



Fighting bullying and extremism in the education system in Albania

ACTION IMPACT STUDY

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Context

The study on the impact of the European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey action “Fighting Bullying and Extremism in the Education System in Albania” was carried out in 21 pilot schools in Albania within the framework of the action. Based on the findings from the “National Survey on Bullying and Violent Extremism in the Education System in Albania” (ISOP, 2017), the action designed its intervention focusing on three levels: developing effective school mechanisms in creating safe school environment (policy development), capacity building and awareness raising activities. This study provides evidence on the impact of intervention in these pilot schools.

■ In specific, the main purpose of this study was *to measure changes that can be attributed to the intervention of the Action; gather and analyse data about the effectiveness and efficiency of the action; record the impact and sustainability of the action in the education system in Albania*. Participants in this study were students, teachers, staff and parents from beneficiary schools and non-beneficiary schools. In addition, the study provides some evidence on how Mentors, Steering Committee and Project Staff evaluate with the impact of the action in Albanian schools.

■ The findings offer a significant contribution with regards to the impact and the perceived changes due to the implemented intervention, and sheds light on the necessity for continuation in fighting bullying as a phenomenon in the education system in Albania.

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- Shkelqim Muca, Kukës
- Marjan Ndoci, Lezhë
- Albana Kastrati, Shkodër
- Zana Kondi, Tiranë
- Rada Cuci, Vlorë

Acronyms

AB	Antibullying
BS	Beneficiary Schools
BSCS	Beneficiary School for Case Study
CoE	Council of Europe
FG	Focus Groups
IED	Institute of Educational Development
N-BS	Non-Beneficiary Schools
PS	Project Staff
RED	Regional Educational Directorates
SC	Steering Committee
VET	Vocational Education Training

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

■ Nearly 30 years ago, Albania was exposed to various untreated social phenomena. Bullying as a concept has been horizontally explored under concepts such as violence or abuse, but its meaning has not been explored at national level. Thus, evidence on this phenomenon was scarce. The action run by Joint European Union and Council of Europe aimed at finding effective means to fight bullying and extremism in the education system in Albania in line with Council of Europe standards and practices. The action focused on three levels: developing effective school mechanisms in creating safe school environment (policy development), capacity building and awareness raising activities.

■ The action was launched (May 2016) and it was followed by the first large scale national survey on bullying and extremism in the education system organized by Albanian Institute of Public Opinion Studies (ISOP, 2017). The findings concluded the need for intervention, a programme designed by Council of Europe to be implemented in 21 pilot schools in Albania.

■ In implementing the action, more than 210 teachers in 21 pilot schools in Albania were trained by accredited teacher training programme, an Anti-bullying National Day on 21 November was established, and an anti-bullying school policies and practices and a Roadmap directed to national authorities were developed with the effort to prevent bullying in the educational system in Albania.

■ This Follow-up study aimed at evaluating the impact of the intervention in 21 schools in Albania within the implemented period. Data collection over the course of the study is comprehensive and it includes a range of quantitative and qualitative information from different sources.

1.2. The aim of the study

The study provides evidence on the impact of intervention, revealing findings on its main objectives:

- to measure changes that can be attributed to the intervention of the joint EU/CoE Horizontal Facility action;
- to gather and analyse data about the effectiveness and efficiency of the action;
- to record the impact and sustainability of the action in the education system in Albania.

■ This introduction will be followed by *Methodology, Data Analysis, Conclusions, Main Findings and Recommendations*.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research questions

— This study draws on a methodological triangulation whilst the research process adapts a bottom-up approach. Participants involved in this Follow-up study were invited to evaluate the action. They were Students, Teachers and Parents, from beneficiary schools (pilot and case study) and non-beneficiary schools (control group). More so, the study involved Mixed groups, compiled by students, teachers, parents, school staff (i.e. social worker or psychologist) and RED representatives. In addition, the study extended to explore the views of Mentors, Project staff and Steering Committee. In striving to increase reliability and validity, the study utilized mixed (quantitative and qualitative) and multi-methods (surveys, focus groups and interviews).

— In details, the main research questions focusing on Students and Teachers from beneficiary schools (BS) and non-beneficiary schools (N-BS) were:

- To what extend do *students* attribute changes to the action?
- To what extend do *students* perceive the project as effective and efficient?
- How do *students* evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action?
- To what extend do *teachers* attribute changes to the action?

- To what extend do *teachers* perceive the action as effective and efficient?

- How do *teachers* evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action?

■ In addition, for BS acting as case study, qualitative multi-methods were utilized to measure:

- To what extend do *parents* attribute changes to the action?

- To what extend do *parents* perceive the action as effective and efficient?

- How do *parents* evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action?

- To what extend do *directors* attribute changes to the action?

- To what extend do *directors* assess the action as effective and efficient?

- How do *directors* evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action?

■ For mixed groups:

- To what extend do *mixed groups of participants* attribute changes to the action?

- To what extend do *mixed groups of participants* perceive the action as effective and efficient?

- How do *mixed groups of participants* evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action?

■ At last, Mentors, Project Staff and Steering committee were invited to evaluate the action. With each group, qualitative methods were utilized to measure:

- To what extend do Mentors/Project staff/Steering Committee attribute changes to the action?

- To what extent do Mentors/Project staff/Steering Committee perceive the action as effective and efficient?
- How do Mentors/Project staff/Steering Committee evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action?

2.2 Instruments of the study

■ The study adapted the Olweus standardised questionnaire with close-ended questions and open-ended questions for students and for teachers.

■ In order to explore complementary aspects of the same phenomenon, questions from Olweus standardised questionnaire were used to compile protocols for Focus groups and Interviews. The protocols were amended during the trial period. All amendments were approved by the members of the steering committee at the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY) in Albania. MoESY mediated the contact with all schools and all field researchers were able to perform the collection process with ease.

■ All instruments used were translated using back translation method, from English to Albanian.

2.3 Sample size and selection

■ The collection process was organized in two stages. During the first stage, quantitative data were obtained by surveys administered to a representing group of **2073** students and teachers from BS¹ and N-BS. Out of 2073, **1945** successfully responded to the survey, making up for **836** teachers/**605** students (BS) and **278** teachers/**226** students (N-BS). All responses were anonymised which ensured that participants

1. Beneficiary schools are schools where the Project was implemented and acted as pilot schools; Non-beneficiary schools are schools where project was not implemented and acted as control group schools for the purpose of this study.

felt free to express their views about the impact of the action in their schools.

■ During the stage, qualitative data were obtained with the use of multi-methods.

■ In total, **32** Focus Groups (FG) and **4** Interviews were conducted with a range of participants. In specific:

- a) Pilot schools as case study: **12** FG were conducted with Students (**4**), Teachers (**4**) and Parents (**4**), as well as Interviews with Directors (**4**);
- b) Pilot school not as case study: **17** FG were conducted with Mixed groups, compiled with students, teachers, parents, school staff and RED representative- **8** were conducted in Primary 9th Grade schools (**6** Public and **2** Private schools) and **9** were conducted in Secondary 12th Grade schools (**6** Public General, **2** Secondary VET and **1** Private General);
- c) FG were conducted also with Mentors (**1**), Project staff (**1**) and Steering Committee (**1**).

■ The overall response rate in this process was above 90% making the findings reliable and valid.

2.4 Administration of the survey

■ Considering the quantitative approach of the study and the aim to generalise the findings, a multi-stage stratified sampling was used for the research. The selection process followed a predefined set of criteria, which included:

- > Geographic area;
- > Level of the schools (primary, secondary general and secondary vocational);
- > Type of school, private/ public.

— The first stage of sampling searched for the targeted number of pilot schools in the divided in corresponding 12 regions of Albania, as shown in the next table and criteria mentioned above. As for the pilot schools, they were selected randomly.

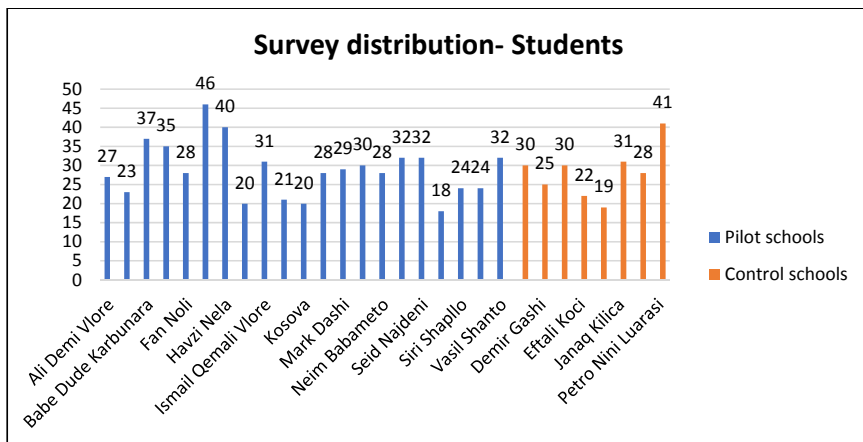
Table 1: Distribution of Surveys in schools by Region and School System²

Regions/ School system	Primary 9 grade schools		Secondary 12 grade schools		
	Public	Private	General	VET	Private
1.Berat			1		
2. Dibër	1		1		
3.Durrës	1+1			1	
4.Elbasan	1		1+1	1	
5.Fier	1	1	1		
6.Gjirokastër			1		
7.Korçë	1				
8.Kukës			1		
9.Lezhë	1				
10.Shkodër	1				1
11.Tiranë	2+1	1+1	1+1	1	
12.Vlorë	1		1		
TOTAL=29	6+3+3	1+2	6+1+3	1+2	1

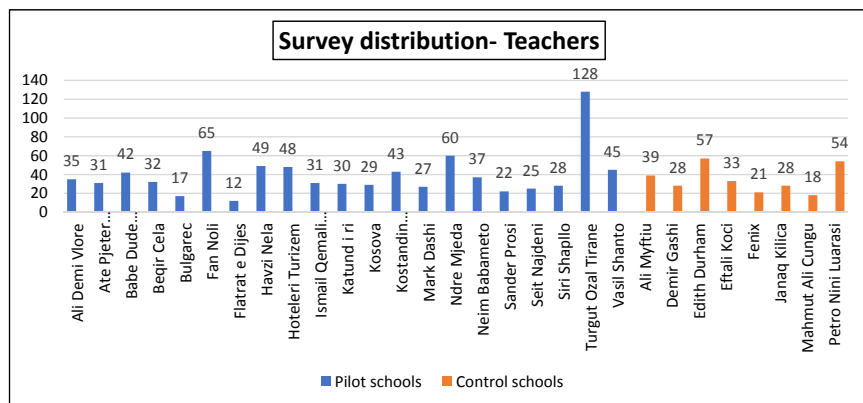
— As shown in above Table 1, surveys were distributed to 29 school in the 12 regions, where 21 are BS, where 4 are also case study schools and 12 are N-BS. For detailed number of students and teachers involved in the distribution of surveys per school, please see **Graph 1** and **Graph 2** below.

2. Numbers in red represent beneficiary schools, in green beneficiary schools for case study, in blue non-beneficiary schools

Graph 1: Distribution of Students' number responding to survey per school



Graph 2: Distribution of Teachers' number responding to survey per school



2.5 Conducting Focus Groups and Interviews

Following the distribution of surveys, the data collection process extended to conducting FG and Interviews with mixed and individual groups of participants, in BS and N-BS. The tables (Tables 2 through 4), show the distribution of FG and Interviews, by region and school system.

Table 2: Mixed Focus groups in schools by Region and School System³

Regions/ School system	Primary 9 th grade		Secondary 12 th grade		
	Public	Private	General	VET	Private
1.Berat			1		
2. Dibër			1		
3.Durrës	1			1	
4.Elbasan	1		1		
5.Fier	1	1			
6.Gjirokastrë			1		
7.Korçë					
8.Kukës			1		
9.Lezhë					
10.Shkodër	1				1
11.Tiranë	2	1		1	
12.Vlorë			1		
TOTAL=17	6	2	6	2	1

3. Numbers in red represent beneficiary schools

Table 3: Separated Focus groups in schools by Region and School System

Regions/ School system	Primary 9 th grade		Secondary 12 th grade		
	Public	Private	General	VET	Private
7.Korçë	3				
9.Lezhë	3				
11.Tiranë			3		
12.Vlorë	3				
TOTAL=12	9		3		

Table 4: Interviews in schools by Region and School System⁴

Regions/ School system	Primary 9 th grade		Secondary 12 th grade		
	Public	Private	General	VET	Private
7.Korçë	1				
9.Lezhë	1				
11.Tiranë			1		
12.Vlorë	1				
TOTAL=4	3		1		

4. Numbers in green represent beneficiary schools for case study

2.6 Analysis of data-quantitative and qualitative

■ Follow-up studies feature comparisons of the views on the same issue, drawing perception depending on one's place within the hierarchy of stakeholders involved. This study combines the descriptive level of quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative analysis provided by conducting FG (with same and mixed groups) and interviews, all efforts complementing towards generalised results.

■ Quantitative data on students and teachers is of a descriptive level. Comparisons have been drawn between each group- students and teachers- from the two representing schools-BS and N-BS. Validity and reliability check were guaranteed by cross referencing among data sources. The large sample was representative for the schools participating in this study and consistency of the responses across the data further ensures reliability.

■ This consistency is then expanded by a variety of stories of change that are accessed through face-to-face discussions, school visits, illustrations and individual accounts of the impact. Extended conversation with students, parents, teachers, staff, directors, as well as mentors, project staff and steering committee offer clarification and provide insights into the meaning.

■ Please refer to following Figure 1 for a visualized framework of the qualitative data analysis process exploring participants' accounts⁵ on the action.

5. Accounts- What participants claim/say in relation to each main theme.

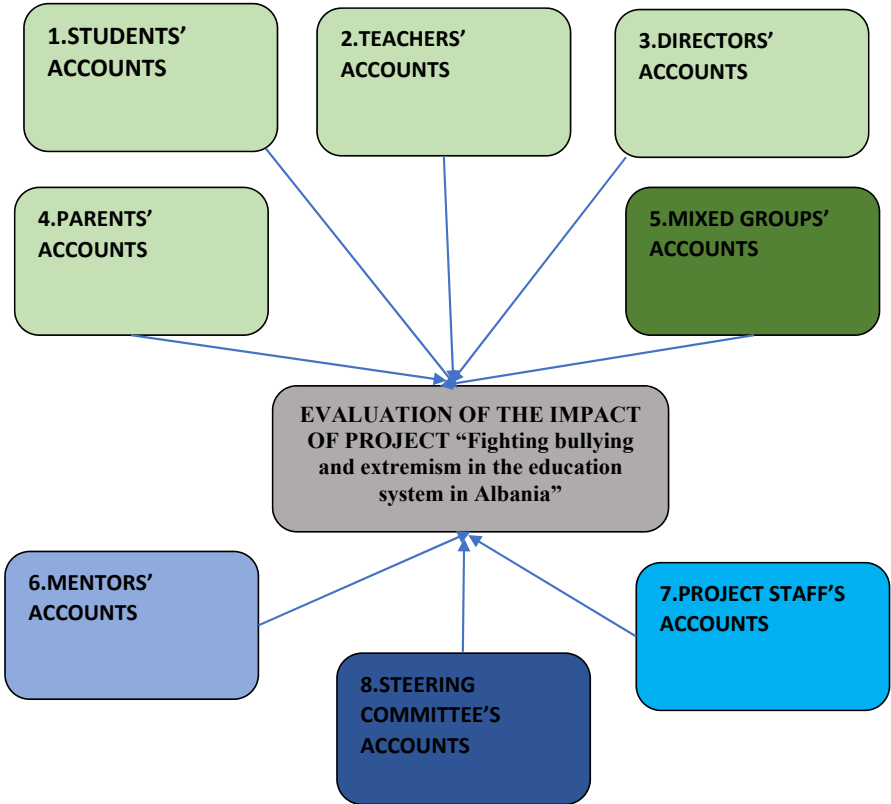


Figure 1: An overview of the stages of the analytical process by target group

3. DATA ANALYSIS- QUANTITATIVE

3.1 Students' perceptions on the impact of the action- Pilot versus Control Group Schools

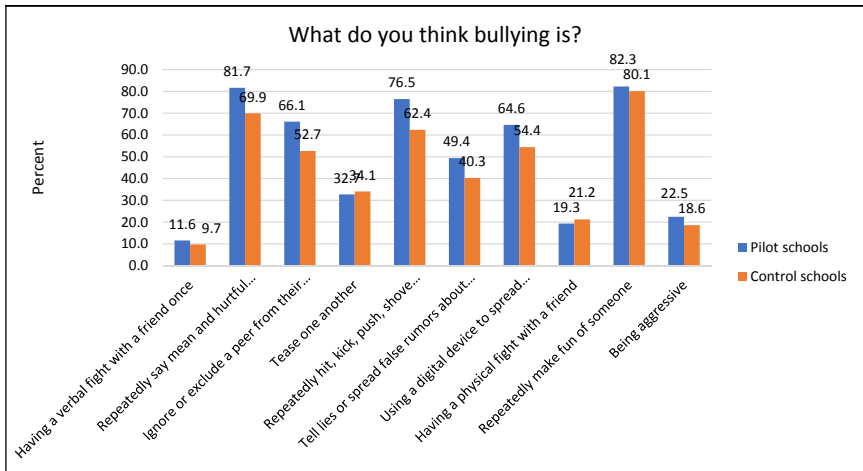
— This section aims at analysing students' perceptions on the impact of the action. The total number of students participating equalled 831, where 605 studied in BS and 226 N-BS. Students studied in higher primary and secondary schools, between grades 6th and 12th. With regards to gender distribution, 55 % girls and 43% were boys from BS participated, following a similar pattern in N-BS where 48 % were girls and 49% were boys.

— This data measured the extent that *students from* both school types attribute changes to the implemented action, whether they evaluate the action as effective and efficient and how they evaluate the impact and sustainability of the action.

— In trying to explore the research questions, the underlying hypothesis consists on the prediction that the action would have impacted more students in beneficiary schools (BS-pilot school and pilot schools for case study) than students in non-beneficiary schools (N-BS-control group schools). This section will explore the main questions to show how these two groups perceived the impact.

Initially students were asked to reflect on what they thought bullying was. The Graph (3) below shows their definition of bullying, by percentage.

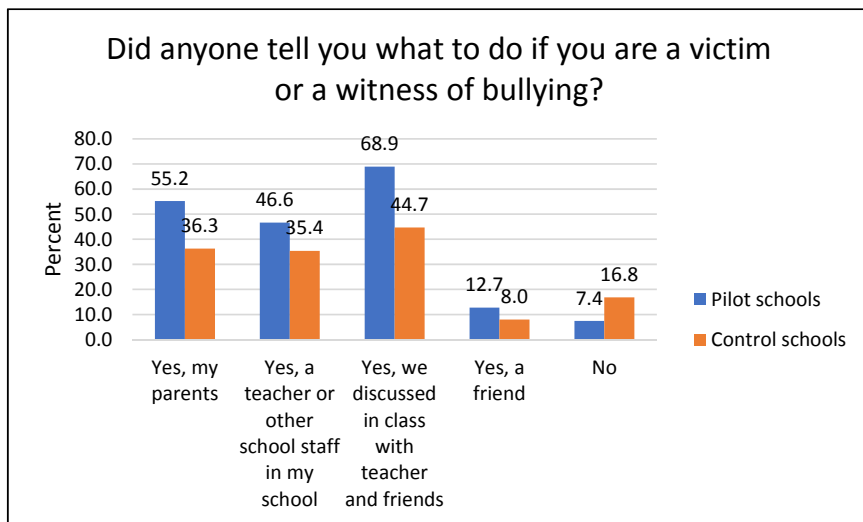
Graph 3: Students' perception on what bullying is by schools



Students from both schools linked listed acts to bullying, showing that they had a good general understanding of bullying as a phenomenon.

When students were asked whether anyone had instructed them what to do if they were to become a victim or witness of bullying, it is evident that students' responses in BS revealed that they had been informed more in relation to their peers in N-BS. (Graph 4). In addition, if they had been informed, part of the question was asking students what their action would be. 57% of students in BS stated that they would *Report it* or *Talk to an adult* compared to only 36% of students in N-BS.

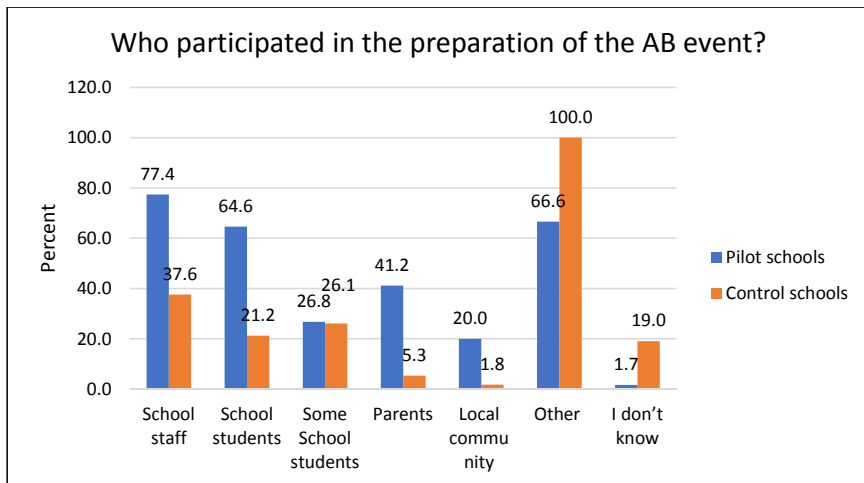
Graph 4: Students degree on being informed about action when faced with bullying per school



Students involvement in school activities is yet another important component explored in this study. The percentage of students in BS who declared that their school was involved in the implementation of the action overpassed 93%, proving that BS had involved their students in this process. Students involvement in activities not related to bullying, i.e. writing classroom rules also showed that students in BS advanced their peers in N-BS by 30% (BS=74.3, N-BS=44.3). In addition, approximately 69% of students in BS revealed that they were involved in anti-bullying activities (in 2017 & 2018), whereas their peers in N-BS showed a lower percentage (30%).

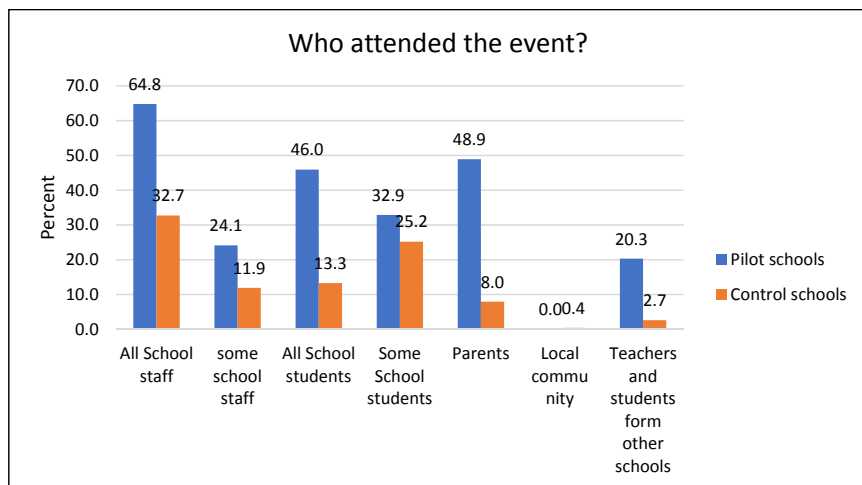
Further, students' responses in relation to the other stakeholders participating in anti-bullying activities also differed amongst the two groups (Graph 5). From the findings, participation of school staff, other school students and their parents in BS is striking in comparison with responses of N-BS students.

Graph 5: Participants involved in preparing anti-bullying events



These differences were resulted on a higher attendance of participants during the events, which again reveal that BS benefited from the action more. In other words, students' responses on the stakeholders attending the AB events also showed strong evidence for a higher number of stakeholders in BS school compared to N-BS (Graph 6).

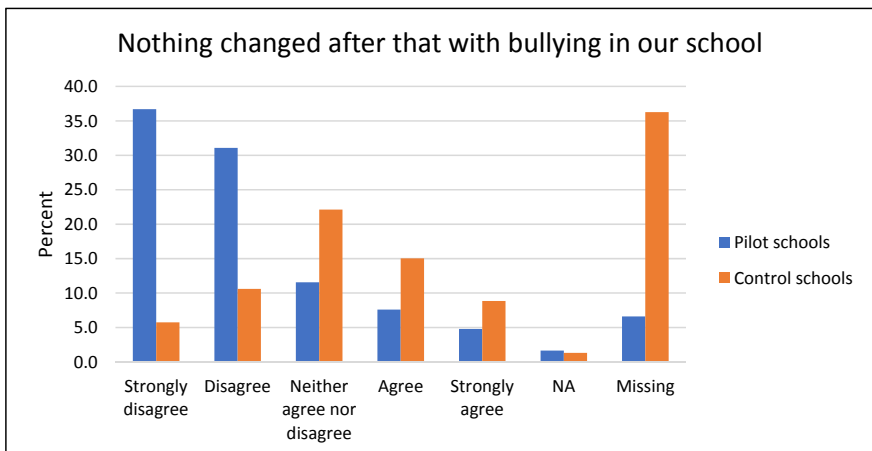
Graph 6: Stakeholders attending the school AB events



When students reflected on the importance of anti-bullying events helping others to learn about dangers of bullying, what stroke in the findings is that, whilst 73% of students in BS *Strongly agreed* to this statement, 53% of students in N-BS answered *Strongly disagree*, with an additional 31% of data missing. It is worth mentioning here that only 40% of students in N-BS answered that such events occurred in their schools. Thus, instead of summarizing that N-BS did not think such events were important, it could reflect that lacking preparation of anti-bullying events could have an impact on how students saw the value in those activities.

Furthermore, students were invited to share their perception on changes related to bullying following their schools' involvement in anti-bullying activities and events. Precisely, students were faced with the statement "*Nothing changed after that with bullying in our school*". In this case also, graph below provides another evidence to show that students in BS 67% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with such claim, opposing their peers in N-BS who showed some degree of agreeableness to lacking changes related to bullying in their schools.

Graph 7: Perception of what did not change related to bullying after AB events



At last, students evaluated the climate in their schools (Table 5). Overall, students from both schools *Agreed* to a positive climate in their schools, with schools benefiting from the action scoring higher in percentage throughout each characteristic in comparison to schools which did not benefit from the action.

Table 5: Students’ perception on climate in their schools

CLIMATE vs Schools / Agree-ability	Welcoming		Safe		Inclusive		Cooperative		Efficient	
	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control
Agree	92.2	79.6	86.1.4	67.7	85.1	68.2	89.4	76.6	88.1	65.5
Neither agree nor disagree	4.5	12.8	9.8	18.6	8.6	18.6	6.0	13.3	6.0	21.7
Disagree	0.5	5.3	1.8	9.7	3.0	6.6	2.3	7.1	1.7	8.8
Strongly disagree	0.5		0.5	2.7	1.3	4.9	0.5	2.2	1.0	2.2
Missing	2.3	2.2	1.8	1.3	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	3.3	1.8

Descriptive analysis on students suggests that intervention offered by the action had a great effect in beneficiary schools in comparison to non-beneficiary schools. The impact was reflected in what students thought bullying was, in understanding what students should be doing if faced with bullying as well as the role of school staff and parents in preparing them about actions to be taken. The intervention was effective in bringing the school and outside community together attending school anti-bullying events. Further, the impact of the intervention was more effective in how students in BS viewed the AB activities as beneficial and in how they attributed changes related to bullying to AB events. Due to the intervention, the way they evaluated the climate of the school also reflected the effect of the intervention. There is no suggestion of any different in the outcomes by class grade or gender.

3.2 Teachers' perception on the impact of the action- Pilot versus Control Groups Schools

— This section presents a descriptive analysis on teachers' perception on the impact of the action. The total number of teachers participating equalled 1114, where 836 worked in BS and 278 in N-BS. They worked in primary and secondary schools, general and VET upper secondary schools, in public and private education system. With regards to gender distribution, the pattern was imbalanced, with 81% female and 17% male teachers, in proportion with the number of women in this profession which is generally higher in the Albanian education system.

— This data measured the extent that teachers from participating schools attributed changes to the implemented action, whether they viewed the action as effective and efficient, and how they evaluated the impact and sustainability of the action.

— In trying to explore the research questions, the underlying hypothesis consists on the prediction that the action would have impacted more teachers working in beneficiary schools (BS-pilot school and pilot schools for case study) than those in non-beneficiary schools (N-BS-control group schools). This section will explore the main questions to show how these two groups perceived the impact. For a full statistical analysis on teachers' data, please see Appendix page 121.

— At the time when the study was being conducted, participants had been teaching from less than 1 year to more than 20 years. The table below (Table 6) shows the distribution of their position when completing the surveys.

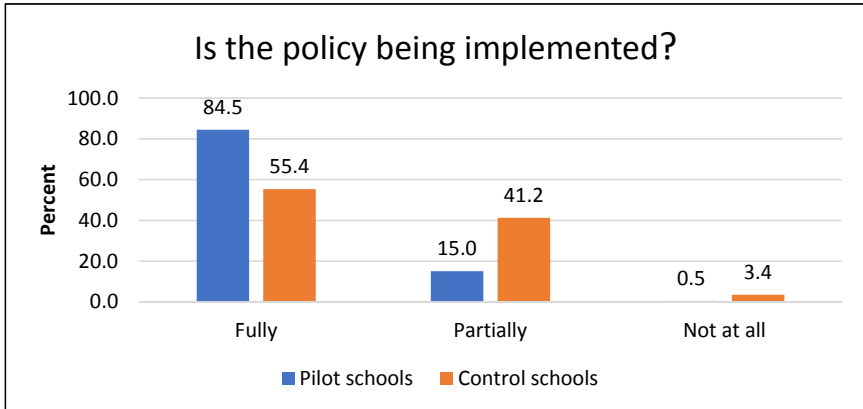
Table 6: Job position of teachers

Position in school	Pilot schools	Control schools
School Director	2	1
Subject Teacher	41	47
Class teacher	12	17
Homeroom teacher	39	31
Other, specify	3	1
Missing	3	3

When teachers were asked whether their school had an anti-bullying policy, they scored 95% in BS and 81% in N-BS. Teachers in both schools responded at similar degree when asked if they had been involved designing/developing policy (44% in BS; 42% in N-BS). When asked whether their students had been involved in this process, 84% of teachers in BS responded positively with 63% of teachers in N-BS.

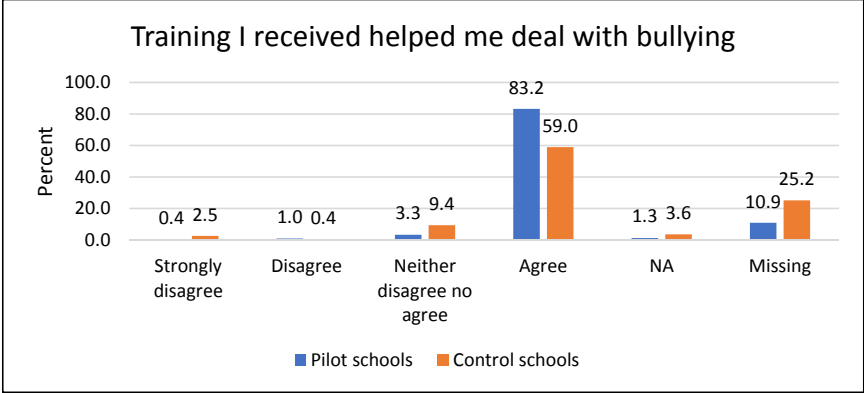
In responding whether policy was being implemented, teachers in BS (84%) overpassed their colleagues in N-BS (55%). Teachers were also asked to estimate how effective the policy had been, for which teachers in both schools, responded in favour (*Agree/Strongly agree*) at a considerable degree, with 89% in BS and 72% in N-BS (Graph 8).

Graph 8: Teachers' perception on the implementation of policy



■ In addition, teachers' perception on training related to bullying was estimated, whether they had received training, the duration of training who conducted the training and whether training had helped in dealing with the phenomenon. In BS, 83% of teachers confirmed to have received training with 55% those in N-BS. They were also asked who had provided training for them, both groups claimed that either external trainers or teachers from other schools did, with BS scoring higher in this question. More so, Graph 9 shows the degree as to which teachers perceived training as beneficial. Again, teachers in BS scored higher, over 83%, compared to their colleagues in N-BS, scoring 59%.

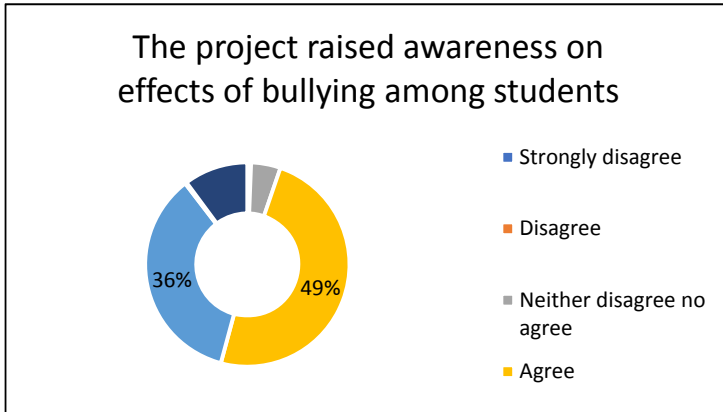
Graph 9: Teachers' perception on the role of training in dealing with bullying



During the action, school designed/developed AB policy and action plan. When asked whether there was a need for national AB guidelines in schools, teachers from both groups agreed or strongly agreed to this statement. Teachers were also questioned to reflect on the capacity that their schools had to develop policies without external support and results from both schools showed that approximately 57% of BS teachers and 38% of N-BS teachers *agreed* and *strongly agreed* to this claim.

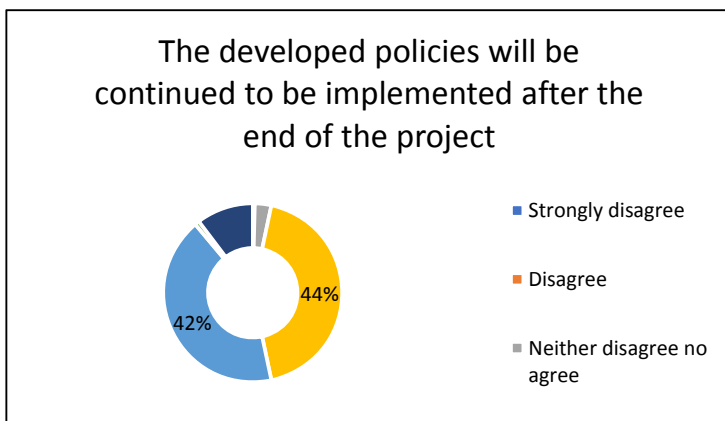
Perceptions of teachers in BS were explored further. They were specifically asked about the impact of the action in their schools. In details, 66% of the teachers revealed that the action had reduced bullying cases in their schools, 85% of them believed that it had raised awareness of bullying amongst students (Graph 10) and school staff, and 74% of them confirmed that it had raised the awareness of parents.

Graph 10: Impact of action on students' awareness in BS schools



With regards to whether AB protocols were being implemented, 70% of teachers *agreed/strongly agreed*. In addition, 86% of teachers *agreed/strongly agreed* to the continuation of implementation after the end of the action (Graph 11).

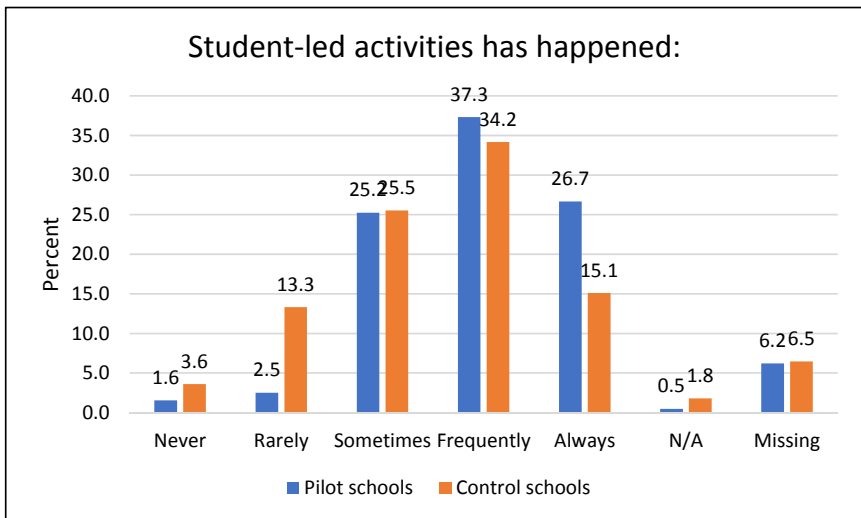
Graph 11: Teachers' perception on the continuation of policy implementation after the end of the action in BS schools



■ In addition, interesting data drawn from both groups and their perception on implemented protocols showed that teachers in BS responded to a higher degree of frequency on certain protocols were being practiced, such as: *Effective supervisions of students outside classrooms; Staff related to bullying; Reorganizing physical space to reduce potential of bullying; Use of AB curriculum materials; Class exercises such as role plays, writing assignments, and Development and posting of class rules has happened.* The gap between the two schools was not significant in one protocol- *Regular classroom discussion on topics surrounding bullying-* where both groups scored relatively high.

■ Involving students in anti-bullying school activities was yet another topic explored by this survey. Again, teachers in BS responded that they had involved students in AB team more than their colleagues in N-BS. Teachers in BS also confirmed a higher degree of their students leading activities (Graph 12).

Graph 12: Degree of occurrence in students-led activities



■ The impact of the action was also reflected on the role of school in counselling students when faced with bullying. Table 7 shows an overview of the frequency of teachers practicing individual and group counselling to students in the position of the victim and bully. The results showed that, even though teachers of both schools made effort to offer counselling to students witnessing bullying incidents, teachers in BS offered counselling more frequently than teachers in N-BS. In addition, they offered more individual than group sessions, which speaks for an in-depth personalized support to students' needs.

Table 7: Frequency of offered counselling to students

Frequency of Counselling session/ School type	Individual-Victims		Individual-Bully		Group- Victims		Group-Bully	
	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control
Never	0.5	3.2	1.0	0.7	5.0	4.0	3.7	1.4
Rarely	2.2	6.8	1.6	8.6	6.8	9.7	4.8	8.6
Sometimes	11.5	19.4	7.4	15.5	16.3	15.5	15.9	16.9
Frequently	79.5	64.7	84.0	69.4	63.8	62.3	68.3	65.1
N/A	0.4	1.4	0.2	1.8	0.6	1.8	0.4	1.8
Missing	6.1	4.3	5.9	4.0	7.5	6.8	6.9	6.1
Never	0.5	3.2	1.0	0.7	5.0	4.0	3.7	1.4

■ Furthermore, the way teachers had involved parents in school activities was also measured. As viewed in Table 8, teachers in BS scored higher in providing more information to parents and inviting them to school events, resulting in higher participation of parents in AB activities.

Table 8: Frequency of parental involvement in school events/ activities

Frequency of parental involvement/ School type	Provide information		Invite to school events		Participation in AB activities	
	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control
Never	3.2	7.2	1.3	10.1	1.8	6.5
Rarely	6.5	16.9	3.6	10.4	4.4	14.4
Sometimes	27.4	28.4	21.9	27.3	17.6	24.1
Frequently	37.9	26.6	30.4	31.7	34.7	30.2
Always	16.7	12.6	35.9	11.9	33.4	16.2
N/A	1.7	1.4	0.6	1.4	0.8	1.8
Missing	6.6	6.8	6.3	7.2	7.3	6.8
Never	3.2	7.2	1.3	10.1	1.8	6.5

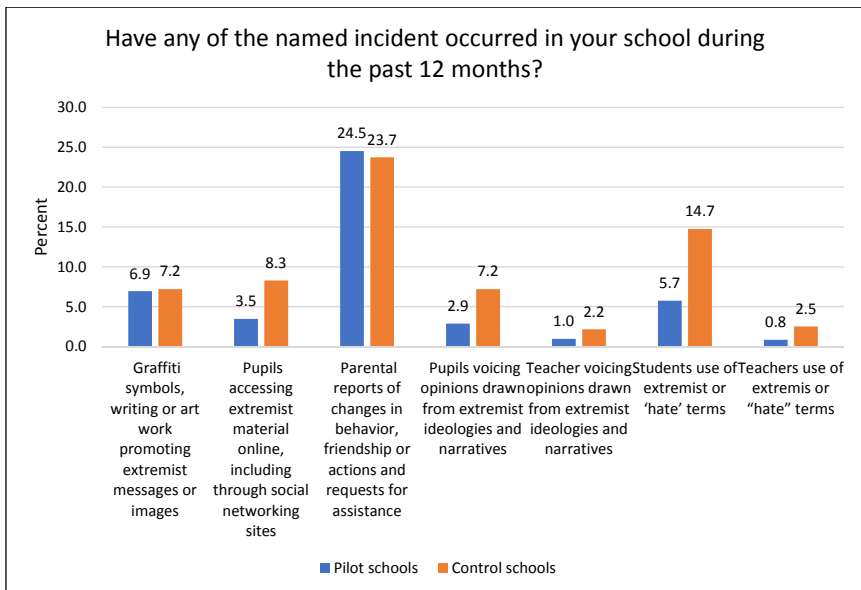
At last, teachers evaluated the climate in their schools (Table 9). Overall, teachers from both schools agreed or strongly agreed to a positive climate in their schools, with schools benefiting from the action scoring higher in percentage throughout each characteristic in comparison to schools which did not benefit from the action.

Table 9: Teachers' perception on climate in their schools

CLIMATE vs Schools / Agreeableness	Welcoming		Safe		Inclusive		Cooperative		Efficient	
	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control	Pilot	Control
Strongly agree	60.9	51.4	53.1	41.7	61.5	46.8	63.4	55.4	54.2	44.6
Agree	31.0	36.0	36.4	41.4	28.1	38.8	27.9	30.9	35.2	37.4
Neither agree nor disagree	1.9	4.7	3.1	8.3	4.7	5.4	2.5	6.5	4.1	9.0
Disagree	0.5	1.4	1.1	1.8	0.2	3.2	0.6	0.4	0.4	1.4
Strongly disagree	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.1		0.1	1.1	0.2	0.4
Missing	5.6	6.1	6.2	6.5	5.4	5.8	5.5	5.8	6.0	7.2

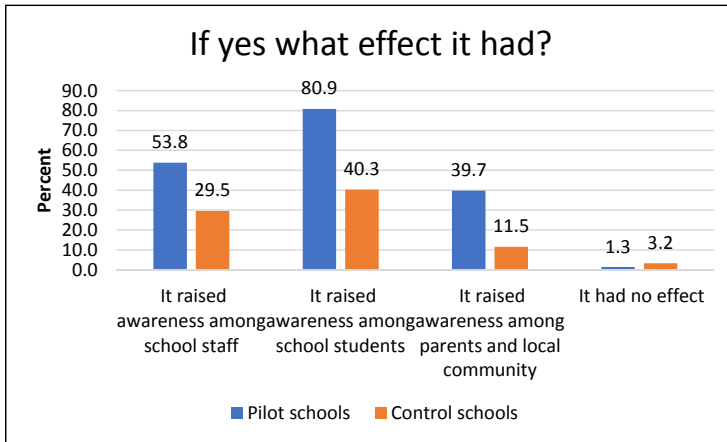
— In contrary to most of the above findings, when teachers reflected on events that had occurred in their schools in the past 12 months, it was evident that in 6 out of 7 components, N-BS scored higher showing that more incidents had happened in their schools. There was one component (*parental report of change in child's behaviour or request for assistance*) in which teachers in BS scored higher than their colleagues, which spoke for a higher level of raised awareness of parents in this group (Graph 13).

Graph 13: School incidents in the past 12 months



— Teachers shared perception on the school organizing and participating in AB activities. When asked whether those activities had had an effect, teachers in BS scored significantly higher in all components (Graph 14) to teachers in N-BS.

Graph 14: Teachers' perception on the effect of AB activities



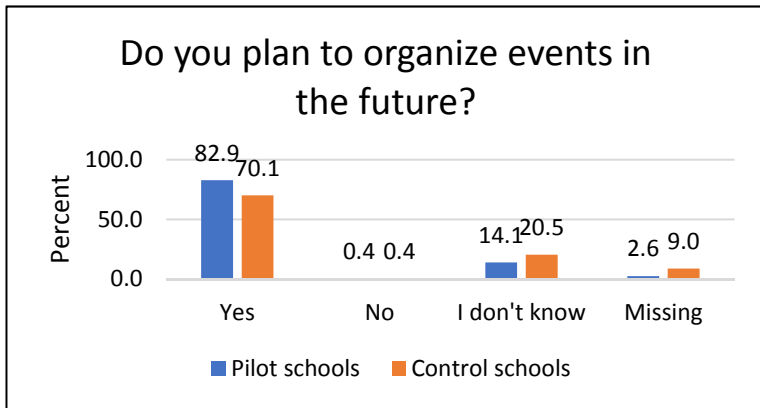
— The following Table 10 presents teachers' perception on actors participating in preparing anti-bullying activities and stakeholders attending those events. These findings further confirmed the high degree of engagement of BS in AB school activities/events.

Table 10: Teachers' perception on who participated in preparing activities and who attended school events

Who participated in preparing for activities	School Type		Who attended events	School Type	
	Pilot	Control		Pilot	Control
School staff	84.2	41.4	All school staff	47.4	22.7
School students	60.5	30.9	Some school staff	12.4	25.9
Some school students	21.5	13.3	All school students	36.6	15.8
Parents	45.5	7.9	Some school student	15.1	24.5
Local community	22.4	1.8	Parents	37.8	11.5
Other	4.8		Local community	24.9	2.2
I don't know	4.4	13.7	Local education authorities	24.8	1.8
			Teachers and students form other schools	17.2	1.8

Finally, when invited to reflect on the continuation of AB activities after the end of the action, teachers in both schools showed willingness for continuation, with teachers in BS showing a higher degree of confirmation compared to their colleagues in N-BS (Graph 15).

Graph 15: Teachers' perception on the organization of future events



Analyses on teachers shows that intervention had more impact in beneficiary schools than on non-beneficiary schools reconfirming the positive effect of the implemented action. The effect of the intervention was particularly evident in the benefits of training, in the raised awareness of teachers, students and parents. The teachers in BS also attributed the fact, that they had involved students in AB activities, had encouraged student-led activities and had offered counselling to students, to the action. The action was also effective in the implementation of policy and anti-bullying protocols, in the organized anti-bullying activities and attendance, in positive changes related to bullying in the school, in reducing bullying incidents, and the overall improving of school climate.

4. DATA ANALYSIS- QUALITATIVE

■ This section aims at analysing the qualitative data retrieved from Focus groups with participants a) in pilot schools, beneficiary of the action and acting as case study schools (BSCS); b) in pilot schools, beneficiary of the action, not acting as case study schools (BS), and c) leader of the actions, namely Mentors, Project staff and Steering Committee. Target groups with BSNCS were mixed and were composed by students, teachers, school staff, parents and RED representatives. Target group in BSCS were Students, Teachers, Parents and Directors. Directors were the only group with whom individual interviews were conducted. Views of participants from BSCS will be triangulated to evaluate the impact of the action in depth.

■ The following sections will present thematic analysis with each representing group. Through the thematic analysis, participants' accounts⁶ of the impact of the implemented action will be analysed and summarized in this section. An overview of the themes explored in the process of evaluating the impact of the action is shown in Figure 2.

6. Accounts- What participants claim, say in relation to each main theme.

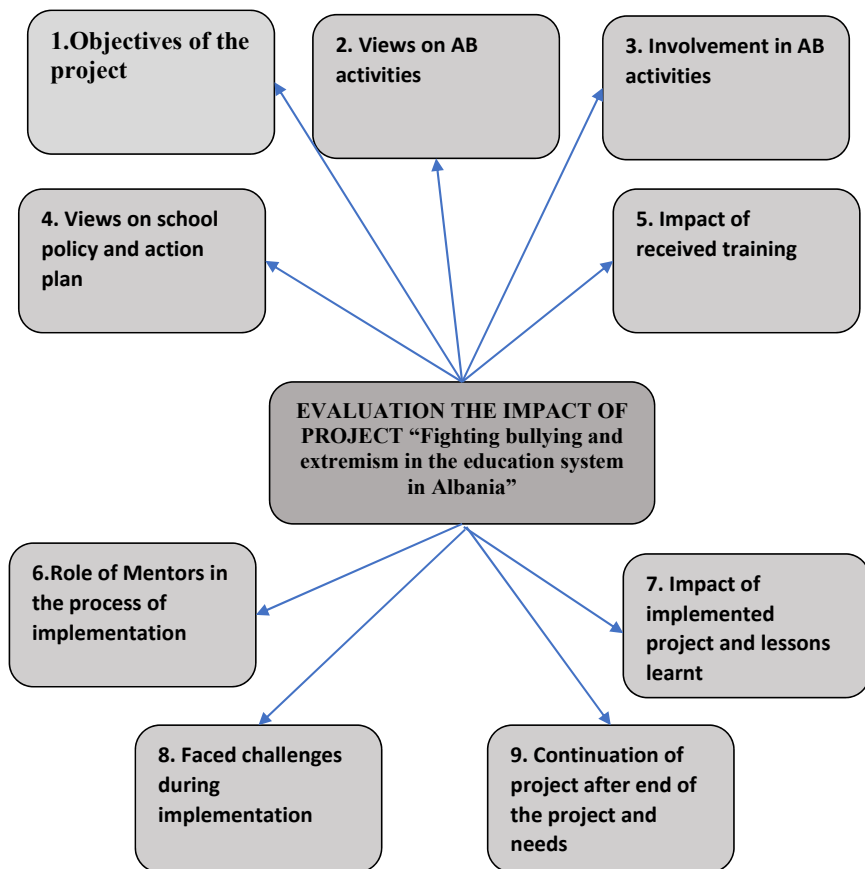


Figure 2: An overview of common themes explored by participants

4.1 Mixed Focus Groups with BSNCS- Primary and Secondary Schools

— This section describes the thematic units originating from the mixed group participants from beneficiary schools not selected for the case study. The groups are compiled of students, parents, teacher, members of staff (i.e. social worker or

psychologist), not the director. Mixed groups were conducted in 9th grade Primary schools and in Secondary Schools in cities across the country.

■ The analysis showed a few themes and subthemes common across the group related to the discussed topics. The importance of these themes was evident as they were expressed by most participants.

■ Participants were invited to a group discussion to reflect on the joint EU/CoE action "*Fighting Bullying and Extremism in the Education System in Albania*". In specific, students in primary schools shared their views on these topics:

- knowledge about the action and overall involvement;
- evaluation of the benefits of the action;
- impact of the action on their school;
- views on developed policy and action plan;
- involvement on anti-bullying (AB) school activities;
- continuation of activities after the action.

■ Their views shared in groups were analysed and emerging themes are accompanied by coded statement. Occasionally, themes are illustrated with extracts from the analysis. The following tables (Table 11 & 12) presents an overview of the analysis.

Table 11: Accounts of Mixed Group on the impact of the Action-9th Grades Primary Schools

Core themes / Subthemes	Coded extracts from the Focus Groups with Mixed Groups by School and City
<p>Knowing about the action and overall involvement</p>	<p>9th grade Neim Babameto School- Durrës - Did not know what bullying was. Classified it as violence or conflict. Learnt to share about it and to work in developing a strategy for preventing it. (Teachers)</p>
<p>-all informed about the action</p> <p>-coming into terms of what bullying is and how it can be prevented</p> <p>-teachers trained which resulted in increased capacity</p> <p>-high level of participation in the action</p> <p>-Parents informed via teachers and their children</p>	<p>9th grade Ndre Mjeda School-Shkodër -Teachers were trained on bullying outside of Albania/ different areas in Albania. School was involved massively, and participation was a pleasure. -The trained teachers then trained all the other teachers. -Meetings with students and parents were organized in relation to bullying. -Everyone was involved. -Students “dressed in a uniform” called anti-bullying.</p> <p>9th grade Turgut Ozal Private School- Tiranë -Got to know the action as involved in activities, wrote essays in English and Albanian, video messaging from parents how they understand bullying, etc. (Students) -Part of the team members and involved from day one in implementing, supporting in organizing activities, guaranteeing attendance, motivating students to prepare shows, essays, dancing, etc. I was part of the training in capacity building. (Teachers) -We were informed about the action through children participating in activities, leaflets and posters on bullying in school Is, and we were involved in supporting children to prepare different materials for open days. -Acted as coordinator, organizer and facilitator. (Psychologist) -Involved in all activities, developing policy and action plan, seminars, in creating video messages and a movie. (AB team member)</p>

	<p>9th grade Vasil Shanto School- Tiranë</p> <p>-A good experience when it comes to benefiting from the training. We were 10 teachers involved in the action and shared experiences. Students were all informed and awareness was raised to better understand the concept and to prevent it. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Teachers have transmitted a lot of information for fighting bullying. (Parents)</p> <p>-Informed about everything through training, developed policy, action plan, activities. (Psychologist)</p>
	<p>9th grade Fan Noli School- Tiranë</p> <p>-Involved in roles and in preparing materials. Participation helped in raising awareness. Activities were organized in the school but also outside, Hotel Sheraton, where they performed various choreographies for raising awareness on the occasion of Anti-Bullying National Day. (Students)</p> <p>-Fully aware of the action, part of the Action team, part of all activities and meetings with psychologist and project coordinators and participated in training organized in Vlora. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Aware of the Action as informed by the children, or teachers and psychologist and participated in activities. Involved with children preparing materials, drawings, artwork. Participated in open days. (Parents)</p> <p>-Informed and involved in the action, its objectives. Played a role in organizing activities, guaranteeing participation and informing. Psychologist prepares the topics and then discussed in class hour. Now students know the terminology on bullying well. (Psychologist)</p>
<p>Awareness of the benefits of the action</p>	<p>9th grade Neim Babameto School- Durrës</p> <p>-Action is beneficial. We cannot say the phenomenon is gone completely but we can say it has made them (students) more responsible, sensible, logical. (Teachers)</p>

<p>-action as beneficial for all</p> <p>-more informed about the phenomenon</p> <p>-differentiate a joke from bullying</p>	<p><i>"I work in two schools as a psychologist and I have noticed that it has had an effect. Quite beneficial. From what my colleagues say and from what I can see there is an impact. In our school we work hard with other organization as well. Every action has had an impact. We can say that this year my new colleagues have found it easier to work with students compared to school they used to be before."</i> (Psychologist)</p>
<p>-behaviour amongst students has become friendly and positive</p> <p>-action brought a concrete policy and action plan</p> <p>-acknowledgment of cyberbullying</p>	<p>9th grade Katund i ri School- Elbasan</p> <p>-Very important because all levels, preschool and 9th grade, were active. At the beginning it was difficult for the young children to understand it. (Students)</p> <p>-Very important in raising awareness of students and staff and to understand what bullying is. In this action parents became active, they participated and were involved. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Very important in understanding what bullying was. Now we separate a joke from teasing, and once would often tell our children "Don't worry it is a joke" without realising they were suffering. Parents do not need to interfere between children but can now report the case to the right place. (Parents)</p> <p>-Beneficial because now the school has a policy and concrete strategy in fighting bullying. All steps to be followed are listed for us to solve a problem in the school or the community. (Social worker)</p>
	<p>9th grade Mark Dashi School- Fier</p> <p>-The teachers who were first trained from CoE, they trained all the teachers in the school. Students and some parents also received training in the form of workshops. Students now understand how to identify bullying better, when it is bullying and when not. (Teachers)</p> <p>-We received a lot of information from the teachers who were trained and this information we shared it to other students. (Students)</p>

	<p>9th grade private Flatrat e dijes- Fier - Very beneficial for teachers, parents and students. We received the information from the teachers who created group discussions for us to understand the phenomenon. We supported the action and our participation was voluntary because the information was beneficial to us. (Parents)</p>
	<p>9th grade Ndre Mjeda School-Shkodër -Beneficial to all. Success can be seen in the fact that students can report all cases in the school. We worked in group. Staff’s awareness is raised as well as because cameras in school premises have prevented bullying. It is not eliminated. Particularly cyberbullying is present in 6, 7, 8 and 9 grades classes.</p>
	<p>9th grade Turgut Ozal Private School- Tiranë -We are more open and know where to go for help and how to act if faced with bullying behaviour. Students collaborate more with each other and with parents in fighting bullying. (Students) -Success is in the fact that the school has become open to parents and to the community and teachers, students are more aware of the phenomenon. Thanks to all the information and training we know how to identify bullying in school. Also, students are involved in the Action, in different activities. (Teachers) -The behaviour of our children has changed in relation to other children. They have become more positive, friendly, respect their classmates. We know the right terminology on bullying and about positive behaviour such as tolerance. (Parents) -It has strengthened the system of reporting cases from students themselves. This system follows this route: head teacher-deputy director-psychologist-ethics committee. There is an increase in trusting the psychologist more. Also, raised awareness towards bullying, and the developed policy and action plan. (Psychologist)</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Vasil Shanto School- Tiranë</p> <p>-Activities have an impact on students' behaviour, to not do more these kinds of gests. We have been involved in all activities. Teacher is always with us. (Students)</p> <p>-Not fully successful because it started two years ago and now it finished, but this doesn't mean bullying is gone. But we have received useful information. Fight against bullying is a long route, but we are not where we were two years ago. Even younger children in the school know bullying.</p> <p>-Beneficial initiative for children because we didn't even know the concept.</p> <p>-School did not have a policy and it has helped me and other teachers how to refer cases. (Psychologist)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Fan Noli School- Tiranë</p> <p>-More informed, know where to go to report cases. Before the action was implemented cases were less referred, whereas now we talk freely because we know more about bullying and types of bullying and report cases with no problem. (Students)</p> <p>-A successful and beneficial action because now they (students) know how to identify cases and talk freely and report and so prevent the phenomenon. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Children react against anti-social behaviour and are aware because they are informed. (Parents)</p> <p>-Now school has an AB team (10 members including Director and teachers) and a referral commission which is compiled by deputy director, psychologist, school president (student) and vice-president. (Psychologist)</p>
<p>Involvement in AB school activities</p> <p>-Activities were diverse and brought inclusiveness</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Neim Babameto School- Durrës</p> <p>-Many activities that were organized and had an impact. We participated and got involved. In my school someone was bullied. Activities helped to improve the situation. No one is bullying him now.</p> <p>-There was psychological violence, but we named it with differently. Now students are more aware. Activities have helped us in 9th grade, but</p>

<p>as all actors engaged in different roles and tasks</p> <p>-involvement brought change in behaviour</p> <p>-identification of cases inside and outside school</p> <p>-activities played a role in raising awareness</p> <p>-action taught teachers how to build AB strategies</p> <p>-learning about the phenomenon helps prevent it</p>	<p>also smaller children in preschool, they are not influenced by us. Because smaller children also bully. (Students)</p> <p>-Some activities, like drawing, theatre, were organized last year, outside on the playground, against bullying and we were involved and now content because we do not see bullying between children anymore. It is nice to see your children in activities.</p> <p>-Children are treated the same. There are not more scolding and insults. I am happy with my children' classes, my son says: <i>"Mom, other children do not tell me anymore I am fat with glasses. . . , Because this is bullying."</i> (Parents)</p> <p>-This year we had a more reduced programmed because it rained in November 21 and the activities were planned to be outside. We went in to do the activities.</p> <p>-School implements AB policy. All are informed, parents, teachers, students. It is effective.</p> <p>-Acted as coordinator of the action in the school and had the support from all staff. (Teachers)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Katund i ri School- Elbasan</p> <p>-We felt good being involved in the action. We did an important thing by being involved. As a member of the students' government I was involved in meetings with class senators to discuss bullying and meetings with students of all levels. Also involved during open days, doing the posters, dancing, etc. (Students)</p> <p>-We were involved during 2017 and 2018, in training, here and in Budva. Organizing the event was not easy. Everyone was collaborating. We understand we had extreme cases of bullying in our school compared to some other schools. Involved also in talking to the students about the phenomenon and in sports activities. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Engaging students in developing the plan was not easy, so they can also give their ideas, but we will work on this. We had a case referred which happened in the bus. We will gather to discuss the</p>

	<p>case and develop a strategy to handle it. (Social worker) <i>"Bullying is not only in school and that means it can not only be fought inside it, but also in the community...I was involved at the beginning of the action. I am still engaged with my children". (Parent)</i></p>
	<p>9th grade Mark Dashi School- Fier -All participants have worked and were engaged at their maximum. Parents requesting all the time to know more about bullying and the information were beneficial. We understood what bullying is, because we had heard the concept, but we did not have detailed information on it. Students and teachers have worked hard to organize activities.</p>
	<p>9th grade private Flatrat e dijes- Fier -Our school was part of this action. At first a few teachers were trained by the CoE, then they created different groups to share the information in relation to the action. All were involved particularly for the first open day.</p>
	<p>9th grade Ndre Mjeda School-Shkodër -Students were involved in various AB activities (expositions, marching, sports) in line with the action plan developed in the class. One class distributed AB emblems. In our school we organize the week of Bullying, not the day. Policy is being implemented effectively. School does not have a gym where sports can be organized, and this is a negative factor which encourages bullying in our school when it is cold, and it rains.</p>
	<p>9th grade Turgut Ozal Private School- Tiranë -We participated, were involved and performed during activities-essays, theatrical shows, posters with quotes by students, video messaging with parents. We gave our contributing in raising awareness. (Students) -Involved in both years contributing in organization and facilitation of the events and motivated students in creating essays posted in the exhibition,</p>

	<p>etc. Implementing Action helped to build capacity in fighting bullying, draft AB policy and action plan and raise awareness amongst teachers, students, parents and community. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Action was important because it increased the level of information and awareness on bullying. Involved in the activities and in supporting children in preparing materials. (Parents)</p> <p>-Acted as coordinator and organizer. Action fulfilled its objective bringing about drafting of AB school policy and action plan, trained the teachers, increasing school capacities in efforts to cope with the phenomenon and raise awareness.</p> <p>-Involved with the team in organizing and guaranteeing attendance, in involving students and parents and engaged in Media. Action is important because it defined the role of school in fighting bullying. (AB team member)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Fan Noli School- Tiranë</p> <p>-Participated and acted as protagonist through dancing, acting, drawing, singing, etc. Thanks to the Action the degree of recognizing the phenomenon in school is increased and school is more prepared to prevent it.</p> <p>-Involved as teachers but also as action team members. Activities involved and raised the awareness of students, parents and community. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Involved in helping children prepare materials and in guaranteeing the media during activities. Important for us and the community to be informed about bullying and to differentiate it from other forms of violence. (Parents)</p> <p>-Fully involved in activities. Activities are important in providing information and raising awareness in school, family and community, with the effort to take measures for prevention. Teachers and students know the terminology and its forms. Developing AB policy and action plan are products of implementing the Action.</p>

<p>Implementation of policy and action plan</p> <p>-Policy and action plan are made known to students</p> <p>-They are being implemented</p> <p>-Implementation can be seen in organized activities in the community, in engaging students to develop policy,</p> <p>-In some schools a lower degree of implementation</p>	<p>9th grade Katund i ri School- Elbasan</p> <p>-We are introduced to the policy by the teachers and then we discussed it with our class mates. We have an anti-bullying team with whom we have meetings and discuss strategies. (Students)</p> <p>-Success or effectiveness is about 80%. We have worked a lot during the past two years and some changes have been achieved. (Teachers)</p> <p>-I would also give it 8 (out of 10) because students were not as engaged in developing the strategy. (Social worker)</p> <p>-We know about them (policy/action plan) because the director sent to our homes leaflets about what bullying is and what steps school takes and activities that were being organized. We read it and signed it. Teachers also invited us in meeting where bullying was discussed, how we can react when we face a case or how to behave with our children. (Parents)</p>
	<p>9th grade Mark Dashi School- Fier</p> <p>-School has an AB policy now and it is known to teachers, students as well as parents. Policy is being implemented because everyone participated in developing it. Many activities have taken place during open hours, in different groups, short films, corners in the school filled with pictures reflecting how students view bullying, activities during the two open days, etc.</p>
	<p>9th grade private Flatrat e dijës- Fier</p> <p>-School has an AB policy which was developed by all because our school is part of the action.</p>
	<p>9th grade Ndre Mjeda School-Shkodër</p> <p>-All students have been included in activities. All were proud in producing AB activities. In 2017 there were some activities, but in 2018, November 21st was launched so activities took place also. The 21-pilot school were part of this because they insisted a lot. More cases have been reported, AB projects have been developed in different classes, not just in Albanian but also in English and in Italian. In maths, students produced diagrams</p>

	<p>with statistics related to the phenomenon. During Bullying week each student held a balloon with an anti-bullying message. In collaboration with RED in Shkodra, leaflets were distributed in other schools and activities were reflected in the media.</p>
	<p>9th grade Turgut Ozal Private School- Tiranë -Involved in drafting AB school policy but not aware of how it is being implemented. (Students) -Policy and Action plan are being implemented and are effective. Raised awareness has helped students to address the issues. Bullying most present in grades V and VI. We are working on intervening in preventing and fighting bullying in age group. (Teachers) -We lack accurate knowledge on the policies and action plan so now aware whether implementation is effective. But we have contributed in activities. (Parents) -They are being implemented as I am part of the working group who developed them. We have identified cases and we are working in giving a solution. (Psychologist) -Policies are being implemented effectively. (Member of the AB team)</p>
	<p>9th grade Vasil Shanto School- Tiranë -We were involved in drafting the policy. They are effective. (Students) -We are aware. (Parents) -Students cannot wait to have the activities. In such activities they simply need some guidance and they do great things. It is also our desire. (Teacher) "I cannot say that they (policy/action plan) are too effective, because there are cases but small, and be solved amongst us" (Teacher)</p>
	<p>9th grade Fan Noli School- Tiranë -Aware of the AB school policy and action plan as we were part of the working team and they are being implemented even though the action is finished particularly in informing and activities</p>

	<p>which raise awareness. (Teachers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not aware of the final product and how effectively is being implemented. (Students) -Not aware of the content of the final documents, therefore not aware of implementation. (Parents) -Whilst policy was being developed and activities were organized mainly teachers were invited to give their ideas. A summary of the policy is posted in all floors and in some other places around school. Implemented in terms of informing, raising awareness, functioning of referral mechanism and the prevention of bullying by the AB team. (Psychologist)
<p>Positive changes and Lessons Learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -coming into terms with an unknown phenomenon -better comprehension of what students go through/how they feel -students speak freely and report more -raised awareness -minimization of cases -enforced communication with children and teachers -reflection 	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Neim Babameto School- Durrës</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There are changes. When someone was bullied before, they felt, not like others, they felt different. Now we don't see it. They feel better. -Due to bullying someone stopped coming to school. Now she is returned. She was absent and that made her performance worst, but also her thinking. With the activities she has more will to learn and she is not absent apart from when she has health problems. -Changes in the classrooms and in the schools. (Teachers) -There were no such activities before. (Parents) <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Katund i ri School- Elbasan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -We have the Box of Thoughts where students report their ideas and problems, and there were some bullying cases. During the last months we have had referred cases, which does not mean it is eliminated but it is minimized. (Students) -Climate between students and teachers has changed, has become more friendly and collaborative. Parents and community have become more active in school's problems. Helped students to be involved in activities. Our point of view on the phenomenon has changed. How to identify and how to handle cases. -We have learnt how to write a plan and how to translate it into actions. The action should be spread to the whole country. Our experience can help other schools. (Social worker) -Cases of bullying have decreased.

<p>of change in students' behaviour due to the action</p> <p>-mentality of teachers in relation to bullying has changed</p> <p>-school more open to the community</p>	<p>9th grade Mark Dashi School- Fier</p> <p>-Students are more informed and clearer on what bullying is. Psychologist has noticed that students feel closer consult their problems. Cases of bullying are minimized.</p>
	<p>9th grade private Flatrat e dijes- Fier</p> <p>-More informed about the concept and as a result more activities are organized because the concept is wide. All school structures have AB activities in their action line. Raised awareness for students, parents and children. Developed AB policy. Activities are inclusive and we can identify, evaluate and solve bullying problems. We view a positive behaviour in students due to the action.</p>
	<p>9th grade Ndre Mjeda School-Shkodër</p> <p>-Many things have changed in the school. Each class has groups of 4-5 students who identify and report bullying to the students' government, then to the head teacher, and then the teacher would bring it to staff meeting. Activities reflected in the media means people in the city know about the action. It is an initiative, yet students speak freely of bullying now. However, more needs to be done in raising awareness to all groups. The psychologist, who comes once a week, says that they lack a room where she could counsel students and it is difficult to identify cases unless someone informs her. Director is very supportive of the process.</p>
	<p>9th grade Turgut Ozal Private School- Tiranë</p> <p>-We feel free to talk about bullying and to report the cases. Getting involved in the activities and during class discussion has helped us identify forms of bullying. (Students)</p> <p>-Staff's awareness was raised thanks to the action being implemented, participation in activities, which has helped in reporting cases. As teachers we can now identify bullying thanks to the information we received during training. (Teachers)</p> <p>-School offers more information on bullying and we see it in various posted information inside the</p>

	<p>school, posters, banners on bullying, etc. This action increased our knowledge on bullying. (Parents)</p> <p>-As a psychologist, the action gave me access in communicating with the students. I gained a friendly and academic experience through the activities. I learnt that the impact of teachers and staff plays an important role in preventing bullying, so they do not end up in extreme violence.</p> <p>-I feel more aware of the phenomenon and I know how to react for minimizing it. (AB team member)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Vasil Shanto School- Tiranë</p> <p>-It has helped students to learn what bullying is. Decreased cases. It is not good to offend other because you don't like them. When we were little we used to offend and be offended. Now we don't have such problems. (Students)</p> <p>-Activities helped a lot because the shows on bullying increased awareness in that bullying is wrong. We had projected a short film on bullying before and this action came at the right time. Finally, we learned to offer love and goodness. During activities students were encouraged to bring white shirts where we drew messages on. It was fantastic! (Teachers)</p> <p>-Teachers and students are more informed and have organized many activities on bullying. Before there were only workshops organized by me. We noticed where bullying occurs, and those places are being monitored. Students come to refer cases also. Bullying does not occur only in school but also in the internet. (Psychologist)</p> <p><i>"Students learnt that bullying is not only in their class. They learned to leave out differences "you are fat, you are thin". Students feel better. I am not aware on what happens in the internet as my daughter is young."</i> (Parent)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Fan Noli School- Tiranë</p> <p>-Students are more informed and aware and learnt not to discriminate other and to respect others who are different. We learnt to contribute in activities which raise awareness through art, music, dance, poems and writing essays. (Students)</p>

	<p>-School became open to discuss sensitive issues like bullying. Staff and students are more aware of antisocial behaviour and bullying. We can identify bullying and we are prepared to handle it before it becomes difficult to prevent. (Teachers)</p> <p>-More informed about the phenomenon and that we should not ignore bullying or to treat them as normal teasing but to handle them in due time, in family and school. (Parents)</p> <p>-The mentality of teachers, school staff, and students in relation to antisocial behaviour has changed and the topics are not taboo anymore. There is a high level of raised awareness in the school thanks to all the activities, shared information AB policy and action plan support in preventing and fighting the phenomenon. School is more open about it to the parents' community. School plays a key role in recognising the correct terminology and in taking precautionary measures. (Psychologist)</p>
<p>Positive attitudes towards continuation of AB activities after the end of the action</p> <p>-activities during Open days, November 21, implementation of school policy and action plan, meetings with the community, etc. in effort to inform and raise awareness</p>	<p>9th grade Neim Babameto School- Durrës</p> <p>-We are ready for all. (Students)</p> <p><i>"I think they will continue periodically. Teachers at least once a month will discuss topics related to bullying during their educative class hour."</i> (Teacher)</p> <p>9th grade Katund i ri School- Elbasan</p> <p>-We finish school this year and if we were invited to come back during Open Days, we would come. Posters and Concerts will probably continue. We really like them. (Students)</p> <p>-The open days and educative class hours on bullying will continue. We are open for other suggestions. Also, class groups must continue because they have an impact. (Teachers)</p> <p>-November 21 is set and won't change. Other activities have changed the climate in our school and should continue. (Social worker)</p> <p>-Meetings with the community because school should rely on the community. (Parents)</p>

<p>-continuation of workshops, class hour discussion, school products (i.e. magazine),</p>	<p>9th grade Mark Dashi School- Fier -When action was over, we continue with other activities. One activity was when we created a spot with people from different categories to raise awareness. Different students were part of it, students who had returned from migration, with special needs, with problems in their family, so all could feel equal and there were no differences. Another workshop was organized with parents of children with special needs, because we had organized a show with these children, so they got closer with each other. We don't expect the day on bullying because we are inclusive. It is part of our school policy.</p>
	<p>9th grade private Flatrat e dijes- Fier -We have a school policy on bullying now and this topic will continue to be part of the activities.</p>
	<p>9th grade Ndre Mjeda School-Shkodër -All activities will continue because it has made students and staff involved and it takes them away from the everyday routine. We hope for better premises in our school, to not have classes on shifts, to have a gym, and collaboration between students and teachers will be there, not just in AB activities, but also in any other activity. Representative of DAR reinforced the collaboration in supporting schools in these activities and emphasised the good work done by the school.</p>
	<p>9th grade Turgut Ozal Private School- Tiranë -We will continue to be part of activities related to bullying, in the school and outside to raise awareness. (Students) -In line with the action plan we will continue the activities, in open days or informing activities and how to prevent bullying. The school has a magazine and topics on bullying are present. This can be accessed in the school web. -Involvement of children in activities is a good way to contribute in raising awareness. (Parents)</p>

	<p>-Activities such November 21, improvement of AB school policy and action plan, workshops with teachers and students, in class activities during, reading time, and following of referred bullying cases, will continue. (Psychologist)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Vasil Shanto School- Tiranë</p> <p>-Glad to have taken part in activities because I have received many messages and I have tried to transmit the messages to other students. (Students)</p> <p>The anthem that we made for the school has parts where it talks about bullying. We have started this and we won't go back. It is in our monthly Schedule to have at least one topic for discussion on bullying. The Schedule is done with the students at the beginning of the month. Next year perhaps we do something else. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Workshops with teachers, meetings, activities will continue. There a working plan for this academic year, 2018-2019. (Psychologist)</p> <p>-We feel that this school works a lot and we are content. (Parents)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">9th grade Fan Noli School- Tiranë</p> <p>-We will continue activities to raise awareness and organize November 21, the National day to fight bullying. (Students)</p> <p>-Activities will continue, school policy and action plan will continue to be implemented focusing on informing and raising awareness and preventing the phenomenon. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Not aware what exactly will continue but raising awareness activities will continue. (Parents)</p> <p>-Activities on November 21, open days and AB action plan will be implemented, discussing topics in school, referring cases, so that awareness is raised in the school and community with the presence of the media. (Psychologist)</p>

Table 12: Accounts of Mixed Group on the impact of the Action-Secondary schools

Core themes / Subthemes	Coded extracts from the Focus Groups with Mixed Groups by School and City
<p>Knowing about the action and overall involvement</p> <p>-know of the action by being involved</p> <p>-involved through training and activities</p> <p>-learnt to identify and minimize it</p> <p>-bullying a phenomenon which has been introduced late</p> <p>-it is a problem and needs attention</p> <p>-action helped redefined bullying as a concept</p>	<p>Babë Dud Karbunara High School-Berat</p> <p>-I know about the action and I have been involved in activities. It is necessary and we need more information on it. More involved in informing others. <i>"To be bullied feels like you are lost...and the bully with his group is scary."</i> (Students)</p> <p>-Involved in training which helped to redefine bullying. I learnt more about the phenomenon and how to identify it. Teachers were qualified to minimize the phenomenon. Referring cases has not been easy. (Teachers)</p> <p><i>"The daughter of my friend committed suicide due to bullying and that is when I heard about bullying... so I was very interested to be part of the action."</i> (Teacher)</p> <p>-Although I am policy officer, the concept has come late in our profession. Aware of the action and its activities. (Parent)</p>
	<p>Beqir Cela Professional School-Durrës</p> <p>-Involved during the activities. It is us who bully even when we think we make a joke. It is not enough to have 3 months of activities to raise awareness. We experience it at school daily. (Students)</p> <p>-Aware of the action and involved in some activities. Bullying is not over, as soon as one case is treated, another one starts. (Teacher)</p> <p>-It is a wide spread problem and requires effort to minimize it. Eliminating is out of questions. (Parent)</p>
	<p>Atë Pjetër Meshkalla Private High School -Shkodër</p> <p>-At first 10 teachers were trained inside Albania and.. After the training, they trained the other</p>

	<p>teachers in the school as well as meetings with parents and students on bullying. This was done to raised awareness of all. (Psychologist)</p>
<p>Awareness of the benefits of the action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -beneficial to those who participated and were involved -increased awareness of students and teachers -identification of cases came after action started -more teachers should be trained in schools with larger community -bullying still a problem and more should be done -Involved in tasks 	<p>Babë Dud Karbunara High School-Berat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is beneficial because when you are involved you know more, you see it when you go and inform other students and they would react when hearing cases. We have been informed and know how to protect ourselves and prevent it. Often, we don't realize we are being bullied and the one who bullies thinks it's a game. We cannot say about the effectiveness because we do not see the statistics. We have done activities, materials are still posted but the phenomenon is still present. (Students) -It is useful and beneficial because the youth today is very much exposed to bullying. The action made it clear for students, they understand it and understand the consequences of practicing bullying. (Teachers) -As soon as the action started, together with students' senate we identified two cases. During training it was evident that teacher should learn to identify the phenomenon. (Psychologist)
	<p>Beqir Cela Professional School-Durrës</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It is important to raise the awareness of the aggressors. (Student) -This is a big school and that is why we requested to have more teachers trained, not 10, but 30 or 40, half of the staff at least. Most of the students are boys 1600, only 3 girls. There is a high chance for violence here. (Psychologist) -We have experienced a lot of violence in this school, because here there are dorms. Even us as teachers want to learn more on how to manage the cases. Some students come from 9th grade system and he brings the behaviour with him.
	<p>Atë Pjetër Meshkalla Private High School -Shkodër</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Beneficial to all because it gathered all against bullying and many activities were organized.

	<p>Media was also invited so that the action was made known to the community. (Staff)</p> <p>-We were all involved in this action working on our tasks and then students of 12 grade made a video on the action. Others have done essays or drawings in relation to the action. (Students)</p>
<p>Involvement in AB school activities</p> <p>-students know more on bullying, are open and feel safer</p> <p>-part of various school activities</p> <p>-increased cooperation with school psychologist</p> <p>-Parents invited to meeting with students and teachers to generate ideas on activities</p>	<p>Babë Dud Karbunara High School-Berat</p> <p>-As a class senator I was involved in organizing activity, we initiated the exposition, posters and drawings with students' impressions and messages. I think we feel safer because we know more and are open. (Students)</p> <p>Activities are more for informing and promoting values but not on bullying and its consequences. Activities were in the class and not as a whole school. We feel stronger after the activities. (Students)-We have started with campaigns involving staff, students, parents, marching in the city and lighted candles in 2017. In 2018 we actioned a film and that was discussed in small groups in the class. We also had expositions. We need to promote successful cases of handing bullying. (Staff)</p> <p>Beqir Cela Professional School-Durrës</p> <p>-I am part of the staff being trained. We see bullying everyday and it needs more work to be done. We consult the psychologist for all problems in the school. Some of the them we manage on our own. This is our job at the end of the day. We see different situations with students, some move the chair of his classmate, remove books, etc. (Teacher)</p> <p>Atë Pjetër Meshkalla Private High School -Shkodër</p> <p>-Before activities we developed an AB action plan together with the teachers. This plan was divided in three sections: Students' ideas to be reported to the professors; Activating the ideas and Feedback from all students involved in the action. Many activities were done, as meeting with parents, distribution of leaflets and it was successful. (Students)</p>

	<p>-Sports activities were organized and students enjoyed them. Also, we have been lobbying at the ministry of education that a section connected to bullying should be added to the law. (Teacher)</p> <p>-We organized a dance for raising awareness and representative from the city Hall, RED and other school attended. We have organized discussions with parents and students in class. Everyone has been involved. (Psychologist)</p>
<p>Implementation of policy and action plan</p> <p>-implantation of policy not understood by students</p> <p>-support group operates</p> <p>-policy is shared with others</p> <p>-more work should be done in implementing policy</p>	<p>Babë Dud Karbunara High School-Berat</p> <p>-Not aware what policy is, it is not that we have been invited to develop plans, but it is being done through us doing our part, particularly the psychologist, senate and through activities. It is a phenomenon which requires that we are open. The instrument which has created small groups in classes works because we talk more in small groups. (Students)</p> <p>-Policy is more on the paper because just to have some activities does not mean implementing policy. Policy needs to have everyone involved. (Students)</p> <p>-School has an action plan which is presented in staff meeting and then distributed in classes. There is a protocol on the phenomenon now. There is a support group in the school. The plan is integrated with other plans. (Teachers)</p> <p>-Classes have organized focus groups to identify cases. There are a few cases and there is a supporting system. (Psychologist)</p> <p>-Policy requires intervention to be effective. It needs more work. (Parents)</p> <hr/> <p>Beqir Cela Professional School-Durrës</p> <p>-With one action we cannot pretend a lot. The % of those who have reflected is small and temporary. What can a teacher do in one hours?! To deal with students who are absent, to talk about other problems or to talk about bullying?! There is no time to talk about it. (Students)</p> <p>-We have an AB team which has included diverse students, from Roma and Egyptian community,</p>

	<p>students with special needs, president of academic staff, etc. We have compiled some materials, but they have not been posted yet because school has had work done. (Psychologist)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Atë Pjetër Meshkalla Private High School -Shkodër</p> <p>-As parents we have been involved throughout the year to attend various workshops on bullying and our children have also communicated with us. Our children have been involved in developing policy (Parents)</p> <p>-Discussion on the topics have been present during class. At the beginning of school year, we organized a meeting with parents and bullying was discussed. In most of the classes bullying is now part so that students raise their awareness. (Teacher)</p>
<p>Positive changes and Lessons Learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -more informed, aware of the phenomenon -students should cooperate more -some attempt to involve parents -change is evident but more needs to be done -bullying is minimized -there is support from psychologist 	<p style="text-align: center;">Babë Dud Karbunara High School-Berat</p> <p>-It brought change in the school, staff was informed, awareness raised on the problems this phenomenon brings, we developed action plan which is integrated with class plan. It is not easy to identify cases, students can hide their problems. We need more instruments to measure it...The cases we identified, there were changes. Procedures are long because after identification we need parent's permission. Students do not always want to share problems, they lack trust and especially for transmitting them to their parents. <i>"I am sceptic in preventing and its effect, there is a lot more,"(Teachers)</i></p> <p>-Involved individuals can see the change, there is Bullying corner, a plan, we know about it more now but still cases are not reported. We know that when you are being teased in a group and it is repetitive it is bullying and didn't think of it before. It is a process and needs us to be open-minded. (Students)</p> <p>-We need to be careful because this phenomenon can lead to victims of extremism. (Parent)</p> <p>-As staff we have informed parents and we have tried to involve parents in campaign for raising awareness. (Psychologist)</p>

	<p>Beqir Cela Professional School-Durrës -Beneficial. There is some change. But the number of those who have reflected is not big. It is not just about one action. It needs to be an everyday action. We see bullying every day. One makes fun, the other hits. We cannot stop that person. The students who bully come with a plan in their head to tease others. In our class there are three kinds of students. The bully, the spectators and the ones who are bullied. The classmates have an impact. (Students)</p>
	<p>Atë Pjetër Meshkalla Private High School -Shkodër A lot of changes, students' awareness is raised, students speak freely on the phenomenon. One student shared during class about she had been bullying on the internet and the student had shared who the bully was. After that class, students were called individually and then their parents. Eventually the student is feeling better about it with the support of the psychologist. -Bullying is happening less now because of the facilities and camera we have in our school. (Teacher) -Bullying is more present in the class because of the longer length of time students spend with each other. (Representative of RED)</p>
<p>Attitudes towards continuation of AB activities after the end of the action</p> <p>-November 21, activities at school level, system of referring cases, AB policy, bullying included</p>	<p>Babë Dud Karbunara High School-Berat -November 21 will continue; activities which focus on values need to be organized at school level; Actionion of films and video messages. From all this we need to come up with a product which then can improve plan of action, the system of referring the cases, etc. We need to focus on increasing trust between students. Involving parents is a challenge.</p> <p>Beqir Cela Professional School-Durrës -Very important to continue. Would be good to have activities monthly. But they should be visual, posters, something different so it attracts. (Staff)</p>

<p>in school curricula</p> <p>-More should be done in schools with high number of students</p>	<p>-From the moment the action was introduced that's when I first started to take it seriously. We are 1600 boys in this school. We go out in the break, we do tease one another. Particularly first year students. There is a mix of backgrounds and cultures. It would be good to have activities periodically and to not have the same things repeated. (Students)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Atë Pjetër Meshkalla Private High School -Shkodër</p> <p>-Every year we will organize AB activities during the week in November. In our school's regulation there is a section on AB policy. Teachers have included the topic for discussion during class as well as meeting with parents. Students will be motivated to share more ideas on bullying and involve our school in the city. Sports activities will also include bullying in the programme. (Teachers)</p> <p>-RED representative expresses appreciation towards the achievements of this school in relation to AB project and encourages teachers to share their experiences with other schools. As the school has a good marketing policy to attract new students, same way they can market the AB policy present in their school. (RED representative)</p>

■ It is evident from the thematic analyses that representing groups from both primary and secondary schools have been influenced by the action. The effect is multidimensional and at various levels. Each school presenting similarities and differences in the way they had adapted the action. First, the action was introduced to students, parents and community. Teachers were trained and then they acted as trainers to other teachers who were not part of AB team. This contributed a raised capacity. Action brought re-definition of bullying, an unknown concept for a considerable number of participants. As a result, it increased their awareness, helped them identify cases, made them more open to report and discuss cases and brought willingness to solve cases. Teachers started to approach bullying with a different

mentality. Second, action was evaluated as beneficial and effective from students, their parents and school staff. They participated in a variety of tasks and organized activities. Thirdly, schools learnt to design and develop their own policy, a product of cooperation with students. From the policy action plans were developed which were reflected in their activities, which were original as each school engaged in a variety of activities and events. Activities further played a role in increasing the awareness of students, school staff, parents and general community. Fourth, action improved student-school staff-parent cooperation, established a support system, role of psychologist became more effective and students' behaviour with each other became more positive. More so, parents expressed that school had kept them involved and occasionally they participated in activities. At last, participants valued the implemented policy and action plan, attributed changes to the action and confirmed that some key activities will continue after the end of the action. Although there is evidence of a significant increase of awareness and efforts made to fight the phenomenon, some participants claimed that one action is not enough to prevent the bullying and more needs to be done towards elimination of the phenomenon.

4.2 Focus Groups with Beneficiary School for Case Study

— This section describes the thematic units originating from students, teachers, parents and directors, participants from beneficiary schools for case study. Students account as the primary group of interest where the phenomenon is both widely manifested as a social behaviour and where changes due to any implementation can be measured. On the other hand, teachers also account for a main target group as a driving force to implement action and prevent bullying in schools. Thus, analysis for these two groups is presented in detail. The views of parents and directors from the BSCS will be summarized and the section will end with a general summary of the case study.

4.2.1 Students' views on the impact of action

— Students were invited to share their views on the joint EU/CoE action “*Fighting Bullying and Extremism in the Education System in Albania*”. In specific, students revealed their views on these topics:

- objectives of the action;
- evaluation of the action;
- views on anti-bullying (AB) school activities;
- the impact of the AB activities on their school, developed school policy and action plan;
- impact of the action on their school and lessons learnt.

— The analysis showed a few themes and subthemes common across the group related to the discussed topics. The importance of these themes was evident as they were expressed by all participants. In the subsequent table, each of the emerging themes will be defined accompanied by summarizing statement from the coded extracts. Occasionally, themes will be illustrated with a full extract from the analysis. Table (12) will be followed by a general summary.

Table 13: Students' accounts on the impact of the Action

Core themes / Subthemes	Coded extracts from the Focus Groups with Students by School
<p>Understanding the objectives of the action</p> <p>-the way students make sense of the objectives of the action</p>	<p>-To raise students' awareness of bullying as a phenomenon.</p> <p>-To minimize the phenomenon.</p> <p>-To get the students to get rid of the shyness and to talk freely about this phenomenon. (<i>Students in Korça</i>)⁷</p>

7. 9th grade School Bulgarec- Korça

	<p>-To raise awareness of bullying, its consequences and how to prevent it. <i>(Students in Vlora)</i>⁸</p> <p>-To eliminate bullying as a worrying phenomenon in our school.</p> <p>- Understanding what bullying is, the damage it causes and raising awareness of students about the factors.</p> <p>-Raising awareness of teachers and students, preventing it and rehabilitation of students who bully in our school. <i>(Students in Lezha)</i>⁹</p>
<p>Awareness on the benefits of the action</p> <p>-Beneficial for students, for teacher-student communication, in identifying cases, solving cases and minimizing bullying</p>	<p>-Students talk freely and are not shy to talk about bullying.</p> <p>“Very valuable, this phenomenon is minimized. It can be shown in our friends’ behaviour.” <i>(Students in Korça)</i></p> <p>-The conversation we had on these problems, with the class teachers and with those whom we talked more, have been very useful.</p> <p>-Useful action as it highlights cases of bullying and helps in solving them.</p> <p>-We are conscious now in the identifying such cases and we know that, if we talk to each other, we become aware and assist the victim of the cases. <i>(Students in Vlora)</i></p> <p>-Useful because cases did not repeat when we reported them <i>(Students in Tirana)</i>¹⁰</p>
<p>Views on anti-bullying activities</p>	<p>-Valuable; It was the first time that it happened; We felt involved with responsibility and it brought changes in the behaviour of students. <i>(Students in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Activities raised the awareness of the person who bullies as they realized what it feels to be bullied.</p> <p>-Activities involved the community, neighbours and residents in the area, and other schools. <i>(Students in Tirana)</i></p>

8. 9th grade School Ismail Qemali-Vlora

9. 9th grade School Kosova- Lezhë

10. 12th Sandër Prosi High School- Tirana

<p>-AB activities influential -AB brought change -AB encouraged involvement of all</p>	<p>-We had many activities during class hour with the teachers, discussions with the psychologist, and we have placed posters which state "Stop bullying". -Activities were important as it had high attendance and the impact was unique for all, parents, students and heads of institutions. -Members of community were also involved, other institutions and members of CoE, etc. <i>(Students in Lezha)</i></p>
<p>Involvement in AB school activities</p> <p>-self-involvement, involvement of peers, teachers, staff and community in a variety of activities</p> <p>-engaging in identifying bullying, resolving the case and remaining anonymous</p>	<p>-We were involved, and ideas were considered, and we worked responsibly. -We participated in various schools and other activities, we wrote essays, poems, marched in Korça town. <i>(Students in Korça)</i></p> <p>-The school participated in AB activities in 2017 and 2018. We participated in sports and educational activities and competitions. We had meetings with teachers but also with parents. <i>(Students in Vlora)</i></p> <p>-We wrote poetry and presented posters and danced for raising awareness. We wrote essays which have been very effective because they showed how a bullied student feels. We played short theatre sketches. -Some activities were during the open hours on bullying, but not only on the AB days, we have been constantly discussing this issue. -We also completed anonymous questionnaires. -We acted as observers of the hot areas where each class has had an observant. Others did not know who the observer was. The duties: To observe unpleasant behaviours and to report in order to find a solution. <i>"It was the head teacher's idea to have an anti-bullying box which was discussed with the students and we all agreed. The box was best way to report and be anonymous. The box is useful because when the box was opened it was noticed that there were cases, because there are students who want to be</i></p>

	<p><i>anonymous. Simply the problem is stated for the teacher to resolved, but no names.”</i> <i>“The toilet area was exactly one case; one girl was being photographed and threatened that her picture was going to be put on social networks. I saw and reported it to the psychologist. I do not know what the psychologist did, but photo was deleted and was not published.” (Students in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-High involvement of students in developing the plan and students now understand the damage of bullying and as a result, it has heavily contributed to decreased cases. -Engaged in two big activities in relation to combating against bullying organized at Culture Palace and also at another school where students presented many works, like essays, posters for sensibilization. - Many activities during class hour with the teachers, discussions with the psychologist, and we have placed posters which state “Stop bullying”. -Members of community were also involved, other institutions and members of CoE, etc. -Important activities as it had high attendance and the impact was unique for all, parents, students and heads of institutions. -Many important messages were communicated about this topic.</p> <p><i>“I was involved with the group supporting the psychologist. We organized various discussions in different classes, and we shared information and messages about this topic. I have been part of the training we did for students, presenting bullying as phenomenon and the importance of preventing it and eliminating this damaging phenomenon.” (Students in Lezha)</i></p>
<p>Views on the developed school policy/ action plan on school</p>	<p>-Policy developed for first time, policy and plan of activities based on the policy were good and valuable for us. - Bullying as behaviour is minimized. Policy will remain for every generation to come. <i>(Students in Korca)</i></p>

<p>-developed products had an impact on the self, bully and victim</p> <p>-raised awareness brought action and wide involvement resulting in minimization of bullying and increase in good behaviour</p>	<p>- Policy was good because it offered training for students and made them aware, more alert and sensitive to bullying.</p> <p>-AB box for students to express freely on bullying because some have difficulty talking about it.</p> <p>-Now we know what bullying is and in what ways it shows itself and with whom we need to discuss it if we are affected by it.</p> <p>-We can prevent the problem after identification, and we can address it towards solution. Teachers are always ready to listen to us. <i>(Students in Vlora)</i></p> <p>- Being involved in AB activities made us more aware of this issue.</p> <p>-We were introduced the plan last year and activities were identified.</p> <p>-The main part of the plan was to identify bullying in school by the students and the way of reporting it by them.</p> <p>-The chairman of the board placed some students in different points, closer to those students who are bullied to monitor. Each class has representative.</p> <p>-Bullying has decreased.</p> <p>-Bullies have not been exposed because of anonymity.</p> <p>-School psychologist has spoken to them and have made them aware of consequences.</p> <p>-Bullies place themselves as if they were bullied and they have realized how bad it is to be bullied and this has caused them to react and to not repeat.</p> <p><i>"In my class there was a bullying case. The teacher did something about it and it did not happen again. I am a hot spot monitor and I have reported cases to the teacher, and they have not been repeated."</i> <i>(Students in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Victims who used to leave school a few hours ahead of time because they were afraid that someone was going to make fun of them, they started to attend, and their grades improved, because they are not under the pressure.</p> <p>-There is higher sensitivity towards the ones who are bullied and their peer integration because they</p>
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	<p>understand that they are being supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Through the activities we have given them strength and motivation and not to be afraid. -This initiative was inclusive of most students. But a few students are not much informed and there are still some cases of bullying. -Plan is good because students are more aware and do not practice bullying. <p><i>"Just as bullying is a constant violence, that's how hard we've worked."</i> (Students in Lezha)</p>
<p>Positive perceived changes and Lessons Learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Now students can identify, understand its impact, strive to prevent and work hard to eliminate it -Cyberbullying remains a challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Now we know what bullying is and in what ways it shows itself and with whom we need to discuss it if we are affected by it. -We can prevent the problem after identification, and we can address it towards solution. Teachers are always ready to listen to us. (Students in Vlora) -Things in our school changed. We now know what bullying is and how it appears. -Bullying is damaging for us all and it is important to prevent it and to work hard to eliminate it. -Our school has now a concrete plan and there is a team who deals specifically on it and changes are evident. -Students now feel more protected and safer. -Students understand it and report the cases if being bullied by others. (Students in Lezha) -Something concrete has been done and the bullies react to that. -We would like more strict disciplinary measures taken for those who bully. -We have also dealt with it in the media and got applause. -The media has started to talk more about bullying and many parents have been informed. If their child exercises bullying or is bullied, they understand and try to avoid it, because the worst thing that can happen in bullying is to keep it secret. -Bullying can lead to suicide.

-If it is known that a zone is a hot zone and there is bullying, if it was known, there would be intervention.

-We will not be silent if faced with some injustice.

-Bullying still exists but now there is a lower level and cases are being identified and reported.

-Cyber bullying is another issue because they are happening in social media and it is hard to manage them.

"There have been cases and it (cyber bullying) the kind of bullying we fear most because it is not in our hands. It is widely spread when misused accounts with someone name and picture is opened in social networks. We have dealt with it, but we have not found a way to stop it. There is no information on the law. Reporting can only be done with each other by reporting and blocking the profile. The school can only say that you do not have to accept a friend when you do not know them. Police can find it through IP. The police also cannot do much. Those occurring in personal terms are difficult to report to school because they are personal matters."

"It would be good for social networks to be for people over 18 years of age. When some bully does cyber bullying their friends inform the victim when they become aware. It is good when the cyberbully is identifiable. Many girls fall victim of these fake IDs who are not the people you see on the picture, but people who can lie and seduce are hidden behind. The other case is using someone's pictures and putting them on YouTube by making videos and associating them with improper expressions or songs. Another way is to hack profiles by using social networks of a person by posting improper things. Last year we had a joint activity with several different schools where our program was displayed." (Students in Tirana)

■ As noted in the presented extracts, it is evident that students from representing schools in Korça, Vlora, Tirana and Lezha had a positive experience as their schools participated in the implementation of the action. In specific, students a) showed that they had fully grasped the objectives of the action, in what they said and in what they did to reflect those objectives; b) were aware of the valuable and useful benefits of AB activities and its deriving products (the school policy and action plan); c) were involved inclusively and responsively in a great variety of activities and in different contexts whether inside their classroom, school or outside school context; d) viewed the impact of AB activities as having a positive and gave concrete positive good practice in favour of fighting bullying in their school; and e) were able to draw lessons from this experience and even elaborated the remained challenges ahead.

■ In addition, when reflecting on their involvement, they spoke of it as an inclusive act involving the self, their peers, the students who bullied and the students who had suffered bullying, school teachers and staff, parents and community. When discussing changes, students spoke of “then” (time before the action) as being unaware and “now” (after implementation of the action) as being more or fully aware of the bullying as a phenomenon, projecting a shift in how they approach bullying after the implementation.

■ Furthermore, students identified significant changes occurring related to the minimization of bullying as a behaviour, including decrease in manifesting the behaviour, showed in how students who bullied changed reactions and in how the victims positively responded (i.e. attending school more as less afraid that someone would bully after school was over).

■ Overall, students from this this school category showed that they understood objectives of the action, their personal and institutional involvement lead to example of good practice which resulted in decrease of bullying behaviour amongst peers. Students also understood the importance of raising awareness among community and emphasised the role of media in this process.

4.2.2 Teachers' views on the impact of action

■ This subsection describes the thematic units originating from Focus groups with teachers, participants from beneficiary schools piloted as case study. Teachers were invited to share their views on the joint EU/CoE action "Fighting Bullying and Extremism in the Education System in Albania". In specific, they reflected on these topics:

- objectives of the action;
- evaluation of the action;
- the effects of training;
- views on the developed school policy and action plan;
- involvement in AB school activities;
- the role of the mentors/experts supporting the action in their school;
- challenges faced in implementing the action;
- impact of the action in their school and lessons learnt;
- attitudes towards continuation of AB after the end of the action and challenges in continuing all activities.

■ The analysis showed a few themes and subthemes common across the group indicating to the discussed topics. The importance of these themes was evident as they were expressed by all participants. In the subsequent table, each of the emerging themes will be defined accompanied by summarizing statement from the coded extracts. Occasionally, themes will be illustrated with a full extract. The table will be followed by a general summary.

Table 14: Teachers' accounts on the impact of the Action

Core themes/ Subthemes	Coded extracts from the Focus Groups with Teachers by School
<p>Understanding the objectives of the action</p> <p>-the way teachers made sense of the objectives</p>	<p>-To know what bullying is, the form of bullying, its causes and how we can minimize the phenomenon. <i>(Teachers in Korça)</i></p> <p>- Collection of information for designing the action; Raising awareness of local institutions to offer collaboration and support to our action; Developing policy and instruments for implementation; Raising awareness of teachers and students and the whole community about the phenomenon; Training teacher to address bullying; Designing training instruments for the team and for all staff; Establish an anti-bullying team; Monitoring the situation. <i>(Teachers in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Understanding the concept was important. It is well explained because it was confused with fighting before. <i>(Teachers in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-To find effective ways to fight bullying and extremism in the Albanian education system. -To raise awareness of bullying, how it affects children and the consequences of its prevention. - Finding ways to prevent bullying as behaviour. - Minimizing the behaviour amongst students. <i>(Teachers in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Awareness of the benefits of the action</p> <p>-action as beneficial, useful and successful</p>	<p>- A beneficial action as we understand factors that cause bullying. First time to experience this action in our school, first time to have a policy and action plan. <i>(Teachers in Korça)</i></p> <p>- Useful and successful action based on the good results in our school due to this action- significantly decrease the number of cases because the awareness was raised and due to the policy that we developed.</p>

<p>-more informed about the phenomenon and raised awareness to those who did not know were part of it</p> <p>-more informed about its causes, consequences and intervention</p>	<p>-The action set in motion all the factors that joined together against this phenomenon.</p> <p>-Thanks to the action and the policy that our school has undertaken now, we can say that this phenomenon is on the way of elimination thanks to the utmost dedication of all the factors that influenced. <i>(Teachers in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-A beneficial action, even though it is not eliminated, we have managed to prevent extreme consequences. Best thing was understanding the phenomenon, what causes, and the way bullying is manifested, because cases were present, but victims were not aware that they were being bullied. Some cases were manifested like a joke, without being aware that it was bullying. Also, when students are having a fight it is not bullying, bullying is when it is repeated. <i>(Teachers in Tirana)</i></p> <p>- A beneficial Action because students got to know the concept more and now, they are aware to react against the behaviour. <i>(Teachers in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Views on training and its impact</p> <p>-valuable and effective training</p> <p>-increased capacity</p> <p>-informative in understanding bullying as a concept and how to take preventive measures</p> <p>-training helped teachers to create AB team and</p>	<p>-We all were involved, even teachers of preschool education, and we were trained. It was a valuable training. We recommend it to other schools. Even teachers did not have much information on bullying before. It was known with the term violence. It was inclusive, awareness raised and a concrete plan for continuation. Informative sessions were also given to the rest of staff. <i>(Teachers in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Teachers were trained, first a group of teachers then it was expanded to all the teachers of the school, information was exchanged.</p> <p>-It was beneficial because although we knew the phenomenon a bit and we could see with much concern in our daily work, we did not know how to handle it professionally. Thanks to the Action we have a lot of knowledge and we designed an efficient policy for handling bullying.</p> <p>-All we learn are handy in our work. This training taught us new and useful things.</p>

<p>design/develop policy Views on anti-bullying activities/ developed school policy and action plan</p> <p>-students, teachers and parents contributed to the products</p> <p>-reached positive results in its implementation</p>	<p>-We have recommended to the team who was first trained to organize some training seminars for all teachers to receive the information and to learn to offer the appropriate support.</p> <p>-Many things changed due to the training- learnt about the concept, the way to handle it and how to prevent it or how to rehabilitate students who have bullied or experience bullying, raised awareness and trained how to solve cases thanks to policy.</p> <p>-Policy was communicated by AB team who organized informative sessions about the policy and intervention. (<i>Teachers in Lezha</i>)</p> <p>- Training was effective and would recommend it to other staff. Bullying was separated from violence. Students now can identify and report it in the AB box and teachers know it better too. It helped us understand the phenomenon and for designing in school.</p> <p>-We had talked about bullying before but not with this term. After the training we know the phenomenon better and how to handle it.</p> <p>-At the beginning about 10 members of staff was trained and then these 10 trained all the rest. "Teachers have become aware and they can understand students, and this completes the position of the teacher." (<i>Teachers in Tirana</i>)</p> <p>-Training was useful and to be recommended to all teachers. More knowledgeable and able to manage and solve bullying cases in our school. We know how to support children and guide them to the most effective solutions. Better understanding from the parents.</p> <p>-The other teachers got the information through trainings that were organized by teachers, part of the AB team and during various activities that were organized in our school. (<i>Teachers in Vlora</i>)</p> <p>-A good and efficient plan in our school thanks to the dedication of all students, teachers and parents and policy being drafted included all.</p> <p>-The plan continues to be implemented and to function and thanks to the policy it has minimised</p>
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	<p>the cases of bullying.</p> <p>-The "AB" group functions well and there is a continuous effort to eliminate this phenomenon every day.</p> <p>This is also seen in the decline of the number of cases in our school. (<i>Teachers in Lezha</i>)</p> <p>-It is being implemented, in reporting and finding the way to handle cases. Something positive about the policy is that it follows a positive discipline and positive treatment for the victims, but also for the bullies because the bullies are also victims in themselves.</p> <p>-Inclusiveness is valuable. We received suggestions from staff, teachers, students and parents who were ready and reachable, and we have discussed them between us until we reached a final version. (<i>Teachers in Tirana</i>)</p>
<p>Involvement in AB school activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of all actors and at different levels in different activities -Activities raised awareness of all community -Activities reorganized school space -All teachers helped in accordance with their profession 	<p>"It is a good action plan because it plays a role in preventing bullying behaviour. It is being implemented and it is very efficient. Groups during parents' meetings, discussion with the children, outside classroom programme, etc, make it possible to identify cases." (<i>Teachers in Vlora</i>)</p> <p>-We were all involved, there was quality, some challenges but successful in the end. (<i>Teachers in Korça</i>)</p> <p>-School undertook a variety of activities to raise awareness, in which we have been involved, the AB team and other teachers, psychologist, have taken part.</p> <p>Activities important for the school and for the community, because other actors have taken part, from local institutions, teachers from other schools, students and parents.</p> <p>-Activities have been given special attention from all and as a result there is an evident improvement related to this phenomenon.</p> <p>-Strong messages for sensibilization have been given during activities. (<i>Teachers in Lezha</i>)</p>

	<p>-Involvement of all was important because to come up with a policy we need to receive everyone's ideas and suggestions, and a policy is implemented by those who designed it. This policy is a product of teachers, students, parents and director, so it will be effective.</p> <p>-Creation of a map for Hot zones (toilet, playground, garden) a product from the monitoring team which were boys and girls. This team was one of the strong points in this plan. One representative in all classes who acted as our "right hand"-difficult to do it on your own, but together results were positive.</p> <p><i>"During open days, all head teachers have contributing in providing materials, designing material that discuss bullying. The spirit of cooperation spread. This means collaborating with the IT teacher for getting and selecting information. With the English teacher to get information in English. With maths teacher to draw statistics. With professor of Drawing and Literature, etc to produce the products for the students. We made crafts with embroidery with beads. On the day against bullying we made a great poster. (Teachers in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Involved as a trainer and as active participant in activities that are organized by the school (expositions, competitions on creative work on this topic). All the staff has been part of the process. It was effective due to the participation of all. <i>(Teachers in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Challenges faced in implementing the action</p> <p>-cooperation with parents</p> <p>-cooperation with other schools</p>	<p>-Difficulty to work with parents and cooperate with other schools, but we handled it with success. <i>(Teachers in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Difficulties in providing facilities for organizing planned activities, in providing basic material, the CoE supported us, but we had problems to provide sound, projectors, etc. Despite challenges we organized good and valuable activities. <i>(Teachers in Lezha)</i></p> <p>- Children have energy and can be engaged.</p>

<p>-facing cyberbullying</p>	<p>With parents it is not possible. We have had to contact parents a few times via telephone or letters, informing them about their children. Most of them do not know what bullying is. But it is understandable as we are also parents and to go somewhere, we would need job permission. Also reaching out to the community.</p> <p>- Challenges in understanding cyberbullying because it is a hidden and difficult to be detected. <i>(Teachers in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Organizing training with all beneficiary groups as the idea was to train the staff. Coordination of all groups of interest. We hoped for more parent participation. Communicating with them is part of our everyday job. Every link needs to be functional to have effective results. <i>(Teachers in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Effective role of the mentors/ experts</p> <p>-role effective and cooperation efficient</p> <p>-beneficial and functional</p>	<p>-Mentor was necessary and it worked well in our school. <i>(Teachers in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Mentoring worked well because it was a positive promoter and very productive in implementing the action. The mentor was like a leader who understood us and supported us. <i>(Teachers in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-The cooperation was efficient, we communicated well and achieved a positive result, because the mentor supported us to identify cases, what we had to do and what we could achieve. <i>(Teachers in Tirana)</i></p> <p>- The role of the mentor was beneficial and functional. When school would contact the expert was present, frequent communication with him was valuable. His experience was effective, cooperative and punctual. <i>(Teachers in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Positive perceived changes and Lessons Learnt</p>	<p>-Changes in the way we as teachers think and understand the phenomenon. We received the right information on bullying. We now have a policy with concrete actions. Behaviour of students is improved. They speak freely and identify cases. <i>(Teachers in Korça)</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -changes in understanding and thinking over bullying -changes in students' behaviours -cases towards elimination -improved relationships -entrusted role towards students -parents involved in activities -students identify cases and understand its impact 	<p>-Many changes in our school, starting from understanding the term Bullying, how it occurs, what are the consequences and what policies we need to undertake to minimize the phenomenon. "Thanks to the action today we have trained teachers to handle bullying, we have the right mechanisms to identify and to handle the cases in our school. Awareness is raised in students, teachers and parents simultaneously. We have a concrete action plan and relevant training, things that we did not have before. Above all, our school now is quieter, and cases of bullying are towards complete elimination." (<i>Teachers in Lezha</i>)</p> <p>-A lot has been done, a lot of activities, researching cases, all was very important because raising awareness is very important. Because one needs to feel the power from within to be able to understand and report. We now understand where we stand and what we need to do.</p> <p>-Reduction of the phenomenon. What helped students is that they know how to differentiate bullying from violence. They are sensible towards bullying, they understand causes and consequences, know how to report and help. Parents also know more on bullying.</p> <p>-Cyberbullying remains a problem because they all have phones in their hands and are intimidated to report. Different VIP are sharing messages for protecting children. Most important is to talk to the children. (<i>Teachers in Tirana</i>)</p> <p>-Changes in terms of relationship between students, the relationship between students and teacher and a good cooperation with the parents. Assignment of duties made it possible to share responsibilities. When shared responsibility and effectiveness in solving the problems are increased. (<i>Teachers in Vlora</i>)</p>
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<p>Positive attitudes towards continuation of AB activities after the end of the action</p> <p>-policy, activities, bullying as part of curriculum, Anti-bullying Day</p> <p>-willingness to continue with new activities</p>	<p>-The developed policy remains in the school and activities organized by the teachers and students on National Bullying day will always continue. -It must be spread to other schools. (<i>Teachers in Korça</i>)</p> <p>-Despite the continuation of the action, activities will continue because our school has reviewed this phenomenon well and we have placed the terminology on the long-term planning and curriculum. We will have activities on the National Anti-Bullying day. It is part of our pillars for developing our school as an important element that always needs to be exercised carefully and monitored better to make it possible to eliminate this harmful phenomenon. (<i>Teachers in Lezha</i>)</p> <p>-We have continued our activities beyond activities on the National Day, or Open days. We work continuedly and we put up every new work that is produced. We are thinking of continuing another action, publishing a book with all the work students have produced. We have the materials, but it is down to funding. (<i>Teachers in Tirana</i>)</p> <p>- We think they will continue. Cooperation and Exchange of this experience with other school would be efficient. Organizing competitions amongst school of similar level, the organization of work groups, mutual creative work and others. (<i>Teachers in Vlora</i>)</p>
<p>Challenges for continuation</p> <p>-need for increased number of staff</p> <p>-need of funding for continuation</p>	<p>-There is a need for increasing staff, like social workers and school psychologists because they are main actors in identifying the phenomenon; School needs materials and financial support to organise activities. (<i>Teachers in Korça</i>)</p> <p>-We lack facilities to organize activities that raise awareness; Lack of budget for organization and providing basic materials, like projector, sound or big monitor and other materials.</p>

<p>of activities -shown effort to get information from external source in fighting bullying.</p>	<p>Every necessary cost we as teachers and parents try to cover it voluntarily. <i>(Teachers in Lezha)</i></p> <p>“Three of our students go to CRCA and are engaged in cyberbullying and they will train other students, this will bring about some difficulties. In the internet you cannot stop it, but something can be done, talk to the students to try and prevent it. When message is transferred from student to student it makes it all more sensible. We work a lot in teams during class and this makes it easier for bullying as it breaks the ice of communication. If they do not get involved in class activities, there is something that needs exploring there.” <i>(Teachers in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-For basic materials, funding, directed methodology, support from the directors and parents. <i>(Teachers in Vlora)</i></p>
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Teachers’ extracts showed their thorough understanding of the action’s objectives. Their experience with its implementation was defined as beneficial, useful and successful. Appreciative of the action, they revealed that their awareness as to what bullying was raised and they better comprehended its causes and consequences, the way it manifested itself, and preventive measures to be taken. More so, teachers valued the received training as it increased their capacity, helped them design/develop their own school policy, action plan and AB school team. In finalizing the products teachers had involved students and parents, making the process inclusive. In addition, teachers understood the importance of raising awareness through anti-bullying activities, in organizing school space, in preparing and organizing activities, the role of engaging different social actors and other schools in the process as well as the effect it had in attendance by stakeholders and media coverage.

Teachers perceived several positive changes and reflected on a few lessons learnt throughout the process of implementation.

They depicted changes in how they approached bullying, changes in students' behaviour, in improved relationships and entrusted roles towards students, in students' capability to identify and report cases, in parents' involvement, all resulting in minimization, or elimination of bullying in their schools.

■ In addition, teachers claimed that there were challenges faced during implementation. In specific they reflected on collaboration with parents, cooperation with other schools and tackling cyber-bullying as actions which they found uneasy. In addition, when they reflected on the continuation of the activities after the end of the action, teachers showed willingness to continue with some of the activities, organize new activities and already had made efforts to find external sources to support continuation. However, they emphasized there unless the need for funding allocated towards fighting bullying in schools and the need to increase number of staff (i.e. psychologists or social workers would be fulfilled, continuation would bring more challenges).

4.2.3 Parents' views on the impact of action

■ This subsection describes the thematic units originating from Focus groups with Parents, participants from beneficiary schools piloted as case study. As part of the implementation of the action in their children's school, parents were invited to share their views on it. In specific, they reflected on these topics:

- objectives of the action;
- the effect of the action;
- AB school activities;
- impact of the action in their children's school and lessons learnt;

■ The analysis showed a few themes and subthemes. The themes that were more common across the group, indicate the

reflected topics. The importance of these themes was evident as they were expressed by most parents. In the subsequent tables, each of the emerging themes will be defined accompanied by summarizing statement from the coded extracts. Occasionally, they will be illustrated with a full extract. The tables will be followed by a general summary.

Table 15: Parents' accounts on the impact of the Action

Core themes/ Subthemes	Coded extracts from the Focus Groups with Parents by School
<p>Understanding the objectives of the action</p> <p>-how parents made sense of the objectives</p>	<p>-To be inform about bullying as a concept, what it is and how it can be prevented. <i>(Parents in Korça)</i></p> <p>-To be informed about bullying as a phenomenon, sensibilization and offering solution to cases and rehabilitation of cases or students who practice bullying or have been bullied.</p> <p>-Before we knew with the term "tallje" (tease) and not aware it was bullying. Knowing about it can help us protect our children.</p> <p>-To raise awareness on the phenomenon and its consequences on the children.</p> <p>-Gathering all students, parents and teacher to give solution and eliminate this negative phenomenon. <i>(Parents in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-To minimize, eliminate and fight bullying. <i>(Parents in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Awareness of the benefits of the action</p> <p>-action as beneficial for all</p>	<p>- Beneficial to us and our children because we did not know what bullying was. <i>(Parents in Korça)</i></p> <p>-An important action. Now we know what it is and how our children should be protected and feel safe at school. <i>(Parents in Lezha)</i></p>

<p>-more informed about the phenomenon -children feel protected and safe at school -encouraged teacher-parents communication</p>	<p>-Beneficial for the social effect on children, who should integrate and for us who should raise a nonviolent generation (<i>Parents in Tirana</i>)</p> <p>- Frequent meetings with teacher, keeping us posted about these phenomena make us stay in coherence with what happens to our children. (<i>Parents in Vlora</i>)</p>
<p>Involvement in and views on AB school activities and views</p> <p>-self-involvement in sharing ideas</p> <p>-frequent contact with teacher</p> <p>-parent-child discussion on the topic</p> <p>-working hours forbidding active involvement</p>	<p>-As parents we were involved in school activities, in developing the policy, our opinions were asked, and we understood that sometimes our behaviour at home is bullying. My daughter also presented different works and posters. We feel informed about what school organizes. Activities were organized in 2017 from what I remember. The action was very important for the school and children who learnt a lot of new things. It is reflected in their discussions, open days, ... (<i>Parents in Korça</i>)</p> <p>-Contribution in organizing activities and participation in all activities. Benefits can be viewed. School has developed an action plan and at times, the team and parents gather for taking actions towards those who bully. <i>"I am part of AB team and have given my contribution in activities."</i> (<i>Parents in Lezha</i>)</p> <p>-We have followed the activities and been present whenever school notifies us. (<i>Parents in Tirana</i>)</p> <p>-Active in discussions in 2017, whereas in 2018, due to work, I was notified by the teacher about the AB policy.</p> <p>-Engaged in sensibilisation meetings and do a good job in discussing with the children so we can also identify problems. Communicating with the children and with teachers we can prevent bullying ... (<i>Parents in Vlora</i>)</p>

<p>Positive changes and Lessons Learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -coming into terms with an unknown phenomenon -better comprehension of what children go through -children speak freely -raised awareness on consequences that it brings -comparing self then and child now to make sense of bullying -enforced communication with children and teachers -feeling part of the solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Children’s behaviour changed, speak freely and correct us too. Understand what bullying is, we have not heard of it before. (Parents in Korça) -Unknown concept for us and we lacked understanding why children did not feel well at school or laced performance. Now we know how damaging it is and know where to go for help, to the teachers or the AB teams. - Know more on how bullying is manifested and what negative impact it has on children. (Parents in Lezha) -Anytime school organizes programmes it is positive for the children, as they get to know about the cases (they might know of them, but they are informed with concrete cases. When children come back from school, they say what has happened. I can speak it in my daughter and I appreciate this change. They work in a team and they feel useful for this. “I remember being a student myself and back then I used to give different reasons for not going to school. Now I see something different-my daughter is happy and goes to school with pleasure/...We should respect and accept all with all the values and differences that one has, despite how special they are.” [This parent shares how when she was little, she has felt bullied. Her mother would cut her hair and she did not always look nice. When she would go to school, her friends would make fun of her.] “We want that this collaboration continues (with organisations such as EU, CoE), because doing a action does not mean we are done with the problem, because new children come to the school and they need to be educated on these topics.” (Parents in Tirana)
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	<p>-Feeling of peace that children can identify this problem themselves and they can discuss it with teacher without feeling prejudged.</p> <p>-Communication is more open now and it is the best way to identify problems.</p> <p>-Being part of the community involved in this action and engaging in open discussions on faced problems and children's performance is what I like.</p> <p>"I learnt what a parent needs to know-types of bullying, verbal, social, physical, psychological, race, sexual and the one on the internet (cyberbullying). Identification of cases by students, teachers, parents- talking about it we feel collaborators in preventing bullying towards our children". (<i>Parents in Vlora</i>)</p>
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Analysis of Focus groups with parents show that the implemented action has also influenced the parents of students of BSCS. Parents also became aware of bullying as a phenomenon, came into terms with the concept, viewed the action as beneficial for all, emphasized that their children felt more protected and safer at school and that it had encouraged teacher-parents communication.

Further, parents were also involved in sharing ideas, helping their children with developing materials, however, late working hours had not allowed them more time to be actively engaged in activities. Parents expressed that the action had increased their communication with their children and encouraged frequent contact with the teachers.

When parents reflected on the lessons learnt, they expressed that the action had a positive effect on understanding what children go through when faced with bullying, children speak freely about the phenomenon, enforced communication between teachers and children and that as parents they felt part of the solution.

4.2.4 Directors' views on the impact of the action

■ This subsection describes the thematic units originating from Interviews with the Directors, participants from beneficiary schools piloted as case study. Directors were invited to share their views on the Council of Europe action "Fighting Bullying and Extremism in the Education System in Albania". In specific, they reflected on these topics:

- objectives of the action;
- views on the action;
- the effect of training on them and their staff;
- views on the developed school policy and action plan;
- involvement in AB school activities;
- challenges faced in implementing the action;
- the role of the mentors/experts supporting the action in their school;
- impact of the action in their school and lessons learnt;
- attitudes towards continuation of AB after the end of the action and the challenges for continuation of all activities.

■ The analysis showed a few themes and subthemes. The themes that were more common across the group, indicate the reflected topics. The importance of these themes was evident as they were expressed by all participants. In the subsequent table, each of the emerging themes will be defined accompanied by summarizing statement from the coded extracts. Occasionally, themes will be illustrated with a full extract. The table will be followed by a general summary.

Table 16: Directors' accounts on the impact of the Action

Core themes/ Subthemes	Coded extracts from the Focus Groups with Directors by school
<p>Understanding the objectives of the action</p>	<p>-To find tools and measures to prevent bullying as a phenomenon; Informing parents, students, the community with the concept because it was not known as a concept before from us and teachers, let alone parents and students; Short-term and long-term consequences of this phenomenon. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>-To find effective measure to fight bullying and extremism in the education system in Albania in line with CoE standards; To support relevant institutions to create safe learning environment through fighting bullying and extremism; Enhance the educational skills of professionals by increasing knowledge and competences on how prevention can be done, how to deal with cases of bullying and extremism. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Differentiating between violence and bullying was beneficial. The school knew the phenomenon but not with this concept. Beneficial that we were part of this initiative, with an impact in the school and in the community. <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p><i>"Main objective was to increase efficiency in fighting against bullying and extremism. Our participation was inclusive and effective."</i> <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Awareness of the benefits of the action</p> <p>-action as beneficial, useful and successful</p>	<p><i>"At the beginning we were sceptical about the action... this was because we did not accept that this phenomenon was present in our school, outside school or in our families. Sceptical about the action at first, questioning ourselves as to why we agreed."</i></p> <p>-The action was beneficial because we all learnt how to deal with it and minimize it. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p>

<p>-more informed about the phenomenon and raised awareness to those who thought bullying did not exist in their environment</p> <p>-the input is reflected in students' attendance</p> <p>-more informed about its causes, consequences and intervention</p>	<p>-Beneficial and successful because today our school does not have a case of bullying. Students, teachers, parents of our school offer their impact in society in relation to this phenomenon. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Beneficial and successful. Before we lacked information on how to handle the student who bully and the one who is bullied and there were problems. Now we know it. The way we work with them is accurate.</p> <p><i>"Students had quitted school because they felt bad; with our input, they have returned."</i> <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Useful in formalization and standardization of actions and attitudes; Addresses a widespread problem for us us, in our institutional and family roles. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Positive effect of training</p> <p>-understanding the concept in a different dimension</p> <p>-brought about capability and sensibility towards cases</p> <p>-changes in the self</p>	<p>-Acted as leader, the whole staff of teachers and preschool education were trained. Teachers grew in their knowledge and capacities, understand how to draw a line between violence and bullying behaviour, differentiate the phenomenon and know how to manage in the best way. <i>(Director in Korça)</i>.</p> <p>-We knew of bullying a bit before but specific training for steps that should take to eliminate this phenomenon are very important and necessary for us all. We have recommended it and training was organized for all staff.</p> <p>-Thanks to training a lot of changes occurred because we, students-teacher-parents, became more capable, sensible and persistent. The training was important as they (the staff) know to identify a case and are trained how to deal with it. This phenomenon should not happen in our school anymore! <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p><i>"The first 10 teachers were trained and then trained the rest of the teachers. This has had an impact in my personal performance and the performance of the team."</i></p>

	<p>-We identified the cases anonymously. Cases were reported in the box which we checked weekly. As we gained experience, we were able to engage problematic students into activities, because we are community centre schools. <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Due to work overload, I was not part of the training, but a considerable number of teachers were involved in the training. I think it was beneficial in terms of improving communication and collaboration. I value what has been done until now. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Views on anti-bullying activities/ developed school policy and action plan</p> <p>-effective policy</p> <p>-first experience of designing and developing own policy</p> <p>-policy lead to actions</p> <p>-policy lead of AB teams and clubs</p> <p>-Everyone's roles are well defined in the action plan</p>	<p>-AB policy and action plan were designed for the first time in our school which was then followed by concrete activities (round tables, activities during open days). The process involved teachers, parents, students and representative from RED. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p><i>"I am thinking that this is an anti-bullying policy of a high level because the implementation is giving good results in relation to the phenomenon, every day more."</i> <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-We have worked hard with the policy-it was the first time. It was difficult but we had the support from the action. Parents were impressed by it. We tried to involve all of the parents, but not everyone came. The number of intellectual parents who could share their thoughts is small.</p> <p><i>"When school starts, we distribute questionnaires which we design ourselves to identify the case, why it happens. Based on the findings we organize different class and school activities..."</i></p> <p>-We discuss bullying in debate clubs. We have a monitoring team of students in school, which is composed by good students and those who are a bit aggressive- engaging them has been good. Students monitor where bullying is occurring, because we are not everywhere at the same time. <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p>

	<p>-Our school has its own action plan which is effective where roles are defined for leaders, teachers, students, parents. We engage in frequent discussion about cases and how to solve them. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Involvement in AB school activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of all actors and at different levels in different activities -school premises give AB messages -Presentation of own activities in other schools -planning for future activities in advance Challenges faced in implementing the action -cooperation with parents -engaging fathers 	<p>-We were the first school in the region to implement the action. It was new to us all. I was involved, the quality was good, we achieve what we expected. The impact in our school scored good results. The action involved all, staff, students, parents. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Involved as a Director, and as a member of AB team in the school. Activities were important-a powerful sensibilization for many components, learning process, and for student, teacher and parent.</p> <p>-After meeting was over, other meetings with teachers, students' government and parents' committee took place for generating ideas and discussions from all groups, which then contributed to develop the policy. Policy was made known to all. The message <i>"Stop bullying- Together for safe schools"</i> is posted in our school corner. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Extraordinary activities. Participated in both open days and organized activities for all the community, other schools, private and public. In one school, we went to present the best parts of our activities. Students enjoy them. Important and they should continue. We start thinking of bullying day from September." <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-AB team organized many activities. Students and teachers were engaged in activities like aerobics, marathon, popular games, competitions, essay writing and we made November 21 a special day for raising awareness of all and for the importance of fighting against bullying and education of the moral values of inclusiveness. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p> <p>-This process was innovative, but it had its own challenges. Cooperation with parents was not easy as they could not accept the phenomenon. Their</p>

	<p>mentality to accept and for students to break that ice and communicate cases, to differentiate between violence and bullying. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Most difficult was lack of facilities in school for preparation and presenting stages of the action. We had support from CoE in providing materials but it was difficult to provide other necessary equipment such as sound, projector and other materials. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Most difficult was to attract the community of parents on the level we want. For this we organized meetings with mothers outside school for them to feel comfortable. One was on violence against women and the other on family planning. More difficult to engage fathers-they are present when their children face problems. <i>"When I presented the annual plan along with AB policy, parents came and were active. Parents have started to talk more about the problems of their children. Before they would only go to the class teachers, now they come to me and the psychologist."</i> <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-A wider participation of parents, to increase their representation. Communication with them is part of a continuous effort that school does and the more of active they are the more successful this process is. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Effective role of the mentors/ expert</p> <p>-useful, beneficial, present physically and frequent communication</p>	<p>-The expert supported in developing the policy, preparing for activities, gave his expertise – the policy was innovative for us. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>-Guidance from a mentor was paramount for a successful organization of the activities. Despite our dedication and interest, we remain in the capacity of actors who without the scripts we cannot succeed. Cooperation with the mentor was functional and useful and it resulted in meeting the objectives of the action successfully. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p>

	<p>-It was useful, present in the school whenever we need him and non-stop exchange of communication. <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Communication with him was beneficial, his experience was effective and always open. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
<p>Positive perceived changes and Lessons Learnt</p> <p>-increased staff capacity</p> <p>-joined different groups of interest</p> <p>-wide sensibilization</p> <p>-full comprehension of the phenomenon</p> <p>-minimization of bullying</p> <p>-shift in how students see themselves in relation to bullying</p>	<p>-Increase of the capacity for all teaching staff; We learned how to differentiate bullying, how to minimize it; Even primary school children, if they were asked questions about bullying, they would respond; Developing the policy was an achievement. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>- A lot of changes in our school- We had the best performance at county, perhaps even at national, level for the educational activities during AB open days; Activities were widely attended by participation of different actors, community, local government representatives, teachers and students from other schools.</p> <p>-Sensibilization was best and widespread.</p> <p>-Knowing the phenomenon, following and resolving cases is done in a very successful way.</p> <p>-Most important, there is almost no bullying in our environment today. Our primary objective <i>"To develop a person as a decent and successful member of the family today and in the future."</i> <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-A lot of change-we expect more. Minimization of bullying is important no matter how much is decreased. Engaging students with the problem lead to decrease of it. They used to say, "I am strong", now they say, "I am strong to protect others." <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>"What I value most is the functioning of the mechanism for the fight against bullying, with well-defined roles... enabling everyone to take on their responsibilities and duties." <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>

<p>Positive attitudes towards continuation of AB activities after the end of the action</p> <p>-AB activities already included in school annual program</p> <p>-Good will to continue</p> <p>Challenges for continuation</p> <p>-support from institutions</p> <p>-lack of materials and facilities</p>	<p>- Activities will continue after the end of the action; The developed policy is approved by RED, but also the National Day of Bullying, the school will organize activities based on the plan of activities. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>-We will continue with activities because topics related to bullying, we have merged them in our annual school plan. Activities are in class and school level during the National Day of Bullying. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Questionnaires will be distributed each year, open days. The topic will be merged in different school activities. <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Activities will be spread throughout school year, during open days and November 21st. They will be massive but also during organized debates on the cases that have been treated, making it clear that problems should not be left silent. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p> <p>-In need of support from local government during activities like we did during the big marching we did in the city where other schools joined; In need for collaboration, materials and equipment for activities, a budget for us in rural areas because parents' board does not have enough finances. <i>(Director in Korça)</i></p> <p>- Two main difficulties: lacking facilities in our school for activities, and even for the learning process; and lack of a budget because the needs of the school are covered by voluntary contribution of the parents and teachers of this school. Lack of basic materials, equipment like sound, projectors, which are important to organize activities of any kind. <i>(Director in Lezha)</i></p> <p>-Difficulty in finding basic material which the action guaranteed it for us. The ideas from the students are extraordinary. <i>(Director in Tirana)</i></p> <p>-Support and agreeableness from all relevant local institutions, in fighting the phenomenon, in raising awareness, preventing it and finding solution for the identified cases. <i>(Director in Vlora)</i></p>
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— Directors viewed the implementation of the action as an initiative that had not happened in their schools before. They evaluated the action as beneficial, useful and successful. Anti-bullying school policy was viewed as effective. They claimed that due to the action they were more informed about the phenomenon, that it had increased staff capacity, and the implementation brought about raised awareness and sensitivity towards solution of cases. In addition, students' attendance increased (i.e. students facing bullying started attending classes more, feeling at ease and not under pressure), and they became more aware of the causes and consequences of bullying. Anti-bullying activities were evaluated as important, and they were included in school annual programme, promising continuation. At last, directors expressed their good will to continue activities with the effort to minimize bullying and expressed the need for support from institutions with regards to provision of materials and facilities, which could prevent sustainability of good practice learnt from the action.

4.2.5 Triangulating views

— Section 4 presents a case study conducted in four schools, beneficiary of the implemented action, exploring the views of school staff (teachers, directors) triangulated with those of students and parents (Figure 3).

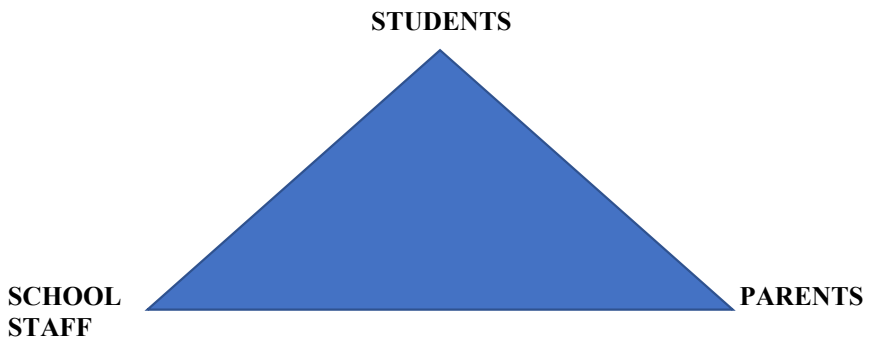


Figure 3: Triangulation of main social actors in schools

■ The aim of the case study was to triangulate their views, how they attributed changes to the action, whether they perceived the action as effective and efficient and how they evaluated the impact and sustainability of the action. As shown from the extracts of each group, the action was viewed as an initiative with well-defined objectives and stages. The initiative raised the capacity of teachers, who then were capable of training other teachers. School staff started the work on designing school policy and action plan. In the process of finalizing the policy school staff had engaged students and their parents to give ideas. School created various good practices in order to inform actors, raise their awareness, involve them, organize activities, identify and report cases, all the way to offering solutions and support, which resulted in minimization of cases.

■ Beneficial in this action was that all actors played an important role and the action was believed to have modelled inclusiveness. All their efforts had brought about change, in their thoughts, in behaviours, in approaching social phenomena, in building communication and in improved relationship between actors. It had also brought about change in better understanding the phenomenon, its causes and consequences, and more so, in speaking freely and contributing to solving cases.

■ School incorporated anti-bullying activities in school curriculum, established AB teams, organized the physical space and engaged staff, students, parents and community during events, with high coverage from local and national media. To conclude, participants confirmed their willingness to continue with AB activities and expressed needs that would need fulfilling, such as their needs for financial support, provision of materials and facilities, and increase in human resources, all towards a successful continuation of fighting against bullying in schools.

4.3. Analysis of Focus Groups- Mentors, Project Staff, Steering Committee

■ Mentors, Project Staff (PS) and Steering Committee (SC) were invited to evaluate the action from their perspectives. With each group, qualitative methods were utilized to measure the impact of the action, its effectiveness, efficiency and its sustainability

4.3.1 Mentors' views on the impact of the action

■ Mentors reflected on the impact of the actions in the schools they were involved. Under each theme, their summarised comments are listed:

1. Views on the impact of the action

- a. Schools had the chance to specifically focus on bullying,
- b. Schools for the first time designed and developed own policy in stages, and created a reference point,
- c. A collaborative climate was established in schools,
- d. Teachers were introduced and redefined the concept,

2. Views on the training programme they offered, whether it was beneficial and to be recommended;

- a. Module was created and trained teachers for the first time,
- b. Teachers were introduced to bullying,
- c. Module is effective and can be used again.

3. Views on the developed school policy and action plan, their implementation and impact on schools;

- a. First time for teachers to engage in developing policy and action plan,
- b. Quality in the designed products,
- c. Integration of action plan with school plan means continuity,
- d. Teachers involved students and parents in this process,

4. Views on the continuation of developed school policy and action plan;

- a. Days in the school were limited but from all the contacts it they are being implemented,
- b. Implementation could be part of the monitoring process from the ministry and this way it can guarantee implementation for the future,
- c. Continuous support would be a necessity,

5. Their involvement in anti-bullying school activities and their evaluation on its importance;

- a. Activities were important,
- b. Schools determined to organize activities even when weather was not in their favour,

6. Views on the challenges faced in implementing;

- a. Challenge in keeping the AB team constantly occupied so that information was shared to all teachers,
- b. No clear mechanism to measure how the information was shared,
- c. Not all teachers received certificates, the ones who did felt more motivated,
- d. Process is complex and requires for everyone to be part of implementation
- e. Media was present in projecting activities,
- f. Experts should have been more involved due to schools lacking experience,
- g. Timeline of action made it difficult to keep teachers motivated.

7. Views on the changes related to bullying in schools as a result of the implementation;

- a. Increased staff capacity,

- b. Increased level of awareness of staff on bullying,
 - c. Teachers share cases of change in behaviour of students,
 - d. More cases are being reported,
 - e. Referral policy has impacted in reporting cases,
 - f. School climate changed to being positive and revived,
 - g. School became more open,
 - h. Decline in number of cases,
 - i. Reinforced collaboration between school teams and between teachers,
 - j. Improved communication with students,
 - k. Strengthening of the role of psychologist/social worker,
 - l. Teaching technique were revised due to training.
- 8.** Views on their participation in the process and whether school could implement a similar action without external support;
- a. First action that had in focus teachers,
 - b. Participation was beneficial,
 - c. Continuation of training would not be easy without external expertise,
 - d. Designing and developing policy was one of the biggest challenges for schools and they would be difficult to be done without support,
 - e. Not convinced that schools would have organized activities without support,
- 9.** Views on continuation of anti-bullying activities after the action is finished;
- a. Trained teachers will continue to contribute,
 - b. Policy, a necessity to continue,
 - c. Schools enthusiastic to continue activities,

10. Views on the needs of the school to continue all anti-bullying activities;

- a. Activities in raising awareness,
- b. Meetings with parents and students,
- c. Open hours during class,
- d. Open days,
- e. Schools need mentoring, not monitoring,
- f. Schools need basic materials, papers, sources.
- g. The action should continue more in depth,
- h. Infrastructure and continuous investment in coherence with external expertise

Summary

■ Mentors acted as mediators in implementing the action. Thus, their views contribute towards a better picture on the impact of the action. When they reflected on the impact of the action on schools, mentors stated that the initiative gave schools the chance to exclusively focus on bullying exploring its meaning, causes and consequences. It also supported schools to develop its own AB policy, creating a reference point, encouraged collaboration. Further, they spoke highly of the quality of the modules used for training, a product which they thought had equipped teachers with knowledge and skills and that it could be used in the future.

■ In addition, mentors reflected on their participation in the process and whether schools could have implemented a similar action without external support. They viewed participation as beneficial because continuation of training would not have been easy without external expertise. The process of developing policy, they claimed, was one of the biggest challenges for schools. Even though schools were engaged in this action, mentors believed that their role accompanying schools in this process was a necessity.

Furthermore, when asked about the school policy and action plan and how they were being implemented in schools, mentors confirmed that the experience was a first for the teachers, that teachers involved students and parents to finalize the products and that products were of high quality because the school included them in its annual plan, as an act towards continuation of the practice. As witnessed during activities, they confirmed that activities were important for schools and schools were determined to organize several raising awareness activities. For guarantying continuation in implementing policy, mentors suggested that one way could be that the policy becomes part of the monitoring process from the Ministry.

As experts, they also reflect on the changes related to bullying in the schools. They emphasized these changes amongst many: increased staff capacity, increased level of awareness, changes in students' behaviour, the impact of referral policy in reporting cases, change in school climate, reinforced collaboration between school teams, improved communication with students, empowerment of role of psychologist/social worker and revised teaching techniques due to training.

In addition, mentors talked about perceived challenges during implementation, such as challenge in keeping the AB teams constantly occupied, timeline of the action in relation to keeping teachers motivated, no clear mechanism in measuring how AB team shared information to other teachers, in engaging all actors in a complex process as well as the timeline of the action and the short time allocated to mentors with the school, all bringing about some faced difficulties.

Finally, mentors were asked to reflect on activities that schools were to continue after the end of the action. They stated: activities in raising awareness, meetings with parents and students, open hours during class as well as open days. As for the needs that schools might have for continuation, they listed the need for basic materials, infrastructure, investment in coherence with external expertise.

4.3.2 Project staff's views on the impact of the action

■ Project staff (PS) participating in the focus group shared their views on the impact of the action. Under each theme, their summarised comments are listed:

- 1.** Extent to which objectives were met and benefit at national policy level;
 - a. Outcome overpassed initial objectives,
 - b. Piloting in 21 school resulted successful,
 - c. Policy to be integrated in national policy level and long-term strategy,
 - d. Ministry evaluates the intervention as good practice.
- 2.** Views on the rise of awareness on bullying due to the implementation;
 - a. Raised awareness at school, community and media coverage level,
 - b. Media designed TV programmes based on data from the National Study.
- 3.** Views on the developed support programme, whether CoE could use it again and recommend it to other countries;
 - a. Well-designed programme based on CoE standards supported by international, national and Ministerial experts,
 - b. Consultation at various levels,
 - c. Action plan followed in steps,
 - d. Other countries have expressed interest in the way programme was implemented in Albania.
- 4.** Views on the impact of the action on pilot schools;
 - a. Beneficial as informative in a context where bullying was not treated before,
 - b. A action filling a gap,

- c. Beneficial in increasing capacity and raising awareness,
 - d. Bullying is decreased,
 - e. Work climate improved,
 - f. Indirectly school is empowered as the policy is not a top-down product, but a product designed by actors in the school,
 - g. Collaboration between schools in different regions,
 - h. Encouraged peer learning,
 - i. Study visits in Norway and Portugal successful in exploring good practice,
 - j. Approach similar with international approach, particular in Portugal.
5. Views on changes regarding bullying in Albania due to the intervention;
- a. Awareness was raised,
 - b. Schools took concrete actions,
 - c. Schools created own good practices, adapted to their skills and opportunities,
 - d. Schools established own anti-bullying structures,
 - e. Referral system clear in the policy and action plan.
6. Views on the challenges in implementing the action;
- a. Action worked at various levels, input of RED could have been more participatory in some regions,
7. Views on the continuation of anti-bullying activities after the end of the action;
- a. National Day,
 - b. Schools' own initiatives,
 - c. Referral Box,

- d. Anti-bullying teams/leaders
- e. Network with other school.

8. Additional information

- a. Training module to be used as part of professional package for training other teachers,
- b. Massive public attention on the phenomenon, as there was already an increased attention to the theme globally too,
- c. Action applied positive discipline of children, and not punishment.

Summary

■ Project staff (PS) was invited to share their views on the impact of the action. Their reflection was of importance as they had been following the implementation in all steps. PS assessed the action as beneficial at National, RED and School level overpassing own objectives.

■ When they reflected on awareness, PS claimed that the awareness was raised not only on school and immediate community level, but through media coverage, the general public became more aware on an issue they knew little of. More so, the programme that was applied was based on CoE standards and its quality was unquestionable. Consultations with various levels was conducted prior to its implementation, schools designed their own policy which brought about quick actions. Other countries had shown interest in the applied programme.

■ As a result, other benefits could be listed due to the success of the intervention, such as the action filled a gap in a context where bullying was not covered before, it increased capacity and raised awareness of all actors, work climate improved, bullying cases decreased and school was empowered by designing and implementing own policy.

The action encouraged peer learning and positive discipline as opposed to punishment. It also increased collaboration with other schools. The successful implementation raised school capacity to the level of other European schools.

— Furthermore, PS also emphasized schools' input in developing own policy and action plan where anti-bullying structures and referral systems were clearly stated and defined. Schools' own policies were also acknowledged by MoESY as good practice and they were being discussed for integration in the national education strategies. PS appreciated the collaboration with MESY and schools and wished for more active participation of some RED offices.

— To finalize, requested to give their thoughts on activities which schools would undertake after the end of the action, PS listed: National Day, Schools' own products, Referral Box, Anti-bullying teams/leaders and Network with other schools. PS also claimed that one reason that could have contributed in a massive raised attention by general public was the fact that there was an increased attention to the theme globally. In ending their views, PS suggested that for teacher training to continue, it would be beneficial if the module could be integrated as part of their professional package.

4.3.3. Steering Committee's views on the impact of the action

— Steering Committee (SC), represented by Mirela Kondili, member of the Steering Committee, reflected on the impact of the actions in the beneficiary schools. Under each theme, their summarised comments are listed:

1. The extent that objectives of the action were met,
 - a. Fulfilled objectives starting from Roadmap,
 - b. Recommendation were given at Ministry, RED and school level,
 - c. Influential action for the 21 school which also benefited from two study visits in Norway and Portugal?

2. Understanding of the benefits of the action at national policy level;
 - a. First accomplishment was National day,
 - b. National policy will start soon along with a new national strategy,
 - c. Annual guidance to all schools will include bullying,
 - d. Experience of 21 school will be used in other schools,
 - e. Training module will be used by the Institute of Educational Development as accredited training.

3. Views on the rise of awareness on bullying due to the implementation;
 - a. First national study provided an impact on the general public,
 - b. National day was projected in the media,
 - c. General public was informed on present situation of bullying in schools.

4. Views on the impact of support programme on 21 pilot schools and whether this experience could be used at policy level;
 - a. The impact occurred - personal experience with school of child,
 - b. Activities in schools brought students to position themselves,
 - c. Information shared with students were understandable for their age.

5. Views on the continuation of anti-bullying activities after the end of the action,
 - a. National day,
 - b. In collaboration with CoE or other donors, and teachers who had had the training, training for other teachers will continue,
 - c. Activities listed in the guidance shared at the beginning of the year.

Summary

■ The Steering Committee (SC), composed by representatives of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the Institute for Educational Development and the State Inspectorate of Education followed the implementation of the action from the start. Their views on the process of implementation was crucial as they acted as monitoring body for the intervention in the 21 schools. Invited to reflect on the extent that the action met its objectives and whether the action had been beneficial for schools in Albania, SC revealed that the action had met its objectives as the action had accomplished the Road Map, offered recommendation at Ministry, RED and school level and benefited from schools abroad. According to SC, the action was beneficial because it set up the National Day, training module accredited by IED, experience from 21 schools would be useful for other schools. The benefit of the action could be also seen in that bullying will be included in the annual guidance to all schools and it will be part of the new national strategy that the Ministry is designing.

■ In addition, SC shared their views on the impact of the action relating to raised awareness. They emphasized the impact of the first National study on bullying and the National day projected in media, acting as awareness promoters on bullying to the general public. SC also reflected on the programme implemented in 21 schools. They emphasized the impact of the action through activities which encouraged students to position themselves in relation to bullying and that information they received was adapted to their age.

■ At last, SC confirmed that the good practice will continue. In specific, trained teachers will continue to train, the organization of the National Day and bullying as a topic to be included in the annual guidance that Ministry distributes to schools.

5. MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Going back to the objectives of the action

— This section attempts to bring together the aims of this impact study in the light of the initial joint EU/CoE action's objectives (Table 17). Evidence-based research was carried out to measure the impact of the action "*Fighting Bullying and Extremism in the Education System in Albania*". In this report, significant evidence has been provided to explore the three underlying aims of the study, by using mixed and multi-methods, conducting descriptive and in-depths thematic analysis, whereby emerging identified themes were coded and illustrated by extracts. The research process has provided reliable and valid results originating from the evidence to confirm directly the fulfilment of aims and indirectly shedding light to the fulfilment of the action's objectives.

— The implementation of action has *impacted* school actors and communities and awareness is raised at personal, social, institutional and societal level. Social actors rated the action as beneficial, effective and efficient. Along with raised awareness, *changes* were perceived and felt at personal, social and community level. This initiative is bound to remain *sustainable* because schools now are prepared to fight bullying with their own policies, structures and tools. Barriers that could come on the way include lack of funds and resources. Nevertheless, the study indicated that when all social actors come together, with some support, they can change the situation in schools. This good practice can be applied for working on other social phenomena present in the education system.

Going back to the objectives of this action, the study confirms that all objectives have been met. The action has acted as a supportive mechanism to create safe school environments through fighting bullying and extremism in the education system, it has strengthened capacities to deal with controversial issues, and surely, it has raised awareness of the consequences of bullying and extremism in the Albanian education system to the general public.

Table 17: An overview of the Action's objectives in the light of this study's aims

Aims of Follow-Up Study	Evidence from School staff	Evidence of Students and Parents	Evidence from Action Leads (M, PS & SC)	Overall Action Objectives
-to measure changes that can be attributed to the intervention of the joint EU/ CoE action;	YES	YES	YES	Support the relevant education institutions in creating safe school environments through fighting bullying and extremism in the education system
-to gather and analyse data about the effectiveness and efficiency of the action;	YES	YES	YES	Strengthen capacities of teachers and school administration to deal with controversial issues, bullying and extremism;
-to record the impact and sustainability of the action in the education system in Albania	YES	YES	YES	Raise awareness of the consequences of bullying and extremism in the education system for the general public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendations for national and central structures

■ School personnel, students, parents and community's interest and advocacy to fight against bullying provides the opportunity for policy makers to restructure their approach towards the future of the education system in Albania.

- First, it is recommended that legislation on pre-university education system to be reviewed entailing bullying as a present phenomenon in schools.
- Secondly, national and central structures to make efforts in allocating specific funding for schools in support of developing anti-bullying policy and organization of activities and events.
- Thirdly, national and central structures to increase the personnel, social workers and psychologists, working in schools for an ongoing socio-emotional support to students and staff.
- Fourthly, in collaboration with police directorate, policy makers should work to establish a protocol on countering cyberbullying among children.
- Fifth, policy makers are encouraged to move forward with the establishment of the position of the guardians in schools.
- At last, policy makers are recommended to reshape their evaluation of schools in the light of how they create a positive,

collaborative, safe and inclusive climate while maintaining what has already been achieved. In doing so, good practice and experience gained from this action ought to be extended to all schools in strengthening support for continuous school development.

2. Recommendations for schools

- First, all schools in Albania are recommended to determine their anti-bullying policy and action plan and continue to find way to incorporate the policy with their annual school programme. It is recommended that they evaluate anti-bullying work regularly.
- Secondly, schools need to have a clear protocol and referral system to deal with cases.
- Thirdly, schools must cooperate with each other in sharing good practice, experiences and continue to build staff capacity.
- Fourth, schools are recommended to audit bullying behaviour, entrench strategies in curriculum and organize physical space to enforce their work on bullying.
- Fifth, schools should continue to entrust key roles to students and more effort should be made in involving parents and the community.
- Sixth, schools should encourage reported cases by acknowledging that they are working on the case in order to increase accountability.
- Seventh, schools should practice an open-door policy to further encourage parent teacher collaboration and publish information that is understandable to parents and their children.

- Eights, schools which participated in the action must continue to build on their best significant outcome.
- Last, school staff are encouraged to lead their students by example in modelling tolerant, inclusive and trusted behaviour.

MORE INFORMATION

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