



Panel Session Note 3: Preventing Violence and Bullying

Time: November 15, 13:30-15:00

Room: Hoff Pensjonisten Room

Moderator:

Angelos VALLIANATOS, teacher trainer, CoE and EWC expert, Greece

Speakers:

Vanja RAKOCEVIC, School counselor, Grammar School Slobodan Skeroviv, Montenegro

Kristine KAHRS, School inspector, Primary School Finstad, Norway

Branka PERIC, School psychologist, Primary School Osnovna Skola Gradac, Croatia

Input & reflections on topic & school practices by Pascale MOMPOINT-GAILLARD, President and Co-founder of Learn to Change, Change to Learn, France

Rapporteur:

Bernt GEBAUER, Lead Expert, Violence Prevention and Democracy Education, EPAN-member and Campaign Steering Group member, Germany

Language: English

Background:

Preventing violence and bullying is one of the six themes of the CoE Campaign “Free to Speak, Safe to Learn - Democratic Schools for All”:

“Bullying, cyber-bullying and violence in schools are human rights violations which infringe on the rights of children and young people to live a life free from violence. Schools can, and should, play a key role in tackling these abuses. Whole-school anti-bullying programmes are needed, which promote peer support systems and involve active and well-trained teachers and parents, to foster a safe learning environment in which no violence is allowed.” (CoE Campaign leaflet)

Good practices and initiatives by school representatives, as submitted, please find below.

Grammar School Slobodan Škerović, Montenegro

“No hate offline, no hate online” by Vanja Rakocevic, school counselor

Question	Description
<p>Why did you/ your school choose to work on the issue of “Preventing violence and bullying”?</p>	<p>We recognized the problem of hate speech online in our school, but also in the surrounding, which very often escalated to conflicts and various forms of violence, including our students, and students from other schools, as well as our teachers. Thus, the project started by Volunteering Club of the Grammar school <i>Slobodan Škerović</i> involving 2 schools at the beginning, and in the period of 2014-2018 the network of schools was widening up to 20 high schools. In the center of the project were young people, and it was realized through complementary online and offline activities and initiatives to combat hate speech online through drawing attention to the problem, but also through building the capacity of young people and teachers to acquire the necessary competencies to recognize and act effectively against this kind of violation of human rights in online and offline world. We started to work believing that young people should know that the online world is also a public space where human rights principles and values must be equally respected as in the offline world.</p>
<p>What did you do and what went well? Who took part?</p> <p>Please describe some important steps of the process.</p>	<p>The project involved students, parents and teachers, and was implemented through the creation of offline and online platforms established in schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training for peer educators (students) and their mentors (teachers) • students’ activities: peer workshops, panel discussion, public debates, • research on attitudes and experiences with hate speech, • publishing printing and other material, • online and offline media campaign including creation and moderation of Facebook and Twitter accounts.
<p>What were main challenges you have experienced?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting the activities to local context (in regard to part of Montenegro). With recognizing local problems and focusing on it, it was easier to connect with the problem of HS and its resolution. • Lack of motivation of parents to attend activities. • Lack of free time to organize different activities in school: both teachers and students are overwhelmed with curricula over the school year. • Funding the activities: there are not many donors that will fund projects developed by school/school network
<p>Did your project/ practice/ initiative bring some changes? What were the benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment in which young people learn and adopt core values of human rights is created. • Environment free of hate speech in which teachers, parents and young people together take part in the prevention and intervention is created. • Relations of teachers and students are improved: they work together on the problem solving • Increased awareness and competences of young people and their teachers to recognize and confront hate speech in the online and offline world using existing mechanisms. • Providing teachers and students with concrete tools for combating hate speech.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of parents and teachers about the abuse of children online and how to protect them. • Educational and informational material as a permanent source of knowledge available (brochures, leaflets, training material, peer workshops, etc.). • Cooperation among secondary schools is fostered • Cooperation between secondary schools and other stakeholders (NGOs, media, institutions of the system) is improved.
What would you say to a colleague who is about to start the same kind of project/ practice/ initiative to help them repeat your success?	Cooperation among different stakeholders is crucial for success. In order to have a comprehensive approach as much as possible, we cooperated with youth and other NGOs, institution and media representatives. This cooperation has helped us in the realization of the project: each of them, in its domain, dealt with the planned tasks during the implementation of the project.
Anything else you would like to highlight?	This project was a new experience for our Volunteering club and we realized that it is very important to realize similar projects because they give the opportunity to young people to cooperate with teachers and parents in solving problems, as well as this was a chance among schools to work closely.

Primary School Finstad, Norway
by Kristine KAHRS, school inspector

Question	Description	Description
	I would like to talk about two different practices/projects:	
	Activity plans	A well-being-program
What is the title of your project/practice/ initiative (if any exist)?	An activity plan for each student who are experiencing bullying or violence. All the schools in our area are using this. Made to fulfill the education law 9A-3.	A well-being-program in our school where students are trained in playing different outdoor games in the student's recess. The well-being-leaders "work" 4 days a week in one of the recesses.
Why did you/ your school choose to work on the issue of "Preventing violence and bullying"?	It is important that the school take violence and bullying seriously. It affects the students learning a lot. This document helps us reveal, help and evaluate. The student's perception is important, and the measures are being evaluated with the parents. We are committed by law, and this is a good document to show the measures we are doing, who is responsible, and the further work we are going to do in the case.	Our school is growing and our schoolyard is getting smaller, because we had to set up temporarily buildings. The idea of students playing and making new friends prevents violence and bullying. Some of our staff had worked with this before and were very satisfied with the decrease in bullying.
What did you do and what went well? Who took part?	This document is easy to use. Each time a student says he/ she is experiencing violence or bullying; the school fills out the form. The student's teacher inspects and observe if it is true.	It is the well-being-leaders who are running all the games, the organization and they are responsible for the program together with two teachers.

<p>Please describe some important steps of the process.</p>	<p>If it is, the teacher, together with the parents, find measures that can help the child. After some time, the plan is evaluated together with the parents. If the violence or bullying has stopped we close the case, or we keep working with maybe some new measures. We must document the work we are doing. All the schools in our area is using this plan.</p> <p>All the schools in our area came with input in the making of the plan. One of the goals was that the document should be easy to use and fulfill our responsibility according to the law.</p>	<p>To become one of the members of this group the class have nominated students that are not bullying and being a good role model. We do this twice a year. The well-being-leaders are trained in new games every year. All the well-being-leaders in our area meet and learn the games together. They learn a lot of games so they can vary the games they use in school. We also have a reward in the end of their period (bowling, cinema, pizza etc.)</p>
<p>What were main challenges you have experienced?</p>	<p>To get the teachers to use the plan, and see it as a help more than just one more thing to do.</p>	<p>There are not many challenges. The well-being-leaders are very motivated for the job, and they know what to do. In the beginning we used a little time to organize all the equipment the well-being-leaders need.</p>
<p>Did your project/ practice/ initiative bring some changes? What were the benefits?</p>	<p>The teachers are observing the students more closely. All the measure, and the work the teacher is doing are more visible, and the students and their parents know what to expect from the school. Every incident is being treated the same. This gets a lot of documentation.</p>	<p>The students are in activity in their recess. They are playing instead of being board and bullying each other. The students are playing with children from different ages, and they can get new friends. Easy for the teachers to praise the students for good behaviour.</p>
<p>What would you say to a colleague who is about to start the same kind of project/ practice/ initiative to help them repeat your success?</p>	<p>This plan is a good tool for the teachers, and it helps us solve a challenge in an easier way than before. All the teachers are doing the same, and the principal know what to expect. The student and their parents have a saying in the work the school is doing.</p>	<p>The program runs itself. The well-being-program holds the students accountable, and they feel they are in charge. The program focusses on positive play among the students. All the other students like it. In the beginning the school need to invest in some equipment.</p>
<p>Anything else you would like to highlight?</p>	<p>The voice of the students is important.</p>	<p>A lot of happy children and an including environment in our school.</p>

Primary school Osnovna Skola Gradac, Croatia
“Good School Mood” by Branka Peric, school psychologist

The Good School Mood projects have been conducted in **Primary School Gradac (Gradac, Croatia)** during last nine years. All of them addressed prevention of violence and bullying. As a starting point, we implemented a programme for the prevention of peer violence and bullying which was conceived by UNICEF together with Croatian experts : **For a Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools - Stop Violence among Children**. We chose to join this programme because we recognized it as a good tool in fighting bullying and violence that we experienced in our school.

After completion of this project, we have continued to create and implement projects and activities which aim to improve wellbeing of our pupils and generally to create a positive and stimulating atmosphere in the school. The first one was **Our Rules** which aim to develop nonviolent communication, tolerance, respect and appreciation of diversity. Through composing the anthem with lyrics based on the class rules and plays with situations from the class that related to the rules, pupils not only learned how to communicate in a nonviolent way, but also developed their creative potential and improved self-respect and self-confidence. Through another project, **Sport Heart**, we addressed inappropriate behavior at sport meetings. The project plan included interviews with our pupils – athletes, workshops for training pupils-judges, designing and making props, composing fan songs and organizing tournaments. We continued this project within the framework of the former Life Long Learning Programme, and in cooperation with six partner schools from European countries we created and implemented the project **Euroball**. Through the central task of making rules for new sport games, we again encouraged appropriate behavior on sport grounds and supported pupils for healthy lifestyles. The project **Let's Live Healthily and Grow up Happily** was oriented on raising awareness of the importance of proper nutrition and regular physical activity for growth and development of communication skills. All mentioned projects were continued through activities such as workshops, sport events and drama classes.

From our previous projects we learned that if we improve a sense of participation, encourage the working atmosphere and improve the functional and aesthetic appearance of the school and its surrounding, the rate of bullying and violence will lower.

This is a reason why we created the project **The School is my Sunny Home**. Since our school doesn't have a logo, a motto and a dress code, we decided to ask all pupils to give their proposals. With a help of volunteers from the local community we arranged a part of the school garden as Sunny Garden and organized Sunny Corner, a place in the school where pupils can have a rest, play games and socialize. (Our school celebrates the School Day on Day of Sun – 3rd May.) From pupils' responds we understood that there is still room not only for improving our school atmosphere and functional and aesthetic appearance but also to improve cooperation with the local community.

As a part of the project **The Good Mood School** we again arranged a part of the school garden – The Good Mood Garden with the reflexology path which is together with the choice of colours and scents of indigenous herbs in the function of relaxing its users. The municipality of Gradac financially supported upgrading of the school sport fields. Our school decorated a bench on the Gradac waterfront by our school colours and the school logo. In this way we brought the school closer to our fellow citizens and guests.

After completion of each project we asked pupils to fill an evaluation form. Feedback was generally positive and violence and bullying rate was low. The main problem that we have experienced was the

lack of motivation of some teachers, other staff in the school and some pupils, because any initiative besides the regular curriculum is considered as an extra burden. Sometimes the problem are finances which are not planned for such projects.

From our experience if we want to prevent violence and bullying, we do not need necessarily to deal only with this topic and prevention have to be included in the curriculum of all school subjects. Any achievement in improving pupils' confidence, self-respect and generally emotional status leads to lower rate of bullying and violence. This area also needs to be a part of teachers' studies education program. The continuity in projects implementation is also very important and every project has to take in consideration specifics of every school.