

Social competences
and Fundamental Rights
for preventing bullying



safer

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THE SAFER PROJECT

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Be the
HERO
for
reducing
bullying
to
ZERO



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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

OVERVIEW

1

Welcome to the 4th Issue of the SAFER Newsletter!

SAFER - SociAl competences and FundamEntal Rights for preventing bullying is a three-year project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (KA3-Social inclusion and common values: the contribution in the field of education and training) of the European Union that aims to develop and implement an innovative method for preventing school violence and bullying for fostering inclusive education.

The project is coordinated by the Fondazione Hallgarten Franchetti Centro Studi Villa Montesca in Italy and the partnership consists of the Giunti Psychometrics Srl (Italy), The Cyprus Observatory on School Violence - Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Cyprus), the Center for Intercultural Dialogue (North Macedonia), the Association Roditeli (Bulgaria), the Universidade do Algarve (Portugal), the European Anti-Bullying Network (Belgium) and the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Crete (Greece). The project has developed training materials for teachers, parents, students and members of the educational community.



Be the HERO
for reducing
bullying to ZERO!

The **PROGRESS** of the project

2

In this Newsletter, you will find out more about:

SAFER
Survey:
Results

Students'
Handbook

Teachers'
Manual

Guide
for Parents
and
Community

First steps
of the
Piloting Phase:
The experience
of Cyprus

A. The Results of SAFER Survey

The **SAFER** project has been created in order to develop and implement an innovative method to prevent dynamics of violence and bullying in school settings. How? By defining and structuring inclusive education through the promotion of the development of social and civic skills and the appropriation of positive common values and fundamental rights. The Whole School Approach (WSA), involving teachers, students, school staff and parents was applied as a primary prevention strategy.

This project involved a sample of European students (in average aged 14), to whom two questionnaires (**SAFER** – the ad hoc questionnaire created inside the project, and TPB – Test for preventing bullying, a semi-projective test published in Italy and standardized on the general population of children aged 9 to 18) were administered. The **SAFER** survey focused on group dynamics (e.g., who makes decisions inside a group, who executes) and, therefore, the definition of a group as democratic or hierarchical. Moreover, in a second part of the same survey, the focus shifted to the assessment of values, opinions and expectations

related to dynamics of violence and bullying and the evaluation of any direct or indirect experiences of them. As a result, it was possible to quantify the degree of psychosocial maladjustment and cyberbullying in class groups.

The **SAFER** results showed evidence that the most used social media among participants were WhatsApp and Instagram, with a strong preference and higher frequency for WhatsApp.

Other relevant results from the two measures used in the survey showed that:

- Classroom groups defined themselves predominantly as democratic groups, in which each member has the opportunity to propose and discuss with others what the best choice to implement is. Rarely, some students expressed they perceived low decision-making power within the class group
- Bullying was predominantly considered in a negative way.
- Students reported witnessing physical and verbal attacks outside the school and experiencing them firsthand online (verbal attacks)

- In almost all classes, the degree of psychosocial maladjustment and cyberbullying was below the cut-off, highlighting an adaptive outcome and the possibility of intervention through support and reinforcement of cooperative behavior.

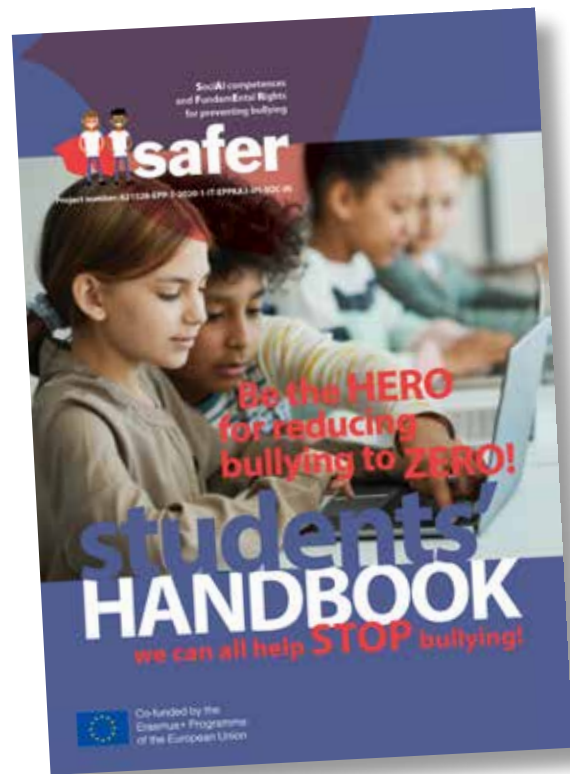
Another interesting aspect of the survey was related to the situational indicators measured, such as school, family, and peer group. Although the data from the measures were almost totally in the normality range, excluding the risk for bullying or cyberbullying, when considering the situational indicators, so that more than one environment (as said above school, family and peer groups) students reported - with a certain level of systematicity - the presence/observation of violent behaviors. This type of contextual variable can influence the risk for bullying episodes: the study of situational indicators provided, then, a wake-up call to pay attention to.

Guinti Psychometrics

B. Brief Introduction to the Students' Handbook

In the SAFER WSCA –Whole School and Community Approach– students have an important role in bullying prevention. That is why we designed a Students' Handbook specifically addressed to them. This highly practical guideline, which students can read and use by themselves, is conceived as a tool that can help each student to have a voice against bullying and the courage to be part of THE SOLUTION.

The Guide starts from a better understanding of what bullying really is, how many forms bullying looks like, what is cyberbullying and focuses the attention on the fact that bullying can happen to anyone and it's not always easy to recognize it.



At this regard, the Guide answers the commonly asked questions about bullying.

Then it provides step-by-step advices, linked to specific exercises that foster a process of “effective actions” against bullying: how to behave, what to do and not do if a student is bullied or if he/she sees bullying happening to someone else, inside or outside the school. In any situation, the guide tries to focus on the essential nucleus of effective actions.

Furthermore, the Handbook provides multiple levels of support for students including proactive strategies presented as a continuum of acknowledgements, supports, and educational interventions. In this framework, it takes into account the fundamental role of the school, the parents and the entire community in the perspective of work together for preventing bullying. The preventative strategies go beyond the typical anti-bullying programs and describe a pedagogical approach to create an environment and a community that discourages bullying.

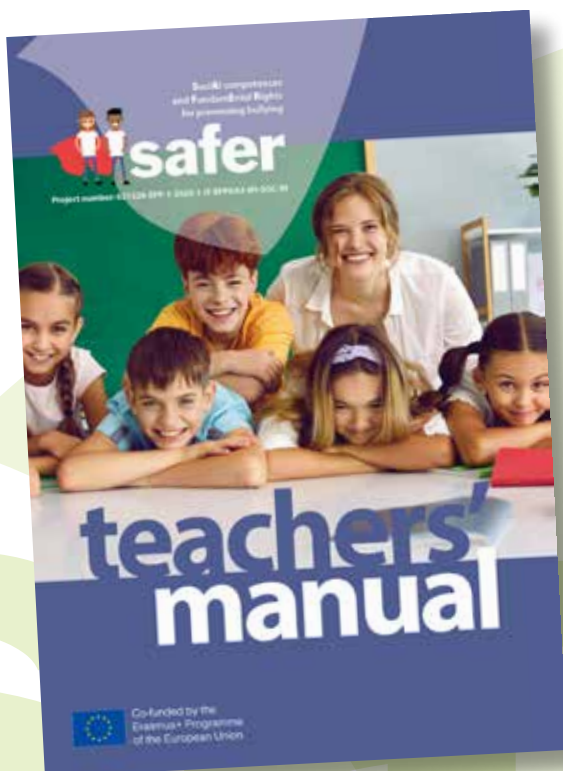
Overall, this is a very practical book, filled with suggestions of a variety of sound students' cen-

tered supporting strategies for preventing and intervening in bullying situations; the text material is presented in a visual and friendly way that helps readers understand the relationships among concepts.

**Fondazione Hallgarten
Francheti-Centro Studi Villa Montesca**

C. Brief introduction to the Teachers' Manual

The Teachers' Manual for the SAFER project is a valuable tool for the teachers who implement the Whole School and Community Approach (WSCA) on bullying. It consists of three parts. The first and second parts provide an overview of bullying and cyberbullying giving clear definitions, presenting the theoretical framework of the WSCA, as well as the SAFER strategies for bullying prevention and intervention inside and outside school. The third part is practical and includes hands-on learning activities to be carried out in the classroom.



The lesson plans, called learning experiences, focus on the acquisition of social and civic competences and make use of experiential techniques in order to encourage students to consider, react and suggest solutions to bullying situations that could be familiar to them. Special emphasis is also given to the cultivation of positive values and attitudes as well as the development of critical thinking.

The learning experiences cover seven different pedagogical topics, namely: 1. Bullying seen from the students eyes, 2. Identity in the community, 3. Social and civic competences in bullying prevention, 4. Teaching rights and values, 5. How to teach students to communicate and solve conflicts, 6. Empathy-Management of Emotions as Soft Skill/relationship with Life Skills, and 7. How to speak and provoke discussion about bullying.

Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Crete

D. Brief introduction to the Guide for Parents and Community

Bullying often evokes in us, as parents, personal dramas and flash backs into our childhood and adolescence as many people have been victims of bullying or have been bullies in their teen years. Many children and adolescents carry the effects of bullying into their adult lives and relationships. Bullying can happen anywhere and to anyone, in many different ways - at the playground, the classroom/school, the sports field or the park, in social media, online games and/or by messaging. Online and offline bullying are nowadays very much interconnected and can start offline and go online, and vice versa.

Bullying is a very serious and distressing experience for the children. This is why the role of the parents if and/or when a bullying situation appear



for our children in school or online (or both) is very important. It is crucial, as adults, we listen to children and young people without judging them and blaming them but rather to help them to find the support that they need.

The aim of SAFER Parents Guide is to provide short information to parents, caregivers and educational communities to help respond effectively to any concerns children and teens may have about bullying or if they are involved in bullying situation. Our short guide provides with tips and advices to parents and caregivers how to recognize signs of offline and online bullying, to prevent and tackle bullying inside and outside the school.

As adults and community, we all have the responsibility to discontinue it, no matter where or how it happens. All children and young people have the right to feel safe, secure, accepted and valued.

Association Roditeli



E. First steps of the Piloting Phase - The experience of Cyprus

The piloting phase of the educational material of SAFER has started in all the countries. Schools have embraced the Program with great interest. Students, teachers, parents and members of the educational community are very motivated and have started to pilot the material produced by enriching it with their own ideas for actions.

In Cyprus, the training of teachers on the topic of bullying and the educational material of the program has started with workshops and presentations. A large number of teachers from the three schools that participate in the piloting phase in Cyprus – Dimotiko Egkomis 1 (KB), Dimotiko Aglantzias 3 and Gymnasio Apostolos Pavlos, Paphos, have actively participated in the workshops and have expressed themselves very positively about the content of the trainings and the educational material.

The teachers have organized and started implementing the learning experiences with the children, integrating the material cross-curricularly into their school curriculum. Most of the teaching is experiential and uses material from the programs' manuals, but also from other sources - articles, videos and stories. Children acquire knowledge, skills and values that empower them to



become strong heroes in a safer school environment, inclusive, with zero tolerance for bullying. In addition, the schools are organizing themed days, are creating theatricals and short videos, are writing and composing songs, are painting walls, are making visual creations, etc.

The schools and trainers of the program have developed cooperation with the Associations of Parents and the Communities in which the schools operate. Training seminars for parents have already been held in specific schools.

The message of the Program has been promoted with the original and intelligent idea of the participation of the parents and children of Dimotiko Egkomi 1 (KB), in collaboration with parents and children of neighboring schools with a group of "heroes against school bullying" in the carnival parade. Parents and children spent a fun day with their families and friends, spreading the message 'Be a hero for reducing bullying to zero'. Empowered with the knowledge, skills and values of the program, dressed in their red capes, wearing jerseys and holding banners with the message and logo of the program that they made with the help of their teachers, they became strong anti-bullying and anti-violence heroes.

The community's interest in joining forces with the schools against school bullying was demonstrated in practice with the participation of the Mayor of the pilot's school, Dimotiko Aglantzias 3, Mr. Andreas Constantinou, in the information/training for the program that took place at the school with the participation of the teachers. In this training, ideas were submitted to promote the program's ideas to the community. Furthermore, the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus, Mrs. Annita Demetriou, has assumed the role of Ambassador of the program, acting as a role model for the children. Joint actions of the Ambassador with the students are planned.

That is just the beginning of the SAFER!

Cyprus Observatory on School Violence

Second FACE-TO-FACE meeting

3

The second Transnational Project Meeting of SAFER was hosted by Cyprus Observatory on School Violence, in Nicosia, Cyprus, on the 8th and 9th of November 2022. All partners of the SAFER project travelled from six countries (Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Portugal, North Macedonia and Belgium) to discuss the progress of the project implementation.

During the meeting, the partners presented and finalized the achieved progress up to date, on each work package, according to each partners' responsibilities. Furthermore, they had the opportunity to work in groups and revise the three Manuals, which are the main projects' deliverables: Students' Handbook, Teachers' Manual and Guide for the Parents and the Community. During the group working process, all the partners discussed thoroughly and exchanged opinions for the content of each Manual, in order to be finalized and ready to be used by schools in 2023.

The consortium, also, discussed ideas for the next dissemination activities, with the main goal to ensure the participation of a role model in each country. The agenda of the meeting was enriched with a walking tour of Nicosia within the city walls and a dinner at a traditional Cypriot tavern.

**Cyprus Observatory
on School Violence Team**



Third FACE-TO-FACE meeting

4

The third Transnational Project Meeting of SAFER was hosted by Universidade do Algarve (UAAlg), in Faro, Portugal, on the 22nd and 23rd of March 2023. All partners of the SAFER project travelled from six countries (Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, North Macedonia and Belgium) to discuss the progress of the project implementation and the piloting phase.

During the meeting, the partners presented and finalized the achieved progress up to date, on each work package, according to each part-ners' responsibilities. Furthermore, they have presented the activities that took place in each country concerning the piloting phase. All partners stated that teachers are very motivated and enthusiastic with the program and the manuals created. They think that the activities are very useful in the perspective of bullying prevention. Students are motivated as well, and very engaged and captivated. Parents and members of the educating community in some countries are very involved in the process and moved on with original and intelligent ideas on how to spread the anti-bullying message! Role models are already involved in some countries.

The consortium, also, discussed on the project Platform for students called "Students' Voices", on the Network platform of discussion, on the national multiplier events that will take place in each country and on the final conference that will take place in Brussels, in November 2023.

**Cyprus Observatory
on School Violence Team**



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Find out more about the SAFER project



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