



## School Violence Prevention: the I Am Not Scared Project

**Lorenzo Martellini**

Pixel Associazione (Italy)

[lorenzo@pixel-online.net](mailto:lorenzo@pixel-online.net)

### Context

The bullying phenomenon is a challenge, that all European educational systems have to deal with. The official research promoted by the European Council in 2008 tells that the average of pupils declaring being victim of bullying is around 32%.

Bullying deeply affect success of lifelong learning policies, causing early drop out.

There is a strong belief that still important needs can be answered to in order to enhance the capacity of the European Educational system to deal and prevent effectively the bullying phenomenon. Specifically:

- Large majority of information and experiences related to the understanding and the tackling of bullying have been developed and are available according to Experts point of view and following a scientific approach that risks to promote mainly Top-Bottom approach. Despite the high standard of information and strategies developed, teachers, pupils and their parents tend to be only "objects of study" rather than subjects of the solutions adopted to prevent and tackle the bullying phenomenon;

- The standard of the researches and initiatives is not homogeneous at European level: some countries (i.e. United Kingdom, Germany and Spain) seem ahead both in the comprehension and in the development of structures and initiatives to prevent and tackle the issue; some others (i.e. Italy, Greece and Belgium) have a consistent number of studies and a high standard of knowledge, but lack of organic strategies to tackle the problem; some others (i.e. Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania) lack of both the knowledge and the capacity to plan and organise effective initiatives. A sharing of information and methods is therefore needed.

### Objectives and Beneficiaries

The "I Am Not Scared" project (Project Number 511645-2010-LLP-IT-KA1-KA1SCR), in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (KA1 Policy Cooperation and Innovation), intends to identify the best strategies to prevent and combat the bullying phenomenon and provide Secondary school and Vocational Education teachers, Directors Pupils, Parents and key policy makers in the field of education with a better understanding of the dynamics that can lead to the emerging and consolidating of the bullying phenomenon and of the most effective strategies and behaviours to tackle it.

The project started in November 2010 and will end in October 2012. Specific objectives of the project, in order to provide an answer to the needs identified in the context above are:

- Promote and adopt a Bottom-Up approach to the understanding of the bullying phenomenon. The project placed pupils, both Victims and Bullies, their parents and Teachers at the centre of the research so that they themselves are the protagonists of acquiring and understanding the information, through their commitment to a common research-action activity in order to analyse exemplary case studies from their different point of view.

- Promote a knowledge sharing and transfer of knowledge and experiences among institutions and schools representing 9 European countries with different level of awareness and effectiveness on the theme of bullying prevention and tackling, in order to transfer the best solutions and experiences from the most advanced countries (i.e. UK, Germany and Spain) to countries that still lack organic strategies to tackle the problem (i.e. Italy, Belgium and Greece) and that are still developing a complete understanding of the issue (i.e. Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania).

- Promote a transnational based, highly practical oriented approach to the understanding and tackling of the Bullying phenomenon in order to define a shared European strategy to be implemented in order to combat the bullying phenomenon, based on the best practices available in the field, and therefore prevent early drop outs from lifelong learning initiatives.

The project has a direct impact on the following beneficiaries involved in 9 different European countries, that have been directly involved in the analysis of bullying episodes from their different point of views.

- Almost 1.200 students of secondary and vocational education schools





This group of beneficiaries includes: students victims of school bullying, bully students and bystanders students. They benefit from a better awareness of the causes, negative effects and behaviours to adopt to prevent the bullying episodes

- More than 200 teachers of secondary and vocational education schools

This group includes teachers who benefit from the reflection on how they could improve their capacity to understand the dynamics that backup and cause bullying episodes and what they can do to effectively address the situation. Teachers also benefit from the knowledge acquired during a peer to peer online transnational discussion which took place on almost 100 case studies focusing on school bullying.

- More than 750 parents of students who played a role in bullying episodes.

The parents benefit from the opportunity to reflect on the behaviours that can signal problems related to bullying episodes, to gain information on who to refer to be informed and to get advices and to learn what to do to prevent and address the problem.

- 90 Supporting Experts (e.g. Psychologists, counsellors), 90 School Directors and 90 Key Policy Makers

They benefit from a more in depth and practical oriented approach to the understanding of the group and personal dynamics that are behind the bullying episodes, of what role they can play to address the issue.

## Activities

The project activities are organized into the following main actions:

### A) Collection of Information

The aim of this activity was to achieve a better understanding of the bullying phenomenon carrying out an empiric based research at transnational level, aiming at identifying the state of art in the comprehension and strategic tackling of school bullying, violence and intolerance. The main information taken into account are the reviews of publications and the reviews of good practices

The partners identified and reviewed the **main publications** available at national level in the nine European countries involved, addressing the bullying phenomenon. The publications include: researches, reports, books, articles, web articles, laws, regulations, etc. The reviews of the selected publications are organized in a searchable database. The publications are available only in the original languages, while the reviews were made in English and in the national languages. On the database there are currently available more than 450 publications reviewed in English and in the language of the publication



The partners also collected examples of **good practices**, available at national level in the nine European countries involved, addressing the bullying phenomenon. The good practices include: ongoing and past projects, educational initiatives, training courses to teachers, informative and awareness raising campaigns, etc. On the database are currently available about 100 good practices reviewed in English and in the national language of the country where the good practice took place

The databases of publications and good practices are available on the I Am Not Scared portal under the database section.

Through the main bibliographic references available in the field and the analysis of the good practices a **national report** for each country involved in the project has been produced.

Each national report explained the situation existing in the country of the partner focusing on: introduction to the national situation, main national trends on school bullying phenomenon, national bodies in charge of the prevention of the problem, national policies implemented to prevent and tackle the bullying phenomenon, strategies developed at national and local level to prevent and tackle the bullying phenomenon, description of educational initiatives, training courses for teachers and informative campaign in the field, identification of good practices.

### B) Case Studies

The aim of this activity is to promote a bottom up approach to the understanding of the bullying phenomenon through the carrying out of Case studies taking the form of small research projects aiming at analysing bullying episodes from all the possible point of view of the different actors involved: students (victim, bully, bystanders) teachers, parents, school director, counsellors, policy makers.



The Database of case studies produced in the framework of the I Am Not Scared project is available on the I Am Not Scared portal under the link Case Studies. This section provides access to a selection of Case Studies on School Bullying which have been analysed in the nine partner countries. Every case study is available both in English and in the national language.

On the database are already available almost 90 case studies. Each selected case study has been presented according to a common format providing the following information: objective and synthetic description of the event, information on the point of view of the main actors (students, teachers, school directors, counsellors and policy makers), conclusive deduction.

### **C) Transnational Discussion**

The aim this activity is to involve the teachers participating in the project (meaning those interviewed for the completion of the Case studies) in a transnational discussion, aimed at enhancing a peer to peer based knowledge exchange experience, on the them of bullying prevention and tackling.

The aim of the Workpackage is to use the information and opinions collected during the project to create the European Strategy for Combating Bullying that will be published as the main comprehensive and tangible output of the project.

### **D) European Strategy to Combat Bullying**

The aim is to use the information and opinions collected during the project to create the European Strategy for Combating Bullying that will be published as the main comprehensive and tangible output of the project.

### **Main Results**

The main results achieved are:

- Database of reviews of publications
- Database of reviews of Good Practices
- Database of Case Studies
- Reports on National Situation in nine European countries
- Transnational discussion on the case studies

All the projects results are available on the I Am Not Scared project portal: <http://iamnotscared.pixel-online.org>

### **Project Organization**

The project is promoted by Istituto Don Lorenzo Milani (Italy) and it is coordinated in cooperation with Pixel, an education and training organization specialized in European cooperation, based in Florence, Italy.

The project transnational partnership is composed by: Inforef (Belgium), Zinev Art Technologies (Bulgaria), School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (Greece), Connectis (Italy), Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania), EuroEd Foundation (Romania), University of Seville (Spain), Wilsthorpe Community School(United Kingdom).



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This material reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.