BULLYING: PERSPECTIVES, PRACTICE AND INSIGHTS

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Council of Europe

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Foreword

The Council of Europe has, since its creation in 1949, always promoted human rights, democracy and the rule of law, not just in its 47 member countries but also across a much broader region of the world. We are constantly reminded that the children in our generation will become the leaders in the next, and will shape the world with the values and attitudes inculcated from the social environment in which they live and learn. Their understanding of democracy and respect for human rights will be largely influenced by their own childhood experiences. For this reason, the protection of children against all forms of violence is a principle central to our work, and is one of the five priorities of the recently launched Third Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021).[1] Bullying is one of the most difficult areas of violence against children to eliminate, especially with the ubiquitous role that internet and mobile technology plays in their life today and the capacity this gives for bullying to continue night and day.

Prevention starts with educating children about the harmful effects that their actions can have on others. It is nevertheless also very important that everyone working with or raising children is fully aware of the challenges and impact of bullying and is able to provide timely, meaningful guidance. This underlines the importance of implementing a holistic approach that tackles the problem at its roots by opening up for children new learning opportunities to develop their social skills, their capacity for empathy and an appreciation of just how enriching diversity can be. Such opportunities and challenges are presented in the pages of the present publication, through the perspectives, practices and insights of the many researchers and practitioners who have contributed to the work of the European network ENABLE, which is one of the many initiatives that the Council of Europe supports for the protection of children's rights. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all the contributors for their dedication to this very worthy cause.

Equal opportunities, freedom of expression, participation and a life free from violence are the essential ingredients of democracy, and the right of every child. Bullying affects all of these rights. It is therefore imperative for the future of our society that we work together to prevent it, at the level of governments and organisations, industry and civil society, experts and teachers, and parents and children themselves. I hope that all of them will use and draw inspiration from this publication to join in a common effort to eliminate bullying from our children's lives.

Snežana Samardžić-Marković

Director General of Democracy

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Notes on contributors

Parry Aftab is a digital privacy and security lawyer. She founded the world's first internet safety and help group and has received the FBI Director's Award and the Air Canada/RCMP Child Recovery Award, and accepted on behalf of her volunteers the Clinton Whitehouse President's Service Award. Parry sits on Facebook's Safety Advisory Board and MTV's Public Affairs Advisory Board. Many cybersafety programmes (for example, StopCyberbullying – www.stopcyberbullying.org – and www.cybersafety. org) were created by Parry and, combined, have been delivered to more than two million young people.

Amy Barnes holds a Master's degree in Public Health and works as a health promotion researcher at the Telethon Kids Institute, University of Western Australia. She has been involved in school-based research addressing the health and well-being of Australian children and young people for several years, particularly in relation to their involvement in bullying, cyberbullying and other risky online behaviours.

Anne Collier is executive director of The Net Safety Collaborative, a national non-profit organisation now piloting the US's first internet helpline for schools. Anne has written and spoken widely on the subject of youth and digital media, served on three national task forces on youth internet safety and currently serves on the safety advisory boards of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and ASKfm. She blogs at www. netfamilynews.org (accessed 13 November 2016) and lives with her family in the Seattle, Washington area.

Ken Corish is Online Safety Director for UK charity South West Grid for Learning, drawing on 20 years as an educator and 10 years as an award-winning adviser with Plymouth City Council. He advises the UK Government, education inspectorates, local government and schools on online safety policy and practice. He developed and wrote the multiple award-winning 360 degree safe (online safety self-review) tool and the Online Compass tool. He also created the award-winning BOOST toolset for children's settings. Ken works with a broad range of national and international organisations and has spoken at global conferences across the world.

Donna Cross is a Winthrop Professor with the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Western Australia and the Telethon Kids Institute. Donna has led over 50 applied longitudinal school and community-based research intervention projects in Australia and the US investigating ways to enhance social and emotional development and reduce bullying and cyberbullying among children and adolescents. She is currently leading nine research projects investigating ways to enhance student well-being, especially their social competence, and other skills to reduce all forms of antisocial behaviour and mental health harm, especially among vulnerable school-age children.

Helen Cowie is Emerita Professor at the University of Surrey in the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. For over 25 years, she has specialised in strategies to counteract school bullying. Her co-authored book *Understanding children's development*, into its sixth edition in 2015, is one of the most popular undergraduate textbooks in the field. Recently, she wrote *From birth to sixteen*.[2]

Katja Engelhardt is a member of the Knowledge Building Team at European Schoolnet (Brussels) and regularly prepares reports and studies, including the current study "An analysis of educational approaches to developing Computational Thinking (CompuThink)".[3] She has developed expertise in the areas of mobile learning, special needs education and accessibility of information, coding as a 21st-century skill, self-assessment and online teacher training. Katja holds a Master's degree in International Law and a Bachelor's degree in Social and Cultural Studies.

Luis Fernandes is a senior psychologist and has co-ordinated and supervised several projects on bullying and violence involving schoolchildren. He has conducted professional training sessions and awareness initiatives throughout Portugal, aimed at students, teachers, educators, officials, coaches, parents and the public in general. With Sónia Seixas, he has published *Bullying plan – Deleting school bullying* and a children's book entitled *Say no to bullying. Do not let them hurt you*.

Urko Fernández has a Master's in Business Administration from Wheeling Jesuit University (USA). As a project manager at PantallasAmigas (FriendlyScreens), he designs new educational materials related to healthy use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), with particular emphasis on the prevention of child grooming, cyberbullying, sexting, sextortion and gender-based cyberviolence.

Jorge Flores Fernández has a degree in Computer Science from the University of Deusto, Spain. He founded PantallasAmigas (FriendlyScreens), a global initiative that designs and develops educational programmes and resources for the prevention of major internet-related bullying with particular emphasis on promoting a culture of privacy and the development of digital life skills. He has directed, authored and co-authored numerous publications and is often invited to share his experience and expertise in various Latin American countries.

Barbara Forresi is a clinical psychologist. She received her PhD in Psychobiology from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy). Her clinical and research interests are concerned with developmental psychopathology and the promotion of child and adolescent mental health as well as the use of new technologies and social media. As a member of Telefono Azzurro, the Italian helpline for children and adolescents, she has taken part in several European and international research projects aimed at protecting children from violence and other online risks.

Lidija Kralj is a teacher by training (computer science and mathematics), vocation and intrinsic motivation, with 25 years of experience in teaching in primary and secondary schools in Croatia. She is Vice-president of the non-governmental organisation Suradnici u učenju, and Editor-in-chief of the digital magazine *Pogled kroz prozor* and the portal ucitelji.hr. She is a member of the Croatian National Council for Education, a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert and a Microsoft Certified Educator. Author of

textbooks on informatics and mathematics, she writes scientific and expert articles and presents papers about e-learning and e-safety.

Elizabeth Milovidov is an American lawyer, law professor, children's rights advocate and e-safety consultant at European Schoolnet. A graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of California at Davis, she practised as a litigator in California for four years before moving to France to work as General Counsel in two internet technology companies. She is a faculty member of the Université de Cergy-Pontoise Law School in France and she teaches law and technology at L'ISCOM, Institut Supérieur de Communication et Publicité, Paris.

Tito de Morais founded and runs Portugal's pioneering internet safety project, Miudos Seguros Na.Net.[4] He is on the Advisory Board of the Portuguese team of the EU Kids Online project and represented Miudos Seguros as a partner in Google's Family Safety Center. He has provided his internet safety expertise to companies such as Microsoft, Symantec, Easybits, Google, Caixa Mágica, AnubisNetworks and Facebook.

Eleni Papamichalaki is a high school teacher and teacher trainer in Greece. She holds a Master's degree in English as a Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, and is an accredited trainer for online safety, intra-school violence and bullying. She has led information sessions for students, teachers and parents/carers and has participated, as guest speaker, in several conferences on relevant issues.

Natasha Pearce is a health promotion researcher and practitioner with over 25 years' experience working to improve health outcomes for children, families and communities. Specialising in implementation science, her current role as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Telethon Kids Institute and previously as Senior Research Fellow at Edith Cowan University includes a range of school and community-based research and evaluation projects aimed at improving child and adolescent well-being. Her particular research interest lies in using knowledge translation and implementation science to improve real world impacts from evidence-based interventions. She is part of the Australasian Implementation Conference Committee and the Australian Implementation Network.

Janice Richardson, international adviser on information literacy, children's rights and digital citizenship, is co-ordinator of the ENABLE network and leads a range of projects for the European Commission, the Council of Europe and government organisations from Europe, the United Arab Emirates and northern and sub-Saharan Africa. She has authored more than a dozen publications books on literacy and citizenship for children, families and schools, and most recently completed the fourth edition of the Council of Europe's *Internet literacy handbook* in co-authorship with Elizabeth Milovidov and Martin Schmalzried, both contributors to this publication.

Signe Sandfeld Hansen, co-ordinator and online counsellor, holds a Master's degree in Psychology from the University of Aarhus, Denmark. Signe has profound knowledge about youth culture, especially in connection to substance use and abuse. She also has a passion for exploring new and different ways to help fragile and vulnerable children and young people. Signe started working at Cyberhus and the Centre for Digital Youth Care (Denmark) in 2015. As a co-ordinator and online counsellor, she

initiates blogs, group chats and articles about specific themes, relevant for and co-created with youth.

Martin Schmalzried holds a Master's degree from the ULB (Université libre de Bruxelles) in Political Science. He is a sociology teacher in upper secondary education and is Policy Officer at COFACE (the Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU). His areas of expertise include safer internet and new technologies, and he has been involved in a number of EU projects and initiatives linked to this field. He has supervised the development of a variety of tools such as Nutri-médias, which aims at raising awareness of parents regarding advertising and nutrition, and the #DeleteCyberbullying app, which is designed to help teenagers, parents and teachers deal with cyberbullying.

Sónia Seixas, from Portugal, is a member of the ENABLE think tank. She has a PhD in Educational Psychology and researches the bullying and cyberbullying phenomenon. She is a member of the National Project Advisory Board "Social adventure" and published (with Luis Fernandes) *Bullying plan – Deleting school bullying* and in 2015, a children's book entitled *Say no to bullying. Do not let them hurt you*.

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Eleni C. Tzavela is a developmental psychologist and cognitive-behavioural therapist who works with adolescents, young adults and parents. Eleni is lead researcher with the Adolescent Health Unit of the Second Department of Paediatrics of the University of Athens. Her research interests include individual and familial processes linked with the development of maladaptive internet use and psychosocial difficulties in adolescence.

Andrew Williams has more than 10 years' experience at all levels of primary school management. Experiences as a school improvement adviser in ICTs led Andrew to work on a range of projects nationally and internationally. Andrew regularly works with wide-ranging audiences. He is the creator of the new addition to the South West Grid for Learning 360 family, 360data, which is a data protection and security self-review tool. Andrew is passionate about the use of technology in schools and supporting children, young people and adults with online safety and data protection issues. With skills in school improvement and self-review cycles, Andrew has a unique breadth of knowledge and experiences.

Introduction –
Perspectives, practice
and insights on bullying

Janice Richardson

… for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

– Shakespeare

Bullying, as the saying goes, is as old as the hills. From Exodus in the Old Testament to Matthew in the New Testament, and from Dickens in the 18th century to the Harry Potter books today, we learn about pharaohs, kings' wives and Malfoys who bullied to get their way. We sympathise with the trials and tribulations of the slaves of ancient Egypt, Oliver Twist and Myrtle, and although some of the interplay may initially amuse us – think of Laurel and Hardy, for instance – we would certainly not want to be in the shoes of the person on the receiving end. Nevertheless, some of us simply are not able to put ourselves in their shoes, because this requires empathy. Indeed, there is a significant difference between sympathy and empathy, and developing empathy along with other social and emotional skills as a means to combat bullying and promote the well-being of every young person is what this publication is about.

Even if bullying has long plagued humanity, it was not until fairly recently – in the 1970s – that the phenomenon of bullying became the object of systematic research,[5] with early investigations mainly taking place in Scandinavian countries. As our knowledge of the brain and learning processes increased over the next quarter of a century, and society generally became more aware and interested in the social impact of individual well-being – or the lack of it – research became far more widespread.

In the mid-1990s, Jacques Delors, eighth president of the European Commission, was one of the first economists to point out that democratic values and social prosperity can only be promoted through an education built not only on learning to know and to do, the mainstays of most school curricula, but also on learning to be and learning to live together.[6] We will look at this in more depth later in this book through interviews with social and mobile media companies, and a youth who has grown up in this media-rich world.

Bullying – The impact of social and mobile media

Although it is important to point out that, more often than not, bullying takes place or is at least instigated in face-to-face situations,[7] the emergence of social media and mobile platforms as well as our rapid take-up of online technologies have had a considerable impact on this and other social interactions, as many of the authors note in this publication. Today, in 2016, although just 40% of the world population use the internet, the figure is far higher in most parts of the Western world and in the UK, for example, reaches 89.9%. We can therefore safely say that almost all children in Europe are online, many of them even before they can walk or talk.[8] The use of Wi-Fi and mobile-connected devices is progressing more rapidly than that of any other type of device, and it is predicted that by 2017 such devices will account for 68% of all internet traffic.

This underlines the mobility and pervasiveness of the tools young people use as they conduct their social life in a blended world of online and offline existence. Bullying, hate speech and hurtful messages can therefore follow a child into the most private corners of his/her life, at all hours of the day and night. More bystanders become rapidly involved too, turning private hurt into public humiliation at the click of a mouse. Technology has put Photoshopping, video-making, the uploading of fake profiles and a thousand other tools within the reach of all, and online harassment can take on imponderably imaginative forms. In the "Perspectives" section of this publication, readers will get a glimpse of some of the challenges young people grapple with on a daily basis.

In all, authors from more than a dozen countries have contributed to this publication, presenting widely differing perspectives, practices and insights on how they are tackling or think we should be tackling modern societal issues such as bullying and hate speech. While some chapters focus more specifically on case studies and what the research tells us, others look as well at issues related to bringing up and educating children for the world we live in. This publication is also about ENABLE, described in the following section, and aims to introduce readers to the psychologists, researchers, teachers, parents and social media innovators who have helped shape it.

ENABLE – Learning to be and to live together

The acronym ENABLE stands for European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments. It was created in 2014 by six organisations working in highly complementary education-related domains in Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Greece and the United Kingdom, with support and co-funding from the European Commission. The common aim of these partners is to develop new social and emotional skill-learning models to tackle bullying, and to culturally adapt these models for implementation in at least five countries and six different languages. A secondary aim is to train a core group of teacher-ambassadors interested in rolling out the approach in their home country within the framework of a cascade model.

ENABLE strives to integrate the "learning to be" and "learning to live together" concepts mentioned earlier, by taking into full account the ecosystem in which

children play and learn. In this respect, children's social contexts at school, at home, in the local community and, increasingly, online is of particular importance. In a nutshell, ENABLE is a think tank: an approach and a repository of learning material and activities embedded holistically in a peer support programme for 11- to 14-year-old children, their parents and their teachers. In little over a year, it has been rolled out by hundreds of teachers in schools as well as by youth leaders and several helplines across Europe. ENABLE aims to lead children and young people to reflect on, and better understand, their interactions and behaviour as well as the impact of their behaviour on others. It does this through a four-pronged process that focuses on self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and relationship management.

The opportunities technology offers to today's generation are undoubtedly the reason why a number of the authors in this publication have chosen to turn their attention to skilling young people for life in the online environment. It may also explain why digital parenting is such a hot topic nowadays. Most people will agree that online and offline worlds have now blended into a single, vast, public space where children learn to be and to live together in the view of all, yet where they have to make up many of the rules as they go along. Moreover, possibly for the first time in history, we are letting our children loose in this vast space to play, learn and interact without any adult presence. When examining the impact of bullying in a child's life, the biggest challenges recognised by researchers, educators and families are their own inability to really see and understand what is happening online, and to intervene in a timely manner.

The ever-expanding role of the internet for young people is also having a resounding impact on their behaviour and their reasoning capacity in a multitude of ways. In a recent study[9] on the human attention span (actually conducted to find the best ways to reach consumers), 2 000 people were surveyed and the brain activity in 112 others was monitored using electroencephalograms (EEGs). The results were alarming: the human attention span has seemingly declined from 12 seconds as measured in the year 2000 to 8 seconds in 2015, much shorter than the attention span of a goldfish (at 9 seconds)! Although the findings and the methodology may raise questions, we cannot help but ask ourselves: what does this mean in terms of impact on behaviour? Does it modify in any way the capacity of young people to reflect on their own actions and the effect they may have on others?

Other research has aimed to look at the impact of online technology on our brains.[10] This indicates that overexposure to a rapid succession of sounds and images via the media may be resulting in underdevelopment, in children and young people, of the pre-frontal lobe: the very part of our brain needed to formulate hypotheses and predict the possible consequences of our actions. Several of the following chapters examine, from a practical perspective, how the meaning of literacy has changed, and how we need to re-shape school learning if we are to ensure that the upcoming generation can acquire the essential competencies to become active, responsible citizens in the digital world. How can we counteract the effects of their immersion in an environment that is not yet fully understood even by the most knowledgeable among us?

Tackling bullying – Learning from each other

One of the early steps that ENABLE took soon after its creation was to set up a think tank as a means of drawing on the knowledge and experience of leading international practitioners and researchers from varying domains of activity. A dozen regular members continue to advise and guide the actions of the network, with input from parents, teachers and, of course, children and teens who are encouraged to have their say every step of the way. Although we were unable to find any young people willing to write their own chapter for this publication, their ideas and insights are reflected throughout these pages, along with those of both regular and occasional think tank members.

Bullying is a vast subject and tackling it comes down to providing an environment in which every individual is encouraged to develop self-awareness and self-management as well as empathy for others; to reflect and act rather than to react; to sense when humour is turning sour; and to know how to be supportive. The global world we encounter online and the multicultural societies in which we live out our "real life" mean that people, especially children who are usually less guarded in their interactions, may have very different ways of expressing emotions. Due to a lack of cultural and social awareness, we can easily step on the toes of others without realising it. For many young people, their teenage years are about "fitting in" and being accepted, which underlines the importance of their being confronted with diversity and learning to embrace it.

In recent years there has been an emerging consensus among anti-bullying experts that improved social and emotional skills – or social and emotional intelligence, as it is referred to by many[11] – is key to the empowerment of children and young people and that diversity is a positive and enriching facet of any community. In this approach, the aim is to empower every individual to become the master of their own well-being and an active contributor to the well-being of others around them. Such self-awareness is also a key ingredient in resilience: the quality that enables a person to tackle and learn from challenging situations rather than to be harmed by them. However, the development of these capacities is rarely included in school curricula, and the need for them barely understood by society in general. When such skill-building is part of the school programme, especially when peer supporters are trained to take the lead, the benefits are quickly evident in terms of a better overall learning environment; less absenteeism on the part of pupils but also teachers; and fewer bullying incidents. Success stories from schools and from ENABLE's Danish partner – which runs a youth centre, a helpline and a number of youth-related projects – tell us that this social-emotional focus on the individual is proving effective in offering new paths to reach more vulnerable children too. And what child or teen isn't vulnerable at some point of their childhood or teen years?

Society is facing major challenges at present, with hate speech almost commonplace in certain circles and in the media, and radicalisation a vision of terror for many parents of teens. There is obviously no easy solution, but early findings seem to indicate that greater focus on learning to be and to live together could well be a route worthy of further exploration.

Perspectives, practice and insights

Readers will discover in the pages that follow a wide range of topics and examples drawn from the experience of practitioners working in one way or another in the field. The one common denominator is that they are all seeking to empower children and build their resilience so that they can respond positively and responsibly to the challenges they encounter in today's rather complex world.

Section 1, "Perspectives", begins with a glimpse of the future and some of the challenges and solutions that virtual reality (VR) may bring. This is followed by an interview with Facebook, ASKfm and Vodafone: all three figuring among the more popular providers of social and mobile media platforms today and playing a significant role in the life of many teens. They are three of ENABLE's associate partners and have supported the network since its outset. Certainly many young people will take a similar perspective to Floran, the 23-year-old "digital native" from the Netherlands who comments on their responses. In the following chapter, an anti-bullying expert shares the lessons she has learned over several decades spent working with youth. This sets the scene for the next chapter in this section, which looks at online issues from the viewpoint of parents, and offers some useful guidance on strategies that are proving successful for coping with the challenges and pitfalls we all encounter when educating children in the digital age. Fittingly, Section 1 comes to a close with an analysis of some of the difficulties that children with special educational needs and their families face. This sector of the population is often especially vulnerable to bullying and less able to defend themselves against it, as the young people and their families themselves testify.

Section 2, "Practice", takes readers in and out of classrooms in some of the countries ENABLE is working with, and into the wings of two helpline services, one based in Italy and the other in Denmark. The section ends with several case studies that illustrate the importance of being able to adapt to cultural and linguistic diversity while respecting certain core principles that remain constant worldwide – for example, the crucial role of senior leadership in promoting a learning culture and an environment conducive to the well-being of pupils.

The final section in this publication, "Insights", draws on the research and experience of psychologists, educators and other experts in a range of countries from Greece and the United States to Portugal and the United Kingdom. All authors underline the importance of life skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and empathy, as well as examining in depth the role of the school and the family in developing these skills. Differences between bullying and cyberbullying are discussed at some length, though all concur that a majority of bullying cases begin in "real life" situations rather than online. They also stress the importance of encouraging peer support in fostering a healthy emotional environment in schools.

We hope that the insights, perspectives and practice on bullying, teaching and parenting that are presented in the following pages will help open up a broader debate and trigger new ideas and approaches. As the English poet John Donne once observed, "No man is an island", and this is truer than ever in our connected world. Like the intricate geometrical symmetries that made the Dutch artist Maurits

Cornelis Escher[12] famous, human behaviour itself is a tableau of interlocking repetitive patterns and processes, every emotion and action we emit shaping those of the people around us. Our aim is to cast the spotlight on evolving social interactions, foster a deeper appreciation of diversity, and strive to ensure that every child can enjoy a violence-free environment, which is, after all, a fundamental children's right.[13]

Section 1

Perspectives

Chapter 1

Virtual environments – Multiple facets, multiple opportunities

Martin Schmalzried

Novelty is an elusive concept. Cyberbullying is certainly a recent phenomenon, originating from the gradual permeation of bullying behaviour into the online world as it developed, leaving us to grapple with the implications of such things as anonymity, outreach, 24/7 connectivity, instantaneity and permanence of data. However, in 2016, a combination of parallel evolutions in technology has brought a truly novel experience to users with the merger of social networking/online communities and virtual environments through virtual reality (VR), with possibly new implications for cyberbullying, online harassment, privacy and more.

Social networking and online communities, or Web 2.0, started sometime at the turn of the 21st century and expanded gradually, bringing together communities of over a billion people. Online gaming communities such as World of Warcraft, League of Legends and Second Life gained millions of users and managed to couple entertainment with online socialisation and interaction. In parallel, the evolution of both hardware (graphics cards, processors and screens) and software (operating systems and graphic application programing interfaces, or APIs) led to a gradual increase in the realism and quality of virtual environments, reaching levels of detail mimicking reality. In fact, VR has been around for longer than most remember but has had a very shaky history, especially with Nintendo's Virtual Boy fiasco. Nevertheless, it was finally able to take advantage of both of the previously mentioned evolutions to enable companies to provide a commercially viable and quality experience for end users at a relatively modest price. Indeed, VR has been used by professionals for some time, in healthcare and by the military, but only with tailored and expensive devices, unsuitable for widespread release.

So while neither virtual environments, social networking/online communities or VR are new phenomena, the combination of all three is nothing short of a revolution.

This chapter will be structured in three parts. The first part will briefly review research about the effects of VR; the second part will raise a number of risks that VR may pose to a phenomenon like bullying; and the last part will present concluding remarks and tentative recommendations for addressing some of those risks.