

Bullying in Schools

A summary of research and anti-bullying initiatives

October 2015





empower children. eliminate bullying.

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Introduction

ENABLE (European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments) aims to contribute to the wellbeing of children by drawing on methodologies that have proven successful in tackling bullying to create a holistic, skill-development approach. The project will produce resources and promote peer advocacy to provide support and guidance to combat bullying in schools and in leisure environments. ENABLE is an EU co-funded project implemented by six core partners in five countries, supported by a Think Tank of 12 experts.

This document aims to provide an objective overview for the general reader; it is written by For Adolescent Health, Greece, edited by European Schoolnet, Belgium, and includes contributions from the other four ENABLE partners and Think Tank members. It brings together research findings on the phenomenon of bullying: what it is, its prevalence and prevention, anti-bullying programmes and their effectiveness, and the approach adopted in ENABLE activities: Social and Emotional Learning.

1. What is school bullying?

1.1 Defining bullying

Bullying is a subtype of aggressive behaviour, documented as early as the 18th century, but not considered a significant social problem until about 40 years ago.



There is no unified definition of bullying. A vague definition carries the risk of an overestimation of the phenomenon and of an over-classification of children as bullies or victims. Olweus (1993) defined bullying as repeated aggression towards a relatively powerless peer. Smith, Schneider, Smith, and Ananiadou (2004) defined bullying as “a particularly vicious kind of aggressive behaviour distinguished by repeated acts against weaker victims who cannot easily defend themselves” (p. 547).

Recently, a revised definition has been proposed, based on three key attributes: goal-directed behaviour, power imbalance and victim harm [Bullying is aggressive goal-oriented behaviour that harms another individual within the context of power imbalance (Volk et al., 2014)]. This revised definition recognises the power imbalance as an important feature of bullying, and as pivotal to developing effective anti-bullying interventions.

ENABLE uses the Anti-Bullying Alliance’s definition, which describes bullying as “the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological, it can happen face-to-face or in cyber space.”¹

There are five key features of bullying:

1. The bully intends to inflict harm or fear upon the victim.
2. Aggression toward the victim occurs repeatedly.
3. The victim does not provoke bullying behaviour by using verbal or physical aggression.
4. Bullying occurs in familiar social groups.
5. The bully is more powerful (either actual or perceived power) than the victim.

¹ <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/information-advice/what-is-bullying/>

1. What is school bullying?

1.2 Measuring bullying

The assessment of bullying needs to consider children's behaviours and experiences of bullying and their beliefs – such as what is/is not bullying, how they can handle it and what is expected of them. Some researchers criticise the use of definitions and terms (“bully”, “victim”) and prefer to use behavioural indicators. Accordingly, behavioural questions and acts are described and measured, such as “how often do you exclude others from games”. By avoiding definitions, researchers can safeguard against erroneous reporting based on misconceptions of bullying, because children may understand bullying quite differently from researchers.

It is important to involve children in the evolving definition of bullying. That is why ENABLE encourages children to contribute their ideas and feedback on the core features and definitions of bullying.

1.3 How do children perceive bullying?

Research suggests that children and adolescents hold an inconsistent understanding of bullying, different from that of researchers. Investigating the sources of their beliefs and attitudes is crucial in altering them.

In one study (Vaillancourt et al., 2008), younger children made more mention of physical aggression, general harassing behaviours and verbal aggression in their definitions, whereas the theme of relational aggression was most prominent in the middle years and reported more by girls than boys. Students who were given a definition of bullying reported being victimised less than students not provided with a definition.

Further research is needed to investigate not only where children and adolescents are acquiring their knowledge about bullying, but which sources affect and promote a change in the attitudes and beliefs they hold about those involved in bullying. By understanding sources of attitudes, policymakers will be in a better position to create effective anti-bullying curricula.

A small-scale pilot awareness-raising intervention conducted in Greece among 6th graders (Tzavela, Vlassi & Tsitsika, 2015) showed how a school-based intervention helped children define the phenomenon better, differentiate other forms of aggression from bullying, and bullying from teasing, and provide solutions such as “handling” perpetrators and assisting victims. Brief, structured, class-based awareness-raising activities can amend misconceptions and be effective in advancing children's' understanding of bullying, while empowering them with problem solving strategies.

1.4 Translating bullying terms

There are difficulties in translating or rendering the term ‘bullying’ into other languages, e.g. harcèlement (harassing) in French, mobning (mobbing) in Danish and Ekfovismos (scaring off) in Greek. Arora (1996) found that the word “bullying” can often be difficult to translate into other languages. Smorti, Menesini, and Smith (2003) found notable differences among countries and concluded that there is no single word to translate the word “bullying” that captures the exact, precise meaning. Smith, Cowie et al (2002) reported that due to cultural variations, pictures may be the only reliable method to collect cross-national comparable data.

1. What is school bullying?

Bullying forms can be further categorised as follows:

1.5 Forms of bullying

Researchers have identified several major subcategories of the bullying phenomenon that are evident across contexts and cultures.

Bullying behaviours can be divided into direct and indirect bullying, both involving cases in which children's rights are violated (Stavrinides, et al., 2010). Direct bullying, more common with boys, is overt behaviours, which include physical and verbal aggression. Indirect bullying, less easy to detect and more common among girls, includes the manipulation of social relationships to hurt (gossiping, spreading rumours) or socially exclude the individual being victimised (psychological or relational bullying).

- 1** **Physical bullying** – the easiest to identify – occurs when children use physical actions to exert and gain power and control over their targets. It is closely related to bullies' physical strength and due to this fact it usually occurs by older students against younger ones (Van Niekerk, 1993; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Byrne, 1994; Leach, 1997).
- 2** **Verbal bullying** involves writing or saying mean things in order to purposefully demean and hurt a person (Barone, 1997; Smith & Sharp, 1994).
- 3** **Relational aggression** – an insidious type of bullying that often goes unnoticed by parents and teachers – is a type of social manipulation where bullies deliberately prevent victims from joining or being part of a group by spreading malignant and false rumours, made-up stories, divulging secrets and breaking confidence (Krige, et al., 2000; Neser, et al., 2002). The victim will have difficulty in trusting others and forming good relationships, later in life.
- 4** **Sexual bullying** consists of harmful and diminishing actions or verbal expressions that target a person sexually. Examples include sexual name-calling, inappropriate comments about a student's sexuality, uninvited touching, and in extreme cases, sexual assault and harassment.
- 5** **Prejudicial bullying** refers to verbal, emotional and/or physical violence based on prejudices that students may have towards people of different races, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, social background, financial state, disability and generally towards people of any kind of differentiation from the bully's perceived norms.
- 6** **Extortion** refers to the theft or destruction of the victim's possessions, such as stealing the victim's money or destroying personal belongings with the use of threats and it can also involve coercing the victim into undesirable and antisocial acts.
- 7** **Cyberbullying involves bullying** peers through the use of technology. Examples include sending threatening or mean messages, spreading rumours and posting unflattering photos on sites with high visibility, hacking and exclusion of the victim from a network.
- 8** It is noteworthy to mention **self-bullying**, where victims send themselves hateful, harassing and/or harmful messages. Recent cases have shown that this is a growing phenomenon.

1. What is school bullying?

1.6 Cyberbullying

Just as youth's social interactions have shifted online, so have bullying behaviours. Cyberbullying has been defined as "an aggressive act or behaviour that is carried out using electronic means by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself" (Slonje et al., 2013, p. 26). Although cyberbullying constitutes a form of bullying, it differs from traditional bullying in several ways. One act of cyberbullying has the potential to cause repeated victimisation because other users/recipients can spread the original posting via social networking services (Slonje et al., 2013). In cyberbullying, an imbalance of power can be created by advanced skills in technology use and through anonymity, the latter propelling potential assaulters to engage in cyberbullying while perceiving low risk. Kowalski and Limber reported that almost half of the victims in their study did not know who cyberbullied them.

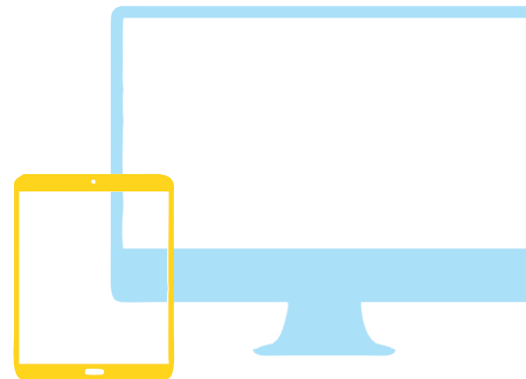
In 'traditional' bullying, the majority of bullying occurs in school or near school and during school hours. Therefore, access to bully targets can be controlled by changing a school's physical and social environments. Cyberbullying, in contrast, can occur at anytime and any place through smartphones (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

Cross et al (2015) found that adolescents experiencing social and emotional difficulties were more likely to be cyber- as well as traditionally bullied than those who were traditionally bullied only. Those targeted in both ways experienced more harm and stayed away from school more often than those who were traditionally bullied, suggesting higher levels of harm from a combination of these behaviours for adolescents over time.

1.7 Self-harassment & bullying

A phenomenon emerging online is 'self-harassing' by anonymously posting questions and then publicly answering them on social media sites. These self-sent posts can be hurtful, cruel, bullying and sometimes inciting self-harm and suicide. Experts and researchers have termed this 'self-harassment/bullying' or 'digital self-harm' but these terms have yet not been clinically confirmed. Whilst research is limited, one US study by Elizabeth Englander (2012) highlighted that nine per cent of the subjects in her study had falsely posted a cruel remark 'against' themselves, or cyber-bullied themselves at high school. The researcher dana boyd suggests three possible reasons for this behavior: 'self-harmers might be uttering a "cry for help", they might want to appear "cool", or they may be trying to "trigger" compliments'.

Further research is needed to explore this behaviour, but parents and teachers should consider that in some cases of hurtful and bullying posts on social media – and particularly where anonymous posts are allowed – it may be that the victim is the actual author. This poses further questions to caretakers and mental health experts regarding what triggers such behaviour and how to assist children with a tendency towards 'digital self-harm'.





1.8 Consequences of bullying

All forms of bullying have adverse consequences both short and long term to children's psycho-emotional development and the learning process (Smith et al., 2004, Georgiou & Stavriniades, 2008; Stavriniades, et al., 2010).

In a two-year longitudinal study among a large sample of Dutch first-year secondary school students, Bannink and colleagues (2014) found that, among girls, both traditional and cyberbullying victimisation were associated with mental health problems. Social and emotional difficulties may contribute to victimisation by limiting adolescent social skills, self-esteem and behavioural regulatory abilities (Kaltiala-Heino et al, 2010), and the victimisation experience may in turn contribute to further social exclusion, social isolation and psychological distress.

Bullies also face negative consequences: increased anxiety, risk of school failure, antisocial and often delinquent behaviours and an increased likelihood of adult criminality.

Bystanders hesitate to associate with the victims because they are afraid of being victims of bullying themselves (Rivers et al, 2009). Through observation of bullying, they learn to believe in the justice of the strong and powerful and can develop feelings of helplessness and guilt because of their difficulty to intervene in bullying incidents.



For victims the most frequent effects include:

- Depression, anxiety (Kaltiala-Heino, 2010).
- Suicidal ideation and behaviours (Holt et al., 2015).
- Social adjustment difficulties and loneliness (Nansel et al. 2001).
- Low self-esteem (Salmivalli et al., 1999).
- Impaired academic achievement (Nansel et al., 2001), linked to school disengagement and absenteeism.
- Psychosomatic problems (Gini & Pozzoli, 2013). Victims are likely to experience headaches, abdominal pains, sleep disorders, bedwetting etc.

2. How prevalent are bullying and victimisation?

The prevalence of bullying and victimisation varies between developmental periods (middle childhood-preadolescence-adolescence), developmental contexts (online-offline) and countries.

Each developmental period and context elicits and facilitates different patterns and forms of bullying. Olweus (1993) concluded that 15% of children from primary and junior high school samples were involved in regular interactions as either bullies or victims, with 3% being bullied and 2% bullying others at least once per week. A study of more than 25,000 Australian children found that approximately one in seven children experienced bullying at least once per week (Rigby, 1997). Since these early investigations, numerous large-scale prevalence studies have been conducted in populations across the world, with the largest ones being conducted in Norway, Australia and the United Kingdom.

2.1 Findings from international studies

Although bullying transcends cultures, its prevalence varies widely between countries.

The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC), an international survey of adolescents in Europe and North America, began in 1983 and describes patterns and issues relevant to adolescents' health and well-being, enabling an increased understanding of how health varies across countries and with age, gender and social-economic status (Currie et al., 2012)². Findings revealed strikingly different rates of victimisation across countries. For example, on average 13% of 11-year-olds had been bullied at school at least twice in the previous two months, ranging from 2% (Armenian girls) to 32% (Lithuanian boys). 11% of 13-year-olds had bullied others at school at least twice in the previous 2 months, ranging from 1% (Norwegian girls) to 35% (Romanian boys).

Bullying involvement varies considerably among youngsters in Belgium, Denmark, Greece and England (countries taking part in the ENABLE project), with Flemish Belgium 13-year-olds reporting the highest rates of involvement in bullying (43%), while English 11-year-olds report lowest bullying rates, the lowest rates being among English and Danish 11-year-olds and highest among Greek 15-year-olds.

The prevalence and forms of bullying and victimisation change with age. Direct aggression of a physical or verbal nature is common in young children (Ayers et al., 1999). With increasing age, physical aggression tends to decrease

² http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/163857/Social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.pdf

2. How prevalent are bullying and victimisation?

and verbal aggression increase (Nishina, Juvonen, 2005). Cognitive and social development allows children to become more “skilled” in indirect forms of aggression. That is why the ENABLE project focuses on early adolescence as a critical period for intervening by promoting awareness of bullying behaviours and building coping skills.

The 2010 HBSC survey found that victimisation generally declines with age (Currie et al., 2012). Craig et al. (2009) suggest that reduction in victimisation with increasing age could be attributable to social development, or may reflect equalisation in physical sizes and consequently increased effectiveness at inhibiting bullying, or may reflect contextual differences between elementary, middle and high school in social climate and academic demands. Among ENABLE countries, stability in bullying prevalence across ages is seen in Belgium and Denmark; in England, there is an increase in bullying involvement until 13 years; and in Greece a continuing increase through 15 years.

In the HBSC study, boys reported higher rates of bullying in all countries. Rates of victimisation were higher for girls in 29 of 40 countries. Rates of victimisation decreased by age in 30 of the 40 (boys) and 25 of the 39 (girls) countries (Craig et al., 2009). Gender differences were usually less than 10% (Currie et al., 2012).

2.2 How prevalent are cyberbullying and victimisation?

Wide variations have been reported across studies and across countries, especially in cyber-victimisation. A recent review concluded that about 24% of young people report being victimised online and 17% report bullying others online (Patchin & Hindura, 2012). Additionally, the prevalence of cyberbullying and cyber-victimisation varies between developmental periods (pre-adolescence to adolescence) and seems to be particularly prevalent in early adolescence. Ybarra and Mitchell (2007) found that as age increases, so does the likelihood and frequency of cyberbullying. It appears that younger youth engage more in traditional (offline) bullying, while older youth engage more frequently in cyberbullying.

Large-scale investigations across EU countries facilitate comparisons and draw a clear aggregate picture of the phenomenon. EU Kids Online is a thematic network of 33 countries that aims to enhance knowledge of European children’s online opportunities, risks and safety. In 2009-2010, the EU KIDS Online team conducted a face-to-face, home survey of 25,000 internet-using children aged 9-16 years old and their parents.

A crucial finding from EU Kids Online research is that increasing internet access brings both increased opportunities but also increased risks. Being cyberbullied is reported by a small minority of 9 to 16 year-olds: only 6% of 9-16 year-olds have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online, and 3% have sent such messages to others. More bullying occurs offline than online: 19% had been bullied either online or offline (compared with 6% online), and 12% had bullied someone else online or offline (vs. 3% online). Most children do not report being bothered or upset when they go online (Haddon & Livingstone, 2012).

The EU NET ADB project was carried out across Greece, Spain, Poland, Germany, Romania, the Netherlands and Iceland with a representative sample of 14-17 year olds. Findings showed that 21.9% said they had been bullied on the internet (Tsitsika et al., 2015).

The proportion was greater for girls than boys, for the older age group compared to

2. How prevalent are bullying and victimisation?

the younger one, and among those whose parents' educational level was low/middle compared to those whose parents' educational level was high (Table 2.1). The proportion of adolescents who stated they had ever been bullied on the internet was highest in Romania and lowest in Spain and Iceland. Age and parental education level were significantly associated with cyberbullying.

	Percentage of respondents reporting having been bullied on the internet in the previous 12 months
All adolescents in EU NET ADB	21.9
Female	24.1
Male	19.5
14-15 years old	20.5
16-17 years old	24.2
Parent/s with low/middle educational level	24.2
Parent/s with high educational level	21.2



Table 2.1. Bullying prevalence in Europe - EU NET ADB findings

2. How prevalent are bullying and victimisation?



Net Children Go Mobile was a project³ across Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK to investigate the changing conditions of internet access and use. The comparative report findings from EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Ólafsson & Haddon, 2014), comparing 2010 EU Kids data with 2013-14 Net children Go Mobile data, reveal that cyberbullying is on the rise. The percentage of children aged 11-16 years old who reported receiving nasty or hurtful ('cyberbullying') messages (in the last 12 months) rose from 7% to 12% especially among girls. Among 13-14 year-olds, the rate of cyberbullying has increased from 8% (2010) to 15% (2013-14) in four years.

Risk does not necessarily result in harm – children may be resilient to the risks they encounter online. However, the proportion of children who reported being bothered or upset online in the past year has increased from 13% to 17%. The biggest increases in recent years are among girls and teenagers.

Each ENABLE country conducted a national review of bullying and cyberbullying studies and consolidated the information in a national fiche available at <http://enable.eun.org>.

³ www.netchildrengomobile.eu/

3. Preventing bullying

Bullying behaviours take place within a multi-layered system, an ecology of bullying, in which the individual is placed at the centre of a cycle (Fig. 3.1), and the systems in which the child lives and interacts, and which shape his/her development, are depicted as concentric cycles around him/her; these cycles denote the micro, meso, and macro levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

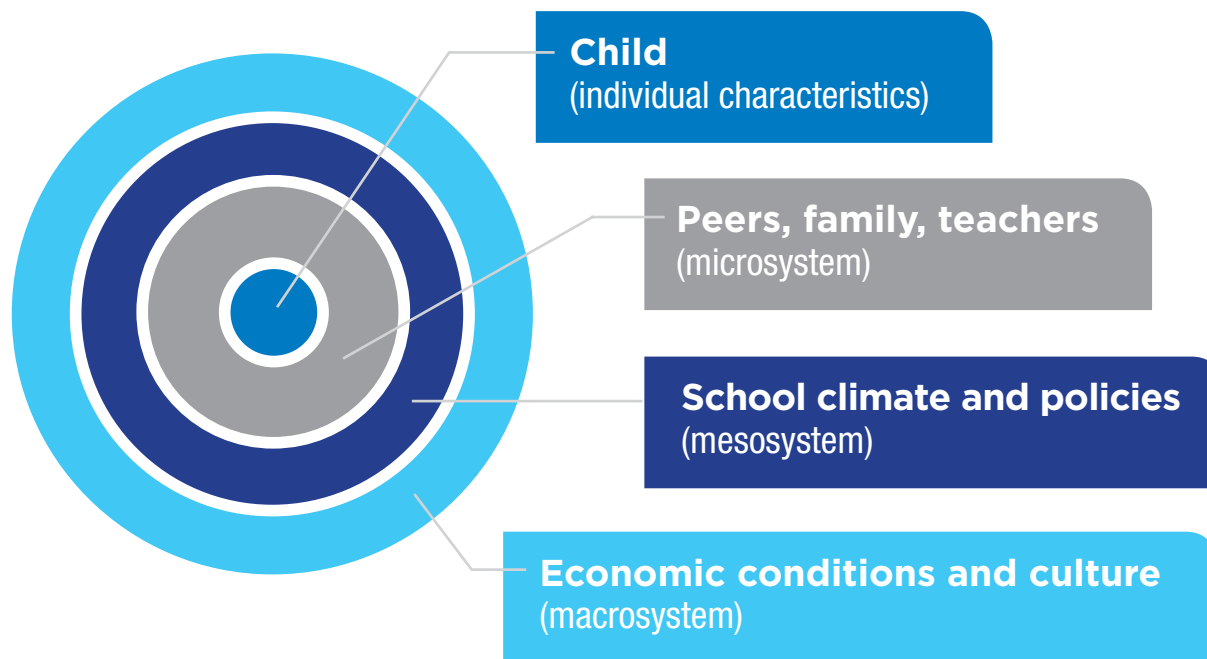


Fig. 3.1. The ecology of bullying

There are two types of predictors of problem behaviour: risk factors that make it more likely that someone will develop a problem behaviour, and protective factors that reduce its likelihood. The more risk factors linked to bullying a child encounters, the higher the likelihood of being involved in bullying. Bullying prevention aims to prevent adolescent bullying behaviour through reducing risk and enhancing protective mechanisms. Individual risk and protective factors interact with contextual risk factors and bring about different bullying behaviours and roles.

Individual risk factors include intra-personal (emotional, temperamental) and inter-personal (social competence) factors. Of contextual risk factors, most influential are proximal risks directly exerted at the microsystem level: family members, peers, and other individuals such as teachers. In ecological prevention efforts, risk factors are targeted, while the respective protective factors are promoted in each domain of functioning: peer group, child-parent relations and school characteristics and relations with teachers. Risk and protective factors are summarised in Table 3.1.

3. Preventing bullying

	Risk factors for bullying	Protective factors/skills
Individual	Low empathy	Empathy
	Low emotional awareness/regulation	Emotion recognition and management
	Low school engagement	School engagement
	Lack of appropriate assertiveness	Effective online communication skills and practices
	Inadequate problem solving	Appropriate assertiveness
	Low peer acceptance/peer rejection	
	Low social self-efficacy	
	Social cognitive biases	Pro-social skills and attitudes
Peer group	Anti-social /Pro-bullying attitudes	Social self-efficacy
	Moral disengagement	Social competence
	Under-developed digital coping skills (cyberbullying)	
	Low awareness of online communication risks (cyberbullying)	
	Anti-social norms/ Normative beliefs about bullying prevailing	Cooperative interactions promoting a cooperative culture
	Power assertion practices	Perceived support
	Low peer support	Bystander power to assist
	Aggressive behaviour rewarded by peers	Cooperative problem solving
Parents	Family conflict and poor communication	Supportive parent-child communication
	Loose parental involvement/monitoring/ineffective parenting	Parental school involvement
	Exposure to aggression at home	Age-appropriate parental support and monitoring (on- and offline)
Teachers/ School	Negative school climate	Supportive-caring school/classroom climate
	Low school connectedness	Instructional support and feedback
	Distant student-teacher relations	Explicit rules about what is/is not acceptable
	Implicit acceptance of bullying episodes-Lack/inconsistent negative consequences for bullying behaviours	

Table 3.1. Factors encouraging and preventing bullying

3.1 Individual risk factors

Gender effects are evidenced across bullying types. Boys are consistently found to report more frequent involvement in bullying behaviour than girls (Espelage and Holt, 2001; Nansel et al., 2001), especially in overt types of bullying. Girls, on the other hand, tend to engage in relational or indirect bullying (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2004). Recent evidence suggests that girls are more involved in cyberbullying (Tsitsika et al. 2015; Cross et al., 2015). Bullying behaviours have been shown to be influenced by age. Physical characteristics such as weight can also influence victimisation experiences at school.

The most prevalent profile of young bullies is that they are aggressive and socially unskilled. Bullies are more likely to possess an impulsive temperament (Bernstein & Watson, 1997). Other important individual risk factors are low impulsiveness and low empathy (Farrington & Baldry, 2010). Low self-control has been linked to bullying, but not to victimisation (Unnever & Cornell, 2003). Children who bully have difficulty with rules, and exhibit poor school adjustment (Nansel et al., 2004; Olweus, 1993). Empathy is another characteristic that has been linked with bullying (Espelage et al., 2004). An Italian study (Gini et al., 2007) reported that for boys low levels of empathic responsiveness were associated with bullying involvement, while empathy was positively associated with assisting student victims.

Developing children's empathy, emotion regulation and problem solving skills are key learning objectives of ENABLE lesson plans.

Children who are bullied (victimised) report psychosocial problems; depression and anxiety are common symptoms experienced by victims (Espelage et al., 2001, Espelage and Swearer, 2003). Children who are bullied also report peer difficulties, loneliness, psychological distress and social anxiety (Eslea et al, 2004; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004; Nansel et al., 2001;). In addition, low self-esteem has been found among victims (Andreou, 2004, Salmivalli and colleagues,1999).

Most of these psychosocial characteristics have been shown to be both precursors (causes) and consequences of bullying experiences, and a cyclical process seems to be present.

3.2 Peer group relations

As adolescents seek autonomy from their parents, they turn to peers for social support. Peer rejection and lack of peer support are risk factors for psychosocial adjustment, while friendships and peer acceptance are crucial for adolescent positive development and school adjustment. Peer rejection, low social support and deviant affiliations all constitute risk factors for school bullying victimisation, and friendships can serve as an effective buffer against peer victimisation (Schmidt and Bagwell, 2007). Negative peer relationships are central to the problem of bullying (Spriggs et al., 2007).

Bullying incidence increases when endorsed by a peer group and regarded as a group norm (Duffy & Nesdale, 2010). A peer and school culture that supports bullying is more likely to have individuals who view this behaviour as acceptable, further increasing normative support for bullying (Williams & Guerra, 2007). A consistent finding in both the aggression and bullying literature is that children who endorse normative beliefs supporting bullying behaviour are more likely to be perpetrators (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997).

Bullies strive for dominance over peers, and have the primary aim to maintain a dominant position in the peer group (Adler & Adler, 1998). Olthof and Goossens (2008) found that 10-13 year-old boys who engage in bullying behaviours sought acceptance of other boys.

3. Preventing bullying

Victims are typically children with low assertiveness or who exhibit social introversion. Victimisation, and the harm experienced from victimisation, is perpetuated through lack of help-seeking behaviours and difficulties coping with bullying incidents.

Bystanders play multiple roles, often encouraging the bully and contributing to the levels and frequency of bullying (Salmivalli et al. 2011). Girls are more likely to be empathic and supportive of the victims, while boys believe that victims 'deserved what happened to them' (Rigby, 1997).



In short, peer group relations and dynamics are highly relevant in bullying prevention and intervention programs (Salmivalli, 2010), an approach that is embraced by ENABLE.

3.3 Family context and child-parent relations

Parents model behavioural patterns and condition their children in forming and maintaining relationships. Parents also introduce and reinforce behavioural attitudes and norms. Lereya, Samara & Wolke, (2013) showed that both victims and those who both bully and are victims (bully/victims) were more likely to be exposed to negative parenting behaviour including abuse and neglect and maladaptive parenting. Positive parenting – including good parent-child communication, warm and affectionate relationships, parental involvement and support and parental supervision – was found to be protective against peer victimisation. Another study showed that youth are likely to become victims if the mother hinders the development of autonomy in boys or connectedness in girls (Duncan, 2004). Boys with overprotective mothers are likely to be victimised by their peers due to limited practice and underdeveloped coping and conflict resolution skills. Moreover, overprotection may hinder the development of a sense of autonomy necessary for obtaining and maintaining status in their peer group.

Parental conflict at home and family conflict (Stevens et al., 2002) and maltreatment (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001) have been consistently linked with bullying behaviours. Baldry's (2003) study in a sample of Italian youth found that both boys and girls who witnessed violence between their parents were significantly more likely to bully their peers. Maltreated children may feel powerless, as they are unable to protect themselves from harm (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). Several studies have shown a link between sibling and school bullying (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

ENABLE reaches out to parents involving them both in the needs assessment phase and in promoting parents' skills development.



3.4 School factors

Both bullies and victims report lower school attachment than non-involved peers (Haynie, Nansel, Eitel, Crump, Saylor, Yu et al., 2001). Although perpetrators are generally found to have low academic achievement (Nansel, Overpeck et al., 2001), victimisation appears related to both high and low academic achievement (Bishop et al, 2004). Olweus found that children who bully were only slightly below average in academic performance, although they held negative attitudes towards schoolwork and learning.

Students in schools with consistent enforcement of school discipline and availability of caring adults experienced lower levels of bullying and victimisation. Moreover, students who perceived their teachers and other school staff to be supportive are more likely to endorse positive attitudes toward seeking help for bullying, suggesting that a supportive school climate is a potentially valuable strategy for engaging students in the prevention of bullying (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2010).

Teachers' involvement in their students' academic and social lives significantly decreased students' feeling unsafe in their school (Hong & Eamon, 2011) and conversely non-intervention may be linked to lowering the chances that students will seek help from them.

Curricula in ENABLE countries show distinct contextual differences. The UK and Denmark have educational modules to safeguard students' wellbeing and developmental needs, while Greece lags behind in core educational modules, but supplements them with local district initiatives. In ENABLE, educational objectives may therefore need to be adapted to existing educational structures and curricula.





4. Anti-bullying initiatives

Many programmes, projects and initiatives to reduce bullying are underway worldwide, based to a greater or lesser extent on the research findings described above.

Many follow the Olweus Bully Prevention model programme, which aims to create a safe and positive school climate, improve peer relations, and increase awareness of and reduce the opportunities and rewards for bullying behaviour (Olweus, 1994). KiVa is another programme (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996), which aims to change bullying-related norms and reduce both bullying perpetration and experienced victimisation. Conflict-resolution pedagogy and promotion of accountability of children's behaviour are approaches used in some programmes. Others employ the restorative justice model, which uses reconciliation techniques (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006). More recently, a skills-promotion approach has been developed, known as SEL (Social and Emotional Learning), described in more detail in the following chapter.

These and other programmes and the projects and initiatives arising from them are more fully described in data sheets on the ENABLE web site at <http://enable.eun.org>, under headings which include duration, countries, funding, aims, approach and impact.

4.1 EU programmes: Daphne and Comenius

Daphne I aimed to contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence (including violence in the form of sexual exploitation and abuse), by taking measures for the prevention of violence, providing support for victims of violence and by raising awareness in order to prevent future exposure to violence. Daphne II is the second phase of the Daphne programme. Its aim is to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women by taking preventive measures and providing support for victims. It also seeks to assist organisations that are active in this field and to encourage cooperation between them. The Daphne III programme also aims to prevent and combat all forms of violence, especially of a physical, sexual or psychological nature, against children, young people and women. It also aims to protect victims and groups at risk and strives to foster a high level of physical and mental health protection, wellbeing and social cohesion throughout the European Union.

There are several projects of note funded under Daphne. The 'European Network Against Bullying', for example, which aims to develop a network to coordinate actions in order to address bullying at a European level. The project is implemented with the direct participation of 17 partners from 12 Member States of the European Union, representing 62% of the European population. The

I Am Not Scared programme aimed to determine best European strategies to prevent and address the bullying phenomenon. The purpose of the project was to involve vocational education teachers, directors, pupils, parents, counsellors and key policy makers in the field of education in a common reflection on the issue of school violence.

Some Comenius projects aim to prevent and tackle bullying in schools, for example 'Bullying of adolescents: prevention and treatment methods in schools' aimed to analyse the effects of school bullying in Greece and Cyprus, as well as the investigation of methods for effective communication between adolescents, parents and teachers. It includes research studies involving both teachers and students, and joint training activities, seminars, workshops, lectures and workshops.

4.2 Programmes in ENABLE partner countries

In Belgium, actors from NGOs to public bodies have addressed cyberbullying. In partnership with national organisations, Childfocus, part of the INSAFE network, has set up two websites in addition to their own (clicksafe.be): Webetic.be (French) and Veiligonline.be (Flemish). The Belgian Government has launched Stopcyberhate, a campaign, website and an app, set up in cooperation with the Federal Police and 103écoute, the helpline for children. There are also regional initiatives, for example Yapaka, the Brussels and Wallonia Federation portal covering cyberbullying prevention and online safety.

In Croatia, the UNICEF programme For a Safe and Stimulating Environment in Schools was implemented under the slogan 'Stop Violence among Children'. More than 140,000 children from 280 schools in 95 cities and villages participated in the program, and over 10,000 teachers were trained. 153 schools successfully implemented all its elements and were awarded the Violence-Free School certificate. 135,000 copies of the parents' manual *How to stop bullying* were printed and distributed, as well as 140,000 notebooks/manuals for children on the subject 'Stop Violence among Children'. Evaluation showed

4. Anti-bullying initiatives

that the programme reduced the level of violence by 50%, and increased teachers' competences.

Prevention is a key element in Denmark. Almost every programme deals with the prevention of bullying instead of intervention. Sites like DCUM, eXbus and Mobbeland.dk (anti-bullying consultants) and many others provide a variety of concise exercises for intervention. Three programs in particular have been implemented in Denmark: Free of Bullying, Tactile Back Massage (Taktil Rygmassage) and Mobiles against Bullying (Mobiler Mod Mobning). These and the fact that all schools must offer an online anti-bullying-strategy prove to be a combination that suits a small country like Denmark.

In Greece, very few anti-bullying initiatives have taken place, primarily due to lack of anti-bullying policy and funding. Four structured, theory-based, anti-bullying programs have been evaluated so far (Andreou et al., 2007): Stop School Bullying, Stop Bullying, Understanding School Bullying, and Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying. All four studies were prevention programs conducted in class by classroom teachers and were shown to be efficacious in the short term in reducing bullying and bystanders' behaviours. A six-month follow-up indicated limited long-term effectiveness. More recently, the Ministry of Education has implemented acts of parliament to create a permanent structure to prevent and address school bullying nationwide, train education officials and teachers, record, prevent, diagnose and treat at an early stage school violence and bullying, and raise awareness and the active participation of the educational community, the family and the wider community.

In the United Kingdom, many initiatives have been implemented, in particular ZAP (Kidscape in 2012-13), Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme (Diana Award in 2011), Roots of Empathy Programme (Action for Children Scotland and Inspiring Scotland in 2010), All together now! (Save the Children Northern Ireland in 2006-2009) and KiVa (Bangor University Wales). All focused on the bystander, culture and building up resilience within the victim, whether through group/classroom-based activities or the development of empathy. Evaluations showed that focusing on the development of a culture

of support and reporting are the most effective interventions. Where schools have an active prevention programme, clear policy and culture of supporting the victim, developing empathy within classrooms, supporting students to be peer mentors, and engaging with parents, the outcomes are very positive.

4.3 Initiatives outside Europe

In the United States, many anti-bullying projects focus on social and emotional skill development. 12 such programmes are summarised in Table 4.1, together with the result of evaluations in terms of positive and problem behaviour and academic results.



Programme	Programme details		Evaluation / outcome			
	Grades	Number of lessons per school year	Grade	Improved Positive Behaviour	Reduced Conduct Problems	Improved Academic Performance
4Rs	Pre K-8	35	3-4	●	●	●
Caring School Community	K-6	30-35	K-6	●	●	●
Michigan Model of Health	K-12	8-14	4-5	●	●	
MindUp	Pre K-8	15	4-7	●	●	
Open Circle	K-5	34 + supplementary	4	●	●	
PATHS	Pre K-6	40-52	K-5	●	●	●
Positive Action	Pre K-12	140	K-5		●	●
Raising Healthy Children	K-6	n/a	1-6	●	●	●
RULER	K-8	16 + Supplementary daily	5-6	●		●
Second Step	Pre K-8	22-28 weekly topics	1-6	●	●	
Social Decision Making Problem Solving	K-8	30 topics	4-5	●	●	●
Steps to Respect	3-6	11+ 2 literature units	3-6	●	●	

Table 4.1: US Social and Emotional Learning programmes



4. Anti-bullying initiatives

4.4 Evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions

Evaluation of these and other programmes reveals that peer support is a widely used anti-bullying intervention in schools. Cowie and Hutson found that success came from young people:

The method includes bystanders and can contribute to the creation of a learning environment in which psychological health and emotional literacy are valued.

Vreeman and Carroll (2007) reviewed 26 studies, and found fewer than half reported decreases in bullying. Merrell et al. (2008) investigated 16 studies and found that positive effects were found for only one-third of the study outcomes, mainly improved knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of bullying. Ttofi, Farrington, and Baldry (2008) evaluated 44 bullying intervention studies, mostly based on the Olweus Program, and found that bullying and victimisation were reduced by 17 to 23 percent in experimental schools, as compared to control schools. Analysis of 44 studies by Ttofi & Farrington (2011) also showed reductions of 17-23% for bullying and 17-20% for being bullied/victimisation, in initiatives that included disciplinary (non-punitive) methods, parent training/meetings, cooperative group work (among teachers and other professionals).



- Working together outside friendship groups, reducing prejudice and fostering trust across gender and ethnic groups;
- Having opportunities to develop communication skills, share information and reflect on one's own emotions in relationships with others;
- Dealing with conflict and helping peers relate to one another in a constructive, non-violent way.



Rates of bullying decreased the more the following elements (in particular the first three) were included and the longer the intervention lasted:

- Disciplinary methods
- Parent information (including training and meetings)
- Cooperative group work (using video)
- Improved playground supervision
- Classroom management
- Teacher training
- Classroom rules
- A whole-school anti-bullying policy
- A greater number of elements and duration.

Building on these findings, ENABLE focuses on peer mentoring for young people, parents and teachers to improve relations between and across the groups that constitute the school eco-system and in particular to improve social and emotional skills as a means of developing greater empathy.

5. A deeper look at social and emotional learning programmes

Both research into bullying and evaluation findings of anti-bullying initiatives are leading to a recognition that multifaceted approaches are needed, comprising a school-wide component centred on training, awareness, monitoring, and assessment of bullying; a classroom component focused on reinforcing rules and building social and emotional skills (SEL); and an intervention component for students who are frequently involved in bullying episodes.

5.1 Theoretical background

Social and Emotional Learning programmes are grounded in research showing that many forms of aggression and victimisation share common risk and protective factors such as lack of empathy (Endresen & Olweus, 2001) and attitudes supporting aggression (Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002), often at play in the same contexts (Espelage, Low & Polanin, 2013). SEL prevention programmes target multiple risk and protective factors in order to decrease multiple forms of violence and increase adaptive behaviours. Lessons are reinforced in both classroom and non-classroom settings, as well as during out-of-school activities and at home. Teachers receive ongoing professional development in SEL, and families and schools work together to promote children's social, emotional and academic success. SEL Programmes address five groups of inter-related core social and emotional competencies (Payton et al., 2008):



5. A deeper look at social and emotional learning programmes

- 1 Self-awareness:** assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a sense of self-confidence;
- 2 Self-management:** regulating one's emotions to handle stress, controlling impulses, and persevering in addressing challenges; expressing emotions appropriately; setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals;
- 3 Social awareness:** empathising with others; recognising and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; and recognising and making best use of family, school, and community resources;
- 4 Relationship skills:** establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; and seeking help when needed;
- 5 Responsible decision making:** making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; and contributing to the well-being of one's school and community.

There is a wide range of support materials available to support SEL approaches, in particular from the US (listed at <http://enable.eun.org>).

5.2 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEL programmes

Best practice in SEL Programmes (Elias et al., 1997; Zins et al., 2004) was found to include:

- Linking social-emotional instruction to standard curricula without taking time and focus from other academic areas;
- Providing differentiated instructional procedures;
- Involving parents;
- Training and supporting teachers and staff; and
- Demonstrating programme quality through empirical evidence.

5. A deeper look at social and emotional learning programmes

SEL programmes (CASEL, 2015) can foster educational and social conditions that make bullying far less likely because bullying cannot flourish in a safe and caring learning environment characterised by:

- Supportive relationships between teachers and students and among students that encourage open communication and positive ways to resolve problems and conflicts.
- Good working relationships between schools and families that foster two-way communication about student growth and development.
- School norms, values, and policies that emphasise respect for others and appreciation of differences.
- Students aware of and able to manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging social situations constructively.

Meta-analyses (Durlak et al, 2011) found SEL Programmes to be associated with greater well-being, reduced bullying and aggression, improved social, emotional and academic skills as well as more pro-social behaviour and positive attitudes toward the self and others, and lower levels of emotional distress.



5. A deeper look at social and emotional learning programmes



5.3 Peer support

An important element of SEL programmes is peer support, reducing the negative impact of bullying on victims and making it more acceptable for them to report it. In the UK, Banerjee et al (2010) concluded that mentors in Beat Bullying programmes provided positive support systems to their peers, especially in the transition from primary to secondary school. Cowie and Wallace (2000) found that young people need to be given opportunities to:

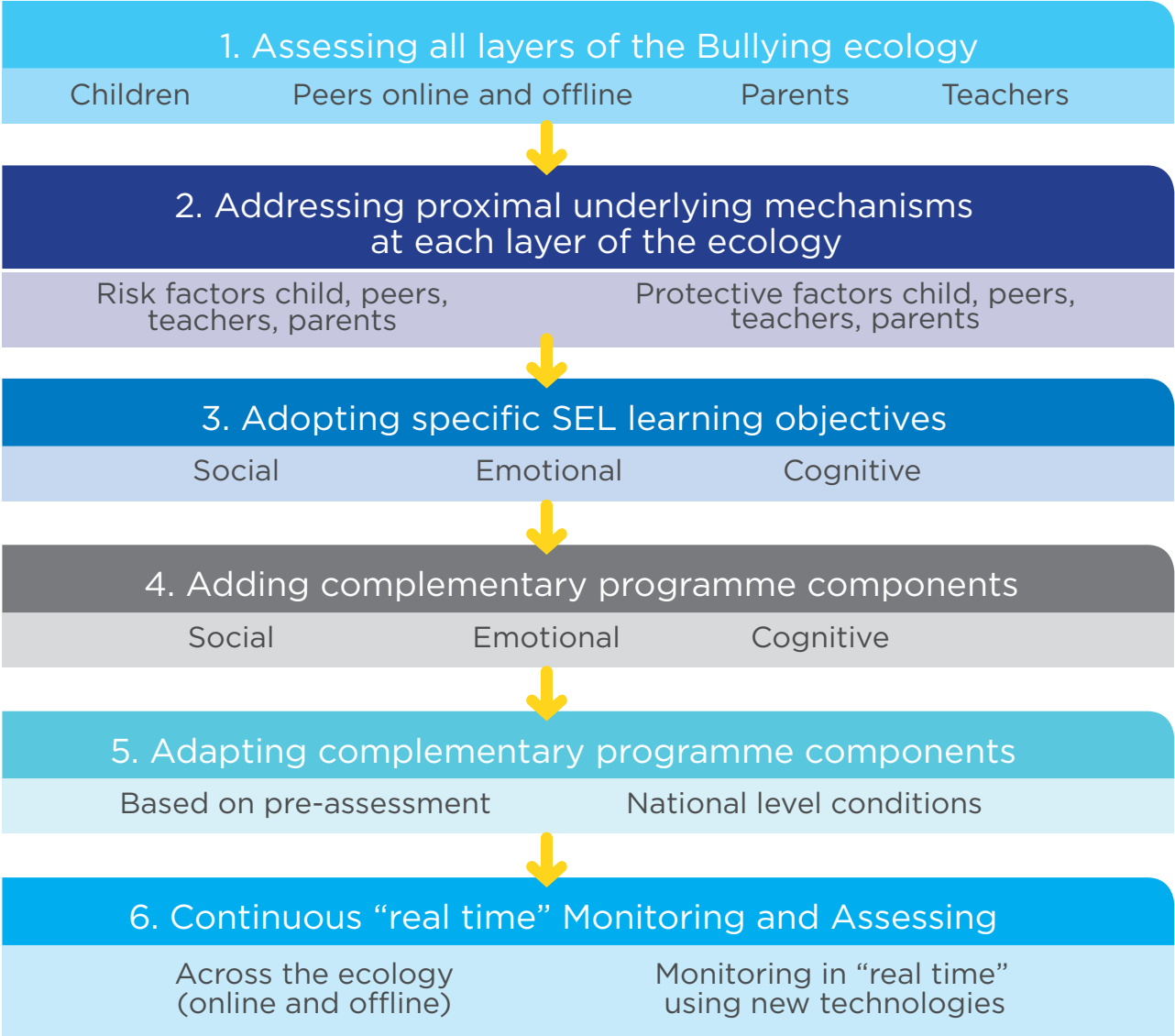
- Work together outside friendship groups aiming to reduce prejudice and foster trust across gender and ethnic groups
- Develop communication skills, to share information and to reflect on their own emotions in relationships with others
- Deal with conflict and to help peers to relate to one another in non-violent ways.

In the UK, Banerjee et al (2010) concluded that mentors in BeatBullying programmes provided positive support systems to their peers, especially in the transition from primary to secondary school.

5.4 The ENABLE programme

The ENABLE programme is guided by the results of research and the SEL movement and features innovative “real time” implementation and assessment practices using new technologies. Adaptable to national cultural and policy conditions, it is a systemic approach that addresses not only the social context but also the underlying mechanisms of bullying. The programme has a competence-promotion approach with specific learning objectives based on SEL modules, supplemented by components to develop cyber-skills (Table 5.1).

5. A deeper look at social and emotional learning programmes



ENABLE embraces the SEL movement and aims to apply SEL theory and practice in its programme and in the development of lesson plans. ENABLE targets social and emotional skills, focusing on students, parents and teachers to improve relations between and across the groups that constitute the school eco-system.

ENABLE also embraces the peer support scheme, with its starting point the assessment of the needs of children. Through the Peer Support scheme, ENABLE trains, educates and empowers young people to become Peer Supporters who then actively work to prevent bullying in their learning and leisure environments.

Table 5.1. The ENABLE approach: six guiding principles

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