



The Pestalozzi Programme Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

The Pestalozzi Programme

Education for the prevention of violence in schools

Trainer training module series

2011/2012

Final report

2012

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Education for the prevention of violence in schools

Trainer training module series, 2011/2012

Focus and expected results

The training course will focus on making the school environment a safe space for learners. If schools are to provide a space for learning and for the personal development of every child, they need to be safe places where everyone can live and work, learn and play without fear. An atmosphere, where each child feels welcome, recognised and respected, where individual needs and learning styles are understood, lies at the core of a safe learning space. The absence of these features makes the space unsafe and prevents children from developing their full potential.

Intimidation and bullying, repression and the threat of actual fact of physical violence are at the opposite end of the spectrum reflecting the violence present in the society around us.

However, every child has the right to a safe environment and if we want to prevent violence in schools we must make violent behaviour a non-option in our schools. It is the task of all education professionals to contribute to this through educational action.

After the training course the participants will be in better position to contribute to the prevention of violence; in particular they will be better equipped to:

- raise awareness in learners, in their families and communities;
- act on the underlying causes of violent behaviour;
- establish and maintain a learning environment where violence is not an option;
- respond to violence when it occurs;
- contribute to making schools a safe place of learning and living.

The participants will form a network of education professionals equipped to continue the training on the international, national, regional and local level with a shared view of the competences which need to be developed and of the appropriate methodology of training and teaching.

A collection of tried and tested training resources will be available online to serve as pedagogical support in teacher training and as a stimulation to further develop resources along similar lines.



“Education for the prevention of violence in schools” Basic assumptions

“Too many schools in Europe continue to be confronted with very serious acts of violence. It is necessary to take action at different levels and involve all key players, in particular families, teachers and pupils.”¹

The training of teaching professionals in the modules series has proved to be a proactive and efficient way to put into effect the principles which are upheld by the Council of Europe. Teaching experts from member states are invited to join a workshop where they get involved in an intensive training on the topic. In the follow up they write their own training units, pilot them in their countries and give feedback on those of their peers. This procedure yields both, well-trained experts on the topic that have already started to work as change agents in their countries and a comprehensive (tried and tested) teachers’ manual ready to be used by all member states.

“Humanism, non-violent behaviour, tolerance and mutual respect are common fundamental values upheld by the Council of Europe since its foundation six decades ago and the Organisation has made longstanding efforts to combat all kinds of violence, in particular against children.”²

In the year 2004, CoE created the **European Charter for Democratic Schools without violence**. The programme "Building a Europe for and with children" is being implemented by CoE further to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw 2005). The programme is a response to the Organisation's mandate to guarantee an integrated approach to promoting children's rights and the decision to launch a three-year programme covering the social, legal, educational and health dimensions relevant to protecting children from various forms of violence. The programme comprises two closely related stands: the promotion of children's rights and the protection of children from violence. One of the CoE's objectives is to help all decision-makers and players concerned by designing and implementing national strategies for the protection of children's rights and the prevention of violence against children. In the last decade most European governments have put school violence on their political agendas³.

What is violence?

It is difficult to have one definition of violence. This definition for example, brings some questions with it:

“Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation.”⁴

- How do we consider different forms of violence such as physical, psychological, structural violence?
- Are we able to distinguish overt and covert forms of violence?

¹ Mr Gvozden Srećko FLEGO, Education against violence at school, Doc. 12513, 2011.

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc11/EDOC12513.pdf>

² Ibid

³ Building a Europe for and with children; http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/Default_en.asp

⁴ <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/index.html>



- Do all forms of violence have the same purpose and results?

In the context of education for the prevention of violence, it will be useful to consider all these questions. For example strategies to prevent acts of violence perpetrated for the gain of entertainment will be altogether quite different than strategies to prevent structural violence such as institutionalized discrimination.

The causes for violence

Violence is a global problem in contemporary society. We find many interrelated causes for violence, such as: experience, personal traits and dispositions of an individual, culture and environment, tradition, historical heritage, and many others. Violence has different forms and we recognize it as physical, psychological or structural violence and it can manifest itself as direct or indirect violence. One of the crucial questions that emerge is: ‘What makes an individual or a group resort to violence?’ In school, as in the society, “*people have to live together, and while living together share resources*” (e.g., Hawley & Little, 2008⁵). In schools and classrooms, there are some resources which seem valuable to obtain. Such resources could be attention from others, space to work in peace, space to have fun during school hours, or friendships with others. When there are conflicts of interest, aggression and violence can appear. During the school years, children are still trying to find their place and role in the society and their social skills are not fully developed, then violence and aggression can rise. In early adolescence, children can experience a gap between how adult they (physically) feel, and how much this is recognized by society (Moffitt, 1993⁶). One way of obtaining more ‘social maturity’ is through their peers: these children can start acting antisocial or showing risk behaviour to compensate for the lack of mature recognition society gives them. Children that have been frustrated for a long time can develop aggressive behaviour due to psychological exhaustion and lack of support and understanding (Maleš i Stričević, 2005⁷). Obviously, there are many other causes for violence in schools. The following questions can help us developing a common ground towards prevention:

- Are there visible triggers of violence?
 - Institutional triggers such as domination/power relations, discrimination and inequality, injustice?
 - Psychological causes such as: helplessness, frustration, fear, anger?
 - Psychosocial phenomena such as: peer pressure, imitation, mob behaviour...?
- Is violence a successful strategy? What is the aim and gain?

⁵ Hawley, P. H., Little, T. D., & Card, N. A. (2008). The myth of the alpha male: A new look at dominance-related beliefs and behaviors among adolescent males and females. *International Journal of Behavior Development*, 32, 76-88.

⁶ Moffitt, T. E. (1993). “Life-course-persistent” and “adolescence-limited” antisocial behavior: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100, 674-701.

⁷ Maleš, D i Stričević, I (2005) Zlostavljanje među učenicima može se spriječiti; priručnik za učitelje i stručne suradnike; Udruženje djeca prva, Zagreb

⁸ Sentse, M., Scholte, R., Salmivalli, C., & Voeten, M. (2007). Person-group dissimilarity in involvement in bullying and its relation with social status. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 35, 1009-1019.

⁹ Allen, J. P., Porter, M. R., McFarland, F. C., Marsh, P., & McElhaney, K. B. (2005). The two faces of adolescents' success with peers: Adolescent popularity, social adaptation, and deviant behavior. *Child Development*, 76, 747-760.



What are its consequences?

Acts of violence produce very significant effects on the persons involved and their immediate environment, often resulting with frustration, fear and feelings of insecurity. They are a worrying sign that, despite many efforts, the phenomena of violence at school and of violence in society in general have not been properly addressed. Besides this, a violent atmosphere can increase the chance that violence takes place. So, aggressive children are liked better in classrooms where there are more aggression (Sentse, Scholte, Salmivalli, & Voeten, 2007)⁸. Popular children, for example, are more prone to adapt to the classroom norms, both positive and negative norms (Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh, & McElhaney, 2005)⁹.

How to promote change?

Violence is a problem recognised worldwide, finding its causes in situations happening on a global level as well as in the specific societies. Family as a key element of society is expected to give children safety and love but fails too often in this task, leaving children scared, confused and frustrated. Schools are public spaces where children spend a lot of their time, almost as much as with the members of their family. School is a place where interactions take place, relationships develop and conflicts abound. For this reason school environments become a 'hot spot' for education for the prevention of violence. To this end, we suggest that school communities develop an approach to education for the prevention of violence that, not only tackles violent acts when they occur, but develop an approach based on the strengthening of '*convivencia*'⁸. In our work for the prevention of violence in schools, it is of vital importance to promote *convivencia* in both classrooms and schools, through **whole school approaches** which include all key players, pupils and their parents, teachers and administration; a program that aims at improving the climate of schools and classes through staff education, and enhanced personal and social education for pupils⁹. If this problem is not treated adequately, the resulting social and financial costs will clearly exceed the costs of setting up more comprehensive programmes to deal with violence effectively, not to mention the unacceptable human suffering of those children who are and were exposed to violence.¹⁰ The focus of this training will be to provide the trainers with skills that can help all key players to promote *convivencia*.

⁸ From the Spanish word for 'living together in harmony', and here: 1) establishing and maintaining a learning environment where violence is not tolerated so that an *ethos* of *convivencia* is always present; 2) responding to violence when it occurs so that *ethos* of *convivencia* is protected.

⁹ Violence reduction in schools –How to make a difference

¹⁰ Mr Gvozden Srećko FLEGO, Education against violence at school, Doc. 12513, 2011.
<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc11/EDOC12513.pdf>



At School Level

At school level, *convivencia* can be increased by setting rules which send a clear message that violent behaviour is not acceptable.¹¹ The rules are agreed on by and valid for everybody within the school: pupils, teachers and administration alike. Rephrased in an unequivocal language, the rules are exposed in highly frequented areas in the school house.¹² Schools can:

- Create an environment that does not encourage violence;
- Create a safe environment that does not tolerate violence;
- Create a democratic and mutually respectful environment.

At Teacher Level

If teachers want to help to promote a climate of *convivencia*, they should all have a sound knowledge of all forms of violence (physical, verbal, psychological). To be able to prevent violence, teachers can:

- reflect on their own practice;
- keep a lookout for the structural violence implicit in the school environment;
- use different forms of professional improvement (formal, non-formal or informal) to develop competences needed for violence prevention;
- build and sustain trusting relationships with all their pupils;
- empower students to challenge unfair behaviour of peers and teachers;
- seek to keep the environment free from the factors that promote violent acts, such as inequality, humiliation and exclusion;
- organize parent-teacher meetings to get the parents involved in the topic ;
- reduce competitive trends in classes by choosing forms of learning that foster team work, co-operation and tolerance, e.g. cooperative learning¹³;
- stay informed about the dangers of new technologies and the new forms of violence that they bring about, (e.g. cyber mobbing or e-bullying);
- get to know the strategies that work as early warning systems in the prevention of violence and implement them in class;
- share the responsibility with their pupils by encouraging student councils and implementing a system of peer mediators;
- and must keep in mind that not all incidents of violence can be prevented in the school context, because risk-taking, the breaking of rules and making mistakes are important parts of every learning process.

At Student Level

Teachers are aware of the fact that solving conflicts in a non-violent way is, first of all, the result of a learning process, and they know that pupils come differently equipped. Therefore, they include the training of life skills in the curriculum and make e.g. “Constructive conflict resolution” the content of lessons. To prevent violence and sustain *convivencia*, students can:

Spies , Christine, Wir können auch anders! Beltz Verlag 2011, Weinheim

¹² ibd

¹³ Mr Gvozden Srećko FLEGO, Education against violence at school, Doc. 12513, 2011.

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc11/EDOC12513.pdf>



- reflect on their behaviour;
- respect others;
- help one another and learn about, through and for cooperation;
- learn to recognize and stop violence;
- take responsibility for the school and environment.

The challenges foreseen

Problems of the contemporary society reflect in our family life as well as in our schools. Economic crises, unemployment, media influence, wars and high level of stress in everyday situations have led a number of people to accept violence as a way of getting things done. At the same time the society has bigger expectations from schools and educational system. Therefore there is a number of obstacles in realizing these ambitious goals of violence prevention and ensuring *convivencia*, such as:

- learning environments that support competition and aggressive behaviour;
- inadequate class and school size;
- teacher burnout due to the constant rising of standards and tasks put in front of the teachers in everyday situations;
- lack of institutional support;
- lack of time or funding;
- insufficient teacher training.

How can we overcome these challenges?

We find causes for violent behaviour in many different spheres of life, from social structures which generated frustration and injustice, to personality traits and dispositions of the students, quality of family relations, quality of school environment, influence of the media, culture and many others. That is why violence is a problem that should be dealt with on different levels; on a community level, institutional level (school and family), and on a personal level (Maleš i Stričević, 2005¹⁴). When considering prevention of violence in schools, it starts above all with the promotion of a climate of *convivencia* and the necessary attitudes and skills for it. It also includes early recognition of violent acts, and intervention when such acts happen. School administrations must be held professionally responsible to implement all the strategies necessary to successfully educate for the prevention of violence¹⁵. Holistic approaches such as the promotion of living in *convivencia* and the involvement of parents and students as partners in violence prevention are crucial. With all parties actively involved in shaping the change, chances of successful creation of *convivencia*, and thus the prevention of violence, increase. Interested colleagues team up, as *convivencia* experts who, with the assistance of the Pestalozzi experts, work out a concept for their school and train their colleagues. The training resources that will be the result of this module series shall be important support tools.

¹⁴ Maleš, D i Stričević, I (2005) Zlostavljanje među učenicima može se spriječiti; priručnik za učitelje i stručne suradnike; Udruženje djeca prva, Zagreb

¹⁵ Mr Gvozden Srećko FLEGO, Education against violence at school, Doc. 12513, 2011.
<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc11/EDOC12513.pdf>



Education for the prevention of violence in schools MODULE A Report

(29 November -2 December 2011, European Youth Centre, Strasbourg)

Module A of the European Module of Trainer Training on the “Education for the prevention of violence in schools” was held at the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France from November 29th to December 2nd 2011.

The Module is a part of the training activities of the Pestalozzi Programme which has, as a general aim, the training of education professionals for them to become multipliers of the Council of Europe standards and values in education. Because violence in schools is recognized as a global problem in all European countries, a great number of nominations for the Module were received. Thus, it was possible to select 43 participants from 23 different European countries.

Participants came from a wide range of institutions, representing the key stake holders in European education. This resulted in a diverse pool of educational experts and teacher trainers working in the field of pre-service and in-service teacher training, as well as the formal and non-formal training, head teachers or others. Teacher trainers working at all levels of education were represented (pre-primary/primary, lower/upper secondary, higher education), as well as the experts from the field of youth work and adult education. The diverse professional backgrounds and expertise of the participants insured a rich knowledge base and pluralistic view on educational practice.

The methodology of Module A was based on learner-centered peer-training, and collaborative work on issues of common concerns was used to try and find fit solutions for the diverse contexts of the participants.

The theoretical and practical backgrounds were provided by the expertise of the facilitators, and materials on research in the field, as well as the materials on preventing violence, developed in the framework of the Council of Europe’s programme on children’s rights.



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The work during Module A followed the four-fold concept of competences development: developing sensitivity and awareness, knowledge and understanding, individual practice, and societal practice.

Module A of the “Education for the prevention of violence in schools” focused on making the school environment a safe space for learners by preventing violence and promoting *convivencia*.

The role of the school and the teacher was stressed in the prevention of physical punishment, bullying, harassment and violence, by encouraging the development of procedures and policies which do not support physical punishment and promote non-violent interaction. The importance of students participation, of the building of a positive school *ethos* and of democratic governance of schools were stated as important elements for violence prevention. The Module tackled some difficult issues such as: What is violence for me? Where does violence start with me? What are the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes for violence prevention in schools? Also, it questioned an understanding and knowledge about personal response and responsibility for violence prevention.

During the Module, participants were able to present and share good policy and practice from their educational context.



A **whole community and whole school approach** that include all key players; pupils and their parents, teachers and administration; local stake holders. Programmes which aim at improving school climate through staff education, and enhance personal and social education for pupils were suggestions for future work on training units. Aspiring for a climate of “*convivencia*” - working and living together in harmony – which is based upon democratic and human rights principles, makes excellent grounds for education for the prevention of violence in schools.

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Convivencia: starts with me – ends with we!!!

During the Module, a network of education professionals was created with the aim to develop the training materials that could be used on an international, national, regional and local level with a shared view of the competences which need to be developed for violence prevention and of the appropriate methodology of training and teaching. Participants will spend the next 6 months developing and piloting the materials in their professional contexts while exchanging ideas and receiving support and feedback from the facilitators and peers through the online working platform of the Pestalozzi Programme.



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Education for the prevention of violence in schools MODULE B Report

(20 - 22 June 2012, Madrid, Spain)

European Module of Trainer Training, Module B on the “Education for the prevention of violence in schools” was held at the Rafael Hotel, Madrid, Spain from 20th – 22nd June 2012. The Module B was organised with the support of the *Gobierno de Espana, Ministerio de Educacion, Cultura y Deporte* and the *Organismo Autonomo Programas Educativos Europeos (APEE)*.

Following a very successful Module A held in Strasbourg in November 2011, 34 participants from 24 European countries continued with their activities in Module B of the European training of trainers “Education for the Prevention of Violence in Schools.” Participants came from a wide range of institutions and countries, and represented the key stake holders in European education. They fulfilled their obligations and, during the time between Module A and Module B, created training units on the topic of violence prevention and promoting *convivencia*. The efforts of a diverse pool of educational experts and teacher trainers working in the field of pre-service and in-service teacher training, as well as formal and non-formal training, head teachers or other, resulted in diverse and applicable training sessions for almost every educational context.



Module B of the “Education for the prevention of violence in schools” focused on deepening the understanding of violence prevention and promoting *convivencia* in educational contexts.

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The training units produced by the participants after Module A focused on the general idea of prevention of violence through the promotion of *convivencia* and can be thematically grouped in the following areas:

- preventing violence by developing social skills, life skills and communication;
- understanding the role and responsibility of the teacher (modelling, teacher – student communication, body language...) in violence prevention;
- implementing art, creativity, and the esthetical dimension to further develop *convivencia* in schools;
- implementing violence prevention in school curricula;
- using a whole community approach in planning activities for violence prevention and developing *convivencia*.

The work during Module B followed the four-fold concept of competences development: developing sensitivity and awareness, knowledge and understanding, individual practice, and societal practice. It was organised in three days which focused on three interlinked major ideas:

Day 1: YO – focused on the **personal experience** of the participants during the period of creating, piloting and peer reviewing each other’s materials in the time between Module A and B. During day 1, a small number of Spanish education professionals joined the activities. The day was organised as Open Space discussions. The flexible structure of Open Space allowed both the integration of the Spanish guests, as well as the time to reflect on major issues that became apparent during the past months. The discussions resulted in the creation of short discussion reports by the participants that were uploaded on the platform of the Pestalozzi Programme.



Day 2: DOS – focused on the teacher’s role in choosing the suitable methodology to develop a climate of *convivencia* in the classroom. In particular the participants were further introduced to the key principles of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, simultaneous interaction, and the theoretical input necessary to understand why these principles work especially well in creating cooperation in



the classroom. Participants applied their newly acquired knowledge by designing training activities which promote one or several transversal attitudes, skills or knowledge (TASKs), and include at least one of the principles mentioned above. Participants then had to model their activity to a group of peers and received feedback on it, using appropriate, non-threatening feedback language (option-based approach). All sessions were structured as a cooperative learning set-up to enhance learning by doing; and a lot of attention was given to develop group dynamics and positive work *ethos*.



During the late afternoon the hosts made great efforts and organised a guided tour of the Prado museum, a guided city centre sightseeing, and the day ended with a lovely dinner at a typical Madrilenian restaurant.



DAY 3: NOSOTROS – focused on **further development** of training units and feedback skills. Participants had the chance to gain new insights in their training unit in groups. This feedback, combined with the experiences during day 1 and 2, will be the basis for further improvement of the training units.



In order to get to know the wider (virtual) Community of Practice (CoP) of the Pestalozzi Programme and join in future online activities, participants took part in a “treasure hunt” which was moderated by a group of CoP stewards from a distance. Through this, the participants gained better knowledge of and skills in the use of the online surrounding. They then focused on their own possible contributions to carrying the results of the module series further through online networking projects as well as various dissemination and cascading projects.



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As a final result of Module A and Module B, a number of training resources focusing on violence prevention and promotion of *convivencia* will be available for wider use by education professionals across Europe. Clear concepts and ideas of the issues addressed, as well as the methodology used to create them, make the training resources easily applicable in different educational contexts. Furthermore, the added value of the Module B is the creation of the Community of Practice, capable of further networking and undertaking new projects for the purpose of education for change.

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Appendices

1. Draft list of training units



2. List of participants

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¹ ² Participants highlighted in a different colour only participated in Module A and did not complete the course