



# Anti-bullying Practices from the Repository of the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC)



*Employment,  
Social Affairs  
and Inclusion*

## Introduction

This document showcases a selection of practices from the online practice repository of the [European Platform for Investing in Children \(EPIC\)](#).<sup>1</sup> EPIC collects and disseminates innovative and evidence-based practices that have a positive impact on children and families in EU Member States to enable cross-regional learning. The practice repository currently hosts more than 200 practices that are aimed at addressing various issues on child and family policy across EU Member States.

The practices presented in this document centre on **anti-bullying**. By disseminating existing EPIC practices on this topic, this document aims to facilitate learning and inspire discussions on what can be done to prevent and/or address bullying amongst children.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the document draws only on practices that are published on the EPIC website and does not seek to address the question of how the information presented in this note compares to evidence that might be available elsewhere. Each practice included in this document has been reviewed by a team of experts according to our set evidence-review criteria, and summarised for dissemination beyond the research community.

The remainder of this document consists of the following sections:

- The first section provides a **brief overview of the issue of bullying**. This is followed by an introduction to the EPIC evaluation framework to understand how experts reviewed and assessed practices.
- The subsequent section provides a **review of practices across an evidence spectrum**, including evidence-based practices (EBP), practices that are promising and where evidence is still emerging, and practices that have either been found to be ineffective or are not (yet) supported by evidence, but that may inspire dialogue and discussion.
- This research note's final section provides a **brief overview of an evidence guide**: a starting point for policymakers who seek more information on how to use evidence to strengthen policies for investing in children.

## Bullying: A Brief Overview

### What is bullying?

There is no commonly agreed definition of 'bullying' used at the EU level.<sup>3</sup> The Council of Europe defines bullying as 'unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time'.<sup>4</sup> Bullying can take many forms. It can be a repetitive or prolonged form of teasing, and/or aggressive/violent behaviour against someone who wants this behaviour to stop, but who, for various reasons (including actual or perceived power dynamics), is unable to

prevent the behaviour from happening.<sup>5</sup> This research note relies on this definition.

It is common to differentiate between four different types of bullying:



'**Direct bullying**' usually takes place face-to-face, with the bully using physical assault and/or verbal insults.<sup>6</sup>



'**Indirect bullying**' takes the form of psychological or social aggression, which can include or cause the isolation or exclusion of the victims.<sup>7</sup> A common example of indirect bullying is spreading rumours or ignoring the targeted person.<sup>8</sup> Because of its less direct nature, indirect bullying can often be more difficult to address.



When a person experiences bullying because of factors including – but not limited to – race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and religion, it is commonly referred to as '**discriminatory bullying**'.<sup>9</sup>



Over the past years, children also increasingly experience bullying online.<sup>10</sup> '**Cyber-bullying**', the fourth type of bullying, is used to describe various acts of harassment, threats and harmful behaviour carried out between peers through the use of electronic media.<sup>11</sup> This may include disseminating videos, photographs and messages through social media, email and mobile phones with the aim of causing humiliation.<sup>12</sup>

Regardless of the type of bullying that takes place, the aim of bullying is always to cause distress to one – or more than one – other person, including 'harming, hurting, intimidating, humiliating, excluding, isolating, discriminating against or oppressing'.<sup>13</sup>

### What are the implications of bullying?

The consequences of bullying can be severe, both in the short- and long-term, with impacts that can be both physical and mental.<sup>14</sup> Studies have shown that children who experience bullying are at risk of struggling in school, which can affect their educational attainment.<sup>15</sup> These children are more likely to develop symptoms of low self-esteem, loneliness, anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation.<sup>16</sup> These consequences do not stop in adulthood: research has shown that adults who have experienced bullying as a child are more likely to experience mental health issues and relationship issues later in life.<sup>17</sup> In addition, due to the link between educational attainment and levels of income later in life, the economic impacts of bullying can be long-lasting.<sup>18</sup> There is also a relationship between the length and severity of the bullying (i.e. being bullied over an extended period of time compared to on one one-off occasions) and the extent of the impacts on the victim.<sup>19</sup>



Research has also shown that victims are not the only individuals to experience consequences from bullying: there are also impacts on the bullies themselves.<sup>20</sup> Children who bully have been shown to be at risk of developing substance abuse issues, anxiety and depression.<sup>21</sup> Because bullying often occurs in front of witnesses, bystanders might also experience effects<sup>22</sup> such as anxiety and fear, including fear of retaliation from the bully, which may also be one of the factors preventing bystanders from intervening and/or reporting.<sup>23</sup> In addition, children who are 'victim-bullies' (who have both been victims of bullying and have displayed bullying behaviour towards others) experience a range of negative impacts.

Accordingly, societal attitudes have changed and bullying is no longer regarded as a 'rite of passage' of childhood. Rather, this sentiment has been replaced by the understanding that bullying and its prevention constitutes a major public health issue.<sup>24</sup>

### How common is bullying?

Bullying takes place in all societies. Available data on its prevalence varies due to the different forms that bullying can take, which affects how it might be measured. However, as pointed out by Jansen et al. (2012), several studies show that bullying and victimisation are common in both primary and secondary schools.<sup>25</sup> A large cross-country research study conducted in 2009 showed that on average, 27% of children in secondary schools were involved in bullying in some form.<sup>26</sup> This amounted to approximately 13% of children who reported that they had been a victim of bullying, 11% who reported that they had bullied others, and 4% who reported that they had been a 'victim-bully'.<sup>27</sup>

### What interventions exist?

Given the prevalence and impacts of bullying amongst children, a range of interventions exist that aim to prevent or respond to victimisation and bullying behaviour.<sup>28</sup> Some interventions also focus on changing the attitudes or reactions of bystanders.<sup>29</sup> Many interventions are implemented in the school setting, and many have been found to work.<sup>30</sup> According to Menesini and Salmivalli (2017), the available evidence is not yet sufficient to determine what kind of

interventions work best and/or which parts are necessary for a successful intervention.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, not all programmes designed to prevent or reduce bullying have demonstrated positive outcomes or shown any effect on reduced bullying behaviour or reduced victimisation. For example, Menesini and Salmivalli's (2017) review of 32 studies on 24 bullying interventions concluded that up to 45% of the programmes that aimed to reduce bullying and 30% of programmes that aimed to reduce victimisation showed no effects. For those that were found to be effective, the results need to be viewed in the context of how they were evaluated.<sup>32</sup>

This research note features practices on anti-bullying specifically from the EPIC practice repository. The next section will introduce the framework used by the EPIC practice repository to rate and describe practices.

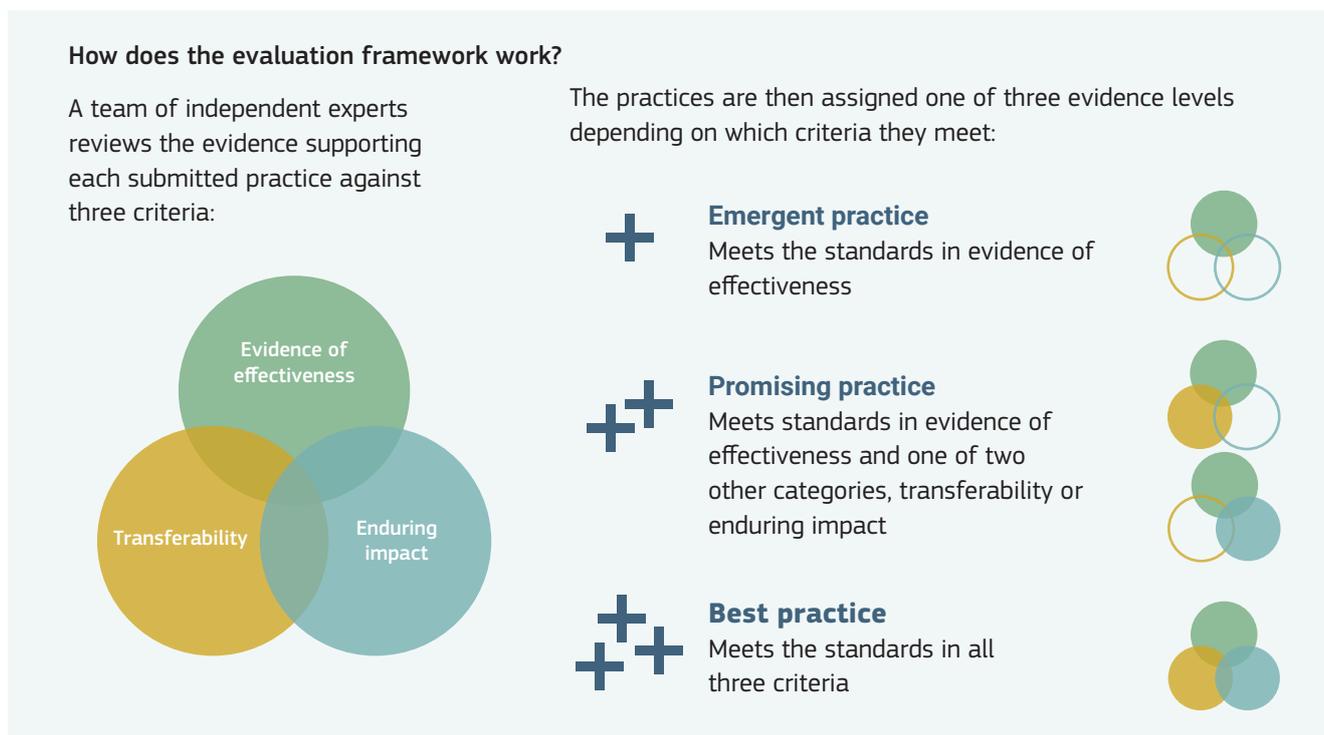
## EPIC Practices on Anti-bullying

The EPIC practice repository contains practices on numerous topics relating to children and families. These are spread across three different collections:

- [Evidence-Based Practices \(EBPs\)](#) aim to share practices that have been found to work, at least to some extent. EBPs are assigned one of three evidence levels – *best, promising, or emerging practice* – based on a set of criteria (explained below).
- [Social Innovation Repository Practices \(SIRPs\)](#) are innovative practices with a clear theory of change. Because they have usually been developed within the past five years, evidence of their effectiveness might still be insufficient.
- [User Registry Practices \(URPs\)](#) are often submitted to EPIC by third parties, are implemented across Europe, and are either lacking in evidence or have not met their desired outcomes. These are shared in the spirit of collaboration.

For evidence-based practices (EBPs), the EPIC expert panel reviews the evidence supporting each practice against our stringent evaluation framework.<sup>33</sup> The EPIC expert panel is composed of independent experts and leading academics in child and family policy across the EU. Criteria to determine

**FIGURE 1: THE EPIC EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**



the evidence level are organised according to three categories: *evidence of effectiveness, transferability, and enduring impact.*

At the end of this process, evidence-based practices (EBPs) are assigned one of three evidence designations: emergent practice, promising practice, or best practice, based on the criteria as shown in Figure 1.

This note includes three EBPs, three SIRPs and five URPs. The following paragraphs will provide a brief summary of all 12 practices.

### Geographical Location

In terms of geographical location, six practices were each implemented in one single country: Spain (2 practices), Belgium (1 practice), Greece (2 practices) and Croatia (1 practice). One practice was implemented in both the UK and Germany. Four practices were implemented in more than two countries.

The *KiVa Antibullying Programme* (EBP) started in Finland, but has since been implemented in Luxembourg, Hungary, Netherlands, France, Sweden and the UK. The *ComBuS programme* (SIRP) has been implemented in Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Romania and Spain. The *ENABLE campaign* (SIRP) has been implemented in Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Romania and the UK. The *#DeleteCyberbullying campaign* (SIRP) has been implemented in Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland,

Greece, Hungary, Spain and the UK. In total, this research note features 12 practices across 18 countries.

### Target Groups

In terms of target groups, three practices targeted children aged 6–12 only, and three primarily targeted children from the age of six upwards into adulthood. The remaining five targeted both children and parents, and at times also the wider community (e.g. *ENABLE, ComBuS*).

### Environment

All three EBPs focused specifically on addressing bullying in schools (*KiVa Antibullying Programme, Curriculum-based Antibullying Programme, and FearNot!*).

Three other practices focused on the school environment as part of their objective, but also had a wider focus. *ComBuS* (SIRP) focused on addressing bullying in schools, but including other stakeholders (e.g. the wider community) was an explicit focus of the practice. This also applied to the *Flemish Anti-Bullying intervention* (URP). The *ENABLE campaign* (SIRP) focused on children’s educational environment, but also on bullying in their leisure environments. *For A Safe and Enabling School Environment* (URP) focused on peer violence, both within schools and local communities. *Life without Bullying* (URP) aimed to eradicate bullying for children and adolescents in general.



Finally, three remaining practices focused primarily on addressing cyberbullying. This included *#DeleteCyberbullying* (SIRP), *ConRed* (URP), and *Cyberprogram 2.0* (URP).

### Outcomes

The EPIC practices aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Raise awareness that bullying occurs and increase understanding;
- Decrease/reduce the incidence of bullying;
- Reduce the number of bullies;
- Reduce victimisation/impacts of bullying;
- Improve emotional competencies (e.g. social cognitive skills, perceived control over information online);
- Change attitudes or behaviours of bystanders;
- Reduce time dedicated to digital usage.

### Modes of Delivery

The practices' modes of delivery included implementation through computer applications, face-to-face classroom interventions, role play, educational modules for children, and free-of-charge confidential advice through an online platform.

### What does the EPIC evidence on anti-bullying tell us?

In terms of what has been found to work, none of the practices were classed as 'best practice': the highest EPIC evidence rating available (see Figure 1). However, the *KiVa Antibullying Programme* has been classed as a 'promising' evidence-based practice, making it the intervention with the strongest body of evidence in this research note. The *KiVa Antibullying Programme* has been found to effectively reduce bullying – both self- and peer-reported. It was also effective in reducing anxiety and depression and increasing perceptions of a positive peer climate. However, it should be noted that the effectiveness of the practice varied by age. It appears that the effects for primary school children were greater than for older children. The *Curriculum-based Anti-bullying Programme*, which ranked as an 'emergent' EBP, was successful in helping bystander children feel more confident to intervene when they witness bullying occurring. The *Fear Not!* practice (EBP) helped more children to escape victimisation as a result.

While the other practices presented in this research note either have not yet been evaluated or have not shown any effects, we present them on the EPIC website in the spirit of collaboration and to help inspire discussion.

The remainder of this document reviews each practice in more detail.

### EPIC Evidence-Based Practices on Anti-bullying

#### KiVa Antibullying Programme

Finland, 2007 – Still operating

++ Promising practice



**Why:** This programme aims to decrease the incidence and negative effects of bullying in schools. The programme is based on the idea that how peer bystanders behave when witnessing bullying plays a critical role in either perpetuating or ending the incident. Therefore, this intervention is designed to modify peer attitudes, perceptions and understandings of bullying. The programme specifically encourages students to support victimised peers rather than embolden bullying behaviour and, furthermore, provides teachers and parents with information about how to prevent and address the incidence of bullying.

**What:** The *KiVa Antibullying Programme* consists of multiple components. A teacher's manual provides detailed implementation guidelines, including descriptions of course content and systematic discussion techniques to address cases of bullying. Children in elementary school have access to an anti-bullying computer game for elementary schools. Students in lower elementary schools have access to an internet forum called 'KiVa Street'. Students can access the game and internet forum either during or between lessons. KiVa also offers a guide for parents and equips schools with promotional awareness material, such as vests for teachers and recess supervisors and posters. The intervention has been tailored to three age specific groups: ages 7–9, ages 10–12 and ages 13–15.

**How:** The practice foresees that teachers in primary schools will largely rely on the manual. This includes conducting ten

90-minute lessons over the 10-month academic calendar, usually monthly. Teachers in secondary school are given more flexibility in how to transmit the contents covered in the manual. This can include either in-person or online group lessons or day events. The intervention is not supposed to be a one-off project, but rather be used on a permanent basis in schools.<sup>34</sup>

**How well:** The programme has become widely acknowledged for its effectiveness and has been implemented in multiple countries. It has been evaluated multiple times and studies have found that the programme significantly reduces both self- and peer-reported bullying and victimisation. In addition, the programme was found to reduce anxiety and depression and to increase the perception of a positive peer climate. However, the effectiveness of the KiVa programme varied by age, with its effects being greatest among children in elementary school. For the full references, please see [here](#).

For a detailed review of the evaluation results, as well as a link to the manual and a more detailed description of the interventions, please see [here](#).

### Curriculum-based Anti-bullying Programme



Greece, 2003 – Still operating

+ *Emergent practice*

**Why:** This anti-bullying intervention aims to address bullying at schools, particularly among children between 6 and 12 years of age. The practice has four objectives. Firstly, it aims to decrease overall bullying and victimisation. Secondly, it tries to increase the number of children helping the victims of bullying (defenders) and reduce the number of children who remain separate from the bullying situation (outsiders). Thirdly, the programme aims to enhance students' confidence to encourage their intervention in bullying situations. Lastly, the programme aims to promote positive interactions between peers.

**What:** The intervention is based on a set of curricular activities that are embedded within the wider school curriculum, arranged around the three axes of awareness-raising, self-reflection, and commitment to the new behaviours.

**By whom:** Designed by researchers, the practice is implemented by school teachers in face-to-face classroom settings. Participating teachers receive training from the researchers.

**Where:** The programme was implemented in 13 fourth- to sixth-grade classrooms (four fourth-grade, five fifth-grade, and four sixth-grade) across 10 primary schools in Greece.

The experimental and control groups were from the same school. The schools did not need any specific infrastructure to be eligible to participate.

**When and how much:** The core of the programme is based on eight curricular activities delivered in small-group and whole-class settings over a one-month period. The group sessions are delivered in a classroom setting between two and six times a week for one-hour sessions.

**How well:** Following the intervention, children were less likely to remain neutral (e.g. neither defend the victim nor contribute to the bullying). Children also felt more confident to intervene and demonstrated an increase in their self-efficacy beliefs. The programme also seemed successful in preventing an increase in the number of bullies and number of defenders (children who are not directly involved in the bullying behaviour but encourage the bullying). However, the six-month follow-up evidence suggests that the effect is not sustainable for the majority of outcomes, with the exception of the increase in self-efficacy, which was maintained at the six-month follow-up. As the practice has not been evaluated in multiple locations, transferability cannot be assessed. There is also no information on implementation costs or availability of practice materials. For full references, please see [here](#).

For a summary of the evaluation results, please see [here](#).

### FearNot! A computer-based anti-bullying programme designed to foster peer intervention



United Kingdom, Germany, 2007 – Unknown

+ *Emergent practice*

**Why:** *FearNot! (Fun with Empathic Agents to Reach Novel Outcomes in Teaching)* is a computer application aimed at children aged 6 to 12. The intervention's main aims are to help bullying victims escape victimisation, to reduce overall bullying by reducing the number of bullies, and, at the same time, to increase the number of new defenders. This application enables children to be part of a virtual school environment where the child user views one 'physical bullying' scenario and one 'relational' scenario.

**What:** At the beginning of their use of the application, the child provides personal information (name, gender and age) and a unique personal code that matches their offline questionnaires. After introduction of the characters, school and situation, users view the first bullying episode, followed by the victimised character seeking rescue in the school library where they start to communicate with the user. After each episode, the student engages in a conversation with

the victimised character, acting as advisor and friend by suggesting coping strategies. Thus, while the learner is not directly part of the virtual role-play that is happening within the bullying episodes, they take the role of an off-stage 'invisible friend' to the victimised character, and are able to influence the storyline slightly.

**By whom:** The practice *FearNot!* was initially developed as part of the VICTEC (Virtual ICT with Empathic Characters) project and then as part of the EU-funded eCIRCUS (Education through Characters with Emotional-Intelligence and Roleplaying Capabilities that Understand Social Interaction) project. The practice has been implemented in schools with implementation support provided by local authorities. Schools were recruited by mailing letters, followed by phone calls or personal visits to present the study and the software to the school staff.

**Where:** *FearNot!* was implemented and evaluated in state primary schools in the UK and Germany in the school year of 2007–2008.

**How well:** The evaluation showed that overall, there were significant programme effects on the number of pupils who escaped victimisation. However, when looking at each country, while students in Germany spent more time interacting with the software than UK students, only students in the UK showed significant effects regarding escaped victimisation; the effects for students in Germany were insignificant. At the first follow-up (a week after intervention end), a significant reduction in the prevalence rate of victimisation experienced was observed for the intervention group. However, based on data from the second follow-up (four weeks after intervention end), this effect seems not to have been sustained. There were no adverse outcomes related to the intervention. For full references, please see [here](#).

For a summary of evaluation results and for materials from the practice please see [here](#).

## EPIC Social Innovation Repository Practices (SIRP) on Anti-bullying

**Combating Bullying: A whole-school approach (ComBuS)**

Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Romania, Spain, 2016–2017



**Why:** The *ComBuS* project is a whole-school approach that engages students, teachers, parents, school leaders and staff to combat bullying in schools. The project aims

to raise awareness of bullying in schools and implement strategies to combat it, including exploring the origins of bullying beyond the school environment. For this reason, a crucial element of this programme is the engagement of and interdisciplinary collaboration between different groups of stakeholders. Through this collaboration, the intervention aims to explore the effects of bullying on children and young people and to create targeted approaches to combat bullying.

**What:** The project uses a blended approach, including a mix of face-to-face, online and mobile methodologies, tools and activities.<sup>35</sup> An online Toolkit provides resources, activities and guidelines for parents, students, teachers and support staff.<sup>36</sup> Examples of the tools available include an online platform, mobile application, experiential workshops for students, peer-to-peer support guidelines, learning modules, and material for thematic schools days. The practice's website promotes the combined use of the different elements of the Toolkit to ensure better results in eradicating bullying.

**By whom:** The project is funded by the European Commission and implemented by a consortium of seven partner-organisations in six EU countries, including Spain, Romania, Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Ireland.

**When and where:** Participants can access the Toolkit's learning modules at any time, either through face-to-face sessions or online. In general, the Toolkit is used daily and sessions last for approximately one hour. The project is implemented in schools but can also be used in the community and homes.

**How well:** The six participating countries prepared a national report focusing on data and findings from the programme, each of which was synthesised by the University of Pitești (UPIT) in Romania. This transnational report includes a literature review exploring 15 best practices in combating bullying. It also includes a project needs assessment with data from a survey of at least 16 teachers, interviews conducted with approximately 12 stakeholders, and a focus group that included five pupils and five parents.<sup>37</sup> The report also presents a list of topics for training and activities in the school context. The last part of the report provides conclusions and recommendations on design and implementation, including: training teachers to recognise bullying; regularly disseminating information about bullying to parents and across schools; and organising workshops to educate about risk associated with using digital tools (e.g. internet, social media). For more information on the report, please see [here](#).

For more details about the practice, please see [here](#).



**ENABLE – European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments**

Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Romania, United Kingdom, 2015 – Still operating



**Why:** *ENABLE* is an EU-funded school- and centre-based intervention that aims to combat bullying in children's educational and leisure environments, with a focus on addressing the wider culture that enables bullying to exist. *ENABLE* operates based on the assumption that if children improve their socio-emotional skills and develop a better understanding of the nature and impact of bullying, they will be less likely to bully, less likely to encourage bullying, more likely to intervene when observing an instance of bullying, and less vulnerable to bullying victimisation themselves. The project further assumes that bullying is not merely an individual-level problem confined to individual victims and bullies, but rather a systemic problem that is produced by a range of individual-, family-, school- and community-level factors.

**What:** *ENABLE* uses teacher-led, classroom-based Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) modules to educate children on how to monitor their behaviour, manage their emotions, and understand the characteristics and consequences of bullying. Additionally, a peer-support scheme trains volunteers from the school community to complement SEL learning in the classroom, both by providing confidential support to their fellow peers on an individual basis, and by running campaigns

to combat bullying in their wider community. Printed materials are provided to parents and carers to enable them to keep their children safe online and offline, recognise the signs of bullying and reinforce SEL progress in their children at home. The SEL modules, peer-support scheme and involvement of parents and carers must be used concurrently to maximize intervention effectiveness. The intervention can be used in any setting where there are children and young people and the *ENABLE* Resource Pack is freely available online.<sup>38</sup>

**By whom:** The pilot project and related impact assessment were funded by the European Commission's Daphne Programme and came to an end in October 2016. The programme is now funded by the *ENABLE* Consortium, and countries are able to implement it in their own schools without formal registration using the open-access materials available online.

**How well:** The *ENABLE* Consortium conducted an assessment 'to evaluate the perceptions and needs of children in participating schools and the effectiveness of the programme'. From this assessment, *ENABLE* has suggested that the programme was 'proven to have broader positive effects on the social and emotional wellbeing of young people, and on the climate of classrooms'. However, due to the 'pre-test post-test' design and the low response rates of the surveys, the results of the pre- and post-assessment are at a high risk of bias. Therefore, the effectiveness of the programme cannot yet be confirmed.<sup>39</sup> For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).

## #DeleteCyberbullying – European Awareness-Raising Campaign on Cyberbullying

Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Spain, United Kingdom, 2013–2014



**Why:** The aim of the *#DeleteCyberbullying* campaign was to raise awareness about the existence and danger of cyberbullying and to share good practices about recognising and preventing it in schools and in families. The target groups for the intervention were children and young people aged between 6 and 19 and their parents.<sup>40</sup>

**What:** The main mode of delivery of this awareness-raising campaign was through mobile apps and computer-based methods (e.g. online courses, web-based tools, etc.). It used the internet to reach people and raise awareness of cyberbullying through an online demonstration (the Big March), videos, and an app, and also included a European-wide conference. The website for the campaign is still live, as are the multimedia products (app, video), a compilation of free and available resources, and the reports from the conference.<sup>41</sup>

**By whom:** The project was funded by the European Commission through the Daphne III funding programme, and was carried out by a partnership of eight partners from seven countries. The products of this campaign were a European conference on cyberbullying, an online demonstration (the Big March), and the development of an app and video that raised awareness of cyberbullying.

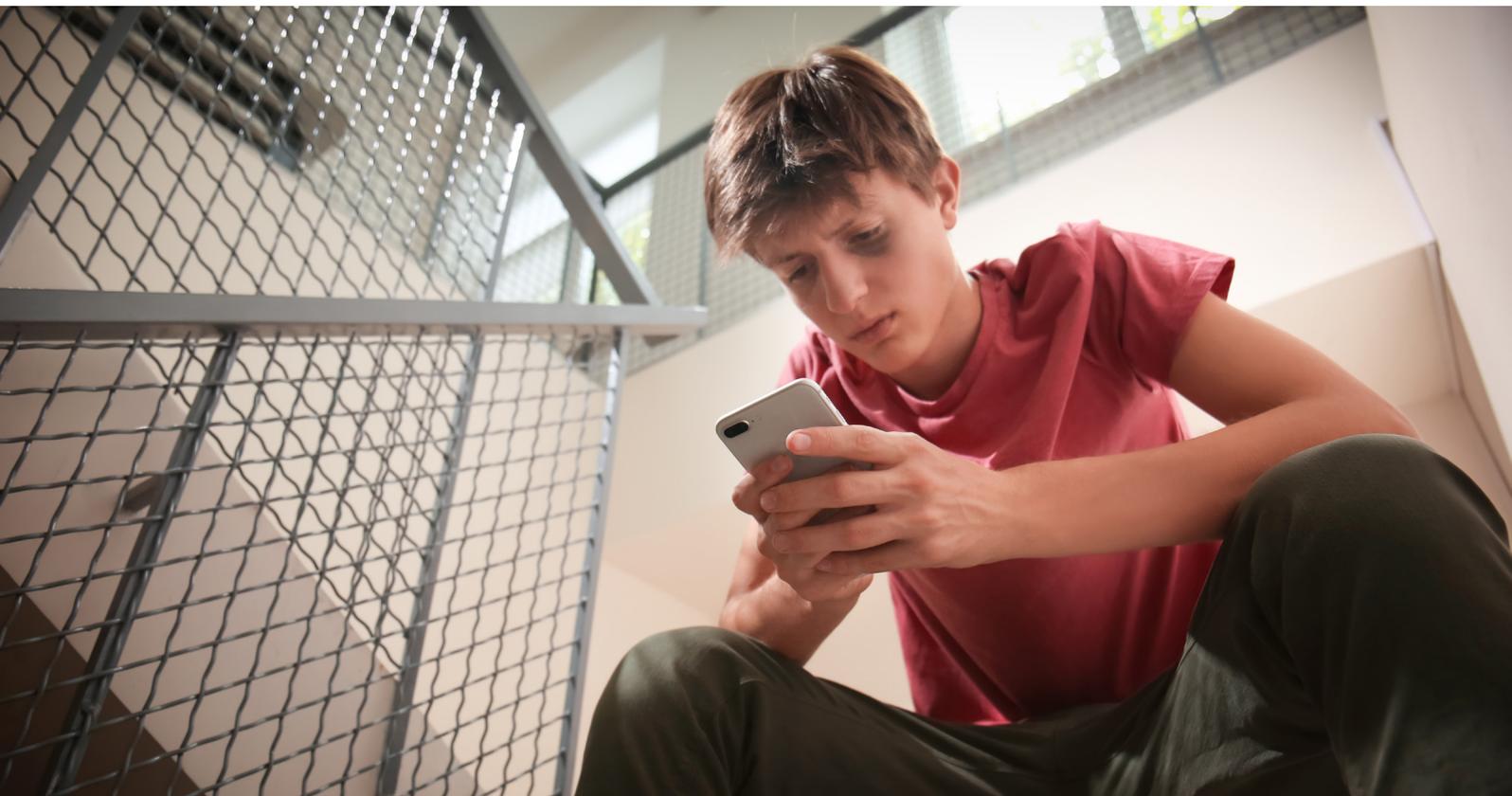
**How well:** The campaign did not have a particular description of how it aimed to effect change beyond a general desire to raise awareness about cyberbullying, particularly among young people and their parents, and to influence policymakers. No evaluation has been conducted or is currently planned. No information on implementation cost is available.

Some of the good practices shared for addressing cyberbullying among schools, parents and young people included:

- Peer mentoring as one of the most successful ways to prevent and address cyberbullying.
- Building young people's empathy and sense of responsibility (as well as arming them with technological ability to react to cyberbullying sensibly).
- Educating parents about cyberbullying through parental control tools, training at work and mass media available in many languages and with a positive and non-alarmist tone.
- Ensuring that schools have school policies that explicitly mention cyberbullying and clarify the role of each actor within the school.

For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).



## EPIC User Registry Practices (URPs) on Anti-bullying

### For a Safe and Enabling School Environment

Croatia, 2003 – Still operating



**Why:** The *For a Safe and Enabling School Environment* programme was created with the aim of reducing bullying and peer violence, promoting respect and creating a supportive environment for children, both within schools and local communities. Within schools, the programme's goal is to raise awareness of the existing level of bullying, to understand the mechanisms and develop processes to address it. The programme also aims to promote participation in activities that encourage children to prevent and intervene in peer violence. Within wider local communities, the goal of the programme is to increase people's awareness of the existence and consequences of peer violence, and to influence attitudes against violence.

**What:** The programme was developed using existing meta-evaluations of bullying reduction approaches. In the programme, schools are required to complete the following seven steps over a period of one year: raising awareness of the problem; defining the protective network; ensuring that the protective network is established and effective; developing collaboration with other stakeholders in the local community; ensuring that students seek help; making sure that the school reacts and acts on school protocol; and finally, checking that the school has become a safer place.

**How:** The modes of delivery of the programme include face-to-face and group sessions. It begins with a mentor from the programme presenting the programme to teachers, who then vote on whether they want to take part. As part of developing their school's protective network, teachers can attend training and workshops from programme mentors, and are then allowed to deliver workshops for the programme in their own school.

**How well:** Even though information on the cost of implementation is available, the evaluation found that available data was not sufficient to conduct a proper cost analysis. The [programme handbook](#) and other practice materials of the programme are available online and are aimed at helping parents, teachers and other school staff to create a positive environment. The material contains a comprehensive set of resources to facilitate the implementation of the programme. For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).

### Life Without Bullying

Greece, 2015 – Still operating



**Why, what, how and where:** The *Life Without Bullying* practice aims to raise awareness around the eradication of bullying among children, adolescents and their parents. Designed and implemented by the non-profit organisation *Κέντρο Μέριμνας Οικογένειας και Παιδιού* (ΚΜΟΠ – Children and Family Care Centre), The practice aims to achieve its aims through the provision of in-person and online counselling and training sessions and the creation of online content, including webinars and educational tools. Through an [online platform](#), the implementers of the practice provide direct, free of charge, anonymous and confidential advice and support to children and young people who are victims of bullying. The online platform also includes a specific area that enables parents and educators to express concerns, exchange views, seek advice and discuss ways to prevent and eradicate bullying. Finally, the online platform hosts an electronic library where children, adolescents, parents and adults can access helpful information related to bullying, including, for example, brochures and training webinars for educators and parents. The programme also includes in-person training sessions that are delivered to students at schools, as well as social campaigns, social media strategies and events in Greece to promote awareness of the website.

**How well:** The programme was peer-reviewed by COFACE Families Europe and independent experts at a two-day peer-review meeting in Athens, Greece in 2017. In their report – which can be found [here](#) – the peer reviewers provided recommendations for improving the scope, reach and quality of the electronic platform. However, the programme has not undergone an independent evaluation assessing how the outcomes of children, parents and students have changed following participation in this programme. For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).

### The Flemish Anti-Bullying Intervention

Belgium, 2004 – Still operating



**Why:** The goal of the *Flemish Anti-Bullying Intervention* is to reduce bullying in schools through changes in the school and social environment. The practice focuses on three groups: adult stakeholders (including teachers, staff and parents), students, and those involved in bullying either as bullies or victims. The intervention aims to raise awareness of bullying

and to develop students' social skills and strategies to help address, confront and handle bullying.

**What:** The practice is based on developmental models of aggressive behaviour and behaviour modification theories. According to these theories, bullying behaviour gains social outcomes, such as dominance or status. When bullying is not addressed and sanctioned, peers will reinforce bullies' behaviour. On these lines, this intervention aims to address bullying by including parents, peers and teachers. In particular, activities include the development of clear anti-bullying policies, problem-solving strategies for those who are victims of bullying, and encouraging bullies to reflect on their behaviour.

**How:** The modes of delivery include information sessions for teachers and parents, classroom activities for students (such as role-play activities aimed at developing the social skills to directly intervene in incidents), and face-to-face one-on-one meetings between bullies and teachers. The classroom activities normally constitute four sessions of 90 minutes each.

**How well:** The [evaluation](#) examined 18 schools comprising 1,104 students between the ages of 10 and 16. Some of the desired outcomes were achieved through the intervention. For instance, in primary schools, there was a decrease in the level of bullying. However, there were no significant impacts found on victimisation or positive interactions from the intervention in both primary and secondary schools. No significant impacts were found on any intended outcomes in secondary schools. It is possible that children's developmental characteristics may affect the probability of success. Adolescents tend to conform less with anti-bullying rules established by authority figures compared to younger children. In addition, organisational characteristics of secondary schools – such as more complex timetables – may hamper the practice's implementation. For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).

### The ConRed Cyberbullying Prevention Programme

Spain, 2012 – Still operating



**Why:** The *ConRed Cyberbullying Prevention Programme* addresses cyberbullying and other emerging problems linked with the use of the internet. The programme also seeks to promote a positive use of the online environment. The main aims of the *ConRed* programme are to improve perceived control over information on the internet, to reduce the time dedicated to digital device usage, and to prevent and reduce cyberbullying.

**What and how well:** The impact of the programme was [evaluated](#) with a quasi-experimental design involving a sample of 893 students. The results demonstrate that *ConRed* contributes to reduced cyberbullying and cyber-dependence, helps to adjust the perception of information control, and increases the perception of safety in schools. For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).

### Cyberprogram 2.0

Spain, 2012 – Still operating



**Why:** *Cyberprogram 2.0* was designed to prevent and reduce peer bullying/cyberbullying.

**Where:** The programme was implemented by a private education organisation in Spain and targeted children and teenagers.

**What and how well:** An [evaluation](#) was conducted to experimentally assess the effects of *Cyberprogram 2.0* on behaviours of victimisation and diverse social behaviours. It also focuses on the importance of implementing programmes focused on promoting socio-emotional development and prevent violence.

The sample comprised 176 adolescents, aged between 13 and 15, who were grouped into 93 experimental subjects and 83 control subjects. The study used a repeated measures pre-test and post-test design with a control group. The evaluation confirmed that the programme stimulated a significant decrease in victimisation and an increase of positive social behaviours, such as social conformity, help-collaboration and pro-social leadership. The intervention significantly decreased some negative social behaviours to a greater extent in females, although in the remaining variables, the change was similar for both sexes. For full references, please see [here](#).

For more information about the practice, please see [here](#).

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## The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC)

The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) is an **evidence-based online platform** that provides information about policies and practices that can help support children and their families in Europe. EPIC supports the efforts of Member States to adopt principles relayed in the [2013 EU Recommendation for Investing in Children](#). EPIC aims to achieve this objective by managing the EPIC practices repository, publishing studies and reports and sharing information via the drafting of news items.

## An Evidence Guide for Policymakers

The interventions presented in this research note have a diverse body of evidence behind them. More evidence is required to help inspire practitioners and ensure that new practices can also generate evidence.

This 2016 [evidence guide](#) provides a **starting point for policymakers** who seek more information on how to use evidence to strengthen policies for investing in children.

The guide provides an introduction to the basics of some approaches to using evidence to inform policies related to children, including:

- conducting needs assessments;
- selecting practices that have shown promise in previous implementation;
- developing a logic model to help plan a practice and determine if it has achieved its objectives; and
- conducting or overseeing various types of evaluation, including theory-based evaluations and counterfactual impact evaluations.

The guide contains original material and also points users to existing useful material that is available for free online.

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