

# VISIONARIES-NET

## Overall evaluation of the international online conferences



Education and Culture

**Socrates**  
Minerva



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## **I. VISIONARIES-NET: the project behind the online conferences**

The online conference “Coping with School Bullying and Violence Using the Internet” is one of five online conferences that is held as part of the VISIONARIES-NET project funded by the European Commission within the Socrates Minerva program. Before we present some selected outcomes of this conference we first would like to outline some basic ideas of our project, its background, objectives and the partners that cooperate in this project.

### **Background and starting point of the project**

School and juvenile violence have been rising constantly over the past decade and have wide-ranging implications on our societies (cp. Jäger, Bradley and Rasmussen, 2003). The growing number of national and International conferences on violence in school points out 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 exchange their experiences with others, especially on an International level.

The Internet offers new possibilities: One of the benefits of online-discussions or conferences is that they have the 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.

The overall idea behind this project, the VISIONARIES-NET project, is that in spite of all differences in terms of culture, educational or professional background, age and target group (pupils, parents, researchers etc.) we assume that there are many people from different countries who face similar problems and who can learn from each other.

In the VISIONARIES-NET project we invite people affected by and dealing with school bullying and violence to online conferences in order to facilitate discussions, to analyse the situation in a selected field within the broad topic of school bullying and violence and to work out common, sometimes innovative solutions.

### **The VISIONARIES-NET project, its partners and sponsors**

The VISIONARIES-NET<sup>1</sup> project is a European cooperative project from institutes and organisation from four European countries - Germany, France, Spain and Romania. The partners are:

- Centre for Educational Research, University Koblenz-Landau, Germany (co-ordination)
- Department of Education, Faculty of Sciences of Education, Universidad de Córdoba, Spain
- European Forum for Urban Safety, Paris, France
- CONCEPT Foundation, Bucharest, Romania

The project that started in October 2004 and ends at 2006 was supported by the Socrates/Minerva program of the European Commission.

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<sup>1</sup>VISIONARIES-NET is an acronym for ‘violence in school - initiative on the net archiving resources for European states: net of experts’.

The VISIONARIES-NET project builds on the VISIONARY project (2000-2003) – also funded by Socrates/Minerva program of the European Commission - that focused on implementing a European Internet portal on school bullying and violence that aimed at providing information and facilitating communication on school bullying and violence ([www.bullying-in-school.info](http://www.bullying-in-school.info)). The portal that includes background information, link collections, news section and much more was created by partners from Germany, Denmark, Finland, Portugal and the UK.

As a part of the VISIONARIES-NET project this portal was completely updated and extended by additional sections such as blogs, best practice sections and online polls. Apart from this the portal is available in three further languages now: French, Spanish and Romanian.

### **Objectives of the project**

As mentioned above one of the main ideas behind the VISIONARIES-NET project is that in spite of differences in terms of countries, cultures or educational background there is much people can learn from one another.

The VISIONARIES-NET project mainly addresses persons engaged 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.

Apart from networking the participants of the online conferences themselves another goal of the project is not only to inform a broader public about the conferences' outcomes but to include them in the discussion process. This will be realized by means of web logs that aim at publishing selected outcomes of the conferences' discussions and that encourage users of the VISIONARY portal to continue the discussion.

## II. Summary of the outcomes of the evaluation questionings for each of the conferences

### Conference 1: Coping with SBV Using the Internet [conference1.bullying-in-school.info](http://conference1.bullying-in-school.info)

The online conference ‘Coping with School Bullying and Violence Using the Internet’ was the first from five online conferences of the VISIONARIES-NET project.

#### **Objectives of the conference**

The objective of this online conference was to get to know web sites and the people behind these sites, their experiences, ideas and visions. The conference aimed at making its participants discuss the potential as well as the limits the Internet has when dealing with school bullying and violence. Furthermore it aimed at bringing together and networking people who share similar interests.

The discussions intended to find out more about ...

- the ways the Internet can help when tackling school bullying and violence
- capabilities, benefits, challenges and limits of the medium Internet
- intercultural similarities and differences of national Internet resources

Furthermore the conference aimed at giving the participants the opportunity ...

- to meet others who also offer web resources on school bullying and violence
- to find out more about approaches and ideas from other parts of the world
- to learn and profit from others who deal with the same problems and challenges
- to network with experts from other countries and cultures

**Period: May 4 – June 3, 2005**

**Participants:** representatives from leading Internet portals, web sites and other web resources from different countries and cultures throughout the world.

The conference included 28 participants from five continents plus representatives of the implementing team

#### **Method of evaluation**

- The questionnaire was the instrument used for the evaluation of the first online conference;
- It content 10 questions, each question with several answers;
- The participants were invited to complete the questionnaire at the end of the conference, which it was online

#### **Selected outcomes:**

- ✓ 40% of the participants said they participated in the conference from the beginning till the end

- ✓ 20% of those who answered the final conference evaluation questionnaire said they attended the conference several times per day and 33,33% said they attended it several times per week
- ✓ 86,67% of the participants said that they actively posted in the conference discussions
- ✓ 57,14% of the participants had a very positive attitude towards the online questionings

The conference site was appreciated like:

- very positive: 64,29%
- positive: 21,43%
- negative: 14,29%
- very negative: 0%

The moderation was appreciated like very positive by 64,29% of the participants and like positive by 35,71% of the participants

The structure of the forum was appreciated like:

- very positive: 42,86%
- positive: 42,86%
- negative: 7,14%
- negative: 7,14%

Issues learnt from this conference:

### 1. Internet Marketing

- How to advertise a website
- What makes a good website on SBV
- How to ensure good quality information
- How to find out more about the users of your website

### 2. SBV

- What cyberbullying is
- The way other countries define and deals with SBV
- How online courses can help to deal with SBV

### 3. Networking and cooperation

- ✓ 92,86% said that the conference will influence their work
- *I will try to make the site **www.bullying.com.br** be better, adopting some lines of work and ideas I knew during the conference. I intend to still change messages with others participants, looking for best experiences and knowing*
- *Giving me many ideas concerning the structure and the way to leader a future forum about SBV in my country*
- *It let me work on projects that can help international organizations*
- *This conference convinced me that there are indeed different approaches to dealing with school bullying and violence*

- *I found it very positive to work with people internationally on a mutual topic of concern. The topics were very useful*

Things participants liked about the conference:

- The quality of discussions. The opportunity to know and change ideas with order SBV programs. To understand the power of a good SBV site as an instrument to inform and teach abilities
- Meeting people around the world dealing with the same subject
- It was very interesting to meet participants from the different countries that deal with the same educational issues
- The good leadership, above all, the summaries and reorganization of threads

Things participants didn't like about the conference:

- The conference being dominated by one participant's posts
- Any dispersion and some repeatability in the ideas owing to simultaneous threads - the occasional lost of continuity in some discussions
- I found the threads somewhat hard to follow-but have no suggestions on how they could be improved either
- At times, the slowness of the format was frustrating, but perhaps that was due to my online connection

Suggestions:

- It's worthwhile to think about the forums being less open and more structured
- There should be an easier way to find one's way, when there are so many postings. Especially the latest postings should be shown first (on top). Direct answers should be shown together
- The only thing I could suggest is that it could be longer
- The forum was confusingly arranged, so that I did only read the postings offline via email. A help would be a thread structured tree for the topics and posting as you might find in newsgroups, as well as there should be the newest postings first
- The outcomes should be presented in all of the participating websites (in different languages)

Comments:

- The conference was perfect. I would like to register the high quality of the participants
- The quality of the summaries was excellent. Each one was written very timely and effectively. They were very helpful for me
- It was a good conference
- I think it was perfect

## **Conference 2: Coping with School Bullying and Violence at the local/ regional level** [conference2.bullying-in-school.info](http://conference2.bullying-in-school.info)

The second online conference was held from **October 24th to November 18th, 2005** and was focused on the involvement of the Local/ Regional authorities for coping with school bullying and violence and prevention strategies for Local Authorities

### **Objectives of the conference**

The objective of this online conference was to get to know local/regional representatives, their experiences, ideas and visions. The conference aimed at making its participants discuss the potential as well as the limits the Internet has when dealing with school bullying and violence. Furthermore it aimed at bringing together and networking people who share similar interests.

The discussions intended to find out more about

- the involvement of local authorities in SBV
- the actions of conflict resolution and mediation on SBV
- The identified obstacles and gaps, the expectations and suggestions

Furthermore the conference aimed at giving the participants the opportunity ...

- to meet others who also deal at a local/ regional level on SBV
- to find out more about approaches and ideas from other parts of the world
- to learn and profit from others who deal with the same problems and challenges
- to network with experts from other countries and cultures

**Participants:** representatives from Local/ regional authorities and local non governmental organizations dealing with school bullying and violence from 21 countries throughout the world

The conference included 34 participants

### **Method of evaluation**

- The questionnaire was the instrument used for the evaluation of the second online conference;
- It content 10 questions, each question with several answers;
- The participants were invited to complete the questionnaire at the end of the conference, which it was online

### **Selected outcomes:**

- ✓ 60% of the participants said they participated in the conference from the beginning till the end
- ✓ 20% of those who answered the final conference evaluation questionnaire said they attended the conference once per day and 50% said they attended it once per week
- ✓ 30% of the participants said that they actively posted in the conference discussions and 40% said they posted a few times but mainly read postings from others

- ✓ 60% of the participants had a very positive attitude towards the online questionings

The conference site was appreciated like:

- very positive: 40%
- positive: 50%
- negative: 10%
- very negative: 0%

The moderation was appreciated like very positive by 80% of the participants and like positive by 20% of the participants

The structure of the forum was appreciated like:

- very positive: 40%
- positive: 60%
- negative: 0%
- negative: 0%

#### **Issues learnt from this conference:**

- Why coping with SBV has to be handled at a local / regional level
- Definition of what is “the whole school community”
- Necessity of getting the involvement of the whole school community
- How to work in partnership for dealing with about SBV
- The role of each local partner dealing with SBV
- What is school mediation
- What kind of training can be set up
- Why implement or not CCTV at school and around school
- Which are European policies for SBV prevention
- How useful is to network practices at a European level

- ✓ 60,00% said that the conference will influence their work
- *Thanks to this conference I have learned more about the interesting topic of school bullying and violence, above all concerning the role of mediators and implementing CCTV*
- *It shows any ways of work with examples of bullying*
- *I am going to make it a case in my classes. I am also going to refer it (as I already did) to some of my colleagues' practitioners. I would like to get involved in future steps, if intended*
- *I will have very good referential elements for further national developments about SBV*
- *Developing our researches, projects and actions about SBV*

Things participants liked about the conference:

- The discussion of the issue concerning implementation of CCTV at school and around school

- The discussion concerning school mediation and the role of mediators
- Opportunity to discuss issues with other people working on the same problems
- Prevention techniques against bullying and the use of CCTV in schools
- A sense of optimism and positive thinking, despite the marginalization of the subject in some countries
- The excellent moderation
- The possibility to participate in the conference where and when you like
- The topic of the conference
- The quality of the interventions
- How to realize the involvement of the “ whole school community”
- How to define the role of each local partner dealing with SBV
- How do local authorities /NGO get a diagnosis on SBV
- Knowing projects, researchers, practices developed in other countries ... but also their problems
- The structure of the forum and the simplicity of dialogue with the other participants
- Discovering the breadth of the international community interested in this topic

Things participants didn't like about the conference:

- Not feeling comfortable with the online “thread” system
- Lacking the time to participate with comments and ideas during the discussions (it is easier to get time off when you go off town to different conferences, than to do it at work or at home ...
- The relative small number of posts, this is related to the recruitment and the targeted marketing that should have been in place before the conference – I think there is a lot more to be done in this area of finding the relevant participants. We can further identify and recommend future actions of this kind to our network of contacts
- The length and incomparability of the contributions. It could have been more focused in length and more focused on the topics

Suggestions:

- The focus seemed to be about how SBV is involved. While this was useful, there could have been a greater focus on actual interventions and some real issues about bullying (not just in the last week but over the whole 4 weeks). Some things (i.e. CCTV) I was unsure about the topic ... it took me about a week to actually form an opinion because it was something I had not discussed before ... maybe a longer opportunity to discuss these topics. Maybe you could include the proposed Schedule from the beginning (not just for the upcoming week) and post some preliminary questions (just to think about, not to post any responses) so we can think about them earlier...
- Call early to the World about it. The idea is OK
- Some of the suggestions are already on the website and in the previous boxes. As a first online conference, I think it is an excellent experience for me and I am convinced it should be continued. Good LUCK!

- A translation of the interventions in 2 or 3 languages would support the participation
- To build a "resource bank" of project reviews, research results, policy analyses
- I prefer shorter ... so I can say: I take all my time during a week for example to do that ...
- Make the subject a bit smaller (e.g. only violence in schools – what can you do at the school level?). That way, the discussion will be more focused and probably easier to make progress. The whole point is to dig deep into a subject and what happened now was mostly (in my experience) a platform to put up links to stuff that you did
- I would add a page of resources – some of those suggested by the participants, for example
- Discussion should be more in-depth, these were mostly monologues

**Comments:**

- I would like to congratulate all the participants and specially the good work and the moderation
- The conference was very useful for my job the careers and educational master. Thanks for this idea!
- Thanks for the opportunity to deepen so an important issue as SBV, profiting on internet potentialities
- I'm sorry to have stopped but I couldn't follow because of the language. I had a help to translate but it was too much work for translating every post of others participants and my posts. It was difficult to speak a lot for me in English also
- Many people around the globe are working on this issue, but it's mostly academic people that are involved in the real interesting questions. The level of international sharing and cooperation is very limited, thus impeding progress in this field of research. In addition, many people working in this area are from the academic world. That limits the practical application of their views to many schools
- I enjoyed the forum and I would join next time as well. It's just that the benefits were of a different kind than what I had expected and than what I guess the organization behind it expected (or hoped)
- The richness existing in terms of diversity of participants and institutions represented. We should capitalize on this, not only at local levels
- Lesson learned: we need to move forward, by trying to get international actors to coordinate their research questions more

### **Conference 3: New forms of School Bullying and Violence** [conference4.bullying-in-school.info](http://conference4.bullying-in-school.info)

This third online conference brought together experts and practitioners dealing with and affected by such new forms of school bullying and violence in order to make them exchange experience and learn from one another.

#### **Objectives of the conference:**

The objective of the conference was to bring together people interested in SBV and discuss with them the new forms of SBV like '**cyberbullying**' and '**happy slapping**', '**dating violence**' and other new trends

Apart from the topic oriented discussions themselves the conference aimed at giving the participants the opportunity to present their own projects, concepts, research outcomes or websites in a separate section of the forum. The participants could discuss their ideas and experiences with others there

Last but not least this online conference aims at bringing together and network people who share similar interests.

**Period: April 24 - May 19, 2006**

**Participants:** teachers, pupils, parents, representatives of web sites, researchers, professionals, representatives of communities, policy makers and others affected by or interested in new forms on SBV

There were 46 participants from 15 countries

#### **Method of evaluation**

- The questionnaire was the instrument used for the evaluation of the third online conference;
- It content 10 questions, each question with several answers;
- The participants were invited to complete the questionnaire at the end of the conference, which it was online

#### **Selected outcomes:**

- ✓ 75% of the participants said they participated in the conference from the beginning till the end
- ✓ 62,50% of those who answered the final conference evaluation questionnaire said they attended the conference several times per week
- ✓ 62,50% of the participants said that they actively posted in the conference discussions

The conference site was appreciated like:

- very positive: 50%
- positive: 50%
- negative: 0%
- very negative: 0%

The moderation was appreciated like very positive by 62,50% of the participants and like positive by 25% of the participants

The structure of the forum was appreciated like:

- very positive: 50%
- positive: 37,50%
- negative: 12,50%
- negative: 0%

**Issues learnt from this conference:**

- Traditional vs new forms of bullying
- What is cyber bullying
- Sources of cyber bullying
- Types of cyber bullying
- How to tackle the problem of cyber bullying concerning levels of intervention

✓ All those who answered the final questionnaire said that conference will influence their work

- *The contents and especially the newer information are a very good base for my advising work with parents, teachers and pupils*
- *With some of the new contacts I have made professionally*
- *I will be more inclusive of the other types of bullying*
- *I'll pay more attention to the cyber bullying signals and I will include cyber bullying in my conferences, in my work with the classroom and in my web site*
- *I stand warned and have to observe precautionary measures to safeguard against hackers. Since cyber bullying appears to be little known in my place of work, I have to work closely with the University Webmaster and sensitize our community. As a psychologist I have to reach out to schools to create awareness and set interventions where it is necessary*
- *I have learnt more about bullying. I have read the experiences of the participants*
- *I look forward to continued global interactions*
- *Until the conference I was focusing on traditional bullying only. Now I have learned that we need to react as it might get out of hand because we (parents) do not understand this media*

Things participants liked about the conference:

- The opportunity to participate at a convenient time for me
- Meeting new people
- Hearing other's perspectives
- Chance to hear from people you don't know
- Networking
- Learning
- Level of knowledge
- Sharing experiences and cyber bullying description
- The topic for discussion

- Moderation
- The awareness created and the experiences shared
- I found very interesting topics: other new forms and trends related to School Bullying and Violence, presentations of websites and the one related to "happy slapping"
- Participants
- The different points of view
- Having contact with people who have the same interest
- The discussion

Things participants didn't like about the conference:

- Everybody (except Helga from Norway) posted anonymous without picture (I tried to motivate the posting with pictures, but it didn't work). For my pupils it would have been better, if they got something like a little-account themselves (so they could have posted opinions in private time and were independent from me and the school-time (we met every Wednesday and Tuesday) I did not like that I can't edit my threads by myself (to change mistakes)
- Except for the definition thread at the beginning I was disappointed that few people contributed to the discussion
- Another call on time difficult site to learn not enough on homophobia
- People not always answered to direct question
- The very small group of people participating in the conference

Suggestions:

- Possibly an intro that walks us through how to use the site
- Do not use such small prints
- It is difficult to find certain articles
- It is hard to do this and remember what has been said, certainly was better once I got all the emails sent to my box so I could see what was going on, in a busy week adding this to it is a challenge

Comments:

- I would like to thank you for the opportunity to join in the conference. Cheers from Down Under Marilyn
- I think the forum site it's good enough
- I can't make any suggestion because everything is perfect
- I (we) learned a very personal way of discussion with experts from all over the world. We were very good integrated; also the pupils were respected very well.  
Thank you
- The media persons were open on merits and demerits of the media
- Since I came into the conference a bit ahead of the curve -- having researched cyber bullying for the last two years, I can't say that I learned a lot. But it was helpful to "check perceptions." I really appreciated and learned from the comments of others - especially with a global reference. There are primarily similarities
- I don't think this language is helpful, the comments were useful, the software not very easy, the structure was fine
- I was really satisfied

- Irrespective of the power failure in my country I hope to learn much more. I appreciate sharing experiences

#### **Conference 4: School Bullying and Violence: the Role of Media** [conference3.bullying-in-school.info](http://conference3.bullying-in-school.info)

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

#### **Objectives of the conference**

The objective of this conference was to bring together participants from several European countries who are interested in the way School Bullying and Violence (SBV) is reported by the media. Furthermore it aimed at bringing together and networking people who share similar interests.

The conference focused on the following topics:

- what is the role of media in School Bullying and Violence
- how can media participate at the prevention of SBV
- how do the media reports on SBV influence the development or prevention of SBV
- how can the media be a vector of safety feeling about SBV
- how can the media valorize actions dealing with SBV
- how can the media be an alternative to crisis situations

Furthermore the conference aimed at giving the participants the opportunity ...

- to meet others people interested in the role of media in SBV
- to find out more about approaches and ideas from other parts of the world
- to learn and profit from others who deal with the same problems and challenges
- to network with experts from other countries and cultures

**Period:** May 15 – June 9, 2006

**Participants:** The target groups of the online conference were journalists, media policy makers, researchers, invited guests, NGO or educational institutions representatives. There were 34 participants plus representatives of the implementing team

#### **Method of evaluation**

- The questionnaire was the instrument used for the evaluation of the fourth online conference;
- It content 10 questions, each question with several answers;
- The participants were invited to complete the questionnaire at the end of the conference, which it was online

### **Selected outcomes:**

- ✓ 80% of the participants said they participated in the conference from the beginning till the end
- ✓ 20,00% of those who answered the final conference evaluation questionnaire said they attended the conference several times per day and 30,00% said they attended it several times per week
- ✓ 50,00% of the participants said that they actively posted in the conference discussions
- ✓ 70,00% had a positive attitude towards the online questioning

The conference site was appreciated like:

- very positive: 50%
- positive: 30%
- neutral: 10%
- negative: 10%
- very negative: 0%

The moderation was appreciated like very positive by 40% of the participants and like positive by 40% of the participants

The structure of the forum was appreciated like:

- very positive: 20%
- positive: 50%
- neutral: 20%
- negative: 10%
- negative: 0%

### **Issues learnt from this conference**

- Information sources on SBV
  - Types of media reports on SBV
  - Rights and risks of victims exposed by media
  - Basic media relation skills
  - The relevance of facts, data, reports and testimonials for journalists
  - Violence effects of different media programs
  - Relevance of target groups when communicating on SBV
  - The need to adapt messages to target groups
  - The link existing between the message and the channel / medium that transmits the message
- 
- ✓ 80% of those who answered the final questionnaire said that the conference will influence their work
  - *More attention in identifying SBV cases, and a little bit more expertise in tackling the issue*
  - *During the researches, and all the information made me understand some problems in Moldovan society that I even did not observe*

- *I learned where I could find new sources of information about violence*
- *I know more how media works*
- *Since most of my country men/women seem to know less of cyber bullying, I have to embark on creating awareness. Work with those who have knowledge of it to devise means of control where they are not. To conduct more systematic studies on the subject*
- *I'll pay more attention on the importance of co-operating with media*
- *It was very interesting to know how different people coming from different cultures and experiences look at the perpetrator, especially those who had experienced this trauma. Removing the perpetrator or the victim from the scene is going to solve the problem but for a very short time*
- *After some bad experiences I had chosen to exclude media attention. Now I understand what media can do for us if they are 'handled' in a positive way*

Things participants liked about the conference

- The diversity of experiences shared
- The expertise of the participants
- The variety of subjects discussed having connection with the main theme
- The topics
- The arguments
- I've liked that many people are interested in putting resources in to approach/ to diminish the problem of violence
- The new contacts made during the conference
- Cross fertilization of ideas
- The role of the moderators. Very effective
- Quality of contributions
- Sincerely talking about anti bullying programs
- Receiving comments
- Positive criticism
- Dealing with a very real and present problem
- The wide interest in the subject
- The different views on the subject
- Bringing in an expert

Things participants didn't like about the conference:

- Low interaction between participants
- Not always coherence in following a certain subject
- Some topics were closed too soon
- The length of the conference
- The pace of the discussions
- Absence of time to take part in
- Absence of more extensive conclusions
- Not making full use of the expert's participation in the conference – meaning things that could have been learnt from him about the media if we did not let bullying overtake the topic

#### Suggestions:

- I recommend a changed electronic format for further conferences. The present one is sometimes very difficult in terms of identifying new messages and having a general view of the conference topics. Maybe it was my fault, because I'm taking part for the first time to such a conference....
- I think that it would be fine if that kind of conference will be schedule until June, because many people take a vacation in the summer season
- Provide both English and European versions for those who find English difficult
- Maintain the flexibility in allowing for discussions after the scheduled time
- Set strategies to reach those parents, guardians and caregivers who seem to be blind of their children's advance via technology
- More one to one interventions from professionals in charge
- Introduction to take longer or another format so as to have more time to break the ice
- Issuing of a Certificate for participation or other incentive
- It would be nice to see who is online and who has been online in the last e.g. 30 minutes
- The ability to send a PM (personal message) to the author as some reply's or questions are not relevant to the subject

#### Comments:

- The need of rising the awareness about SBV in the Romanian media, in a professional way, based on studies and analysis
- That finger prints can help in tracing the invisible bully
- I learned a lot about eastern European countries and this helps me in working with immigrant children
- The sense of inclusion among the participants was minimal
- Different views bring up different and unexpected approaches. Therefore it is necessary to communicate. I think the majority of the participants are working solo or within a small group. Information from (many) other sources could help you

## **Conference 5: Research: A Way to Deal with School Bullying and Violence** [conference5.bullying-in-school.info](http://conference5.bullying-in-school.info)

Research has contributed significantly to the understanding of school bullying and violence (SBV) phenomenon. Moreover, researching has been linked to the development, assessment and improvement of the main proposals of intervention against SBV all over the world. Nevertheless, the different, and sometimes contradictory, scientific approaches have contributed to generate confusion among the general public (e.g. when talking about the levels of incidence, types and severity of SBV). It seems, therefore, that there is a real need of a common space where all the different researching approaches, methodologies and instruments could be presented and discussed.

### **Objectives of the conference**

This international **Online Conference “Research: A way to deal with School Bullying and Violence”** was proposed as a common framework for all those who are interested on the SBV research.

The conference focused on the following topics:

- Can we talk about a unique concept of SBV
- Where does researching on SBV go to
- Which are the requisites that SBV assessment instruments should fulfill
- How can we achieve greater coordination among researchers

Furthermore the conference aimed at giving the participants the opportunity ...

- to meet others people interested in the role of research in SBV
- to find out more about approaches and ideas from other parts of the world
- to learn and profit from others who deal with the same problems and challenges
- to network with experts from other countries and cultures

**Period:** September 25 - October 20, 2006

**Participants:** researchers who have developed their research on SBV, in order to gather and share the different perspectives of this complex problem

There were 30 participants plus representatives of the implementing team

### **Method of evaluation**

- The questionnaire was the instrument used for the evaluation of the fifth online conference;
- It content 10 questions, each question with several answers;
- The participants were invited to complete the questionnaire at the end of the conference, which it was online

### **Selected outcomes:**

- ✓ 50% of the participants said they participated in the conference from the beginning till the end

- ✓ 20,00% of those who answered the final conference evaluation questionnaire said they attended the conference several times per day and 50,00% said they attended it once per week
- ✓ 40,00% of the participants said that they actively posted in the conference discussions
- ✓ 50,00% had a positive attitude towards the online questioning

The conference site was appreciated like:

- very positive: 60%
- positive: 30%
- negative: 10%
- very negative: 0%

The moderation was appreciated like very positive by 60% of the participants and like positive by 30% of the participants

The structure of the forum was appreciated like:

- very positive: 30%
- positive: 40%
- negative: 30%
- negative: 0%

#### **Issues learnt from this conference:**

- A unique concept of SBV
  - Current researches and explications for the changes of SBV overtime
  - “Real problems” and research
  - Tools for assessing the SBV problem
  - Development of research instruments
  - New focuses of interest of research on SBV
- 
- ✓ 60% of those who answered the final questionnaire said that the conference will influence their work
  - *I will be very careful in referring to scientific research*
  - *now I have a new vision about how violence affects family victims and how far is sometimes investigation from reality*
  - *I will now depend upon my own conclusions and upon the conclusions of those who have been confronted with the bully as his/her victim*
  - *there were several topics which were touched on which I feel provided interesting avenues for future research, and I would hope to be able to focus on (some) of these*
  - *one of the areas to focus in the work is the one of the investigation. I can retake some contributions boarded in the conference, to have better results*
  - *I have learned a lot*
  - *I am going to make a doctoral thesis on cyber bullying and everything has interested me in what I have been able to read*

Things participants liked about the conference:

- the ability to talk with foreign experts
- getting new ideas that might help to fight SBV
- flexibility
- easy communication with the researchers
- the possibility of reading works of other people
- learning about different perspectives on the problem
- to know the opinions of specialists and professionals about this theme
- to know about approaches on the subject in the present time
- to have references of people in the different countries
- learned more on research, what works and what doesn't
- making contacts from all over the world
- moderation
- participation of experts
- parents participation

Things participants didn't like about the conference:

- Far too many 'experts'
- Too much focusing on unimportant subjects
- Questions on real problems have been ignored
- There was an emphasis for research on subjects that have a minor impact on bullying. More important matters like why do boys bully boys and girls bully girls? And, if power is so important to the bully then why do they pick on someone of their own age instead of a younger and therefore weaker person? Or, why is the bully not doing anything when he/she is alone? And much, much more!
- To make researchers learn the real problems of SBV. Like the problems parents sees
- To find a common definition
- The word bullying is not a good word to use at this problem
- In this conference I have experienced ignorance, no compassion to real problems and not a single suggestion on how to deal with SBV. For me this is very disappointing because I thought that this conference was mended to fight SBV

Suggestions:

- I'd like to have the possibility to have all questions together in one document
- No more research for the sake of research, we have to look at real people and real problems
- You could start a conference with 'bully fighters' who are trying to find ways on how to stop or prevent bullying. There are several methods being used and each of them must have pro's. I.E. I have come up with a method in which bullying can be stopped overnight. In the last few months we have had three cases which have been solved in just one day! In the conference I wrote about a girl that lives in a foster home. She asked us for help. This question has been ignored by the participants of this conference. I told her what to do and she wrote to me: *I have done what you told me and in the middle of the night they waked me up. We had a*

*long talk and they were so loving and understanding. The next morning we went to the police and then I went to school. Within five minutes the police arrived and they picked out the bullies. I have not been bullied since then and I have a friend now. Thanks.* In this particular case school was not involved. In the other two cases they were. We are now completing the method and hopefully within a few months we will introduce this to the schools. Teachers who have been informed about this method are very enthusiastic. The school administration however is afraid to let someone else but them to deal with the problem

- It was quite difficult to me to be able to follow the conference and participation in the English language. Is possible that the next conferences are facilitated in Spanish (bilingual)?
- It would be interesting to make the conference in several languages to make agile it more

Comments:

- I prefer a conference with people who are confronted with SBV in real life
- Most important is to know that we are talking about the same thing
- The battle against bullying is very hard while the fight against the bully is the easiest part of it
- I have learnt that we should not depend upon scientists in order to find methods to stop and/or prevent bullying
- The gap between scientists and ordinary people is too big
- Scientists are only studying the problem and they are not looking for a way to deal with the problem. Research shows us that their children are less likely to be bullied than children from ordinary people and this is another indication that a researcher may not have the same experience as the ordinary people and therefore not being able to know what is really happening
- In summary, ways to deal with prevention and even stop bullying can not come from the scientists only
- This conference has been very interesting for me, because I am just starting my work in this theme
- I am happy to read opinions from important researchers