



# The Enable Research Review

## A Scientific Review of the School Bullying Phenomenon and Anti-bullying Programmes

For Adolescent Health  
Athens, March 2015

ENABLE Deliverable D1.1



This project is funded by the Daphne Programme of the European Union.

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Daphne Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of European Schoolnet and its partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

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## *1: About ENABLE*

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. In the process, the project consortium 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 based in five countries:

1. European Schoolnet (EUN) is a not-for profit consortium of 30 education ministries. It brings more than 18 years' experience as aggregator of educational networks and leader of large-scale trans-national projects related to ICT and European co-operation and is in contact through its activities with over 5 million schools. In 10 years as coordinator of the Insafe network, EUN has developed in-depth knowledge and expertise on online and offline bullying.
2. "For Adolescence Health" (FAH) is a Greece based NGO, funded and activated through its vision to promote adolescent health in Greece as well as in Europe and internationally. FAH is a well-known entity at all clinical, educational and research levels. FAH works in close collaboration with the Adolescent Health Unit (AHU) of the Second Department of Pediatrics - University of Athens ([www.youth-health.gr](http://www.youth-health.gr)) as well as with local, European and International NGOs and institutions.
3. South West Grid for Learning, SWGfL is an educational charitable trust that specialises in supporting schools and affecting lasting change, primarily through the positive use of technology and ICT. It has built an international reputation for developing award-winning educational online safety tools and resources, as well as providing educational establishments with safe, secure and reliable broadband internet connections. SWGfL, alongside partners Childnet and Internet Watch Foundation, lead the UK Safer Internet Centre within the European Commission's Connecting Europe Facility programme.
4. The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Award for Inspirational Young People (DA) aims to support the outstanding achievements of young people. DA has 13 years' experience of working with young people, supporting them to improve their personal safety whilst building confidence to take full and active roles in communities. The Award has been presented to over 36,000 young people. More recently The Diana Award has successfully organised an Anti-Bullying Programme, under government contract, to over 20,000 young people, parents and adults.
5. "Suradnici u učenju", Partners in Learning (PiL) is a Croatian teacher association dedicated to creating a positive and supportive environment in which education professionals can share their experience, get quality and current information, be innovative and creative and continue their professional development. NGO Suradnici u učenju promotes purposeful use of educational technology in all areas of education, lifelong learning of teachers and teaching about responsible, appropriate and safe use of internet.
6. Centre for Digital Youth Care (CfDP) is as a non-profit organisation anchored in the national organisation, Ungdommens Vel ("Youth Welfare"). 10 employees and 100 volunteers currently staff CfDP. The centre runs Cyberhus.dk, which is an online socio-educational club house and online forum and chat counselling service for at risk children and teens. Counselling is undertaken mainly by volunteer chat-counsellors, all with relevant educational experience.

The ENABLE Think Tank plays a crucial role in the project by acting as an advisory body of experts, peer reviewing emerging research and ensuring that the project builds on worldwide experience to reach the intended goals. The Think Tank comprises the following members:

- David Finkelhor, Crimes against Children Research Center, USA
- Marc Brackett, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, USA
- Sonia Livingstone, EU KidsOnline, UK
- Jasmina Byrne, UNICEF, Serbia
- Donna Cross, Telethon Kids Institute, Australia
- Martin Schmalzried, COFACE, Czech Republic
- Susan Flocken, ETUCE, Belgium
- Sonia Seixas, Educação do Instituto Politécnico de Santarém, Portugal
- Alessandro Bencivenni, ProfDigitale, Italy
- Robertas Povilaitis, Child Line, Lithuania
- Helle Rabøl Hansen, Aarhus University, Denmark
- Jette Kofoed, Aarhus University, Denmark

## *2: What is School bullying?*

The study of school bullying and of anti-bullying programmes must begin with elaborating a *definition* of the bullying phenomenon that meets consensus from the ENABLE partners and the project's Think Tank. We cannot attempt to change bullying unless we know what it is and is not. In addition to pinpointing *the key elements* used to define the phenomenon, *the forms* of and the *roles* associated with bullying further delineate the phenomenon into distinct behavioural manifestations. *Translating* the term bullying into other languages constitutes a challenge for researchers in non-English speaking countries, including ENABLE partner countries. Finally, the least studied aspect of this topic appears to be the *understanding of children themselves* of the notion of bullying.

### *2.1 Defining and Measuring Bullying and relevant roles*

Bullying is a subtype of aggressive behaviour. Not all acts of juvenile aggression are bullying. Bullying is not a new phenomenon since bullying behaviours were documented as early as the 18th century. Yet, bullying was not considered a significant social problem until about 40 years ago when Daniel Olweus, a Norwegian psychologist and pioneer researcher, undertook systematic studies on bullying. Only then, was bullying acknowledged as a social phenomenon and a prevalent and serious problem.

Olweus, in his now classic book *Bullying in School* (1993), originally defined bullying as repeated aggression towards a relatively powerless peer. Consistently, a child who bullies others is described as someone who directly (e.g. pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking) or indirectly (e.g., teasing, threatening, calling names, or spreading rumours) causes, or attempts to cause, fear, discomfort or injury upon another person (Olweus, 1993, p. 9).

Although the Olweus definition is pivotal and predominant, to date there is no unified definition of bullying. For example, Smith, Schneider, Smith, and Ananiadou (2004) have defined bullying as “a particularly vicious kind of aggressive behaviour distinguished by repeated acts against weaker victims who cannot easily defend themselves” (p. 547).

For the purpose of the project, ENABLE will use 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.”<sup>1</sup>

Although researchers may have varying definitions of bullying, there are five features of bullying that a number of researchers have agreed upon:

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.

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

5. The bully is more powerful (either actual or perceived power) than the victim.

Notwithstanding these commonly accepted characteristics, the defining characteristics of bullying have been challenged. For example, the repetition requirement has been challenged based on recent research findings suggesting that a single incident of bullying can be very harmful, as in the case of cyberbullying whereby the harmful material/posting may be visible over a long period (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Accordingly, 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, Dane & Marini, 2014)]. This definition omits “repetition” and specifies bullying as a “goal-oriented behaviour” rather than simply intentional harm, based on research indicating that bullying is more strongly associated with proactive rather than reactive aggression (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.

In summary, despite 40 years of bullying research there is still no adequate definition of bullying broadly accepted by researchers. Discrepancies across definitions hinder the full understanding of the phenomenon and the advancement of prevention efforts. Moreover, a vague definition of bullying may lead to *overestimation* of the phenomenon, and to *over-classification* of children as bullies or victims.

Involving children in the evolving definition of bullying constitutes a priority. Accordingly, ENABLE encourages children to contribute their ideas and feedback on the core features and definitions of bullying.

### ***Measuring Bullying***

Difficulties in defining bullying carry over to discrepancies in measuring bullying behaviours. Self-report measures of bullying behaviours and experiences appear on most used methods for assessing bullying. Most school bullying surveys provide a definition of the term to facilitate students’ understanding and avoid misinterpretations. Definitions include key behavioural constructs (i.e. repetition, power imbalance). In surveys conducted among young children, the researchers typically read out the definition, provide examples and prompt children for clarifications. Many surveys use the Revised Olweus’ Bully/Victim Questionnaire (ROBVQ; Olweus, 1996), which includes the Olweus definition emphasising the repetitive nature of bullying and the power imbalance between the victim and the bully. However, self-reports have the inherent potential to be unreliable and results from these measures can be difficult to corroborate. In some cases, peer nominations are used to assess the children who are less liked and /or victimised.

Teachers and parents are valuable reporters of the bullying phenomenon and teacher nominations are often used, but there are no instruments for them specific to bullying.

The complete 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. Moreover, teachers and parents beliefs and attitudes about bullying along with community and school norms, need to be considered in order to reach a full understanding of the bullying phenomenon.

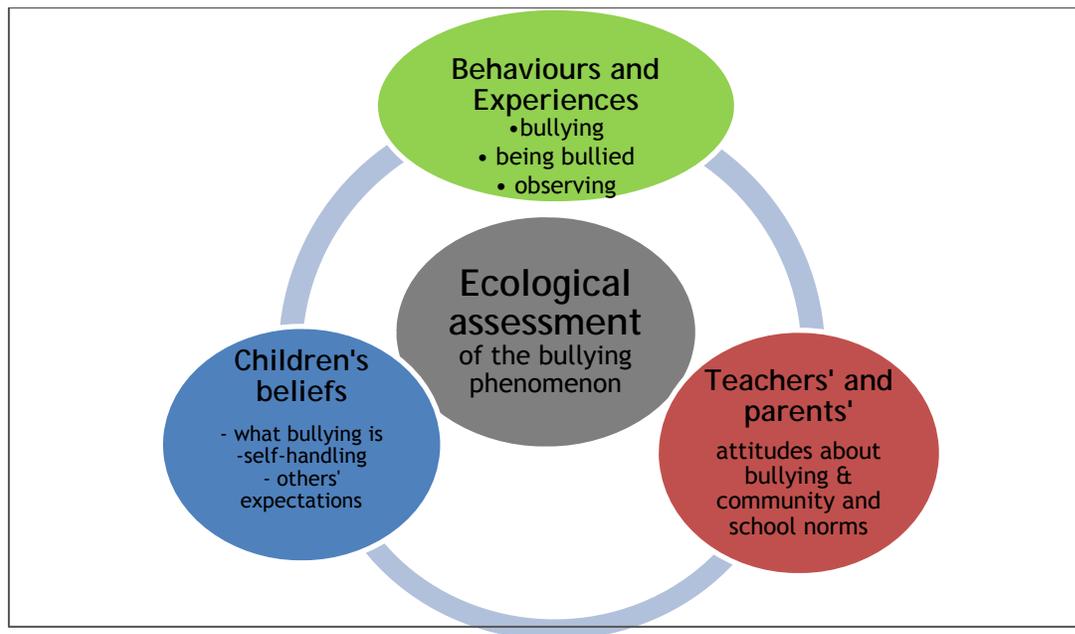


Figure 2.1. An ecological assessment of bullying

Developing in-depth research strategies to measure bullying constitutes a priority. Utilising mixed methods and conducting focus groups, in addition to administering questionnaires, enriches the assessment with qualitative data and offers opportunities for a broader understanding of the phenomenon and the context of bullying. Such an ecological perspective will shape the ENABLE approach and protocol development, which will be based on a solid understanding of children's needs at pre-intervention. Questionnaires will be supplemented with open-ended questions and focus groups, which will be analysed qualitatively.

### ***Roles linked with Bullying and Terms used***

Three main roles have been identified within the bullying cycle:

- children who bully (often referred to as *bullies* )
- children who are bullied (often referred to as *victims*)
- children who are not involved

Some researchers criticise the use of definitions and terms (“bully”, “victim”<sup>2</sup>) and prefer to use behavioural indicators. Labelling children as bullies or victims should be avoided, especially around children themselves, because labels relay stability in roles, which is often not the case. Also, the focus should not be on the child but on the particular behaviour. Accordingly, behavioural questions are used such as “how often do you exclude others from games”. By incorporating definitions, researchers can safeguard against erroneous reporting based on misconceptions of terms because children may understand bullying quite differently from researchers.

## *2.2. How do children understand BULLYING?*

Although there is some consensus among researchers on the core features of bullying, the same is not necessarily true for the general public and for the children and adolescents involved. Misconceptions among children may be based on media coverage of bullying or on the lack of age-appropriate information sources. Research suggests that children and adolescents hold an inconsistent understanding of the phenomenon.

For example, one study explored whether the themes that emerged from children's definitions of bullying were consistent with theoretical and methodological operationalisations within the research literature, and whether the provision of a definition when administering bullying experience items would lead to different prevalence rates in reported victimisation and bullying (Vaillancourt et al., 2008). The researchers assessed students aged 8–18 (N = 1767) and found that students' definitions of bullying rarely included the three prominent definitional criteria typically endorsed by researchers: intentionality (1.7%), repetition (6%), and power imbalance (26%), although almost all students (92%) did emphasise negative behaviours in their definition. 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. Finally, students who were given a definition of bullying reported being victimised less than students not provided with a definition.

Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall (2010) asked 12-16 year olds to identify behaviours from a list, and found that indirect behaviours were less likely than direct behaviours to be identified as bullying. This perception comes contrary to research evidence, which suggests that in adolescence indirect forms of bullying are more prevalent than direct physical bullying. Such a misconception among children and adolescents can generate erroneous research findings.

Similarly, Frisen and colleagues (2008) asked 13-year-old participants to define their understanding of what constitutes a bullying relation: 70% did not mention repeated behaviours, and 81% did not mention a power imbalance. Participants mentioned the forms of bullying behaviours rather than the defining criteria. These findings suggest that children may perceive one-off (i.e. not repeated) acts of aggression as bullying.

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<sup>2</sup> The present report does use the terms when reporting on other researchers' work, using the terms used by each research team

Hopkins and colleagues (2013) conducted focus groups with adolescents 11-17 years and asked participants to define concepts relating to traditional and cyberbullying, violence and aggression. The authors aimed to investigate how adolescents understand and differentiate between terms relating to interpersonal peer aggression, violence and bullying. Thematic analysis revealed that the participants held a shared understanding of the terms relating to aggression, bullying and violence. Participants defined each term by describing the behaviours involved, their perception of *the level of control the perpetrators* of each type of negative peer interaction have, and the perception of those involved. The authors note that 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 second important finding from Hopkins et al. (2013) was the emergence of a perceived continuum of control over an individuals' expression of anger: a shared understanding emerged that the term aggression referred to the feeling of anger, which may lead to subsequent physical and verbal expression.

A small-scale pilot awareness-raising intervention, based on a self-help book on bullying, which was conducted in Greece among 6th graders, revealed misconceptions in pre-teens understanding of bullying (Tzavela, Vlassi & Tsitsika, 2015). The study posed open-ended questions on what bullying is, the causes and characteristics of bullying behaviours and on the prevalence of the phenomenon in their school. Before participating in awareness raising sessions, 11-12 years olds had understood bullying as a physical *threat* and an *imbalance*. The *imbalance* was typically grounded in older age or physical superiority. The construct of repetition did not surface in the definitions. Many kids justified bullying behaviours as stemming from personal or family problems, “poor upbringing” or low peer acceptance - the latter being one of most common causes, as indicated in children’s definitions below:

*“Bullying is a threat and disrespect exhibited by an older or more uncivilised kid towards a younger or less social kid”. (Girl, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Athens)*

*“Bullying is the physical violence exerted by kids who are typically big or have issues because they are not popular”. (Boy, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Athens)*

Two months after the intervention participants had a more accurate understanding of bullying, which included relational forms of bullying. Moreover, participants were able to differentiate other forms of aggression from bullying, and bullying from teasing. Normalising teasing and distinguishing the boundaries between teasing and bullying was described by children as being particularly facilitative. Moreover, post-intervention, students readily provided *solutions* such as “handling” perpetrators and assisting victims. The most common coping strategy was *seeking support* from family and friends. The study suggests that brief, structured, class-based awareness-raising activities, in conjunction with reading a self-help book, may amend misconceptions and be effective in advancing children’s understanding of bullying, while empowering them with problem solving strategies.

Children’s understanding of bullying differs from that of researchers. Many children dismiss relational aggression and the element of repetition; cultural variability is salient.

In addition to assessing bullying behaviours, it is important to explore children’s attitudes, beliefs and subjective experiences of bullying.

Understanding children beliefs and attitudes about bullying constitutes a priority and the starting point of ENABLE research. ENABLE will employ focus groups which will explore children’s understanding of the term bullying and of the perceived extent and impact of the phenomenon.

Parents’ and teachers’ attitudes and the school norms will be assessed to consolidate an ecological assessment across all contexts of functioning.

### 2.3. Translating Bullying terms

In addition to discrepancies in the conceptualisation and definition of bullying, difficulties have surfaced in translating the term across different languages. Arora (1996) reviewed the literature and found a wide variety of terms and descriptors for bullying behaviour appearing across studies, and that the word “bullying” can often be difficult to translate for use in various languages. Smorti, Menesini, and Smith (2003) compared how ‘bullying’ is defined and conceptualised in five countries (i.e., Italy, Spain, Portugal, England, and Japan). The researchers found notable differences among countries and concluded that there is no single word to translate the word “bullying” that captures the exact, precise meaning.

Researchers in non-English speaking counties are faced with difficulties in finding a valid term for bullying in different languages. Table 2.1 includes the translations for bullying in the five European languages spoken in ENABLE countries, and the literal translations back into English.

Table 2.1 Translations of term “bullying” and literal translations back into English

Language	Bullying term	back-translation into English
English	Bullying	N.A.
French (Belgium)	Harcèlement	To hassle, to harass (which has a strong meaning as in “sexual harassment”)
Croatian		
Danish	Mobning	'Mobning' is derived from 'mobbing', thus implying a

		group of people vs one person or fewer persons
Greek	Ekfovismos (Εκφοβισμός)	To scare off

As suggested by the above back-translations, important cultural differences are salient across translations. Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefhoghe (2002) reported that due to cultural variations in the conceptualisation and understanding of bullying, pictures may be the only reliable method to collect cross-national comparable data. The varying definitions and translation of bullying used render it difficult to interpret and compare findings across cultures.

## 2.4. Forms of bullying

Researchers have identified several major *expressions* or *forms* of bullying behaviour, which constitute different subcategories of the bullying phenomenon. These forms prevail across contexts and cultures, although different forms may be more prevalent in certain contexts and certain developmental periods.

Bullying behaviours are differentiated into *direct* and *indirect* bullying, both involving cases in which children's rights are violated (Pinheiro, 2006; Stavrinides, et al., 2010). Direct bullying refers to the use of overt behaviours, which include physical aggression (hitting, kicking) and verbal aggression (insults, racial or sexual harassment, threats) and therefore is more easily identified. In contrast, indirect bullying includes the manipulation of social relationships to hurt (gossiping, spreading rumours) or socially exclude the individual being victimised. The latter type is psychological bullying, and is also referred to as relational bullying. Boys are more likely to engage in physical aggression, while the verbal and relational types are more common among girls.

Because bullying has been correlated with both proactive and reactive forms of aggression, a Finnish study aimed to discover whether bullying behaviour could be classified accordingly (Salimivalli & Nieminen, 2002). Using a sample of children aged 10-12 years, the researchers compared peer and teacher reports of bullying, finding the highest degree of agreement when classifying children as being reactively aggressive rather than proactively aggressive, possibly because these behaviours are *more salient* to observers. Findings such as these suggest that relational aggression and bullying are often difficult to observe and as such may be challenging to accurately measure.

Bullying forms can be concisely categorised as follows:

- 1) Verbal bullying is a direct type of bullying and involves writing or saying mean things in order to purposefully demean and hurt a person. Verbal bullying includes teasing, name-calling, taunting, inappropriate sexual comments and threats.
- 2) Physical bullying is a direct type of bullying and the easiest to identify. It occurs when children use physical actions to exert and gain power and control over their targets. Examples of physical bullying include kicking, hitting, pinching, punching, slapping, shoving, spitting, tripping or pushing, making rude hand gestures, taking or breaking someone's things and other physical attacks.
- 3) Emotional bullying or relational aggression is an insidious type of bullying that often goes unnoticed by parents and teachers. It is a type of social manipulation where bullies try to hurt their victims by ostracising and deliberately preventing them from joining or being part of a group. It usually entails spreading malignant and false rumours, or divulging secrets.
- 4) Sexual bullying involves harmful and diminishing actions or verbal expressions that target a person sexually. Examples of sexual bullying include sexual name-calling, inappropriate comments or gestures about a student's sexuality, uninvited touching, and in extreme cases, sexual assault and harassment. Sexting can also lead to sexual bullying.
- 5) Prejudicial bullying refers to the expression of 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 overall majority or the bully's perceived standards.

Cyberbullying is another form of bullying. It involves bullying peers through the use of technology mediums such as cellular phones, tablets, laptops, digital cameras and other gadgets. Cyberbullying itself can take several forms. Examples of cyberbullying include sending threatening or mean messages, spreading rumours and posting unflattering photos without consent on sites with high visibility, hacking others' webpage and altering its contents or even exclusion of the victim from a network group. Due to the fact that adolescents increasingly use technology to inflict harm on their peers, this type of bullying will be further elaborated on in the following section.

## *2.5 Cyberbullying: Definition and Connections to Traditional/Offline Bullying*

Just as youth's social interactions have shifted online, so have bullying behaviours moved online. Cyberbullying is another form of bullying that has surfaced more recently and which is expressed via electronic means.

Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) defined electronic bullying as "a means of bullying in which peers use electronics to taunt, threaten, harass, and/or intimidate a peer" (p. 565). More

recently 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, Smith & Frisé, 2013, p. 26). As with bullying, there is not a definite operational definition of cyberbullying.

Additionally, inherent in the definition are distinct differences between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. Although all definitions of cyberbullying convey that the behaviour is *hostile* and *intentional*, not all include the features of *repetition* and *power imbalance*. In the case of cyberbullying, as aforementioned, one act of cyberbullying has the potential to cause repeated victimisation because other users/recipients can spread the original posting via social networking services (SNS). Therefore, a single act of posting may be repeated several times by others (Slonje et al., 2013).

Traditional bullying and cyberbullying both involve an imbalance of power between one individual and another. However, the *source* of power is different between the two different types of bullying. In the case of traditional bullying, an imbalance of power can arise in anything from size, age, and socioeconomic status to psychological development (Griezel, Finger, Bodkin-Andrews, Craven, & Yeung, 2012). Usually, the victims of traditional bullying are physically weaker persons or have some obvious or perceived characteristic making them “different”. In the case of cyberbullying, an imbalance of power can be created by advanced technical skills in technology use and through anonymity, the latter propelling potential assaulters to engage in cyberbullying while perceiving low risk.

Additionally, cyberbullying is distinct from traditional bullying in that electronic communication allows for perpetrators to remain anonymous. Yet anonymity is contentious in cyberbullying - some research shows that a majority of children know who bullies them and cyberbullying in fact happens within close relationships, among friends (Mishna, 2012; Mishna, Saini & Solomon, 2009).

Cyberbullying, compared to traditional bullying, demonstrates a lack of supervision by authority figures (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Parents, teachers and other adults cannot always supervise youths' online activities because youths can access the Internet anytime via smartphones. In the case of traditional bullying, the majority of bullying occurs in school or near school. Therefore, access to bully targets can be controlled by changing a school's physical and social environments. Moreover, traditional bullying usually occurs during school hours. After school, the bullying temporarily ceases. Cyberbullying, in contrast, can occur at anytime and anyplace through smartphones (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

There appears to be overlap between bullying and cyberbullying. Slonje and colleagues (2013) reported that engagement in cyberbullying often initiated from a face-to-face argument. Additionally, an argument in cyberspace sometimes led to offline bullying. Just as the offline and online world are closely connected to each other, the bullying incidents are closely inter-connected.

Cross, Lester & Barnes (2015) studied the associations between the relative contribution of cyberbullying victimisation and traditional bullying victimisation on social and emotional

antecedents and outcomes among adolescents. Participants were a cohort of 1,504 adolescents from 16 Australian schools followed longitudinally from age 13 to 15 years. The researchers found that adolescents experiencing social and emotional difficulties were more likely to be cyberbullied and traditionally bullied than those who were traditionally bullied only. Moreover, 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 (online and offline) for adolescents over time.

There appears to be overlap between bullying and cyberbullying.

Importantly, children targeted both online and offline experience higher harm over time.

## *2.6. The consequences of bullying: evidence-based effects and perceptions of harm*

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; Stavrinides, et al., 2010). There is considerable evidence that bullying at school can have serious negative consequences for the physical and psychological health of those involved.

Children who are bullied have increased risk for:

- 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), which has been explained as linked to school disengagement, school absenteeism.
- Psychosomatic problems (Gini & Pozzoli, 2013). Victims are likely to experience headaches, abdominal pains, sleep disorders, bedwetting etc.

Children who bully also face negative consequences: they face increased anxiety and the risk of school failure. They usually exhibit problematic behaviour, such as antisocial and often delinquent behaviours. According to longitudinal studies, most of the bullies, in the long term and during their adult life, have had at least one crime in their criminal record (Eron & Huesmann, 1984).

Bystanders also suffer the consequences of such violent acts, although most of the time they remain uninvolved in bullying incidents. Observing violent acts leads to familiarity with situations that cause physical or psychological pain. Through the observation of such acts,

they learn to believe in the justice of the strong and powerful. Since they are not able to react effectively in the critical moments of violence, it is very likely that they develop feelings of helplessness and guilt because of their difficulty to intervene in bullying incidents.

Similarly to bullying, cyberbullying can have negative effects on school performance and children's self-esteem, and can under some circumstances result in substance abuse and other forms of maladaptive behaviour, although this relationship is not entirely clear (Cruz-Cuha & Portela, 2014; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012).

In the last couple of years, data from longitudinal studies has revealed evidence on the long-term impact of bullying victimisation and cyber-victimisation. In 2012, Schultze-Krumbholz and colleagues examined the links of cyberbullying and cyber-victimisation with internalising and externalising problems across two measurement occasions (3 months apart), in a sample of 412 German middle school students. The researchers examined differences between cyberbullies, cyber-victims and cyberbully-victims compared to non-involved students in regard to internalising (depressiveness and loneliness) and externalising (instrumental and reactive aggression) problems. The results revealed no significant differences between groups in internalising problems, but all three cyberbullying groups differed significantly from the non-involved group in externalising problems. Female victims showed increases in externalising problems while male victims did not show changes across time in either internalising or externalising problems. Male bullies reported decreases in internalising problems across time. For boys, scoring high in both cyberbullying and cyber-victimisation led to increases in loneliness, while for girls this predicted decreases in reactive aggression.

Similarly, Gámez-Guadix and colleagues (2013) analysed the temporal and reciprocal relationships between being a victim of cyberbullying and three frequent problems during adolescence: depressive symptoms, substance use, and problematic Internet use, and found cyberbullying to be predictive of some significant psychological and behavioural health problems among adolescents, namely victimisation at T1 predicted depressive symptoms and problematic Internet use at T2, and higher depressive symptoms and more substance use at T1 predicted more cyber-victimisation at T2.

Most recently, in a two-year longitudinal study among a large sample of Dutch first-year secondary school students (N = 3181), Bannink and colleagues (2014) examined whether traditional and cyberbullying victimisation were associated with adolescent's mental health problems and suicidal ideation. Traditional bullying victimisation was associated with suicidal ideation, whereas cyberbullying victimisation was not associated with suicidal ideation after controlling for baseline suicidal ideation. Both traditional bullying victimisation and cyberbullying victimisation were shown to be associated with an increased risk of mental health problems among girls, but not among boys (after controlling for baseline mental health).

Longitudinal studies mentioned above suggest a reciprocal vicious cycle may best capture the relationship between cyber-victimisation and psychosocial problems. Social and emotional difficulties may contribute to victimisation by limiting adolescent social skills and self-esteem, and the victimisation experience may in turn contribute to further social exclusion, social isolation and psychological distress (risk factors in detail in chapter 4).

Less is known on how children themselves understand the current impact of bullying. There is variability across children, genders and cultures in the extent to which children perceive bullying as harmful (see section 3.2). This impact will be explored in ENABLE.

### ***3: Bullying Phenomenon Prevalence***

Prevalence refers to the number of persons with a defined condition existing at a given point in time (*point prevalence*). Prevalence rates are aggregate estimates collected at the individual level. Prevalence estimates allow researchers to compare phenomena such as school bullying between time periods, or compare rates before and after an intervention (pre- to post comparisons).

Bullying prevalence refers to the percentage of students that have engaged in bullying behaviours within some defined time-period (e.g. within the previous month or school year) and at a defined rate/frequency. Respectively, victimisation prevalence refers to the percentage of students that have been exposed to bullying (victimised) within some defined time period and at a defined rate/frequency. Prevalence estimates are typically based on self-reports, while peer and teacher nominations are also used.

Prevalence estimates depend on relevant terms of use and on the frequency criterion used, such as “at least once”, “sometimes”, “weekly”. Moreover, prevalence rates depend on the time frame specified (e.g. in the last month, or in the last year).

Moreover, the prevalence of bullying and victimisation varies between developmental periods (middle childhood-preadolescence-adolescence), developmental contexts (online-offline) and countries. Additionally, each developmental period and context elicits and facilitates different patterns and *forms* of bullying.

Comparing prevalence estimates across countries requires consideration of the relevance of definitions and local terms used. Prevalence rates reported in the literature vary significantly across cultures and across studies.

#### ***3.1 Prevalence Across Countries: Knowledge from International studies***

Although the bullying phenomenon transcends cultures, the prevalence of bullying varies widely between countries.

##### **The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) Survey**

The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) is an international survey of adolescents from across Europe and North America that provides a unique opportunity to study and compare bullying victimisation across a large multinational sample of school-aged children in 44 countries. Since its inception in 1983, the HBSC study 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 SES*. The latest HBSC International report *Social determinants of health and well-being*

*among young people* edited by Candace Currie (Currie et al., 2012)<sup>3</sup> draws on data from the 2009-2010 survey.

*Sample.* Each participating country surveyed a representative sample of school children aged 11, 13 and 15 years (approximately grades 6th, 8th and 10th) using identical sampling methods (Currie et al., 2012). In the 2009/2010 HSBC study, over 200,000 school children from 40 different European countries responded to questionnaires. Response rates were over 60% in most countries.

*Measures.* Being bullied: Olweus originally developed the questions on bullying. Young people were asked how often they had been bullied at school in the past couple of months. The question was preceded by the following definition of bullying:

*We say a student is being bullied when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like or when he or she is deliberately left out of things. But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight. It is also not bullying when a student is teased in a friendly and playful way.*

Response options ranged from “I was not bullied at school in the past couple of months” to “several times a week”.

*Bullying others:* Young people were asked how often they had taken part in bullying (an)other student(s) at school in the past couple of months. The question was preceded by the Olweus definition. Response options ranged from “I have not bullied another student at school in the past couple of months” to “several times a week”.

### 2009-2010 International trends

The findings presented here-below show the proportion of 11 and 13 year-old students, as most relevant to ENABLE ages, who reported being bullied at least two or three times at school in the past couple of months:

*Being bullied/Victimisation prevalence:* The findings presented here indicate the proportion of students who reported having been bullied at least twice in the past couple of months. Findings revealed strikingly different rates of victimisation across countries:

- 11 year-olds. On average 13% had been bullied at school at least twice in the previous 2 months, ranging from 2% (among Armenian girls) to 32% (among Lithuanian boys).
- 13 year-olds. On average 12% had been bullied at school at least twice in the previous 2 months, ranging from 2% (among Armenian girls) to 31% among French Belgian boys.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/163857/Social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/163857/Social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.pdf)

Bullying prevalence: The findings presented here indicate the proportion of students who reported bullying others at least twice in the past couple of months. Findings revealed strikingly different rates of involvement in bullying across countries:

- 11 year-olds. On average 8% had bullied others at school at least twice in the previous 2 months, ranging from 1% (among Armenian, English, Swedish, Danish, Welsh and Icelandic girls) to 26% (among Romanian boys).
- 13 year-olds. On average 11% had bullied others at school at least twice in the previous 2 months, ranging from 1% (among Norwegian girls) to 35% (among Romanian boys).

Overall, the HSBC 2009/2010 findings show that prevalence remains high in some countries, suggesting the continuing need for prevention and intervention programmes. Adolescents in Baltic countries reported higher rates of bullying and victimisation, whereas northern European countries reported the lowest prevalence. As noted in Craig et al (2009), country variations may reflect important cultural differences or differences in the implementation of national anti-bullying policy and programs. In Scandinavian countries, low prevalence of offline bullying may be explained by the presence of national programmes addressing bullying, whereas in the countries with the highest prevalence (Eastern European) there may be no national campaigns in place. The disparity in prevalence rates of bullying involvement may, in fact, reflect the success of these national initiatives that have been ongoing for many years (e. g., Olweus, 1993).

Noteworthy, bullying prevalence rates are much higher when reporting lower frequency rates, namely for bullying others *at least once* at school in the past couple of months (as opposed to *at least two or three times in the past couple of months* in the figures above): the average rates ranged between 27% for 11 year-olds (HBSC average) to 34% for 13 year-olds (HBSC average).

### Comparing ENABLE countries 2009-2010 HBSC rates and trends

Rates for bullying others/being bullied at least once at school in the past couple of months for ENABLE partner countries<sup>4</sup> are presented in Table 3.1.

As seen in Table 3.1, bullying involvement varies considerably among youngsters in Belgium, Denmark, Greece and England, with Flemish Belgium 13 year-olds reporting the highest rates of involvement in bullying (43%), while English 11-year-olds report lowest bullying rates.

Three distinct levels are seen among the four ENABLE countries:

- Denmark and England show similar bullying involvement rates, lowest among ENABLE countries, and rising through early adolescence: 14-19% among 11 year-olds and 22-26% among 13 year-olds, and thereafter stabilising.
- Greece shows elevated prevalence in early adolescence, with one in four early adolescents involved in bullying (27% at 11 years), and a two-fold increase by mid adolescence (15 years), when half of adolescents report being involved in bullying.

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<sup>4</sup> Comparable figures were not available for Croatia in the HSBC study

- Belgium shows consistently highest rates across ages, especially among French-Belgian adolescents (40-43%), while about one in three Flemish-Belgian adolescents are involved in bullying. There is stability across ages in Belgium.

This suggests varying rates of bullying across ENABLE countries, with lowest rates among English and Danish 11-year-olds and highest among Greek 15-year-olds.

Stability in bullying across ages is shown in Belgium and Denmark, while in England there is increase until 13 years and in Greece a continuing increase through to 15 years.

For victimisation, there is less variability among ENABLE countries. As seen in Table 3.1, again there are three levels of victimisation:

- Denmark and Greece in 2010 had the lowest victimisation rates among ENABLE countries, similar to each other and rising with age: (from 25% at 11 years to 30% at 15 years). England follows with slightly higher levels at 11 years, similar at 13 years and *lower* rates at 15 years.
- French Belgium shows very elevated rates across all three ages (52%-54%-47%). Similarly high are Flemish Belgian 11-year-olds.
- Flemish Belgium has the highest rates of victimisation, which markedly decrease with age (from 40% to 23%).

Victimisation generally declines with age, which could be attributable to *social skills development*.

In Greece and Denmark victimisation rates remain high and increasing through mid-adolescence.

HBSC data suggests similar patterns of victimisation across Greece, Denmark, and England. Moreover, relative stability is shown in all three countries in early adolescence (11 and 13 years), while England shows a decrease in mid-adolescence. Belgium has much more elevated victimisation rates as compared to these three countries, and shows a significant decrease of victimisation with age; the decrease is especially evident in Flemish Belgium where victimisation is reduced by half at age 15.

Table 3.1. Proportion of adolescents reporting bullying others and being bullied at least once at school in the past couple of months (2010 Data)

Country Age	BULLYING OTHERS IN SCHOOL At least once in last couple of months PREVALENCE					BEING BULLIED (VICTIMISATION) At least once in the last couple of months PREVALENCE				
	2010 HBSC average	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	England	2010 HBSC average	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	England

11 year-olds	27 %	French: 42% Flemish: 33%	19 %	27 %	14 %	32 %	French: 52% Flemish : 40%	25 %	25 %	32 %
13 year-olds	34%	French: 43% Flemish: 33%	22 %	40 %	26 %	31 %	French: 54% Flemish : 25%	28 %	28 %	32 %
15 year-olds	33%	French: 40 % Flemish: 38 %	23 %	51 %	23 %	24 %	French: 47 % Flemish : 23 %	30 %	30 %	21 %

Note. Based on Currie et al. (2012; p 270)

### Prevalence across Developmental Periods and Gender differences

The prevalence and forms of bullying and victimisation change with age. Direct aggression of a physical or verbal nature is common in young children. With increasing age, physical aggression tends to decrease and verbal aggression increase (Nishima & Juvonen, 2005). Cognitive and social development allows children to become more “skilled” in indirect forms of aggression. Accordingly, [ENABLE focuses on early adolescence as a critical period for intervening by promoting awareness of bullying behaviours and building coping skills.](#)

Slonje and Smith (2008) demonstrated that cyber-victimisation rates were greater for adolescents aged 12-15 compared to older adolescents. In another sample of elementary, middle and high school students it was found that online victimisation was more prevalent in middle school (12.9%) and declined slightly in high school (9.9%) (Williams & Guerra, 2007). Based on the increased prevalence and among younger adolescents, ENABLE focuses on this age group.

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. Accordingly, ENABLE considers and builds on developmental and social factors across the bullying ecology

[Among ENABLE countries](#), HBSC data suggest 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. Similarly, relative stability of victimisation with age is shown in Greece, Denmark and England through early adolescence (11 and 13 years), while England shows a decrease in mid-adolescence. Belgian early adolescents report much higher victimisation rates (as compared to these three countries), and thereafter shows a significant *decrease* of victimisation with age; the decrease is especially evident in Flemish Belgium where victimisation is reduced by half at age 15 years, reaching lowest rates (23%), similar to England.

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). Boys were significantly more likely to report having been bullied in a minority of countries across each age group. Gender differences were usually less than 10% (Currie et al., 2012).

### ***3.2 Cyberbullying Prevalence: how Common is Cyberbullying and Cyber- Victimisation?***

Due to lack of a widely accepted operational definition and measurement criteria of cyberbullying (such as the time frame and frequency), it is difficult to compare prevalence of cyberbullying across countries. 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* (preadolescence-adolescence) and seems to be particularly prevalent in early adolescence. Tokunaga (2010) suggested a curvilinear relationship between age and cyberbullying, grounded on the fact that adolescence is a peak period for cyberbullying behaviour. Similarly, 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 using the same definitions and same measures (EU KIDS Online, EU NET ADB) facilitate comparisons and draw a clear aggregate picture of the phenomenon assessed with the same measures.

#### **Findings from the EU KIDS Online study**

EU Kids Online is a thematic network of 33 countries that aims to enhance knowledge of European children's online opportunities, risks and safety. From 2009-2011 it conducted a 25-country survey of children and parents across Europe, examining their online activities, skills, risks and safety. It has also developed a European Evidence Database of 1500+ studies, a Research Toolkit for researchers, and a body of qualitative research to inform and interpret the survey findings. 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.

The EU KIDS Online cross-national comparative report summarised the internet-related experiences of children in the 33 countries now participating in EU Kids Online and addressed key internet-related research questions: *How do children use the internet in different countries? What do they do online? Does this lead them into exposure to online risks? Is this harmful and if so for whom?* (Haddon & Livingstone, 2012). A crucial finding from EU Kids Online research is that increasing internet access brings both increased opportunities but

also increased risks. Accordingly, and based on national findings for children’s internet usage and the risks they encountered in each country, the study classified countries in terms of risk-harm, and generated local reports and recommendations. For ENABLE countries, see prevalence and characterisation in Table 3.2 and detailed country-specific implications in section below.

Based on 2010 data from EU Kids Online, 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. Moreover, over half of those who received bullying messages were fairly or very upset. It seems 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). Also, 12% of European 9-16 year-olds say that they have been bothered or upset by something on the internet - including 9% of 9-10 year olds. However, most children do not report being bothered or upset when they go online (Haddon & Livingstone, 2012).

Table 3.2 EU KIDS Online prevalence rates for ENABLE countries

	EU KIDS average	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	United Kingdom
<i>Have been bullied on the internet</i>	6%	6%	12%	4%	8%
<i>Have been bullied in some way (either online or offline) in last 12 months</i>	19%	19%	25%	17%	21%
Risk-harm category	-	Medium risk	More use-more risk	Low use-Lower risk	high use-some risk

### EU Kids Online National policy implications

The following national implications have been pointed by Haddon and Livingstone (2012):

Belgium: More attention to digital literacy is highly recommended, especially in primary education, since “digital literacy” in secondary schools has recently been implemented from a cross-curricular perspective (i.e. not as a separate subject). Initiatives and educational material on digital literacy education are scattered. A central website where all information and material can be found and shared would be very helpful for schools and educators. In April 2011, a selection of Belgian stakeholders<sup>5</sup> emphasised the importance of:

<sup>5</sup> OIVO (research and information centre for consumer organisations), CJSM (Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media), VRT (Flemish Public Television), Gezinsbond (organisation for families with children), ISFE (Interactive Software Federation of Europe).

- surveying the child's perception of online risks, opportunities and mediation practices by parents, peers and teachers so as to get a better overview of how initiatives on safer internet use have an impact on the child's behaviour and perceptions;
- taking cultural and political differences into account when developing initiatives on awareness raising, digital literacy and internet safety, given Belgium's two main language communities;
- equipping important adult stakeholders (other than parents and teachers) working in the area of youth services (social workers, youth movements, etc.) with the necessary skills; too often their ICT skills are insufficient, which explains why they tend to feel insecure about how to guide children online.

Denmark: Denmark has a long tradition of promoting institutional and public awareness. The general principle has been to disseminate information and examples of best practice at all levels. In this context the fact that the vast majority answered "yes, there are things on the internet that are not good for children my age" indicates that Danish children have listened to "campaigns" from parents, from schools, read the Media Council's information material, and perhaps also listened to public debates. These efforts must be continued and strengthened through increased dissemination of knowledge, best practice examples and collaboration.

- Another area of concern is that children often engage in online activities that have not been designed for their age group. The youngest children in the survey were most troubled by, and find it more difficult to cope with, negative online experiences of all kinds. In some areas, older children are more exposed to risks but they are also more capable of coping.

- One concern is that we may not have reached the most vulnerable children through this survey, as they may not have participated in it. This is an area where more studies are needed that focus on such groups, followed by initiatives, such as looking into positive online opportunities, directed specifically towards this group.

Greece: the 'low use, low risk' feature is reiterated in the case of broadband penetration, which in Greece is low, and coupled with low levels of online risk encounters. 'Low risk' may be the result of parental mediation of children's internet use. Bearing in mind the substantial debates surrounding the notion of 'excessive internet use' that have recently emerged, we should note that the so-called 'intensified' use is usually the result of how integrated the internet has become in everyday children's practices. What is now sometimes considered to be excessive use is, in fact, the manifestation of the variety of things Greek children do online. The more sophisticated children become online, the more varied and sophisticated their internet use is, and for a multitude of activities (schoolwork, leisure, social communication, information), all of which take time to perform. In this sense, the narrative of 'excessive internet use' may simply be a reflection of the maladjustment of adult and children perceptions to how quickly the internet has become inseparable from Greek children's daily activities.

United Kingdom: The UK has seen a considerable amount of multi-stakeholder policy development in recent decades, with landmarks including the Home Secretary's Taskforce for Child Protection on the Internet, The Byron Review: Children and New Technology (2008) and the establishment of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety in 2008. With multiple work strands, an annual summit for stakeholders, a strong strategy statement and an active Evidence Group, the UK has seen concerted progress. EU Kids Online has categorised the UK as a 'high use, some risk' country, an improvement on previous findings of 'high use, high risk' - it seems that the above efforts are bearing fruit. This should not be grounds for complacency, however, for it shows the level of effort required to reduce risk exposure among children. Future efforts should focus on younger children as they gain internet access.

The UK is noteworthy in the very high proportion of children who access the internet at school, making the school a particularly appropriate setting for the delivery of digital literacy skills. UK children are more likely to go online via a mobile or handheld device, putting them in the vanguard of new risks associated with personal internet access and, equally, making protective oversight by their parents more difficult. Social networking use in the UK is distinctive insofar as the UK has many 9-12 year olds who put a false age on their profile; policy makers should also note that UK children have more online contacts than most, including some that are not known to them face to face.

### Findings from EU NET ADB

The EU NET ADB project was carried out across seven European countries: Greece, Spain, Poland, Germany, Romania, the Netherlands and Iceland. A representative sample of 13,284 adolescents aged 14-17 years attending school in these seven European countries was surveyed between October 2011 and May 2012. The survey included questions regarding adolescents' internet access and use; internet addictive behaviour; online communication and social networking; computer gaming and gambling, and cyberbullying. Cyberbullying was assessed in the EU NET ADB survey as one of potential online risks using questions that were developed within the EU Kids Online project (Q43, adapted from Q112 of the EU Kids Online II Self-Completion Child 11-16 April 2010).

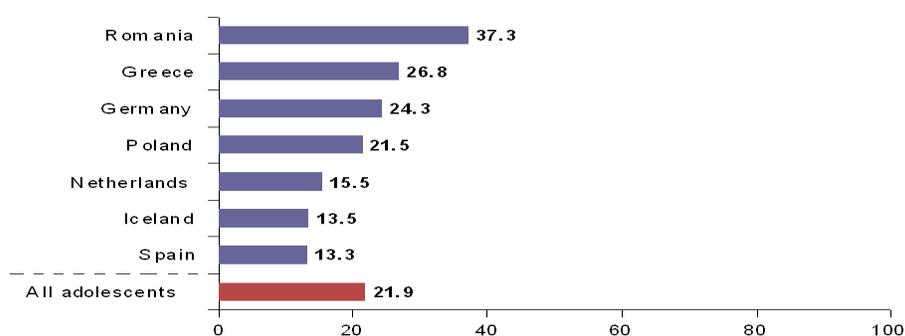
Adolescents were asked if they had been victims of the described behaviour in the past 12 months. Specifically, victimisation was defined as follows:

*"Sometimes children or teenagers can do hurtful or nasty things to someone and this can often be quite a few times on different days over a period of time, for example. This can include: teasing someone in a way this person does not like; spreading false/malicious rumours; sending someone mean or threatening messages; systematically excluding, ignoring and isolating. When people are hurtful or nasty to someone in this way, it can happen on the internet (e-mail, instant messaging, social networking, chat rooms)."*

The question that followed asked, "Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months on the Internet?" Response options were "no", "yes" and "do not know/prefer not to say"

EU NET ADB findings showed that:

- 21.9% of adolescents said they had been bullied on the internet.
- The proportion was greater for girls than boys, for the older age group compared to the younger one, and among those whose parents' educational level was low/middle compared to those whose parents' educational level was high (Table 3.3).
- In comparing rates across countries, the proportion of adolescents who stated they had ever been bullied on the internet was highest in Romania and lowest in the Netherlands, Iceland and Spain (Figure).



*Figure 3.1.* EU NET ADB Study - Percentage of adolescents who have been bullied on the internet in the past 12 months by country.

Country differences place the participating nations basically into three subgroups. Romania was characterised as having very high prevalence rate of cyberbullying (>37%). Greece, Germany and Poland had average or slightly above average rates, while the Netherlands, Iceland and Spain had the lowest prevalence rates. These results are consistent with EU Kids Online studies. Only the case of Greece is out of line as in the EU Kids study it had been in the group of low prevalence countries.

*Table 3.3.* EU NET ADB *Percentage of adolescents who had been bullied on the internet in the past 12 months by gender, age and parents' educational level*

	Have you ever been bullied on the internet? (in last 12 months) (%)
All adolescents in EU NET ADB	21.9
Female	24.1
Male	19.5
14-15.9 years old	20.5

16-17.9 years old	24.2
Low/Middle educational level	24.2
High educational level	21.2

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Age was significantly associated with cyberbullying and the problem was more prevalent in the older group, which is consistent with previous findings (Jones et al., 2012; Tokunaga 2010).

Parental education level was also significantly associated. The higher prevalence in the lower education group can be interpreted in the context of the “power imbalance” theory (Dooley, Pyżalski, & Cross, 2009). Adolescents from families with less educated parents may be more exposed to cyberbullying as they have possibly less power in peer relations.

### Comparative findings from EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile

Net Children Go Mobile is a project<sup>6</sup> conducted across 9 countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK) that aimed to investigate the changing conditions of internet access and use as smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices become more widespread. It asks how these affect children’s online safety, whether negative and/or positively. In 2013-14, Net Children Go Mobile conducted a survey and qualitative research, focusing on children’s uses of mobile technologies. The survey replicated major parts of the EU Kids Online survey, adding a focus on mobile devices, with 3,500 European 9-16 year-old internet users in 7 countries in 2013/14.

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 who reported receiving nasty or hurtful (‘cyberbullying’) messages (in the last 12 months) rose from 8% to 12%. Sexual messaging has decreased a little (except in Denmark). Also slightly decreased is the percentage of children making a new contact online unconnected with their offline friends (from 32% to 29%).

The proportion of children who have been bullied at all (on and/or offline) has remained fairly stable at under a quarter of 9-16 year olds - except that it rose markedly in Denmark, and was already very high in Romania. But cyberbullying has increased in the past four years - from 8% to 12%, especially among girls, and among the youngest age group (aged 9-10 years, followed by teenagers aged 13-14 years). Among 13-14 year-olds, the rate of cyberbullying has increased from 8% (2010) to 15% (2013-14) in four years. The biggest increase from 2010 to 2014 in the percentage of children who have been cyberbullied is in Denmark (a rise from 12% to 21%) and Ireland (from 4% to 13%).

<sup>6</sup> [www.netchildrengomobile.eu/](http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/)

Table 3.4. EU KIDS - Net Children Go Mobile Online comparative cyberbullying prevalence rates in ENABLE countries

Have been bullied on the internet	7 countries <i>Net Children Go Mobile</i> average	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	United Kingdom
2010 EU Kids Online	7%	6%	12%	4%	8%
2013-14 Net Children Go Mobile	12%	7%	21%	N.A. (26.8% in EU NET ADB in 2012)	12%

As the EU Kids Online network has often argued, 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.

Social networking sites (SNS) use is relatively ‘safer’ (more privacy, fewer contacts, less under-age use) in the UK and Ireland, and less so in Romania (most have public profiles and 100+ friends).

### ***3.3. ENABLE Partners’ National Reviews on Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevalence***

Each ENABLE country conducted a national review of bullying and cyberbullying studies and consolidated the info in a national “template”, accessible at <http://enable.eun.org/report>. The main information is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. Bullying Phenomenon Data Sheets for countries participating in ENABLE

Country of ENABLE partner	Organisation who filled out data sheet	Bullying Phenomenon Country
Belgium	EUN	
Croatia	Suradnici u učenju", Partners in Learning (PiL)	
Denmark	Centre for Digital Youth Care (CfDP)	Bullying Phenomenon Denmark

Greece	For Adolescent Health (FAH)	Bullying Phenomenon Greece
United Kingdom	Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Award for Inspirational Young People (DA)  South West Grid for Learning, (SWGfL)	Bullying Phenomenon UK

**The Bullying Phenomenon in Denmark**

The EU Kids Online survey has shown us that Danish children are bullied more in comparison with other European children: 12% reported having been bullied on the internet versus 6% on average in Europe, and 25% reported having “Been bullied at all, online or offline” versus 19% on average in Europe. But prevalence rates tend to differ in various studies. The 2014 HSBC Study showed that 7% on average had been bullied in Denmark and a completely new Danish study (Ottosen, Andersen, Dahl et al., 2014) found that just below 10% on average have been bullied. In that respect it is very hard to determine prevalence rates in Denmark.

Danish researcher Gitte Stald, who participated in the EU Kids Online Survey remarks: *“Denmark has a long tradition of promoting institutional and public awareness. The general principle has been to disseminate information and examples of best practice at all levels. In this context the fact that the vast majority answered “yes, there are things on the internet that are not good for children my age” indicates that Danish children have listened to “campaigns” from parents, from schools, read the Media Council’s information material, and perhaps also listened to public debates. These efforts must be continued and strengthened through increased dissemination of knowledge, best practice examples and collaboration.”*

Table 3.6. Summative table of local bullying and cyberbullying prevalence studies and rates in Denmark

Study name	Type of bullying assessed	Population and Reporters/ informants and age for children	Year data collected	PREVALENCE rates (per type of behaviour assessed)
The Study of School children 2014 (HSBC/WHO) <sup>1</sup>	Bullying and Victimisation in school	4,534 students in fifth, seventh and ninth grade (11-, 13- and 15-year-olds) on a random sample of schools.	2014	Young people who have been teased / bullied at least twice during the last few months: 7% of all surveyed students (all three ages).  Breakdown per age:

				<p>11 year-olds: boys: 11% - girls: 9% - average: 10%</p> <p>13 year-olds: boys: 4% - girls: 4% - average: 4%</p> <p>15 year-olds: boys: 4% - girls: 4% - average: 4%</p> <p>Young people who have teased / bullied others at least twice during the last few months: 4.2% % of all surveyed students (all three age groups).</p> <p>Breakdown per age:</p> <p>11 year-olds: boys: 6% - girls: 3% - average both genders: 4.5%</p> <p>13 year-olds: boys: 6% - girls: 3% - average both genders: 4.5%</p> <p>15-year-olds: boys: 5% - girls: 2% - average both genders: 3.5%</p>
DCUM - Danish Center for Educational Environment <sup>2</sup> - "Elevens syn på undervisningsmiljøet i grundskolen 2014"	Victimisation (primarily)	Questionnaires in 4-6th class (10-13 years) and consists of 39,758 questionnaires distributed to 422 schools and 84 municipalities	2013/2014	<p>Have you been bullied this school year:</p> <p>no : 79,9%</p> <p>yes - a few times: 14,9%</p> <p>yes - every month: 2,3%</p> <p>yes - every week: 2,2%</p> <p>Yes - every day: 0,8 %</p>
Board of Health about bullies and their victims (2000) <sup>3</sup> : "Mobning som sundhedstrussel blandt store skoleelever." - Due, Pernille; Holstein, Bjørn Evald; Jørgensen, Per Schultz	Victimisation and bullying	5,205 11-15 year-old students from a random sample of 55 schools who answered a standardised questionnaire	1999/2000	<p>11-15 year-olds: Bullied within an academic year: 25%</p> <p>Perpetrators: 32%</p>
<i>Children and</i>	Bullying	7676 children and	2014	Bullied:

<i>young people in Denmark - welfare and well-being in 2014</i> <sup>4-</sup>	and victimisation	young people in the age groups: 3, 7, 11, 15 and 19 year-olds		All children average: 9,75% 7-year-old: 15% 11-year-old: 11% 15-year-old: 8% 19-year-old: 5%
<b>CYBERBULLYING</b>				
EU Kids Online Survey <sup>5</sup>	Bullying and victimisation	National interviews with 1,000 children 9-16 years	2010	12% bullied on the internet (vs 6% average in Europe)  25% Been bullied at all, online or offline (vs 19% in Europe)
Save the Children Survey - Sørensen, Kuno 2009 <sup>6</sup>	Teasing and bullying	3976 ninth graders - questionnaire 2008	2009	Been bullied via text-messages - Girls 13% - Boys 4%

### The Bullying Phenomenon in Greece

Bullying prevalence was not assessed in Greece until the year 2000, when Houndoumadi and Pateraki (2001) conducted the first large scale assessment showing that 14.7% of 8-12 year-old students in the Athens area were self-identified as victims, 6.2% as bullies and 4.8% as bully/victims.

The only large-scale survey on bullying and victimisation (offline) conducted in Greece on a national level with representative samples is the HBSC survey, which is run every 4 years. Data from the 2014 HBSC survey indicates that 7.5% of pre-adolescents and adolescents are involved in bullying (see Table 3.6 for details and age breakdowns). Noteworthy is that bullying involvement rates have dropped by half since the previous survey - from 15.8% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2014.

In Greece, victimisation (being bullied) is less prevalent in early adolescence, as compared to other countries i.e. below HBSC average. Moreover, victimisation rates are declining as compared to four years ago. Namely, in 2014, 6.4 % of 11-15 year-olds reported that they have been bullied repeatedly (at least twice monthly; see Table 3.6), while the rate was 8.5% in 2010. The decline was especially evident among 15-year olds: 10% reported being bullied in 2010, while in 2014 the rate declined to 6.4%.

In regards to cyberbullying and other online risks, Greece was characterised as a “lower use, lower risk” country based on the 2010 EU KIDS Online II survey conducted among children 9-16 years of age. In fact, the survey showed that Greece is among countries with the lowest risk encountered online, with only 4% of children reporting to have received nasty or hurtful messages (cyberbullying) (vs. European average of 6%). A total of 17% of surveyed children had been bullied in some way (online or offline). Surprisingly, two years after the survey the

EU NET ADB study showed the rate of cyberbullying reached almost 27% among adolescents (14-17 years of age).

Table 3.7. Summative table of bullying and cyberbullying prevalence studies and rates in Greece

Study name	Type of bullying assessed	Reporters/ informants and age for children	Year data collected	PREVALENCE rates (per type of behaviour assessed)
Kokkevi et al., 2015 HSBC/WHO <sup>1</sup>	Bullying and Victimization in school	Self-reports of 4.141 preadolescents and adolescents: 11, 13 and 15 years of age (representative sample from 245 school units)	2014	Repeatedly being bullied (at least twice monthly): 6.4% of all surveyed students (11-15 years) 5.6 % of 11-year-old students 7.4 % of 13-year-old students 6.4 % of 15-year-old students Repeatedly participating in bullying others (at least twice monthly): 7.5 % of all surveyed students. 4 % of 11-year-old students 9.6 % of 13-year-old 8.8 % of 15-year-old
Magklara et al., 2012 <sup>2</sup>	Bullying and Victimization in school and psychiatric morbidity	Self-reports of 2.427 16-18 years-old students attending 10th, 11th and 12th grade in 25 senior high schools in Epirus and Aetoloakarnania	N.A. 2000	Victims: 7.1% Perpetrators: 14.6 % Victim/perpetrators: 4.7% Not involved in bullying-related behaviours: 73.6%
Sapouna, 2008 <sup>3</sup>	Bullying and Victimization and bully/victim mixed type.	A total of 1,758 students, aged 10–14 from 20 schools in the greater Thessaloniki area self-reported on bullying.	? Published in 2008	Victims: 8.2% reported being bullied Bullies: 5.8% admitted bullying others Bullies/victims: 1.1%
Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001 <sup>4</sup>	Bullying, Victimization and bully/victim mixed type	Self-reports of 1,312 pupils between 8 and 12 years of age	1999-2000	14.7% of the pupils were self-identified as victims, 6.2% as bullies and 4.8% as bully/victims. In Grade 6: N=325; Victims: 41 (12.6%); Bullies: 24 (7.4%); Bully/victims:8 (2.5%)
Tsitsika et al., 2012 EU NET ADB study <sup>5</sup>	Victimization online	School-based Self-reports of 2,000 students aged 14-17 years.	2011-2012	26.8% of Greek adolescents 14-17 years have been bullied on the internet in the past 12 months

Haddon et al., 2012 EU KIDS Online <sup>6</sup>	Bullying online-offline and Victimization	Home-based interviews with 1,000 children 9-16 years	2010-2011	4% of Greek children 11-16 years-old had been bullied on the internet
Lazuras et al 2013 <sup>7</sup>	Cyber-victimisation and witnessing cyber-bullying	335 students from two randomly selected secondary schools in Athens and Thessaloniki. The age of the participants was 13-17 years.		32% of students reported having either witnessed or experienced cyberbullying (have been victimised)

### The Bullying Phenomenon in the UK

Prior research into bullying prevalence in the UK has asserted that cyberbullying is the least frequently reported form of bullying, and it is ‘roughly evenly’ reported across both genders (Benton, 2011). However, the most recent study on bullying prevalence in the UK focused on online and offline bullying and reported that 21% of 9-16 year olds claimed they faced both online and offline bullying, and 18% were upset by what had happened; this trend was higher amongst girls which marked a “substantial rise” since 2010 (Livingstone et al, 2014).

Furthermore the report documented a 3% difference between face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying, with the latter being more common in the UK, revealing a changing pattern of bullying forms.

21% of UK children have reported being bullied online, in contrast to 19% across Europe. In terms of awareness of cyberbullying, the *UK Safer Internet Centre* (2013) ran a large scale quantitative study with a sample of 24,000 7-11 year olds; 40% of respondents knew someone who had been cyberbullied. Interestingly, this figure confirms the findings of another study which reported that from a sample of 177 Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, 38% of respondents knew of someone cyberbullied within their age group (Tarapdar and Kellett, 2011).

In terms of the nature of the cyberbullying taking place in the UK, the most common is nasty or hurtful messages sent to the child (7%), which is followed by messages posted or passed on (5%) and only 2% have been threatened online (Livingstone et al, 2010). Tarapdar and Kellett’s (2011) research aimed to add nuance to research on cyberbullying, and they revealed that abusive e-mails (26%) was the most prominent method of cyberbullying, followed by abusive texts (24%); what is more concerning is that 50% of respondents felt cyberbullying persisted within the wider community.

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England is a large-scale panel survey which follows cohorts of young people, from 2004 to present day, with the aim of tracking the young people’s experiences of secondary school. In 2013, 40% of pupils reported that they had been bullied in the last 12 months, 13% claimed they had been victims of violent bullying, and 8% of

pupils had reported being bullied every day - all records which show a decline since the last wave of data collection.

Benton (2011) examined the characteristics of the young people who experienced the three types of bullying. From a sample of 35,000 students, it was reported that verbal bullying affects almost a third of pupils aged 11-15, with boys and girls likely to be equally affected. In every age group physical bullying is at least twice as prevalent amongst boys as it is amongst girls. In terms of indirect bullying, prior to entering the sixth form (age 16), “being left out” is more commonly reported by girls than boys.

Prior research conducted by EU Kids Online placed the UK as a ‘high use, high risk’ country (Hasebrink et al, 2009). Now, despite still being a ‘high use’ country, it is “among the lower risk countries” and it has been suggested that the “efforts put into raising awareness and improving safety online for UK children in recent years are bearing fruit” (Livingstone et al, 2010).

Table 3.8. Summative table of bullying and cyberbullying prevalence studies and rates in U.K.

Study name	Type of bullying assessed	Population and Reporters/ informants and age for children	Data collection	PREVALENCE rates (per type of behaviour assessed)
Social determinants of health and well-being among young people: Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey / edited by Candace Currie ... [et al.].	Prevalence of bullying in schools.	Random sampling-young people aged 11, 13 and 15 years, ensuring that the sample is representative of all living in the country within the age range. 1,522 boys and 1,981 girls in England took part in the survey.	2009-2010	Rates of young people by age who reported being bullied at school in the last two months: - 11 year olds - 10% girls and 12% boys - 13 year olds - 12% girls and 9% boys - 15 year olds - 9% girls and 7% boys
Longitudinal Study of Young People in England	This study follows two cohorts of young people from 2004 every year until 2010. The next study on them will be done in 2015. The study shows the cohorts' experiences of Secondary School and compares their experiences of bullying over time.	LSYPE 1 - LSYPE1 started in 2004. The initial sample comprised 21,000 young people aged 13 or 14, sampled from the year 9 pupil records of schools throughout England.  LSPYE 2 - It is intended that LSYPE2 will track a sample of 13,100 young people in England from the age of 13/14 annually	2004 - 2013	30,000 fewer pupils said they had been bullied in the last 12 months - a drop from 45% of pupils to 40%  30,000 fewer pupils said they had been victims of violent bullying - down from 18% to 13%  10,000 fewer pupils reported being bullied every day - down from 10% of pupils to 8%, a drop of a fifth

		for seven years, through to the age of 19/20. LSYPE2 data.		
Benton T. (2011). <i>Sticks and stones may break my bones, but being left on my own is worse: An analysis of reported bullying at school within NFER attitude survey.</i> Slough: NFER	The study looks at the prevalence of different types of bullying among young people and the relative seriousness of each type of bullying as measured by its impact on emotional wellbeing.	100 secondary schools and more than 35,000 pupils in years 7 to 13 took part in the survey.	2010-2011	<p>Verbal bullying - Affects almost a third of pupils aged between 11 and 15. Boys and girls are roughly equally likely to be affected.</p> <p>Physical bullying - In every age group physical bullying is at least twice as prevalent amongst boys as it is amongst girls. Having property stolen or damaged is slightly more common amongst boys than amongst girls of the same age and (perhaps surprisingly) unwanted sexual contact is also more commonly reported by boys.</p> <p>Indirect bullying - Prior to entering the sixth form (age 16), "being left out" is more commonly reported by girls than boys. This is particularly true in the early stages of secondary school between the ages of 11 and 13.</p>
Benton T. (2011). <i>Sticks and stones may break my bones, but being left on my own is worse: An analysis of reported bullying at school within NFER attitude survey.</i> Slough: NFER	The study looks at the prevalence of different types of bullying among young people and the relative seriousness of each type of bullying as measured by its impact on emotional wellbeing.	100 secondary schools and more than 35,000 pupils in years 7 to 13 took part in the survey.	2010-2011	<p>Cyberbullying - as the least frequently reported form of bullying, it is roughly evenly reported across both boys and girls as well as across different age groups.</p> <p>However, there is some tendency for cyberbullying to be more common amongst girls at the beginning of secondary school and more common amongst boys towards the end of secondary school.</p>

<p>Tarapdar, Saima and Kellett, Mary (2011). Young people's voices on cyberbullying: what can age comparisons tell us. Diana Award.</p>	<p>This study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the nature and prevalence of cyberbullying among young people.</p>	<p>1) Postal survey completed by 1282 pupils which compared responses of younger youth (Year 8 pupils aged 12-13 years) and older youth (Year 10 pupils aged 14-15 years).</p> <p>2) The second consisted of two online surveys from 177 Diana Anti-Bullying Ambassadors aged 12 to 16 years.</p> <p>3) Four focus groups completed the third part, with 31 young people aged 12 to 16 years.</p>	<p>2009 - 2011</p>	<p>Types of cyberbullying - Abusive emails' (26%) was the most prominent method of cyberbullying, followed closely by 'abusive texts' (24%) and 'prank and silent calls' (19%).</p> <p>52% of young people were bullied with two or more forms of technology.</p> <p>Prevalence of Cyberbullying - 38% of respondents who were or knew of someone cyberbullied within their age group.</p> <p>- 50% of respondents felt cyberbullying persisted within the wider community.</p>
<p>Aston, H. and Brzyska, B. (2012) Protecting Children Online: Teachers' perspectives on eSafety. Milton Keynes: Vital</p>	<p>This study talks to teachers to gain their perspective on the prevalence of cyberbullying amongst their students.</p>	<p>A panel of 1315 practising teachers from 1051 schools in the maintained sector in England completed the survey. 54% (715) of the respondents were teaching in primary schools and 46% (600) were teaching in secondary schools.</p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>Teacher's perspectives on prevalence of cyberbullying amongst students - 91% of Secondary teachers and 52% of Primary teachers say pupils at their school have experienced cyberbullying, and that most of it is perpetrated via social networking sites.</p>
<p>Munro, E (2011)</p>	<p>Online bullying</p>	<p>A brief scoping</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>30 % of a large sample of</p>

<p>The Protection of Children Online: A Brief Scoping to Identify Vulnerable Groups</p>		<p>of the current literature and key studies that exist.</p>		<p>Secondary school pupils in England have been deliberately targeted, threatened or humiliated by the use of mobile phones or the internet.</p>
<p>UK Safer Internet Centre (2013) Have Your Say: Young people’s perspectives about their online rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p>The Safer Internet Day 2013 research was designed to help the UK Safer Internet Centre engage with children and young people across the UK in order to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ask them about their online experiences</li> <li>2. to hear what they think that their online rights and responsibilities are.</li> </ol>	<p>It consisted of a large-scale quantitative survey which encompassed the views of over 24,000 children age 7-19 years, and the focus groups gathered the perspectives of 90 young people, from across the UK.</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>40% of 7-11 year old respondents knew someone who had been cyberbullied.</p>

# 4: Bullying Prevention

Bullying is a social phenomenon embedded in the context in which it takes place. *Individual and developmental characteristics* interact with *contextual conditions* and define the extent and nature/expressions of the bullying phenomenon. Most studies have investigated the association between bullying behaviour and individual-level factors (age, gender, physical characteristics and psychosocial profile), proximal relations (family and peers) and the school environment (Espelage & Horne, 2008 for a review). Fewer studies have examined *distal factors* associated with bullying behaviour, such as economic and cultural influences.

## 4.1 The ecology of bullying

The ecological system theory contends that bullying behaviours are embedded in a multi-layered system: the ecology of bullying. Interpersonal and institutional settings within which adolescents sustain social interactions also influence behaviour and development. Accordingly, the individual/child is placed at the centre of a cycle 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). The relevance of ecological systems to bullying has been documented in studies showing that youth involved in bullying in school also experience problems in other contexts such as the family, peer group and neighbourhood. **ENABLE addresses the entire bullying ecology, reaching out to children, parents, teachers and schools.**

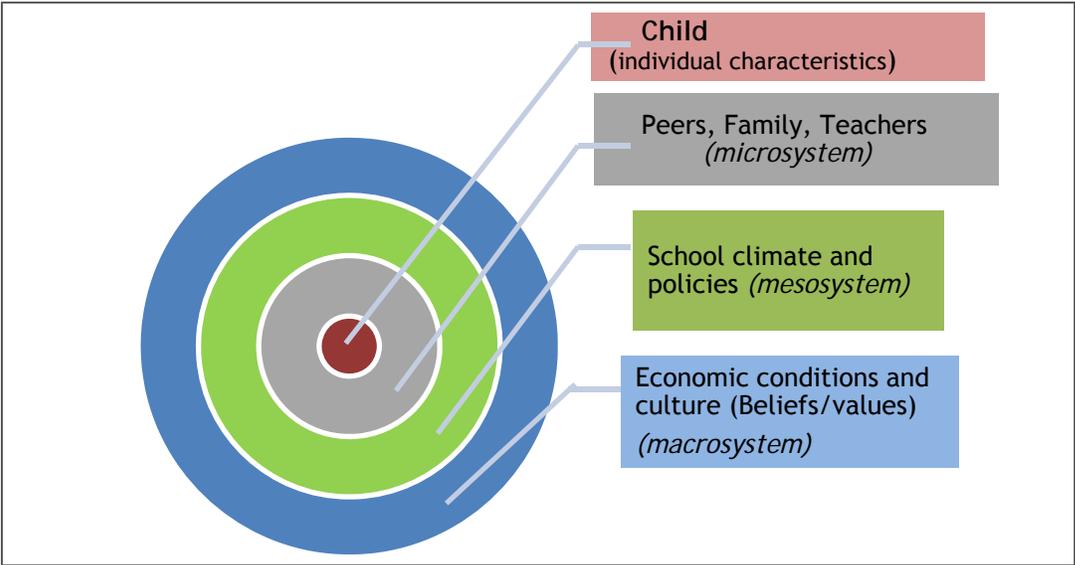


Figure 4.1. The ecology of bullying

#### 4.1 THE MECHANISMS OF BULLYING PREVENTION: REDUCING RISK AND ENHANCING PROTECTIVE FACTORS ACROSS THE MICROSYSTEM LEVEL

Adolescent problems often have similar underlying predictors. The prevailing paradigm in prevention science suggests that predictors of problem behaviours identified by longitudinal research are promising targets for preventive intervention (Coie et al., 1993; Durlak, 1998).

There are two types of predictors: *risk factors* that make it more likely that someone will develop a problem behaviour, and *protective factors* that reduce the likelihood of problem behaviour. Exposure to an increasing number of risk factors increases the likelihood of involvement in a variety of problem behaviours. Simply put, in terms of bullying: the more risk factors linked to bullying that a child encounters, the higher the likelihood of being involved in bullying.

Several risk factors have been implicated in children's involvement in bullying:

Individual risk factors include intra-personal (emotional, temperamental) and inter-personal (social competence) factors.

Of contextual risk factors, most influential *are proximal risks* (conditions and interactions) that are directly exerted on the microsystem level: the family members, peers that children interact with (online and offline), and other individuals and groups with whom children have direct relations, such as school teachers. Because the microsystem is the most proximal and influential layer of the ecology, it is the layer targeted by prevention efforts:

- Peer group relations
- Child-parent relations
- School characteristics and relations with teachers

Individual and contextual risk and protective factors relevant to bullying and victimisation are embedded at each layer of the bullying ecology (summarised in the Table 4.1). Factors interact across layers and conjunctively and cumulatively bring about different bullying behaviours and roles.

Bullying prevention aims to prevent adolescent bullying behaviour through reducing risk and enhancing protective mechanisms that are relevant to bullying. **Accordingly, ENABLE considers these mechanisms in the development of ENABLE objectives.**

##### Individual risk factors

Individual risk factors are characteristics of individuals. Some individual risk factors are demographic-*stable* (gender, age), while other factors are temperamental-*changeable*, namely social and emotional characteristics such as social competence and empathy.

Gender has been widely linked with bullying and victimisation. Gender effects are evidenced across bullying types. Boys are consistently found to report more frequent involvement in bullying behaviour than girls, especially in overt types of bullying. Girls, on the other hand, tend to engage in relational or indirect bullying. Moreover, recent cross-national evidence suggests that girls are more involved in cyberbullying (Tsitsika et al. 2015).

Age. Bullying behaviours have been shown to be influenced by chronological age, as described in Section 3.1.

Physical characteristics, such as weight can also influence victimisation experiences at school. A few studies have examined the association between obesity and peer victimisation.

Psycho-social characteristics have been studied in particular bullying roles:

*Children who bully others (bullies):* The most prevalent profile of children who bully others is that they are aggressive and socially unskilled, although the latter has often been disconfirmed. Empathy has been consistently linked with bullying (Espelage, Mebane & Adams, 2004; Farrington & Baldry, 2010). 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. A recent review showed that bullying is negatively associated with cognitive and – in particular – affective empathy (van Noorden, Haselager, Cillessen & Bukowski, 2014). It is well documented that empathic concern and understanding can have an inhibitory/protective effect on bullying involvement. [Developing children’s empathic understanding is one of key learning objectives of ENABLE lesson plans.](#)

Low self-control has been linked to bullying, but not to victimisation (Unnever & Cornell, 2003). The same study also reported that ADHD only had an indirect effect on bullying via self-control. Impairments in self-control can diminish opportunities for maintaining peer relations. Moreover, children who bully others often have trouble identifying and regulating negative emotions, such as anger. They also have trouble interpreting others’ emotions and intentions and have a tendency to misinterpret social situations more than the rest of their peers do (Dodge, 1993).

Children who are bullied (victimised): report loneliness, psychological distress and social anxiety (Eslea et al, 2004; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004). Victimised children are often socially withdrawn and lack social confidence and skills to effectively interact with peers (Salmivalli, 1999). Accordingly, low self-esteem has been found among victims. For example, in a Greek study Andreou (2004) found that the higher children scored on bullying or victimisation, the lower they scored on self-esteem. Similarly, Salmivalli and colleagues (1999) found that being victimised by peers was most typical among adolescents with low self-esteem.

Children who are bullied have been shown to lack effective emotion regulation and may be using ineffective ways to stop bullying (i.e. screaming) which may in fact be inadvertently reinforcing the aggressive behaviour (Salmivalli, 1999). Victimised children also often lack effective social problem-solving skills, and may employ passive strategies (such as avoidance and ignoring) instead of more effective assertive strategies, such as asking for help (Wilton, Craig & Pepler, 2000). [Developing children’s emotion regulation and problem solving skills are key learning objectives of ENABLE lesson plans.](#)

Based on evidence of these temperamental risk factors linked to bullying perpetration, most programmes have *indicated actions* focused on the bullies. It was not until the mid-1990s that

research on bullies started shedding light on underlying contextual conditions and social processes spurring and moderating bullying behaviours, such as peer group relations and participant roles.

### Peer group relations

Adolescence is a period where friendships and peer support are pivotal. As adolescents seek autonomy from their parents, they turn to peers for social support. Peer rejection and lack of peer support constitute risk factors for psychosocial adjustment, while friendships (dyadic process) and peer acceptance (group process) are crucial for adolescent positive development and school adjustment. Accordingly, peer relations have been linked with bullying.

Negative peer relationships are central to the problem of bullying and have been consistently associated with bullying perpetration across racial/ethnic groups and across studies (Spriggs et al., 2007). On the contrary, friendships can serve as an effective buffer against peer victimisation (Schmidt and Bagwell, 2007). Even the presence of one best friend can prevent victimisation.

#### *How are peer influences exerted?*

Peer groups are formed based on similarities - gender, race, overt behaviour (*homophily hypothesis*) - and peer influences constitute risk or protective factors for bullying, as they have been shown to foster or inhibit bullying behaviour (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

*Social identity theory*, which suggests that youth are motivated to maintain a positive social identity, explains how peer group affiliation is associated with bullying behaviour. Bullying increases when endorsed by a peer group and regarded as a group norm (Duffy & Nesdale, 2010). This is explained because bullying falls within the domain of behaviours with moral consequences; endorsement of the acceptability of bullying is akin to moral approval because harm to others is considered to be a key element of moral reasoning (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). Accordingly, two important predictors linked to bullying are 1) student perceptions of peer acceptability (or moral approval) of bullying, and 2) student perceptions that school is an unsupportive context in which peers and adults cannot be trusted. 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).

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

### Family context and child-parent relations

Family factors have been linked to children's bullying involvement as perpetrators, victims or bully-victims. The parent-child relationship and interactions is one of the primary mechanisms by which children observe, learn and adopt aggressive or passive behavioural patterns. Parents model behavioural patterns and condition their children in forming and maintaining

relationships. Parents also introduce and reinforce behavioural attitudes and norms (i.e. pro-aggression norms).

Lereya, Samara & Wolke, (2013) conducted a systematic review of the published literature on parenting behaviour and peer victimisation. The review 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. The effects were generally small to moderate for victims but moderate for bully/victims. On the contrary, positive parenting behaviour including good communication of parents with the child, warm and affectionate relationship, parental involvement and support and parental supervision, were protective against peer victimisation. Along the same lines, another study showed that victims' home environments are characterised by higher levels of criticism, fewer/loose rules, and more child maltreatment; bullies' homes by lack of supervision, child maltreatment, and exposure to domestic violence (Holt, Kaufman Kantor & Finkelhor, 2008).

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. Girls on the other hand are likely to be bullied if their mothers are emotionally abusive, hostile, and distant. They become victims due to low emotion-regulation skills and communication problems (Duncan, 2004). Consistently, Georgiou (2008), in a study of 252 Greek Cypriot children and their mothers, concluded that maternal responsiveness was negatively related to bullying, while overprotective mothering was associated with higher victimisation.

In addition, parental conflict at home and family conflict (Stevens et al., 2002) and *maltreatment* (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001) have been consistently linked with bullying behaviours. Inter-parental violence has also been linked to bullying. For example, 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 compared to those who were not exposed to inter-parental violence. Studies also have shown an association between victimisation and negative family interactions (Duncan, 2004; Spriggs et al., 2007) and child maltreatment (Shields and Cicchetti, 2001). Maltreated children may feel helpless in protecting themselves. On the contrary, children who are *not* involved in bullying report better parental relations, compared to bullies and bully-victims (Stevens et al., 2002).

Parental involvement and monitoring have also been consistently linked with bullying. Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, (2000) found that children's unsupervised time was positively related to bullying. Flouri and Buchanan (2002) found fathers' involvement was protective against victimisation. In another study, the same researchers found that lower involvement by one parent can be compensated by involvement by the other parent (Flouri and Buchanan,

2003). Moreover, lack of parental support (Holt & Espelage, 2007) has been associated with bullying. On the internet, parental restrictive mediation, but not technical mediation, was found to reduce cyberbullying risk and harm (Duerager & Livingstone, 2012).

Spriggs et al. (2007) found that parental communication was associated with bullying for all three racial/ethnic groups (White, Black and Hispanic), and parental school involvement was associated with bullying involvement for both White and Black students. As suggested by the authors, screening for parent communication and involvement in school may be useful in identifying students at risk of bullying involvement. Further, programmes should consider including interventions to address family communication and involvement, since these factors have been known to impact the success of community- and school-based preventive interventions for other adolescent behaviours such as school disciplinary actions (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

[ENABLE reaches out to parents involving them both in the needs assessment phase and in promoting parents' skills development.](#)

## School factors

Multiple school factors have been consistently linked to children's social development and mental health.

School bonding, defined as both affective attachment and academic commitment (Catalano et al, 2004), is related to both bullying perpetration and victimisation, with possible bi-directional relations at work. Both bullies and victims report *lower school attachment* than non-involved peers (Haynie, Nansel, Eitel, Crump, Saylor, Yu et al., 2001).

However, although perpetrators are 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). In a meta-analytic review, Nakamoto and Schwartz (2010) found a significant negative association between victimisation and academic achievement, as measured by grades, student achievement scores, or teachers' ratings of academic achievement. Andreou and Metallinou (2004) found that academic self-efficacy combined with certain social cognitions predicted both victimisation and bullying behaviour. The same authors also found that self-regulatory strategies combined with social cognitions similar to the victim's and bully's, predicted both assistant and reinforcer behaviour, while none of the cognition measures predicted defender or outsider behaviour. One large scale study (HBSC USA data) showed school attachment and performance were inconsistently related to bullying behaviour across race/ethnicity, but bullying behaviours were consistently related to peer relationships across Black, White and Hispanic adolescents (Spriggs et al., 2007). This study extends past research by showing that dimensions of *school bonding* appear differentially relevant to bullying by race/ethnicity. Below average school performance was related to all three types of bullying involvement for White and Hispanic students; school satisfaction was relevant for Black and Hispanic students only. Further, feeling unsafe at school was positively associated with victimisation, but only for White students. For the

most part, school factors did not differentiate bully-victims from non-involved peers among Black and Hispanic students.

Additionally, children who bully have difficulty with rules, and exhibit poor school adjustment (Nansel et al., 2004).

The school climate has been shown to be consistently linked to bullying. 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 are a potentially valuable strategy for engaging students in the prevention of bullying (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2010).

Teachers' attitudes and involvement in bullying constitute a factor influencing school bullying. It has been shown that teachers' involvement in their students' academic and social lives significantly decreased students' feeling unsafe in their school (Hong & Eamon, 2011). Rigby and Bagshaw (2003), who asked middle school students whether their teachers intervene in bullying incidents, found that 40% responded "not really" or "only sometimes interested". Teachers' non-intervention may be linked to lowering the chances that students' will seek help from them.

Table 4.1. Individual and contextual factors associated with bullying behaviours

Layer in bullying ecology	Risk factors	Protective factors- skills
<b>Individual</b> Children who bully others	Low empathy Low self-control Low emotional awareness/regulation Hostile attribution bias Perceptions of acceptability of bullying	Empathic understanding  Emotional awareness and management
Children who are bullied	Low self-esteem Social anxiety /low social competence Ineffective emotion regulation Ineffective social problem solving -Lack of appropriate assertiveness	Pro-social skills - Social competence/self-efficacy Effective social problem solving Appropriate assertiveness
<b>Peer group</b>	Negative peer relations Anti-social peer norms-culture/normative beliefs about bullying Reinforcing (inadvertently) aggressive behaviour (being bystanders)	Friendship(s) Cooperative interactions promoting a cooperative peer culture Empowering bystander to assist (being upstanders)

<b>Parents</b>	Inter-parental/family conflict and poor communication Loose parental involvement/unresponsive parenting Overprotection (hinders autonomy) Online low parental involvement	Positive supportive parenting (good communication and warmth) Parental involvement and responsiveness (age- appropriate) Age-appropriate parental support and control (promotes autonomy) Online restrictive parental mediation
<b>Teachers/ School</b>	Students' perceptions that school is unsupportive-unsafe Teachers' ignoring antisocial behaviour School inconsistent applying anti-bullying policies and negative consequences for bullying behaviours Negative school climate Low school bonding- connectedness	Instructional support and feedback from teachers and school Teachers' involvement in students' social and academic lives Explicit rules about what is/is not acceptable behaviour in school Consistent enforcement of anti-bullying policies Supportive-caring school climate

At the mesosystem layer, the school context can exert important effects on bullying behaviours through:

- School policies
- Educational curricula

Mesosystem and macrosystem effects are not directly targeted but are considered to mediate prevention programs, and as such are systematically clustered and assessed, as is done in the following sections for the purposes of the ENABLE research. These distal effects may be used for adapting prevention programs, or as mediating variables to assess intervention effects.

#### *4.2 Addressing the mesosystem level: School system and policies*

School systems differ on a national level and on a district level. For example, the curricula differ greatly in terms of their coverage of social and digital skills, which are most relevant to the bullying phenomenon. A brief overview of relevant educational modules across ENABLE countries suggest distinct contextual differences at the mesosystem level:

##### **Belgium**

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.

##### **Greece**

In Greece, IT classes start in first grade. In grade 3 the curriculum accounts for two hours weekly of Information and Communication Technologies classes. Many primary and secondary education teachers follow the ARIADNE program, offered by the Adolescent Health Unit, which trains teachers on adolescent internet use and misuse issues. It is recommended (but not obligatory) that teachers register in the ‘Prevention Observatory on School Violence and Bullying’ platform, and report their students’ behaviour.

Social and emotional skills are not included in the primary or secondary curricula or do not constitute a separate module, but can be incorporated, based on each school’s discretion, in the Flexible Zone program. This is one hour weekly, and primarily includes health education issues. A one-hour Social Life programme was piloted five years ago in grades 3-5 but was never shifted to the standard curriculum.

##### **Denmark**

In pre-school there are six focus areas, two of which are “Social skills” and “Social relationships and cooperation”.

“IT and media” is a cross-disciplinary subject in public schools. Lessons that include ICT and media have students use a range of digital skills; the focus is mainly on four different approaches:

- The student critically examines
- The student as an analytical receiver
- The student as a focused and creative producer
- The student as a responsible participant

“Media” is a one-year elective course that can be selected in the 7th, 8th or 9th class. In the course the students get to know mainstream media and learn about different forms of expression and communication. It includes two areas of competence: Media production and media analysis.

“Innovation and entrepreneurship” is a cross-disciplinary subject in all school subjects and topics. The theme of innovation and entrepreneurship helps students develop innovative and entrepreneurial skills, as well as learning to use their personal, professional and social resources in the world, whether they wish to have an influence on their own lives, participate in social activities or launch activities or enterprises. The goal is to motivate students to participate in society as active citizens, entrepreneurs and innovative employees. At the same time, students should be able to deal with the challenges and opportunities associated with being an individual in a changing and complex world.

“The student’s versatile and many-sided development” is a cross-disciplinary subject where students experience being in control of their own situation in the school, being engaged in education, being challenged and using their strengths and ways of learning to contribute to the school and much more. Versatile development increases the likelihood that students will want to learn more, fulfil their learning potential, and contribute to the wider social context.

“Health, sex and family life education” (Sundheds- og seksualundervisning og familiekundskab) is studied in the 7th - 9th grade. The teaching of health and sex education and family life education is divided into a three-step process (preschool-3rd, 4th-6th and 7th-9th grade) which all students must follow. In this course, children develop skills to promote health and well-being. They gain an understanding of how important lifestyle and living conditions are to health and well-being, and about the interaction between health, sexuality and family life.

**United Kingdom**

England's Department for Education states that schools by law must teach children from age 5 onwards how to: 'use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private; Identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies'.

At Key Stage 3, age 12-14 this includes: 'understand a range of ways to use technology safely, respectfully, responsibly and securely, including protecting online identity and privacy; recognising inappropriate Content, contact and conduct and knowing how to report concerns'.

Personal Social Health and Economic Education takes place under section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010. Such a curriculum must:

- *promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and*
- *prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.*

'Maintained' schools<sup>7</sup> also have statutory duties to:

- *promote children and young people's wellbeing (Wellbeing is defined in the Children Act 2004 as the promotion of physical and mental health; emotional wellbeing; social and economic wellbeing; education, training and recreation; recognition of the contribution made by children to society; and protection from harm and neglect.)*
- *promote community cohesion (Education and Inspections Act 2006; Education Act 2002)*

To conclude, on a mesosystem- educational system level, it seems that the UK and Denmark have educational modules in place to safeguard students' wellbeing and developmental needs, while Greece lags behind in core educational modules, but supplements with local district initiatives. [These differences will be considered in implementing the ENABLE programme; educational objectives may need to be adapted to existing educational structures and curricula.](#)

## **5: ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAMMES WORLDWIDE**

A substantial number of programmes to combat bullying (*anti-bullying programmes*) have been implemented across the world in the last 20 years, primarily in schools. School-based anti-bullying programmes have the common goal to reduce bullying but embrace different

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<sup>7</sup> "Maintained schools are the majority of state schools in England. This means they are overseen, or 'maintained', by the Local Authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national teacher pay and conditions." - definition by <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/>

approaches, and employ different strategies and components. Moreover, programmes target different outcomes, use different measurement tools and exhibit varying effectiveness.

Many traditional programmes follow the Olweus Bully Prevention model programme , which was developed in Norway to reduce and prevent school bullying in elementary and middle schools. The Olweus bullying prevention programme 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. The programme includes school-wide, classroom, individual, and community strategies (Olweus, 1994).

KiVa is another model programme developed in Finland based on the participant role approach to bullying (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996), which focuses on influencing the responses of peer bystanders witnessing bullying. The aim of the KiVa curriculum is to change the bullying-related norms and consequently reduce both bullying perpetration and experienced victimization.

Conflict-resolution pedagogy and promotion of accountability of children behaviour are approaches used in many programmes. Many programmes employ the restorative justice model, which uses reconciliation techniques (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006).

More recently, a skills-promotion approach has been developed (for details see chapter 6).

Programmes implemented in five ENABLE countries and six EU multi-center (cross-national) programmes are presented in data sheet format, which includes programme elements, aims, outcomes and evaluations.

## *5.1. Programmes implemented in countries participating in ENABLE*

### **Belgium**

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.

### **Croatia**

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

## Denmark

Prevention is a key element in Denmark. Almost every programme deals with the prevention of bullying instead of intervention. That said, sites like DCUM, eXbus and Mobbeland.dk (anti bullying consultants) and many others provide a variety of concise exercises for intervention if needed. From our point of view (Center for Digital Youth Care) and our long standing contact with various schools, what is needed the most, locally, are updated materials on the prevention of cyberbullying and how to intermedate in situations where primarily videos and pictures have been used as a means of bullying. Also we see a paradigm shift in the understanding of bullying (from eXbus), that needs to be fully incorporated and understood locally.

Three programmes have been implemented in Denmark:

1. Free of Bullying
2. Tactile Back Massage (Taktil Ryg-massage)
3. Mobiles against Bullying (Mobiler Mod Mobning)

These programmes (among others) and existing exercises combined with external consultants like Mobbeland and the fact that all schools must offer an online anti-bullying-strategy, that informs on the initiatives, proves to be a combination that suits a small country like Denmark. The EU Kids Online survey showed us that Danish children are bullied more in comparison with other European children. (12% bullied on the internet (vs 6% average in Europe) 25% Been bullied at all, online or offline (vs 19% in Europe)

As suggested in the EU Kids Online report (Haddon, Livingstone & the EU Kids Online network, 2012) Denmark has a long tradition of promoting institutional and public awareness. The general principle has been to disseminate information and examples of best practice at all levels. In this context the fact that the vast majority (In EU Kids Online) answered "yes, there are things on the internet that are not good for children my age" indicates that Danish children have listened to "campaigns" from parents, from schools, read the Media Council's information material, and perhaps also listened to public debates. These efforts must be continued and strengthened through increased dissemination of knowledge, best practice examples and collaboration.

## Greece

In Greece, although the phenomenon of bullying is salient, very few anti-bullying programmes have been conducted, primarily due to lack of anti-bullying policy and funding in the 2000s. Some pilot programmes were conducted in the early 2000s but these were either small-scale

local initiatives (<100 children), or were small scale unfunded programmes whose evaluations were not published.

Four structured, theory-based, anti-bullying programmes have been evaluated so far:

- 1) Andreou et al., 2007
- 2) Stop School Bullying (SSB)
- 3) Understanding School Bullying (USB)
- 4) School Violence and Bullying Prevention and Treatment Network (SVBPTN)

The first programme was conducted in 2003-4 in 13 schools in Central Greece by the Department of Primary Education, University of Thessaly, Greece (Andreou et al., 2007). The second, large-scale funded program, STOP SCHOOL BULLYING (SSB) was implemented in 2010-11 in the wider Athens Area.

All four studies were conducted by academic departments and both were prevention curricular-based programmes conducted in class over a limited timeframe (4 weeks in Andreou; 11 weeks in SSB) by classroom teachers and were shown to be efficacious in the short term in reducing bullying and bystanders' behaviours. The SSB programme has not published long term efficacy results, while Andreou program's 6-month follow up indicates limited long term effectiveness, which is to be considered in conjunction to the lack of school-wide policy in Greek schools and lack of a reporting system for bullying incidents. The third Bullying Intervention Programme "Understanding School Bullying" is a bullying prevention and treatment programme in secondary schools. It is a programme based on the Theory of Mind (Mentalisation). It is a primary and secondary prevention programme against bullying in secondary education, which is based on the integration and extension of the principles of the theory of cognition to prevent and address the complex phenomenon of bullying in high schools. It focuses on the effort to create a framework in which the participating schools will be prepared to deal effectively bullying cases, mainly through training and teaching staff support. All three programmes included teachers' training, and the SSB programme used a detailed manual for teachers.

The structure of the local educational system (centralized) and the lack of nation-wide anti-bullying policy dictates policy development as a priority. Moreover, lack of centralized initiatives towards the national implementation of anti-bullying programmes, left the task of programme implementation and evaluation to academic departments, which can conduct theory-based localized smaller scale programmes, with robust implementation fidelity and valid assessment procedures.

More recently, the Ministry of Education is implementing the Acts "Development and Information Network operation, training, prevention and treatment of school violence and bullying» (<http://stop-bullying.sch.gr/>), which is integrated into the Priority Axes 1, 2 and 3

of the Operational Programme "Education and Lifelong Learning", NSRF 2007-2013 and in the general context of the Greek Ministry of Education. The network actions aim at:

- the creation of a permanent structure to prevent and address school bullying nationwide,
- the training of education officials and teachers who will form the basis for the creation and sustainability of prevention and response structure of School Violence and Bullying,
- the recording, prevention, early diagnosis and treatment at an early stage, the phenomena of School Violence and bullying and
- raising awareness and the active participation of the educational community, the family and the wider community.

Future anti-bullying programmes should include the promotion of positive interactions, instruction/teaching of problem-solving skills/strategies and should include a clear published anti bullying policy and available reporting procedures. Moreover, schoolteachers should be trained to implement programme components.

### United Kingdom

In the UK multiple programmes have been implemented in the last 15 years. The five most significant programmes, with published evaluations are:

1. The ZAP Programmes, carried out by Kidscape in 2012-13.
2. Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme, carried out by the NGO Diana Award in 2011.
3. Roots of Empathy Programme, carried out by the NGO Action for Children Scotland and Inspiring Scotland in 2010.
4. All together now!, carried out by Save the Children NI in 2006 - 2009.
5. KiVa Program, carried out by Bangor University Wales

The above are five examples of successful initiatives in the UK. The four regions - Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England, all have different cultures and difficulties. However, across all four those schemes that have successful outcomes for children have similar themes that transcend this cultural difference. These programmes had a focus on the bystander, culture and building up resilience within the victim, whether through group/classroom based activities or the development of empathy. (There are others not included in the data collated for example Childnet Let's fight it together, and Ceop Exposed, which both used videos as a way of triggering discussion but evaluation found them to have a short term impact on behaviour).

Focus on the development of a culture of support and reporting, from this evaluation, are the most effective. 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, engaging with parents the outcomes are very positive. Based on this, we would recommend the following for a successful anti-bullying intervention:

- Programmes that are successful engage with children, young people and their support networks at an emotional level. The focus is on changing both behaviour and the individual responses to situations by developing emotional intelligence and empathy.
- They are not one off ‘quick fixes’ but rather supported by a whole systems approach, including not just the victim and the protagonist, but the bystanders and a system that enables or does not actively challenge.
- Whole school interventions rather than one off sessions have the greatest impact. This involves developing a culture that does not tolerate bullying of any kind all the way through the organization
- Where the intervention is peer-led, this is Peer-led is more successful if all ages and different types of peer groups are represented within the intervention.
- Staff need to be engaged in all programmes and understand both the methodology and research to be in a position to act as champions
- All intervention needs to be fresh, relevant, exciting, interactive and engaging for students parents and staff.
- The intervention needs to provide resources and support for students and staff to help kick-start them with an anti-bullying programme in their schools.
- The parents need to be engaged from the beginning

### *5.2. EU cross national programmes*

Important cross-national anti-bullying programmes have been carried out in Europe in the last decade, most funded and implemented under the Daphne Initiative of the European Commission:

- European anti-bullying network
- CyberTraining - A Research-based Training Manual On Cyber-Bullying
- ProSAVE
- “I am not scared” project
- “European Bullying Research”
- TABBY (Threat Assessment In Bullying Behaviour)

### *5.3. Anti Bullying programme evaluations*

In addition to the program-specific evaluations presented in the above sections and their respective data sheets, integrative evaluations are important to assess anti-bullying programme effects.

A handful of meta-analyses of anti-bullying Programmes have been conducted in the last ten years to evaluate school-based bullying prevention programmes. Overall, the results are mixed. Although there is variability across nations and types of programmes “on average, anti-bullying campaigns have had some modest success” (Smith, 2011; p. 419). Conversely,

Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava (2008) suggest null effects in overt bullying behaviours. There is evidence that programmes are only effective in European countries (Evans, Fraser, & Cotter, 2014), while modest effects are suggested (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). In more detail:

Smith Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou (2004) evaluated 14 whole-school anti-bullying Programmes and suggested that although substantial impact has been demonstrated results are inconsistent. These programmes were all based on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme (Olweus, 1994), which has yet to demonstrate consistent efficacy within U.S. schools. Results yielded moderate effect sizes on self-reported victimization and small to negligible effects on self-reported bullying perpetration.

Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava (2008) conducted a more recent meta-analytic investigation of 16 studies. This meta-analysis included data published between 1980 and 2004 from over 15,000 students attending kindergarten to Grade 12 in Europe, Canada, and the U.S. Positive effect sizes were found for only one-third of the study outcomes, primarily evidenced in favorable changes in knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of bullying. No changes were found in overt bullying behaviours.

Ttofi & Farrington (2011), in one of most comprehensive recent meta-analysis based on 44 studies provided encouraging, yet moderate findings: average reductions of 20-23% for bullying and 17-20% for being bullied/victimization. The review analysed the elements driving efficacious anti-bullying programmes, based on published reviews and meta-analyses on bullying interventions, and found decreases in rates of bully victimization for programmes that included the following elements:

- disciplinary (non-punitive) methods
- parent training/meetings
- cooperative group work (among teachers and other professionals)
- greater number of programme elements and duration

Accordingly, the same review found decreases in rates of bullying (perpetration) in programmes that included:

- parent information
- improved playground supervision
- disciplinary methods
- classroom management
- teacher training
- classroom rules
- whole-school anti-bullying policy
- cooperative group work
- greater number of elements and duration (in Europe)

The latter review findings showed that parent training/meetings was a programme element significantly related to a decrease in both bullying and victimization, and suggested that efforts should be made to sensitize parents about the issue of school bullying through educational presentations and teacher-parent meetings. The authors concluded that new anti-bullying initiatives should go beyond the scope of the school and target wider systemic factors such as the family. [Such an approach is embraced by ENABLE.](#)

## ***6: Social and emotional learning***

As suggested by empirical research presented above, best practices in bullying prevention dictates employing multifaceted approaches. Such programmes may include a school-wide component centered on training, awareness, monitoring, and assessment of bullying; a classroom component focused on reinforcing rules and building social and emotional skills; and an intervention component for students who are frequently involved in bullying episodes.

More recently, best practice in anti-bullying prevention dictates incorporating bullying prevention onto a larger, more comprehensive framework of skills promotion and positive youth development. Pre-adolescence and adolescence is period of intense socio-cognitive change and an opportune time to build skills and resilience. Schools are an ideal setting to implement skills promotion. School-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programmes serve this objective, promoting skills that safeguard against bullying involvement.

SEL is an educational movement gaining ground throughout the world. SEL programmes are based on extended developmental research and focus on the development of social and emotional competences. In the U.S.A., SEL programmes are an integral part of school-based violence prevention programmes, addressing core interpersonal and emotional development such as communication and empathy, by explicitly teaching social skills, emotion management and goal achievement and decision-making.

Similarly, Peer Support Systems have gained ground in the UK, as an effective element of prevention. Such schemes empower youth through teaching conflict resolution or mediation, and intervening in bullying situations.

ENABLE embraces the SEL movement and aims to apply key SEL constructs and methods in its programme, applying SEL theory and practice in the development of ENABLE lesson plan. 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. SEL lessons are coupled with a Peer Support Scheme to empower peers and generate more positive outcomes.

### ***6.1. SEL PROGRAMMES***

#### **Theoretical Background and Core Skills**

The SEL programmes are based on the premise that many forms of aggression and victimization share common *risk and protective factors* such as lack of empathy (Endresen & Olweus, 2001), attitudes supporting aggression (Boulton, Trueman, & Flemington, 2002) and often maintained under same contextual conditions (Low, Espelage, & Polanin, 2013). As such,

SEL prevention programmes target multiple risk and protective factors in order to decrease multiple forms of violence and increase adaptive behaviours.

SEL is based on the use by school teachers of cognitive and behavioural methods.

SEL programmes have a person-centered focus on skills developments and an *environmental focus*. Five groups of inter-related core social and emotional competencies that SEL programmes address (Payton et al., 2008):

1. **Self-awareness:** accurately assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence;
2. **Self-management:** regulating one's emotions to handle stress, controlling impulses, and persevering in addressing challenges; expressing emotions appropriately; and setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals;
3. **Social awareness:** being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; and recognizing 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; and
5. **Responsible decision making:** making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; and contributing to the well-being of one's school and community.

**ENABLE SEL lessons focus on self-control, social competence, empathy, motivation and self-awareness, to reduce problem behaviours and to promote positive ones.**

### Positive outcomes

SEL programming is associated with multiple positive benefits (CASEL, 2015). It can foster educational and social conditions that make bullying far less likely because bullying cannot flourish in a safe and caring learning environment characterized by:

1. **Supportive relationships** between teachers and students and among students that encourage open communication and positive ways to resolve problems and conflicts.
2. **Good working relationships** between schools and families that foster two-way communication about student growth and development.
3. **School norms, values, and policies** that emphasize respect for others and appreciation of differences.

4. Students who are aware of and can manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging social situations constructively.

### **Instruction**

Many SEL curricula provide sequential and developmentally appropriate instruction in SEL skills, and structured opportunities for children to practice and apply these skills. SEL Programmes are ideally implemented from preschool through high school. Lessons are reinforced in both classroom and non-classroom settings, as well as during out-of-school activities and at home. Educators receive ongoing professional development in SEL, and families and schools work together to promote children's social, emotional, and academic success.

### **Best practice guidelines**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

(<http://www.CASEL.org>) has set best practice guidelines for SEL programmes:

- 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

(Elias et al., 1997; Zins et al., 2004).

### **Resources and Programme Evaluations**

In the U.S.A., SEL guidelines and resources are available to help schools identify effective SEL Programmes with:

- the Blueprints for Violence Prevention
- the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
- the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programmes and Practices (administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

An extensive overview of SEL Programmes and the evaluation studies is conducted by CASEL(2013, 2015).

### **Middle Schools Programmes**

Of middle school SEL Programmes suggested by the 2015 CASEL Guide Middle and High School Edition<sup>8</sup>, three programmes with free standing SEL Lessons, are relevant to ENABLE objectives and targetted ages, and are presented in data sheets.

1. Responding in peaceful and Positive ways (RiPP)
2. Second Step
3. Student Success Skills

## Elementary School Programmes

The 2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programmes- Preschool and Elementary School Edition (Domitrovich Durlak, Goren, Weissberg, 2013) provides a systematic review and evaluation of effective SEL Programmes. The guide lists 19 Programmes for Elementary school years. Of these programmes, eight are relevant to ENABLE objectives and are presented in data sheets:

1. Caring School Community
2. MindUp
3. PATHS
4. Positive Action
5. Raising Healthy Children
6. RULER
7. Second Step
8. Steps to Respect

These programmes:

- Measured student behaviour
- Provided classroom-wide content
- Included explicit skill instruction. Such instruction is provided through explicit lesson plans with content and instruction designed specifically to improve social and emotional skills. These lessons teach social skills, such as making friends, working cooperatively with others, coping with stress, making decisions, and resolving conflicts.
- Provided *extensive* opportunities to practice SEL . This rating reflected consistent active learning opportunities to practice SEL skills during or beyond classroom sessions daily.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://secondaryguide.casel.org/#MS-Programs>

## Reviews and Meta-Analyses

The 2008 CASEL report (Payton et al., 2008) summarizes results from three large-scale reviews of research on the impact of SEL Programmes on elementary and middle school students. Collectively the three reviews included 317 studies and involved 324,303 children. SEL Programmes yielded multiple benefits in each review and were effective in both school and after-school settings and for students with and without behavioural and emotional problems. They were also effective across the K-8 grade range and for racially and ethnically diverse students from urban, rural and suburban settings. SEL Programmes improved students' social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, connection to school, positive social behaviour, and academic performance; they also reduced students' conduct problems and emotional distress. SEL Programmes are among the most successful youth-development programmes offered to school-age youth. Furthermore, school staff (e.g. teachers, student support staff) carried out SEL Programmes effectively, indicating that they can be incorporated into routine educational practice. In addition, SEL programming improved students' academic performance by 11 to 17 percentile points across the three reviews, indicating that they offer students a practical educational benefit.

Two meta-analyses have been conducted on SEL Programmes (Durlak et al. 2011; Wilson and Lipsey 2007). Collectively, SEL Programmes have been shown to be associated with greater well-being and to be effective in reducing bullying and aggression and in improving academics in US elementary and middle schools (Durlak et al, 2011). In particular, SEL Programmes have yielded significant positive effects on targeted social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school, and have documented increased prosocial behaviours and reduced conduct and internalizing problems (Durlak et al, 2011).

A meta-analysis of 213 studies shows that students in schools using universally-applied SEL Programmes have improved social, emotional and academic skills, including an 11-percentile point increase in achievement, as well as more pro-social behaviour and positive attitudes toward the self and others, and lower levels of emotional distress. Durlak et al. (2011) report an effect size of .22 for conduct problems (including aggression and delinquency), .57 for social and emotional skills (e.g. interpersonal problem solving, goal setting), .24 for positive social behaviour (e.g., social skills), and .27 for academic performance. The analyses showed that effect sizes (ES) were moderated by programme implementation quality.

Wilson and Lipsey (2007) meta-analysis found similar effect size (.21) for aggressive/disruptive behaviour. The authors note larger effects for better-implemented Programmes and for those involving students at higher risk for aggressive behaviour.

Conclusively, SEL programmes show positive effects on targeted social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school, and have documented increased prosocial behaviours and reduced conduct and internalizing problems.

## *6.2. PEER SUPPORT SCHEMES*

Peer support is a widely used anti-bullying intervention scheme in both primary and secondary schools. Cowie and Wallace (2000) identified the following key features of peer support:

- young people are trained to work together outside friendship groups aiming to reduce prejudice and foster trust across gender and ethnic groups.
- young people are given opportunities through training to learn good communication skills, to share information and to reflect on their own emotions in relationships with others.
- young people are trained to deal with conflict and to help peers to relate to one another in non-violent ways.

The peer support method does not limit itself to those immediately involved in a bullying situation but includes the bystanders, especially those who observe bullying and could play an active part in its prevention (Cowie & Hutson, 2005).

School-based anti-bullying peer support schemes are designed to improve interpersonal problem-solving skills in children and young people by training them to identify the interpersonal problem and to generate non-violent solutions.

Peer support systems reduce the negative impact of bullying on victims and make it more acceptable for them to report it. Naylor & Cowie (1999) surveyed 2,313 secondary school pupils and 234 teachers in 51 schools that had peer support systems. They found that, while peer support systems do not always reduce the incidence of bullying, they can be an effective preventive measure. Importantly, peer support systems reduce the negative impact of bullying on victims and make reporting more easy. Moreover, the researchers found that the existence of a peer support system is perceived as beneficial to the school as a whole for the following reasons:

- peers are able to detect bullying at a much earlier stage than adults could;
- young people are more likely to confide in contemporaries than in adults;
- victims have someone to turn to;

- peer supporters gain valuable social skills and self-confidence;
- the school enhances its reputation among parents and the local community;
- over time, the school is perceived as a community that cares.

Peer-to-peer approaches to addressing bullying can encompass a range of interventions, including: befriending, conflict resolution, mentoring, and counselling-based approaches (Cowie and Wallace, 2000). Policy has previously highlighted the importance of pupil engagement and voice in Anti-Bullying strategies (DCSF, 2007) and research has suggested that peer-to-peer strategies for Anti-Bullying can benefit both users, providers, and the school more generally with positive outcomes (Cowie et al, 2002).

Empirical research on the successes of peer-to-peer approaches to bullying have generally focused on teacher and pupil perceptions of the success of these schemes. Houlston and Smith (2009) have suggested that longitudinal studies which include self-reports of bullying and general perceptions would be ‘more convincing’ suggestions of effectiveness.

In the UK context, only a few high profile evaluations have been conducted of peer-to-peer approaches to Anti-Bullying. The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation evaluated their peer-to-peer mentoring scheme through a quasi-experimental design and found there to be “promising levels of scheme-engagement by young people who were being bullied and of positive benefits for children and young people who volunteered to be peer mentors. Co-ordinator feedback on the early work of the schemes was also generally positive”. Banerjee et al (2010) conducted an evaluation of BeatBullying which employed a similar student-led, peer-to-peer support system in order to address bullying in schools and online. Using case study and survey research the research concluded that mentors provided positive support systems to their peers, especially in the transition from primary to secondary school (2010: 3). More importantly, they concluded that BeatBullying programmes were regarded in schools as a ‘crucial extension’ to existing practice, rather than being used in an ‘exclusive’ manner which replaced other initiatives (Bannerjee, 2010: 4). Furthermore, the National Mentoring Network’s<sup>9</sup> (2004) Peer Mentoring Pilot concluded that the intervention “adds an extra level to the pastoral support offered by a school; it helps to convey the message that this is a school that cares about its pupils.”

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<sup>9</sup> [i] [http://www.mandbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Peer\\_Mentoring\\_in\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.mandbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Peer_Mentoring_in_Schools.pdf)

Peer support systems are now accepted and valued for their contribution for the empowerment of bystanders. The research so far indicates that peer support success lies in their flexible monitoring and clear observation of the needs of the potential users (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). *ENABLE embraces the peer support scheme, with starting point the assessment of the needs of the 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.*

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