net-applying resources for youngsters".

The VISIONARIES-NET project mainly addresses persons involved in different kinds of activities related to violence prevention in school.

Its main objective is to bring these persons together in:

- **Online conferences that unite selected groups of experts and practitioners**
- **International online community on violence prevention in school.**

The community building process is facilitated by the fact that the project is based on the [VISIONARY portal](#). It is an international portal on school violence prevention, which has been developed within the VISIONARY project – the precursor of the VISIONARIES-NET project which is also supported by the European Commission within the framework of Socrates/ Minerva.

### The partners of the project.

- [Zentrum für empirische pädagogische Forschung der Universität Koblenz-Landau, Germany \(coordinator\)](#)
- [Department of Education, Faculty of Sciences of Education, Universidad de Córdoba, Spain](#)
- [European Forum for Urban Safety, Paris, France](#)
- [CONCEPT Foundation, Bucharest, Romania](#)

## The on-line conference

The VISIONARIES-NET project addresses persons involved in different kinds of violence prevention activities who participate in 5 different online conferences.

One of them, the second one, was targeted at persons involved in violence prevention on a communal/regional level (e.g. social workers, police staff, youth welfare staff, authorities, policy makers).

The European Forum for Urban Safety was the main moderator of this on-line conference that was held during 4 weeks, from **October 24<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005**.

More than 5 000 persons or institutions from all around the world, and involved in violence prevention on a communal/regional level have been invited by e- mail.

34 participants from 21 countries have registered, including 4 non EU-states and 11 local authorities' representatives<sup>1</sup>.

The conference consisted in a virtual meeting room in the shape of a closed forum, that is only open to invited participants. It was free of charge and **asynchronous**: this means that the forum was open 24 hours, which gives the flexibility to read and contribute to the discussions whenever wanted.

The 4 weeks were each dedicated to a specific topic:

- **Week 1: The involvement of local authorities/NGO dealing with school violence and violence (SBV);**
- **Week 2 and 3: The actions of local authorities/NGO set up to deal with SBV;**
- **Week 4: Expectations on a National and European level.**

Motivations and previous remarks from participants:

*“My motivation for wanting to be involved in this conference was to network and exchange ideas with people internationally on issues relating to school bullying and violence. I am keen to learn how other local organisations are dealing with these issues and am particularly interested in the practical side of how other organisation are working with schools and students in preventing school bullying”, Linda (AUS).*

*“I hope that the conference will be a good opportunity to discuss prevention strategies and to receive and evaluate information about national and local projects, strategies, ideas, difficulties etc”, Isabelle (BEL).*

*“I'm really looking forward to reading information about school bullying in other countries. This conference is an excellent idea. I think that looking at things globally can help a lot when it comes to deal with SBV at a local level”, Anda (ROM).*

---

<sup>1</sup> A list of all the participants is available in the appendix.

## Week 1: The involvement of local authorities /Non Governmental Organisation dealing with school bullying and violence

### Topic 1: Why coping with school bullying and violence can also be a local competence?

#### - Thinking globally, acting locally.

The governmental level here means giving an impulse to global prevention policies that local authorities would be able to adapt to local differences. The **problems are best solved in the subsystem where they arise according to the principle of subsidiarity**. Subsystems are encouraged to resolve their conflicts themselves without referring them to higher authorities.

Nevertheless, the awakening and the engagement of national governments as regards school violence prevention are necessary and complementary to any local strategy of prevention.

**It is necessary to act locally** because school bullying and violence remain the issues of a particular “school community”. Whereas for all the participants this concept was quite obvious, its definition was more complicated. Some of the questions that came out:

Does “school community” include the persons who are inside the school but do not necessarily intervene directly on violence, particularly the non-teaching staff (supervisors and employees of the social and medical service)?

Does it include the persons outside the school who may intervene on school violence (police, justice...)?

The answers are not that obvious. Even if the notion of “**whole school community**” does not mean exactly the same thing for all the participants, they all believe that their involvement is the only way to get a coherent and integrated intervention against school bullying and violence.

#### - Tackling bullying and school violence is a municipality project among others.

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

Local educational projects mainly succeed if they are closely organised with the projects of municipalities, and conversely, if the necessary **complementarity of all local public policies** is organised: family, justice, town and country planning, infancy, health, urbanism, architecture, housing, transportation, employment... Indeed, *“Municipalities should develop a global approach to urban safety problems, and implement an inter-disciplinary plan of actions based on risk-reduction, strengthening of social and territorial prevention”*.

This is exactly the strategy of the municipality of Livorno (Italy) with the project “A safe city” – *Progetto Città Sicura*. This integrated project develops a global approach to urban safety problems, and implements an inter-disciplinary plan of actions based on risk-reduction, strengthening of social and territorial prevention. In that global project, tackling school bullying and violence is one of the important fields of action.

## Topic 2: What is the role of local authorities/NGOs compared to other partners?

### - Who are the main partners?

The question about who the main local partners are who tackle school bullying and violence is both essential and difficult to answer clearly.

A distinction has been raised between “**inside school**” and “**outside school**” to determine who should be the local partners involved in dealing with school bullying and prevention. *“Bullying can happen in and outside the school. It needs different action strategies. Outside the school, it depends more on police action. Inside the school, I join the point of view to work with an external expert.”*

**A list of partners has been proposed and amended** by the participants:

- local politicians, whether elected or technicians in the departments of education, youth, security and prevention, mediation, justice or cultural and social actions;

- the academic community as a whole: the students themselves, teachers and their representatives as well as all the non-teaching staff present in the establishments (supervisors and employees of the social and medical services);

- the regional and national authorities concerned by the questions of education and the well-being of young people at school and, more generally, in the urban environment;

- the association sector and civil society (socio-cultural associations and non-governmental organisations, as well as those dealing with education, rehabilitation, mentoring or mediation, and associations of student parents or former students...);

- the family, particularly for younger children (i.e. primary school ages);

- the peers. *“In some projects, the most efficient transfer of information and know-how is from peer to peer”. “The peer-help-method” appears as a first step, mostly for teachers, to get “realistic, concrete and recent information about one another”.*

### - What is the role of local authorities/NGOs?

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

In spite of this difficulty, two main roles have been dedicated to local authorities.

**First, they have to convince to do something.** This means alerting and convincing. First of all, it is important to give the necessary knowledge to teachers and parents to recognize episodes of bullying and also not to manifest and to interact with local authorities (social services, police). It is about:

- giving information about the “**first signs**” of bullying and violence and to look for a common culture of what is school bullying and violence. In the project of Livorno presented by Fabio, *“the purpose is a joint training (directors, teachers, parents, social services, and police) to give common instruments to interpret this problem and to get a coherent and integrated intervention against SBV”;*

- **stimulating the cooperation** between all partners, inside and outside the school.

Here, one of the remaining questions is how to get in touch with the school as tackling bullying can appear too big a challenge for a start?

The participants adopt different **strategies of approach**.

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

Another solution can be to find one or two **key-persons from the school** to enter the institution. As Christine said *“I prefer not to waste my time and energy with reluctant head teachers or bad conditions. Instead I try to encourage and support the teachers open for change or cooperation, even if they are very few or only one. When they successfully change their behaviour and/or teaching, others will notice and start asking...”*

Tamar talked about to gaining **confidence**, particularly as there is a large offer on programs, theories or strategies against school bullying and violence. Nevertheless, a relation based on individual confidence could be frail, particularly when one of the parties leaves. As Agnès argued *“the turn over in the institutions can ruin all the previous work done so far.”*

**Then, local authorities can help to do something about it.** This means being involved in actions dealing with school bullying and violence.

This refers to the different actions local authorities can set up. This will be discussed later.

### **School Programme of the Prevention Department of the City Council of Mons, Belgium by Isabelle and Jean Xavier**

#### **Keywords**

Network, Prevention, Violence, School, Communication

#### **Context**

For more than ten years, the Prevention Department of the city council of Mons has noted the presence of a certain number of problems at school; such as incivilities, thefts, vandalism, racket, drug dealing and consumption, physical and verbal acts of violence as well as other offences which are not reported to the Police.

#### **Purpose of the action**

The global purpose of all the projects set up by the School Programme is to anticipate violence and school failure, through the improvement of classrooms and school climates.

In the long run, the main prospect is to favour the partnership between the different actors who are involved. In that respect, a specific purpose is the parental involvement in their children's schooling.

#### **Action Pilot**

Prevention Department of the City of Mons – 2 psychologists attached to the School Programme

#### **Coalition**

Schools play a very important part in our project. The the headmasters' support is essential. The educative team constitutes the frontline intervener who, following its participation in our trainings, can put into practice the identified intervention strategies within the classroom and the school, concretely. The Psycho-Medico-Social Centres (P.M.S.C.) intervene as part of the follow-up of the pupils who frequent “decompression airlocks”. The School Health Promotion Services are involved when problems linked with health are revealed and when “health” projects are developed. The French Community school mediators concretely support the setting up of the Violence Prevention Commissions in two secondary

schools of the municipality. On the basis of an agreement established with Mr Jean-Luc Tilmant – teacher, psycho-pedagogue, independent trainer – a partnership is formalized.

### **Enforcement Strategy**

Our methodology was set up after a study on the needs of Mons secondary schools, undertaken in 1997.

Each intervention is different depending on the school's request, of its needs and characteristics, while it will remain inspired by the same theoretical and coherent principles according to our methodology.

Our action programme is to be undertaken in different stages along an academic year:

**Stage 1:** Analysis and clarification of the school's request as regards the struggle against violence.

**Stage 2:** Meeting with the educative team: presentation of the School Programme and of the training contents, setting up of a group of voluntary and motivated teachers and educators.

**Stage 3:** Forming of the leader group in violence prevention strategies.

**Stage 4:** Once the teachers are trained to use those different strategies, we will identify the relevant strategies to be set up within the school, according to the analysis of the request.

**Stage 5:** Following the identification of the strategies, if there is a specific request for the institutionalisation of a pedagogic team or for a work on communication within the classroom, an additional training can be offered.

**Stage 6:** Setting up of the identified strategies within the school. They can possibly lead to the institutionalisation of a Violence Prevention Commission, to the setting up of a “decompression airlock” or to the realization of projects for the improvement of life standards.

**Stage 7:** Monthly meetings for the follow up of the project.

**Stage 8:** Evaluation of the project. Reflection and action tracks for the future.

The project has existed for ten years, and has always been evaluated each year, at the time of the evaluation of the activities led by the Prevention Department. Quantitative and qualitative evaluations are undertaken regularly as to each action which is led but the quantitative aspect is globally privileged.

### ***What has been evaluated?***

- Evaluation before the action: meeting the headships of the schools and the educative team in order to identify the needs and clarify the request.

- Evaluation during the action: each training session which is organised is evaluated through a questionnaire consisting of open and closed questions. Regular meetings with the partners enable us to make meta-cognitive points on the projects led, and also to adjust practice to progressive field reality.

- Evaluation after the action: at the end of the academic year, a meeting is organised with all the actors who have been involved. The purpose is to record their individual opinions and to collect their criticisms and suggestions, in order to build some tracks of action for the future.

***As regards Public Relations***, two letters addressed to schools' headships have enabled the new School Programme team to make themselves known. In addition, the latter has just published a booklet and a leaflet of presentation. The victory of the 2004 Belgian crime prevention award has also favoured communication around the activities developed by the team.

### **Budget**

Home Office: 6197,33 €

2004 Belgian Crime Prevention Award: 3720 €

French Community (Impetus Fund for Immigration Policies): 6000 €

### **Significant Impacts**

It is materially impossible to provide here the results of everything which has been realized by the School Programme, as the actions were numerous and varied.

Each school which belongs to the municipality of Mons has resorted at least once to the School Programme. The qualitative evaluations which have been undertaken enable us to note a significant climate improvement within schools. Along the years, partnerships have intensified and constitute today a real network of reciprocal exchange of knowledge.

### **Elements of Success**

The main element of success, besides the development of the partnership work, is the acknowledgement of the School Programme team as a full actor of prevention against “school violence”. Today, the School Programme is known and identified as a resource as far as prevention within schools of the municipality of Mons is concerned.

### **Obstacles and/or insufficiencies**

The main obstacle the School Programme team has met is linked with the difficulty of gathering all the actors who revolve around school, as well as in the availability problems of the teachers for the trainings and/or some actions.

### **Prospects**

With a financial contribution from the IFIP, the support in the development of a “decompression airlock”, in another spot of a school which already has this tool at its disposal, is planned for the 2005-2006 academic year.

The objective for the 2005-2006 academic year is also to set up a “Violence Prevention Network” within the schools of Mons. The purpose is to determine a concrete and integrated action, only guarantor for efficient violence prevention. Under the leadership of a psycho-pedagogue adviser, the task of the School Programme will be to gather the Organizing Powers, the schools’ headships, the PMSCs, the Youth Help Service, the Police, the AMOs (assistants for underprivileged areas)...

A second stage will be to train the headships for preventive strategies against violence. This training aims at establishing a common vocabulary and at encouraging the different headships to play a driving and impulsive role for the violence prevention projects.

Following this, the plan is to train as many teachers as possible as regards basic strategies as well as specific units (some have already benefited from these trainings).

### Topic 3: How do local authorities get a diagnosis about school bullying and violence?

#### - The necessity of having a diagnosis from several sources:

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

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

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

#### What are the benefits of surveys?

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

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

#### - The methods of sampling aggression and victimization in school settings.

A presentation Prof. Peter Smith made at the OECD conference [“Tackling School Bullying and Violence”](#), **overviews some methods** that are applied for getting data on school bullying:

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

One critical issue is to know the differences between those methods and which one is the best. Does it give the same results according to who is asking and collecting the data?

In conformity with most of the participants, **the best method is self report**. According to Thomas *“the most common form of getting information is self-reports by students; the optimal situation is when the survey itself is supervised by the researchers themselves or students workers who are present when the questionnaires get filled in”*.

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

#### What about online surveys, by Sander?

This is a good way to reach students (secondary schools). They spend a lot of time on computers and apparently feel free to tell the truth. Maybe even more than in a class-room setting, which we also tried. The main question, however, is how to reach the right students? What we do is open up a survey and ask the school-teachers to encourage their students to fill in the questionnaire - either at school or at home. This works fine, as long as the software is safe and people can only enter the answers once. This on-line tool for measuring problems at school has a lot of advantages: it's fast, it's fun, it's easy to repeat and the results are available for analysis immediately.

### **Livorno: Questionnaires and interviews, analysis and socialization of results** **By Fabio**

#### **Key words**

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

#### **Background:**

We decided to investigate the bullying problem because bullying is a serious form of aggressive or abusive relationship among peers. The seriousness of this form of behaviour is shown both by its diffusion (Fonzi, 1997) and by its long effect. Children who bully others are more likely to have antisocial problems as adults and to be convicted of crimes more than their non aggressive peers (Olweus, 1993; Coie & Dodge, 1995). At the same time, negative experiences, founded on different mixtures of rejection, withdrawal and loneliness, can strongly influence the victims' cognitive attitudes and beliefs and represent a potent risk factor for their subsequent development. Livorno may be considered as an average/big town in Tuscany and is not that different from the other cities as girls and boys could be involved in the same problems; we wanted to know in what way and to what extent we are involved in this problem. There had never been in-deep scientific research about the issue of bullying in Livorno before this one, but bullying has shown to be a relevant problem in our schools

#### **Territory:**

We have chosen two different schools located in different areas: one is in the north and the other one is in the centre. In that way they represent different kinds of people and different ways of life. The first quarter, named Corea, was built during the fifties (public houses) and it has been the subject of a large regeneration programme during the last years, though it is still presenting critical aspects and social disease. The second quarter is the historical centre: a part of its inhabitants belong to middle classes but there are also a lot of immigrants from the poorest countries.

#### **Objectives of the action:**

Bullying is characterised by the fact that there is a social interaction between a child and a group of children who intentionally hurt another child or group of children. This unbalanced relationship can happen in different contexts. It's important to know bullying in all its aspects to help all the girls and boys who are involved in it. Bullying is a combination of elements which involves not only the bully and the victim, but also all the girls and boys around them.

#### **Pilot of the action :**

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

#### **Coalition :**

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

**Strategy**

There are four instruments:

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

These instruments have been chosen by Ersilia Menesini and Simona Pagnucci, who represent the University of Florence. Simona Pagnucci with some collaborators gave the instruments, during the class time but without the presence of the teachers. Each questionnaire was anonymous. The instruments were analysed by Simona Pagnucci and two university students who were finishing their studies.

**Budget:**

€ 4.800 for the research. Costs for printing research results are not known yet

**Significant impact:**

Planning and organizing promotion and contrast actions. We are going to propose some activities to control and prevent bullying. These activities want to involve all the classes that are present in our research.

All the teachers understand the importance of these investigations, to know the children’s relationships.

**Obstacles and/or inadequacies :**

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

**Perspectives:**

Enlarging research and intervention zone, activating suitable strategies.

**Location:**

Italia, Città di Livorno, ‘Corea’ quarter, ‘Centre’ quarter.

**Dates:** date of implementation of the project 2005

Date of form update: June 2005.

#### Topic 4: What is the extent of the local partnership in school bullying and violence?

##### - Partnership or not?

How to give **substance to the necessity of cooperation?**

Even if all the participants agree on the report, the partnership is not that **formalized** in every country. Some of them may appear to be like an “example” to others, where there isn’t even a “*regular connection between professionals and other people who are practically working in different places like schools, police stations and other voluntary places concerned with juvenile problems*”, explained Shin Hee Kyung.

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

In several countries, the process by which the partnership to deal with school violence becomes formalized is the same. It is only after some rather severe incidents in schools and a somewhat broader public discussion that the running of anti-bullying programmes in these schools is more frequent. As Thomas suggested, “*this is the sign that the school is actively combating problems and does not wait until something happens.*”

##### - The obstacles about local partnership:

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

Difficulties of partnership, by Sander:

We divide the organisation into two levels: “In school” and “around school”.

At the “in school” level, we organize two monthly meetings, one for safety- schools-coordinators and one for principals. The safety-coordinators mainly talk about current issues and use the group to talk about the incidents that occurred. The principals mostly talk about safety-policy, cooperation with others (e.g. the police) and funding. The city was divided into three different areas, making the number of schools per area manageable (around fifteen to twenty schools). One of these was unsuccessful because of a **lack of participation**. There just were not enough people present to make the meetings worthwhile. The other two areas are highly successful and have turned into a network of people exchanging information on a lot of issues, not only safety.

At the “around school” level, there are two-monthly meetings where two representatives of the 'in school' level meet with a group of representatives from local government, the police, health-care, public transport, etc. This level is less successful: once you have discussed the main problems and tried to solve them; the discussion can become a bit empty. Therefore, two out of the three areas do not meet regularly anymore, but try to solve problems by calling directly to the other party involved. So, the meetings have at least been good, because they helped establish a network that people can now use at their own discretion. (As soon as people start switching jobs, however, it could be wise to meet again and refresh the list of contacts.)

Local formalized partnerships do not have the same results from a local authority to another: In some communities this works extremely well while in others it could still be “optimised”.

## Week 2 and 3: Different kinds of local actions that can be set up

The objective of those two weeks was not be exhaustive about all the actions that can be set up by local authorities to deal with school bullying and violence but more to approach some of them. Participants decided to talk about:

- Training, as it is one of the first actions to be set up
- Mediation as it is a common action which is set up
- CCTV as it is a sensitive action which could be more and more developed

### **Topic 1: Training on school bullying and violence**

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

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

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

Several goals can be attributed to trainings:

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

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

**Prevention-project “Fair-Trust” (“FairTrauen”):** Located in the police direction of Hildesheim<sup>2</sup>

#### **Key words**

Trainings, Prevention of Violence, School, Socialisation

#### **Background**

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

#### **Territory :**

Hildesheim, Germany

#### **Objectives of the action**

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

---

<sup>2</sup> This action has been introduced to the participants although no representative of the city of Hildesheim participated to the conference.

### **Pilot of the action**

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

### **Coalition**

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

### **Strategy**

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

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

1<sup>st</sup> day: values and norms (sensitisation, definition, empathy);

2<sup>nd</sup> day: alternatives of violence (self-reflection, role of perpetrator-victim, exercises in Communication);

3<sup>rd</sup> day: promotion of self-confidence (conditioning, stabilising, and awareness of border experience).

Target groups: pupils in their 8<sup>th</sup> year of school in High school, with a high rate of foreigners.

Level of action: High schools, youth welfare, police

Instruments of action: introducing of the subject, confrontative Pedagogic, visualisation of behaviour, Role-plays on the behaviour of perpetrators and victims.

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

Communication: Crime Prevention Council of the City of Hildesheim

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

### **Budget**

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

**Significant impact** (concrete result of the policy / the action)

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

### **Element of success**

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

### **Obstacles and/or inadequacies**

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

**Location** (country, city, neighbourhood)

Germany, Lower-Saxony, Hildesheim

**Dates:** Date of form update: August 2004

## Topic 2: School mediation

### - The definition of school mediation:

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

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

Is school mediation an **alternative to some other measures**, particularly to a discipline and penal measure? To some participants the answer is yes. Here school mediation has one of those three main roles in relation to discipline measures:

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

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

### - Who are the mediators?

Mediators can be **professionals but not necessarily** as it is the case for of **peer mediation**.

Peer mediation is introduced in schools to encourage and develop skills of pupils/students to solve problems in a tolerant and constructive way.

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

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

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

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

### Topic 3: CCTV<sup>3</sup> or not at school?

- What is in the debate?

To implement or not CCTV in and around school to deal with school violence is a question that can not be evaded as it is really a very **sensitive issue** for all participants.

CCTV will certainly be introduced some day on a “**broad**” **scale**. Even if today and in most countries, the number of schools which have implemented CCTV is still extremely limited, the number of discussion about introducing CCTV at school is increasing on a political level.

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

The preoccupations of participants were less about ethical issues than about the effectiveness of CCTV.

- Is CCTV effective?

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

Based on the participant’s experiences, CCTV does not increase student safety feelings since CCTV is mostly introduced because management wants it, not because students think it will promote safety.

**CCTV is above all a good way to get evidence after the fact**. An American Criminal Justice Policy Review is quite formal: *“although it is well known that cameras are useful for documenting events after the fact, further utility of the various school safety technologies is virtually unknown. In other words, a “comprehensive report on the effects of security cameras in high schools” has probably not been produced.”*

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

Indeed, there is not much information on the effectiveness of cameras, but that is not only true for schools. A large-scale UK evaluation of CCTV<sup>4</sup> concluded:

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

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

This needs to take into account local crime problems and prevention measures already enforced. Too much should not be expected of CCTV. It is more than a mere technical solution; it requires human intervention to work to maximum efficiency and the problems dealt with are complex.

If properly managed, it has the potential – alongside other measures and in response to specific problems – to help to reduce crime and to boost the feeling of safety; and it can generate other benefits. For these to be achieved though, there needs be greater acknowledgement that reducing and preventing crime is not easy and that ill-conceived solutions are unlikely to work no matter what the investment is.”

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

---

<sup>3</sup> CCTV : Close Circuit TeleVision – TV surveillance.

<sup>4</sup> [Home Office Research Study 292, “Assessing the impact of CCTV” by Martin Gill and Angela Spriggs](#)

maintain the system and outweigh its bad effects and costs? Sander gave this example: *“One school installed 16 cameras outside the school. The costs were 16.000 €, but the system has reduced the damage caused by theft and damage to zero. Last year, the school suffered from theft to the amount of 40.000 €, according to the school. So in this case, the benefits outweighed the costs”*.

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

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

#### Topic 4: What makes the difference?

How designing an intervention which involves community and school in order to be able **to identify whether this does indeed make a difference?**

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

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

Taking into account context and mechanism to interpret an outcome, is a **realistic evaluation**. One of the problems of such an evaluation about school bullying and violence seems to be that there is no evidence that any of the strategies have sufficient obviousness to be recommended over others. (Smith, J. D., Schneider, B. H., Smith, P. K., & Ananiadou, K. (2004). The Effectiveness of Whole-School Antibullying Programs: A Synthesis of Evaluation Research. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 547). According to Roberto, “*now, there would be little to be gained in looking at how orange juice cures cancer, if there is no evidence that orange juice does exactly that.*”

Smith, Pepler & Rigby Eds. (2004), *Bullying in schools: how successful can interventions be?* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, offers a recent comprehensive review of the best efforts that have been done so far in interventions against bullying from all over the world. You will note from this volume that

- a: whole school is defined differently by every study;
- b: there is no consistent strategy used in only one study. From the individual actions carried out to the research designed employed, including measurement of bullying;
- c: there is little evidence to support the effectiveness of any of the interventions discussed in the volume. This is particularly true for interventions on the secondary school level.

The only intervention which claims success is that of [Olweus](#)<sup>5</sup>, which by the way has never been independently replicated.

---

<sup>5</sup> The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a comprehensive, school-wide program designed for use in elementary, middle, or junior high schools. Its goals are to reduce and prevent bullying problems among school children and to improve peer relations at school. The program has been found to reduce bullying among children, improve the social climate of classrooms, and reduce related antisocial behaviours, such as vandalism and truancy. The Olweus Program has been implemented in more than one dozen countries around the world.

## Week 4: The role of the European institutions in the field of local SBV prevention

School bullying and violence has become a global problem in recent years. A number of new phenomena have developed like e.g. cyberbullying in the past 1-2 years which seems to spread around the planet quite fast.

As Mona O'Moore mentioned during the first European Seminar on School Bullying of the OECD conference in Stavanger "*a global response is necessary that is both unified and co-ordinated*"<sup>6</sup>.

Taking advantage of having a lot of representatives from different European countries, the issue of a European policy of SBV prevention rose. What would be the expectations of local authorities in this field? Would it be more money, more practices exchange, or a European guide about SBV?

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

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

International initiatives such as networks, cooperation, projects etc. may **inspire** or on the contrary may **dissuade** others to set up more or less the same action. As Thomas said, "*sometimes there are extremely creative and innovative ideas from which we never heard about before maybe because of the simple reason that we don't know the language of this country*".

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

[A review of scientifically evaluated good practices of preventing and reducing bullying at school in the EU member states](#), carried out on the initiative of the European Crime Prevention Network in 2004, states that "in terms of legislature and policy training, it is possible to say that recent and existing directives have helped raise awareness on the issue of school bullying.

However, little can be said about which measures are the more effective in dealing with the problem. In order to enforce the policies that currently exist in many European Union member states, further training of the relevant people and the provision of support services is necessary. Whilst it should, of course, be acknowledged that **not one policy works everywhere, the success or failure of legislative and policy directives is probably dependant on a number of factors, including the cultural and social history of the individual states and their regions.**

It is, however, possible to recommend that a far greater exchange of information between states [should exist] both on an official and private level, of the policies and their effects, which should help to stimulate discussion on those that can work. **The exchange of information, expertise and even resources** within Europe have facilitated the development of the knowledge basis that exists within this continent as regards our understanding of the prevalence of the bullying behaviour in schools, the development of intervention programmes against it, and researchers' ability to inform legislators and policy makers concerning this issue.

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

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

---

<sup>6</sup> [A Guiding Framework for Policy Approaches to School Bullying & Violence](#)

## List of the participants

BOECKMANN Christine (Germany)  
CALMAESTRA Juan (Spain)  
CORDOBA Francisco (Spain)  
DEFAUT Isabelle ((Belgium)  
FERRONNI Fabio (Italia)  
FINGER Linda (Australia)  
FLIGHT Sander (Netherlands)  
GAVRILOVICI Ovidiu (Romania)  
GLUSIC Nada (Slovenija)  
GOGOU Elena (Greece)  
HANUS Milan (Czech Republic)  
HOSENNEN Tamar (Switzerland)  
JOHNSTON Elizabeth (France)  
KESSLER Isabel (England)  
LE BLEVEC Louis (France)  
LEONARDUZZI Danila (Italia)  
LEROY Jean-Xavier (Belgium)  
LOGELAIN Maureen (Belgium)  
MONKS Claire (Kingston University, London)  
MONTGOMERY Linda (Scotland)  
NOBRE Ana (Portugal)  
PARADA Roberto (Australia)  
PAVALESCU Maria (Romania)  
PERRY Kevin (Denmark)  
PRADET Agnès (France, moderator)  
PRICE Roslyn (England)  
RELLO Anne-Lii (Estonia)  
RISTMAE Tiina (Estonia)  
RODRIGUEZ Antonio Jesús (Spain)  
ROMERA Felix Eva María (Spain)  
SERRANO Angela (Spain)  
SHIN Hee Kyung (South Korea)  
SHOEB Ahmed (Egypt)  
ŠINDLEROVÁ Alena (Czech Republic)  
SEAFIMOV Victor (Bulgaria)  
STRAUCH Bernd (Germany)