



Erasmus+



## Extended Intellectual Output 1

# Summary Resources for Teachers

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A cross-national, co-participatory exploration of cyberbullying,  
young people and socio-economic disadvantage



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Available online at: <https://www.ou.nl/web/blurred-lives/resources>

# PART ONE

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE BLURRED LIVES PROJECT

Welcome to this resource designed for teachers by young people across Europe as part of the Blurred Lives Project - a cross-national, co-participatory exploration of cyberbullying, young people and socio-economic disadvantage.

The Blurred Lives Project focuses on the online experiences of 14-16 year olds in schools in disadvantaged urban areas in Northern Ireland, England, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands and aims to facilitate pupil voice through the creation of resources for teachers, pupils, parents and social networking providers.

The two-year project (2017-2019) is funded by Erasmus+ under KA2 Strategic Partnerships for School Education, and is led by a team of international experts with a wealth of experience of addressing bullying in schools: Dr Noel Purdy, Stranmillis University College, Belfast; Prof Peter K. Smith, Goldsmiths, University of London; Prof. Dr. Herbert Scheithauer, Freie Universität Berlin; Prof Antonella Brighi/Dr Consuelo Mameli, University of Bologna; and Dr. Trijntje Völlink, Open University of the Netherlands.

In the first phase of the project an online survey was completed by up to 500 pupils in 5+ schools in each country, and explored pupils' online access and negative experiences. Pupils were first invited to provide background demographic information and to detail the nature and extent of their regular online activity. They were then asked to describe a nasty or unpleasant online experience that had happened to them personally over the past couple of months, to indicate who they had reported it to (if anyone) and what happened as a result. They were also asked to describe a nasty online experience that had happened to someone else they know well, and to describe anything nasty or unpleasant that they had done themselves to someone online over the past couple of months. Finally, the survey invited the young people to provide suggestions as to how teachers, parents/carers and friends could help more.

The second phase aimed to provide up-to-date resources for teachers, pupils and parent/carers, and make important recommendations to Social Networking Providers, building on ideas from the pupils themselves. This was done through a combination of Sequential Focus Groups, and Quality Circles, carried out intensively with two classes of 14-16 year old pupils in each country. The first Sequential Focus Group was used to present some of the findings of the survey and to explore pupils' online experiences in more qualitative detail. There followed a series of Quality Circles where pupils worked in groups

with experienced facilitators to create original resources for particular audiences: teachers, pupils, parents/carers and social networking providers. The number and length of each session varied between schools and countries, depending on school timetables and availability of time. However in each case pupils were encouraged and empowered to work together (often outside normal friendship groups) with a common purpose to design appropriate and targeted guidance and/or resources, and to share their resources with others in their class or year group. The resulting resources comprised a rich variety of formats including posters, leaflets, videos, comic strips and presentations.

The final two Sequential Focus Groups provided an opportunity for the pupils to provide feedback on the first draft of the resources (after which minor revisions could be made) and on their experiences of participating in the Quality Circles.

The original resources will be made available on the Blurred Lives Project website and on the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform. Additionally, a selection of resources from each country is featured in the appendix to this summary (see appendices 1-5). Each partner country is also hosting one or more dissemination events in 2019 for participating schools, parents, teachers and key educational stakeholders.

## PART TWO

### EXISTING RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Currently, there is no shortage of preventive strategies in Europe that aim to tackle cyberbullying, and a number of them have proven to be efficient in regular school settings. For example, a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of school-based anti-cyberbullying programs identified that programs effectively reduce both cyberbullying perpetration and cyberbullying victimization amongst school-aged participants (Gaffney, Farrington, Espelage, & Ttofi, 2019)[1].

For instance, the „Media Heroes“ Program (German: „Medienhelden“, Schultze-Krumbholz, Zagorscak, Roosen-Runge, & Scheithauer, 2018; cf. Schultze-Krumbholz, Zagorscak, & Scheithauer, 2018)[2] is a universal, manualized, theoretically based, and carefully evaluated (process, impact, implementation, evaluation) preventive intervention program for the school context (7th-9th graders), including teachers and parents. Program objectives are: Prevention of cyberbullying/-victimization and promotion of online self-protection skills and social skills. The program is intended for implementation in classrooms and covers ten weeks

[1] Gaffney, H., Farrington, D.P., Espelage, D.L., & Ttofi, M.M. (2019). Are cyberbullying intervention and prevention programs effective? A systematic and meta-analytical review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 45, 134-153. doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2018.07.002

[2] Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Zagorscak, P., Roosen-Runge, A., & Scheithauer, H. (2018). *Medienhelden: Unterrichtsmaterial zur Förderung von Medienkompetenz und Prävention von Cybermobbing; mit zahlreichen Vorlagen und Arbeitsblättern*. Mit Geleitwort des WEISSEN RINGS e.V. (2., überarbeitete Auflage). München: Reinhardt.



with sessions of 90 minutes each as part of a curriculum.[3] A longitudinal, randomized control study proved the positive effects of the program (e.g. reduction in cyberbullying, improved skills/empathy). Meanwhile, the program has been translated into different languages (e.g. Spanish, English) and is currently being implemented - besides Germany - in South America and Malaysia.[4]

While such programs meet the standards of evidenced-based practices (e.g., program theory, defined core components, empirically-sound evaluation design and measures) and have proven to be effective, none of them is tailored to the needs of pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. What is clearly missing are preventive approaches that take the specific challenges of these pupils into account (i.e., impaired mental health and socioemotional development, multi-problem milieu and co-occurrence of different problems). For instance, little is known about media use and the experiences that these pupils have online (e.g., bullying in combination with discrimination).

Yet, taking pupils' perspective into account might be especially relevant when implementing a program in diverse settings, or when there is a need to adapt program elements to new target groups, such as pupils from lower economic backgrounds.

The Blurred Lives Project is the first project in Europe to use a co-participatory approach and to initiate pupil-led development of resources based on what these pupils experience, how they define cyberbullying, and what they think interventions should look like. Therefore, in addition to making the pupils' materials available to other schools and the public through this summary, in our view, it seems promising to use the resources that have been created (see part 3) for further development of preventive interventions.

## PART THREE

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### OVERVIEW OF THE 'BLURRED LIVES' RESOURCES

The following chapter aims to provide an overview of a selection of the resources created and compiled by pupils from Northern Ireland, England, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. The resulting resources encompass a wide variety of formats including posters, a presentation, a brochure and a leaflet.

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[3]Online: [www.medienhelden.info](http://www.medienhelden.info)

[4] Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Zagorscak, P., & Scheithauer, H. (2018). A school-based cyberbullying preventive intervention approach: The Media Heroes program. In M. Campbell & S. Bauman, Reducing cyberbullying in schools: International evidence-based best practices (pp. 145-158). Cambridge, MA: Academic Press.

**Northern Ireland (Appendix 1)**

Two posters and a lesson plan were designed by pupils aged 14-16 in a post-primary school in Northern Ireland, supported by Stranmillis University College. The first poster entitled “Promoting Cyberbullying Awareness” shows a collection of general ideas for preventative measures that teachers could use to fight cyberbullying. Ideas include a broad range of measures to sensitize for the topic, and respond to cases of cyberbullying: “a presentation for anti-bullying assemblies”, “make sure to give advice for pupils getting bullied”, “anonymous advice box”, “assembly presentation”, “monthly meetings”, “teachers courses”, “leaflets and posters”, and “a lesson”.

A second poster entitled “Problem in Your Class?” gives further advice on how to respond to an actual case of cyberbullying in class. Five key points are mentioned and explained in detail, with the aim of raising awareness of a victim’s suffering and psychological stress (“Take it seriously”), to encourage victims, as well as peer bystanders to report a case (“Teach children how to deal with cyberbullying”), to inform the parents about potential insults, bullying and harassment (“Get the parents involved”), to educate children about what is acceptable practice online (“Netiquette”), as well as to counteract cyberbullying on a school-wide level through the implementation of a school policy (“Have a school policy”).

As a third resource the pupils created a structured “Cyberbullying Awareness Lesson Plan” which offers six components teachers could use to deliver a lesson on the topic. Activities include a group discussion about cyberbullying, asking if pupils know how to report and handle bullying on different platforms, watching two or three Youtube videos that aim to raise cyberbullying awareness, and get the pupils’ feedback, having the pupils summarize what they have learnt in the lesson, and finally giving out leaflets and business cards from prevention organisations.

All three resources aim to equip teachers with a variety of strategies and options for actions to help pupils deal with cyberbullying and to reduce its prevalence in the long term. The resources could be printed out and posted on the school bulletin board and/or given as a handout to every teacher.

**England (Appendix 2)**

The second resource in this output was created by post-primary pupils in London, supported by Goldsmith’s, University of London. A four-page leaflet entitled “How much do you know?” was designed for teachers to read in their own time. The group collected their information from the online survey data findings that were relevant to teachers, and also conducted their own private research study by asking five members of teaching staff a series of questions.

The first page of the leaflet points to the relevance of the topic by reporting statistical data from the online survey (e.g., “30% of 582 pupils reported that they never talk to their parents/carers about their online activities”, and a statement from a pupil’s perspective: “Pupils are feeling more helpless as social media turns into a warzone.”. Starting with a definition of cyberbullying from a pupil perspective (“Attacking someone using social media or a device, with an intent to cause them harm or to hurt their feelings.”), the second page of the leaflet entitled “How to spot” highlights major warning signs teachers should pay attention to (e.g., the conversations pupils have around school, inside or outside the classroom in which potential incidents are being exchanged; unusual behaviour pupils are displaying, such as if a pupil is quiet, not focusing in class or acting in an unexpected way).

The third page contains precise, actionable advice from pupils for teachers on how they can help to tackle the issue, namely (1) to listen to pupil conversations on the playground and in classrooms, because that is when they talk most about their experiences; (2) to ensure they are available, so pupils can discuss any issues; (3) to ask pupils if they are okay, in case they suspect something is wrong. The last page finally reports insights from the group’s mini-research study that inspired the content of the final section in which the pupils aimed to answer the teachers’ questions (e.g., many teachers weren’t sure of how to spot or identify cyberbullying, and wouldn’t know what actions to take if a pupil told them they were being cyberbullied).

### **Germany (Appendix 3)**

Guided by the research team at Freie Universität Berlin, pupils from an integrated secondary school designed and created a lesson plan for a 90-minute session on cyberbullying and prevention of cyberbullying. In order to generate ideas the pupils were asked the following question: “If you were a teacher, what would you like to tell young people about cyberbullying, and which methods would be appropriate?”.

The pupils came up with five key activities to organize the lesson. To begin, (1) a short introduction from the teacher was suggested (could be a presentation on online safety, the most common online dangers, or even stories from victims). Following this, the class is asked to (2) discuss negative outcomes of cyberbullying, and elaborate on potentially harmful effects. This way, the consequences of bullying for the victims (e.g., reduced self-esteem, depression), as well as for the perpetrators (e.g., legal sanctions) are addressed.

In a next step the class would (3) practise a pre-scripted role play on cyberbullying. The role play starts with a girl reporting to a teacher that she was insulted and offended in the comments after posting a “selfie” on Instagram. In the following scene the teacher responds to the girl making suggestions on what steps to take. The Berlin pupils suggested splitting the class into two groups: One group continued the role play with a fictional teacher who is “digitally native”, while the second group played a version in which the teacher has only little knowledge of social media. The pupils’ assumption was that a better informed teacher would

suggest a different set of interventions (e.g., block your account, report as spam) than a teacher with less internet knowledge, but possibly more pedagogical experience (e.g., call the police, talk to your parents or a friend). Each class would find their own ending for the two storylines, and in a (4) final discussion could reflect on the effectiveness of interventions, the victim's feelings, and peer involvement as bystanders or allies. To finish the class, the pupils wished for (5) a "warm shower", a method known to them from another project. As this is a "shower" of compliments for each pupil, it is useful for building up self-esteem and improving overall class climate.

### **Italy (Appendix 4)**

Supported by the research team at the University of Bologna, pupils designed and created a series of 77 post-it notes to stick onto eight flipcharts with specific headings related to cyberbullying. The group proposed leaving those notes in the staff room, in order to remind them of their role regarding cyberbullying. The notes are placed so that the whole sentence (in Italian) reads «#NOCYBER». The flipcharts aim to draw attention to the relevance of the topic in their school ("STOP", e.g., "Stop lies", "Stop curse words", "Stop offending"; "LISTEN TO US", e.g., "Talk to us", "Protect us"), then inform about cyberbullying behaviors and characteristics ("THEY ARE...", e.g., "rude to feel superior/to offend/to feel powerful"; "THEY WRITE TO US...", e.g., "You are ugly/useless/idiot"; "THEY INSULT US", e.g. "Die", "Sl\*t"), consequences of cyberbullying ("Consequences", e.g. "Don't self-harm", "Don't hurt yourself"), a final call-to-action ("Stop", e.g., "Quit offending"), and a summary ("It happens online", e.g. "Cruelties", "Arrogance", "Being rude"). A separate poster entitled "Club No-Cyber" was designed to accelerate the teachers' understanding of the dangers of cyberbullying. The poster shows a list of online insults the pupils have been confronted with in their lives (e.g. "You're an ugly loser. If I was you, I'd have to kill myself.").

To conclude, while this resource does not contain any specific advice for teachers on how to respond and intervene, the pupils developed a unique and innovative strategy for sensitizing teachers, even in the middle of a busy school day. On top of that, this group provided a catchy overview of warning signs that are easy to grasp and visible at a glance.

### **The Netherlands (Appendix 5)**

The pupils at the secondary school in the Netherlands, supported by the Open University of the Netherlands, designed and created a brochure for teachers with suggestions on how to address (cyber)bullying in their school. They opted for a paper brochure, since they are easily distributable, and can be personally handed out to the teachers. The pupils also felt a paper brochure would more likely be read than an e-mail.

The first page includes a short description of the project, the group's self-designed logo, the purpose and what motivated the pupils to create the brochure ("We want to share tips with teachers on how to better deal with cyberbullying. We think teachers are doing it the wrong way and we want to help them change that.").

The main page in the brochure shows a comprehensive list of seven suggestions and tips on how to adequately respond if a case of cyberbullying is reported, according to the pupils' perspective ("First listen. Don't take immediate action"), how the school can increase general safety of internet use ("Children should have their own computer account that provides more overview."; "The school must ensure supervision of 'bullying sites.'"). Additionally, teachers are encouraged to increase their knowledge of the internet and "digital literacy" in order to better understand and respond to the dynamics that are specific to social media ("Make sure you know how the Internet works in general, such as: Instagram and Snapchat."). For instance, as part of their suggestions the pupils proposed that punishing the "followers" (i.e., the perceived bullies) is not always the best response, since they sometimes are not the real perpetrators, but follow because they might be afraid of the bully. This seems to be a valid observation that probably might not have been shared in another approach (i.e., non co-participatory).

All of the resources, including those not featured in this resource will be available to download from the Blurred Lives Project website and the Erasmus+Project Results Platform.

## PART FOUR

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Bullying, and increasingly Cyberbullying, is perceived as a real problem in many schools. Yet, teachers are hesitant and uncertain about how to incorporate their school anti-bullying policy into lessons. The existence of bullying behaviour in classroom settings presents challenging opportunities and the Quality Circles could be a valid strategy to tackle it using a co-participatory approach (Sharp & Smith, 1994)[5].

With (cyber)bullying being a social problem, Quality Circles provide a structure for all pupils to make changes in their own environment, and to practise and model pro-social behaviour. This motivates peer pressure against bullying that can be used as a preventative measure (Sharp & Smith, 1994). Even pupils who are not directly involved in bullying themselves are still likely to know who participates in bullying others, who is regularly bullied and where and when it occurs. During the Quality Circles, pupils embark on an empowering problem-solving exercise

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[5] Smith, P. and Sharp, S. (1994). *School bullying: insights and perspectives*. London: Routledge.

over a longer period of time. Through participation, in a series of workshops, they learn how to analyse problems, identify key issues, and generate pupil-led solutions (Paul, Smith & Blumberg, 2012)[6].

To our knowledge, to date no previous study or project has used a Quality Circle approach (e.g., Cowie & Sharp, 1992[7]; Paul et al., 2012) with pupils of this age group from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Cowie and Sharp (1994)[8] and Paul et al. (2012) had implemented the Quality Circle approach (with no Sequential Focus Groups) with much smaller numbers of primary school children and younger secondary school pupils in England. In these regards, the Blurred Lives Project is unique in implementing this method, combined with Sequential Focus Groups, across five European partner countries. In this final section we would like to give practical tips and recommendations for teachers who plan to facilitate Quality Circles in their classes. In many regards, the Quality Circles facilitated during the Blurred Lives Project turned out to be an engaging and effective intervention when working with young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The resulting outcomes are pupil-driven and a reflection of their needs, experiences and perspectives on cyberbullying.

Nevertheless, some minor adjustments to the Quality Circle approach as described in the literature (e.g., Sharp & Smith, 1994)[9] were necessary in order to produce the aforementioned results and maintain an appropriate level of engagement and enthusiasm.

The experiences gained by the research teams in five European countries, together in 10 schools with 237 pupils aged 14-16, will hopefully be valuable for teachers who plan to facilitate quality circles in their classes. Furthermore, since facilitation also differed slightly due to country-specific pre-conditions, we have included extended reports on the quality circle experiences from all project partners in the appendix to this summary (see appendix 6). A final process report will also be available in an upcoming book chapter in *Child and Adolescent Exposure to Online Risks* (Purdy et al., in press).

Some of the most important challenges faced by all teams were in terms of (1) pupil engagement and self-regulated learning; (2) balancing co-participation with necessary scaffolding; (3) group dynamics, as well as (4) the associated issues of time and resource, and – in some schools – support from school principals when it came to scheduling Quality Circle sessions.

### *1. Pupil engagement and self-regulated learning*

Contrary to the impression of the schools' social workers and teachers who supported the project, and in contrast to previous survey results, during the Quality Circles some of the

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[6] Paul, S., Smith, P.K., & Blumberg, H.H. (2012). Revisiting cyberbullying in schools using the quality circle approach. *School Psychology International*, 33, 492 – 504, doi: 10.1177/0143034312445243..

[7] Cowie, H. and Sharp, S. (1992). Students Themselves Tackle the Problem of Bullying. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 10(4), pp. 31-37.

[8] Cowie, H. and Sharp, S. (1994). Tackling bullying through the curriculum. In: *School Bullying: insights and perspectives*, Smith, P. and Sharp, S. (Eds). London: Routledge, pp. 84-107.

[9] Smith, P. and Sharp, S. (1994). *School bullying: insights and perspectives*. London: Routledge.

pupils subtly voiced that cyberbullying does not affect their school or themselves. Considering that the majority of pupils come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and have other multiple problems (i.e., in their families, academically, or with regard to their socioemotional development and mental health), cyberbullying probably was not their most pressing concern.

Many pupils were easily distracted and lacked focus and discipline (e.g. changing topic when being asked to discuss an issue in the group, insulting each other, standing up and walking around the room, throwing rubber balls around).

Generally, pupils needed a lot more guidance and intervention by the facilitators in order to be productive. In many cases it seemed that the pupils were not accustomed to this degree of freedom – and the self-regulation skills it required – over such a long period of time. They spent a long time trying to find ideas, and often found it difficult to create something original. In order to avoid overwhelming the pupils, we suggest that for some pupils a more directive approach seems more suitable – at least where pupils are not familiar with the methods used. This can be facilitated by splitting the class into different working areas and forming smaller working groups. As experiences from all project teams show, conducting the Quality Circles in subgroups with one trained adult per subgroup more adequately meets the need for consistent guidance and support that we found in this target group.

## *2. Balancing co-participation with necessary scaffolding*

Another challenge mentioned by all project teams was finding the right balance between encouraging pupil agency, self-regulation, independence and creativity on the one hand, and on the other hand providing adequate scaffolding, guidance, encouragement, and practical support to ensure that the pupils were able to produce resources of which they could feel proud. In order to make a recommendation that helps to solve this dilemma, making a distinction between the working process on the one hand, and the expected results on the other hand seems useful: in terms of the results that were expected, pupils' ideas in some cases did not align with pre-defined formats and themes (e.g. creating a comic book while an Instagram story seemed more relevant to their age group), which seemed to inhibit their creativity and agency to some degree. Therefore, in the spirit of empowerment and co-participation right from the beginning, we suggest that pupils should be given the maximum possible ownership of the choice of topic and choice of format/medium for an output.

Conversely, it quickly became clear that the working process needs to be directed and guided closely in order to produce any result. Project teams used a variety of strategies that helped facilitators to structure the Quality Circle sessions:



- **Session plans:** A detailed plan for each session should outline the goals, tasks, and group activities in the first two QC's, and should factor in adequate time for managing pupil concentration, group dynamics and disciplinary issues, as well as practical challenges (e.g., running IT equipment, room changes). Session plans should be agreed upon by all facilitators before the start of each session.
- **Example outputs:** In order to make suggestions to pupils who are not used to being creative and working on their own materials, it is recommended to bring example output materials (e.g., leaflets, flyers) to the first session emphasising that these are only examples and the pupils' creations can look different.
- **Background information:** As an introduction to the topic and to initiate a brainstorming or first discussion with the whole class, we suggest to offering some background information on the broader topic/area that pupils will work on in the quality circles (a short presentation with a definition, quote, case example, statistical information or easy-to-understand diagrams).
- **Task lists:** As soon as the class has been split up and the subgroups have decided on a project to work on, task lists tailored to each group should be prepared that include which step to take next, which goal or milestone to achieve in a week, or which group issue to address. It is best to adapt these between sessions depending on how the last session went. Task lists should be discussed with the pupil who co-leads a subgroup shortly before a session starts.
- **Goals Checklist:** Task lists can be combined with a more concise checklist that help to keep the work on track and ensure that pupils understand the goals for each Quality Circle. The list should include steps and milestones that are necessary for completing a project (e.g., "collect ideas from all group members", "agree upon one output to produce", "outline first draft"). As the Quality Circles proceed, items will be marked completed which helps to motivate pupils.

### *3. Group Dynamics*

Regardless of the setting or country, negative group dynamics became apparent in most of the subgroups to some degree. In particular, many groups had at least one "outsider" who rarely took part in the activities unless being directly addressed by the facilitators or other pupils. On the other hand, in some groups only one pupil was actively creating the output while the others



were on their phones, making jokes, or seemed bored. We recommend to address disciplinary issues and aim for equal effort among group members when it comes to contributing ideas and working on them. Pupils who are a little quieter and struggle to get attention or express their ideas in an adequate manner should be encouraged by the facilitator to speak up.

Furthermore, since Quality Circles have the potential to promote team work and socioemotional skills, arising issues can be an additional opportunity for learning. If dysfunctional group dynamics are directly addressed by a trained facilitator (who optimally can focus on only one of the subgroups), conflicts can be discussed and resolved. Additionally, we recommend establishing group rules during the first session, defining group roles (e.g., vote/nominate a co-leading pupil), and scheduling in time for activities that foster group cohesion, especially in the first two sessions (e.g., games).

#### *4. School-internal report*

While in the majority of schools, the school principal and at least one other person were highly committed to supporting the Blurred Lives Project, in a few cases implementation became challenging, e.g. when scheduling the quality sessions, trying to involve another colleague into the project, or finding empty rooms. Since schools often only have scarce resources, implementing new projects is typically stressful and reservations about another project are often expressed.

We therefore would like to encourage those who decide on taking the lead in facilitating the Quality Circles, to first find support within their school, at least from the principal, and to involve at least one other colleague. Furthermore, we recommend scheduling enough time for practical tasks (e.g., finding a room, organizing laptops), and to making adaptations as needed (e.g., schedule longer, intensive bi-weekly instead of weekly sessions if this helps to increase acceptance of the method). We also suggest briefing colleagues about the quality circle approach and its potential whenever possible (e.g., pupils benefit from its effects regardless of the subject, improved class climate), and at a later time to show the pupils' work and progress in a (celebratory) showcase session together with the pupils. While these steps will probably lead to an increased workload in the beginning, facilitation of the Quality Circles becomes easier when accepted as a school-wide measure.

For an overview, the following table summarizes key challenges during implementation, as well as possible solutions for successfully guiding pupils through a series of Quality Circles.

| Key Challenges   | Practical tips and recommendations   |
|--|--|
| 1. Method is overwhelming for pupils; pupils are not used to self-regulated learning; lack of focus and engagement.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split class into smaller groups (max. five pupils).</li> <li>• Allocate them to separate rooms if possible.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate staffing (one adult per subgroup) to allow to better guidance and encouragement.</li> <li>• Take time to address disciplinary issues or lack of motivation.</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Co-participatory approach offers little structure for pupils; facilitators feels a lack of control during facilitation; amount of scaffolding is unclear. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan each session in terms of timing, methods and material used to generate ideas.</li> <li>• Be open about the results and format.</li> <li>• Make task lists for each subgroup.</li> <li>• Use a goals checklist to keep work on track.</li> <li>• Provide e.g. laptops to do own research</li> <li>• Bring background information and sample materials to start a discussion.</li> <li>• Provide newspapers, journals, scissors, and paper to get creative.</li> </ul> |
| 3. Risk of negative group dynamics; some pupils are quieter or refuse to contribute, some are more dominant.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take time to address issues and allow pupils to talk openly about it.</li> <li>• Encourage quieter pupils to express their ideas, and others to listen carefully.</li> <li>• Discuss and establish group rules in first session with the whole class.</li> <li>• Plan activities that foster group-cohesion (e.g., games)</li> <li>• Nominate/vote group roles in the subgroups.</li> </ul>   |
| 4. Lack of support within schools; head teacher or colleagues express reservations about the project and resources; busy school life.                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve another colleague in the project.</li> <li>• Get support from school principal.</li> <li>• Schedule enough time for finding a room, organizing laptops etc.</li> <li>• Make adjustments as needed (e.g. combine sessions).</li> <li>• Brief colleagues about the benefits of the quality circle approach (see list below).</li> <li>• Show progress in (celebratory) showcase session.</li> </ul>   |

Despite the challenges that are discussed above, throughout the process of facilitating the Quality Circles with pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, working with them was mostly highly rewarding. The experience of creating their own materials, and having their ideas and suggestions taken seriously seemed to induce a sense of pride in the pupils and probably have increased their confidence in their own abilities.

As the pupils reflected on their experience during the final group interviews (i.e. focus groups), some of them reported that through the Quality Circles they had learned how to work in a team and how to stay focused.

To conclude, in addition to gaining knowledge about cyberbullying and how to protect themselves and their peers online, the Quality Circle process requires pupils to develop socio-emotional (e.g., team work, self-regulation) and problem-solving, as well as presentation skills. In detail, according to Smith & Sharp (1994)[\[10\]](#), through the Quality Circles pupils learn to:

- work co-operatively with other people;•
- express their own thoughts and opinions clearly;•
- listen carefully to others;•
- keep record of discussions;•
- identify and prioritise problems faced by themselves and their peers;•
- investigate the extent, causes and effects of the problem;•
- analyse their findings;•
- formulate solutions;•
- evaluate advantages and disadvantages, costs and practical implications of putting any solution into practice;•
- present their solutions in a persuasive way.

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[\[10\]](#) Smith, P. and Sharp, S. (1994). *School bullying: insights and perspectives*. London: Routledge.

## PART FIVE

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### USEFUL WEBSITES BY COUNTRY

#### **England/United Kingdom**

[www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk)  
[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)  
[www.ditchthelabel.org](http://www.ditchthelabel.org)  
[www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)  
[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)  
[www.youthworksconsulting.co.uk](http://www.youthworksconsulting.co.uk)  
[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)  
[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

#### **Northern Ireland**

[www.endbullying.org.uk/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/)  
[www.endbullying.org.uk/publications/pc-toolkit/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/publications/pc-toolkit/)  
[www.endbullying.org.uk/gallery/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour-2/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/gallery/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour-2/)  
[www.endbullying.org.uk/ertbb/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/ertbb/)

#### **Germany**

[www.schau-hin.info](http://www.schau-hin.info)  
[www.elternimnetz.de](http://www.elternimnetz.de)  
[www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de)

#### **The Netherlands**

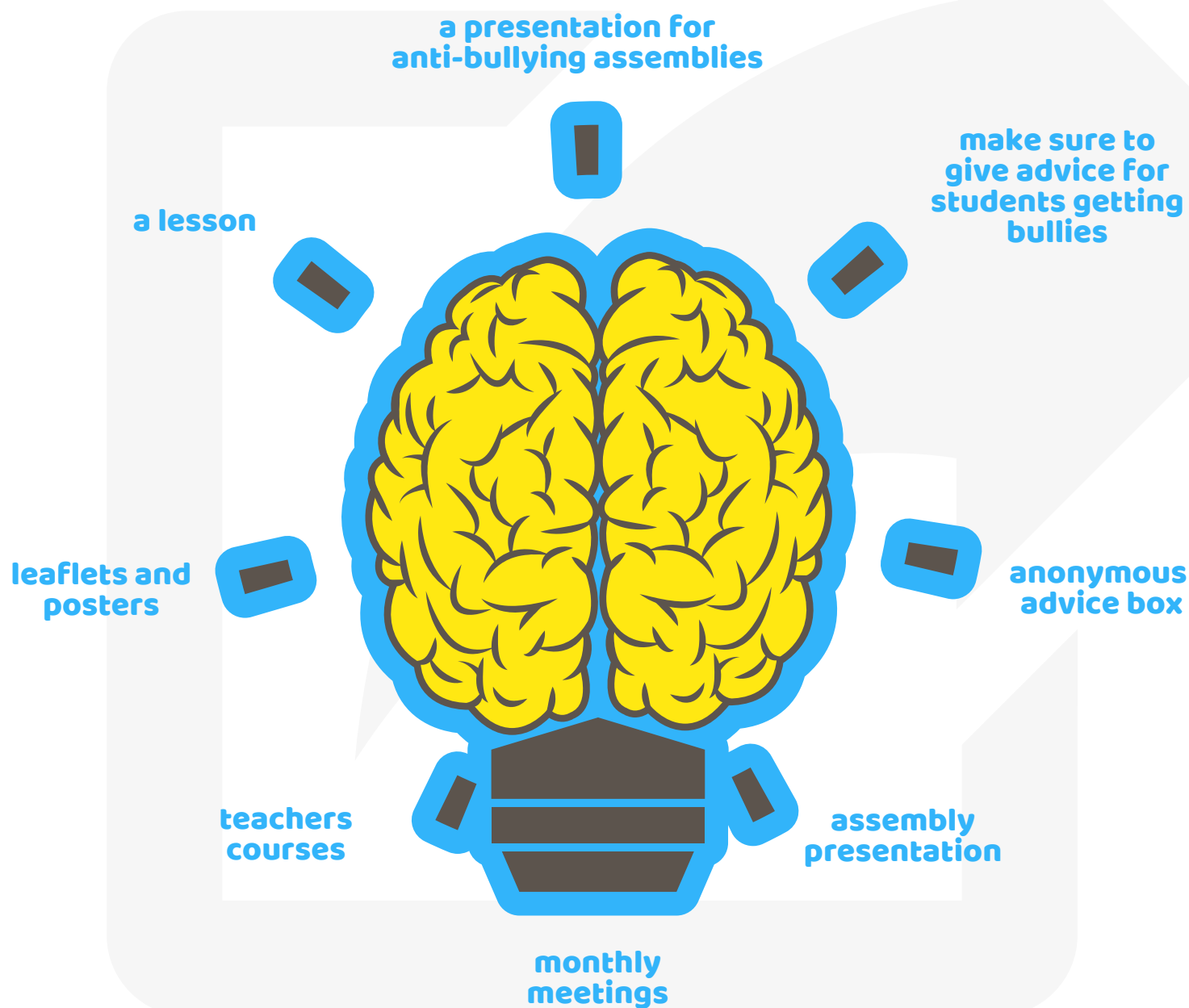
[www.meldknop.nl/](http://www.meldknop.nl/)  
[www.pestweb.nl/](http://www.pestweb.nl/)  
[www.mediawijsheid.nl/](http://www.mediawijsheid.nl/)

# Appendix 1

## Northern Ireland

## Resources





# PROMOTING CYBERBULLYING AWARENESS

## IDEAS FOR TEACHERS



**blurred lives** PROJECT

A Cross-National, Co-Participatory Exploration Of  
Cyberbullying, Young People And Socio-Economic  
Disadvantage.



# PROBLEM IN YOUR CLASS?

**Help & advice** if there's any form of **cyberbullying** within your class

## Take It Seriously

Cyber-bullying can be a living hell for the children who experience it, so don't pretend that it's just a few nasty words in the playground.

## Netiquette

Every school should be teaching their children about what is acceptable practice in cyber-communications and what isn't.

## Get the parents involved

If I had a child that was being insulted, harassed and bullied by some mysterious cowards, I'd imagine I'd like to know about it.

## Have a School Policy

This has been a requirement in all NI schools since the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

## Teach children how to deal with cyberbullying

This means encouraging them to report it whenever it happens.



# CYBERBULLYING AWARENESS LESSON PLAN



Create a group discussion about cyberbullying. Make sure that everyone has a clear understanding on what cyberbullying is.



Ask if they know to how to report and handle cyber bullying on different platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, etc. Get them to write their ideas on a page.



Get feedback by making the students present their ideas in groups or as a class. Make this a class discussion.



Watch these YouTube videos and get feedback afterwards.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GRua-iRwuU>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ctd75a7\\_Yw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ctd75a7_Yw)



Do a final class discussion and get feedback on what the students have learnt in this lesson.



Give out cyberbullying leaflets or business cards from cyberbullying awareness or prevention organisations.





A Cross-National, Co-Participatory Exploration Of Cyberbullying,  
Young People And Socio-Economic Disadvantage.



## Appendix 2

# England Resources



# HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

Students are feeling more helpless as social media turns into a war zone!

## What is cyber bullying?

### Cyber Bullying for us is...

targeting someone through social media with cruel intentions.

### STATISTIC

30% of the 582 students reported that they never talk to the parents/carers about their online activities. However a shocking 96% of these students reported that their parents aren't very worried about their online activities.

### DEFINITION

**Definitive** The use of electronic means to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating nature.

### Our Definition

Attacking someone using social media or a device, with the intent to cause them harm or to hurt their feelings.

### HOW TO SPOT

- The conversations students have around the school, whether that be inside or out of the classroom, can be a way to get an idea about what situations are occurring and which students are involved.
- Any unusual behaviour students are displaying can be a sign that there is a problem to be addressed eg if a student is quiet, not focusing in class or not acting in a way you'd expect.

## ADVICE

- Listen to student conversations on the playground and in classrooms, because that is when they talk most about their experiences/activities occurring outside of school.
- Ensure you are always available, so students can discuss any online issues they are having.
- If you have suspicions about any students, ask them if they are ok and make it clear they can talk to you about anything they need to.

### JUST THINK



## QUOTES

### Students

- "Sometimes they just need someone to talk to and advice."
- "Young people are reluctant to do things when told to do them so be encouraging to promote confidence in teacher-pupil communication."
- "I believe that pupils do not always know what they have access to at school making them feel alone."

### Teachers

When carrying out a private survey of the teachers in our school, we found that:

- Many weren't sure of how to spot or identify if a student was being cyberbullied.
- Most said they wouldn't know what actions to take if a student told them they were being cyberbullied.

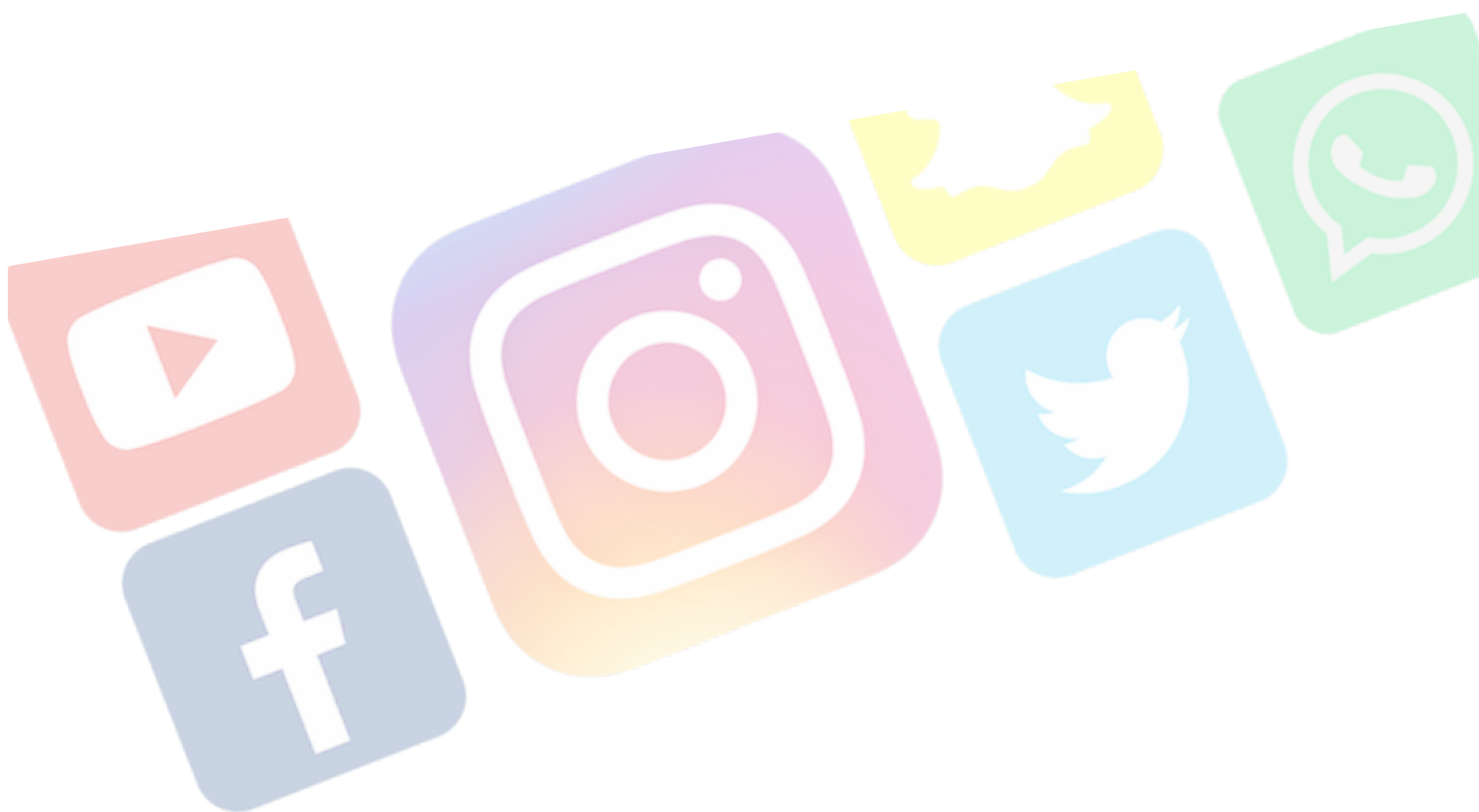


A Cross-National, Co-Participatory Exploration Of Cyberbullying,  
Young People And Socio-Economic Disadvantage.



## Appendix 3

# Germany Resources



Freie Universität Berlin



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
A College of Queen's University Belfast



Goldsmiths  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



# LESSON PLAN

## 5 ACTIVITIES

# TO TACKLE CYBERBULLYING



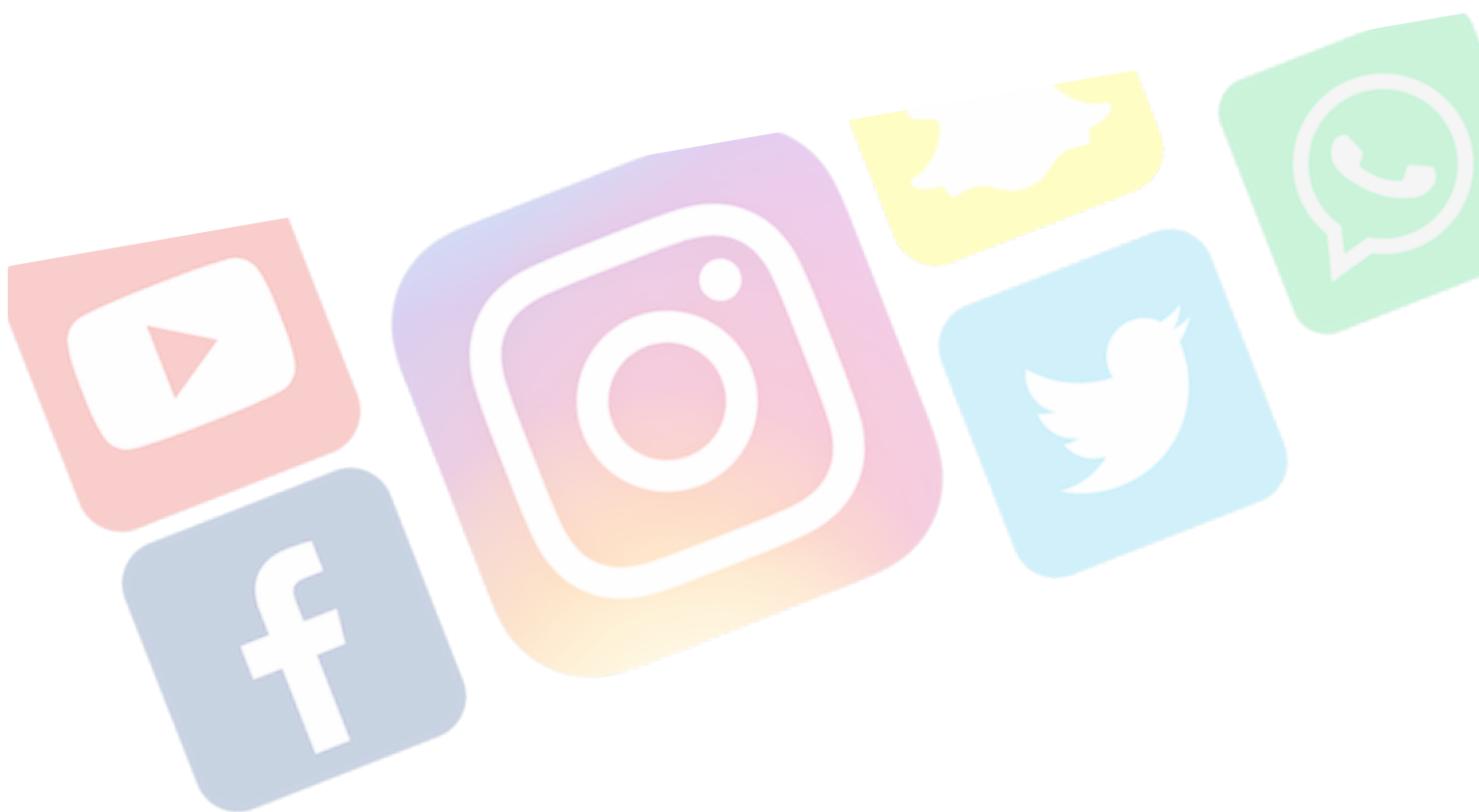
| TIME  | ACTIVITY   | OBJECTIVES   |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 10' | SHORT INTRODUCTION FROM THE TEACHER (E.G., PRESENTATION ON ONLINE SAFETY & ONLINE DANGERS) | Raise awareness in students and teach basic knowledge on the topic               |
| 2 15' | STUDENTS NAME REASONS AGAINST CYBERBULLYING  | Discuss the consequences for victims and perpetrators                            |
| 3 30' | PRACTICE A PRE-SCRIPTED ROLE PLAY ON CYBERBULLYING   | Experience bullying roles and develop interventions from a students' perspective |
| 4 20' | FINAL DISCUSSION AND EXCHANGE ABOUT THE ROLEPLAY   | Reflect on peer interventions and the victim's feelings                          |
| 5 15' | "WARM SHOWER" OF COMPLIMENTS FOR EVERYONE  | Build up self-esteem and improve class climate                                   |

### Suggestions for practicing the pre-scripted role play:

The role play starts with a girl reporting to a teacher that she was insulted and offended in the comments after posting a selfie on Instagram. In the following scene the teacher responds to the girl making suggestions on what steps to take. The Berlin students suggested to split the class into two groups: One group continues the role play with a fictional teacher who is "digitally native", while the second group plays a version in which the teacher has only little knowledge social media. The students' assumption was that a more informed teacher would suggest a different set of interventions (e.g., block your account, report as spam) than a teacher with less internet knowledge, but possibly more pedagogical experience (e.g., call the police, talk to your parents or a friend). Each class would find their own ending of the two storylines, and in a final discussion could reflect on the effectiveness of interventions, the victim's feelings, and peer involvement as bystanders or allies.

## Appendix 4

# Italy Resources





# BASTA...

BASTA

BUGIE

BASTA

CYBER

STOP

PAROLACCE

BASTA

BULLIZZARE

BASTA

INSULTI

BASTA

OFFENDERE

# ASCOLTATECI

PARLATECI

LE

ASCOLTATECI

PROTEGGETECI

PAROLE

AIUTATECI

DIFENDETECI

FANNO

CONSIGLIATECI

MALE

# LORO SONO...

CATTIVERIA

ESSERE

MALEUCATI

ARROGANCIA

SENTIRSI

DIVERTIRSI

SUPERIORI

OFFENDONO

SENTIRSI

POTENTI

# CI SCRIVONO....

BRUTTA

ZOXXXIA

TRXXA

STUPIDA

SEI

INUTILE

HUORI

DEFICIENTE



# CI INSULTANO

BRUTTA

TRxxA

STUPIDA

ZOxxxLA

SEI

INUTILE

MUORI

# CONSEGUENZE

NON

AUTOLESIONISMO

FARSI

DEL

PIANGERE

BASTA

NON

MALE

PARLARNE

CON

NESSUNO

# STOP...

BASTA

BUGIE

BULLIZZARE

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STOP

INSULTI

BASTA

OFFENDERE

STOP

# SUCCEDE ONLINE...

CATTIVERIE

ESSERE

MALEUCATI

PREPOTENTI

ARROGANZA

SENTIRSI

DIVERTIRSI

SUPERIORI

OFFENDONO

POTENTI

## Appendix 5

# The Netherlands Resources





## WHO WE ARE

We participate in a project at school. About how young people think about how cyberbullying should be tackled. There are different groups, our group is called: 'The Leopards'. Our group made a folder for the teachers. In this folder you will find tips against cyberbullying.



## INTRODUCTION

We do this because through our own experiences we want to share tips with teachers on how to better deal with cyberbullying. We think teachers are doing it the wrong way and we want to help them change that.



## Tips for teachers:

- ❖ First listen; don't take immediate action.
- ❖ After a certain time, check how it goes.
- ❖ Especially guidance after bullying.
- ❖ The school must ensure supervision of 'bullying sites' (remote places)
- ❖ Children should have their own computer account that provides more overview.
- ❖ Make sure you know how the Internet works in general, such as: Instagram and Snapchat.
- ❖ Do not immediately punish 'followers', because usually they have not done anything but are afraid of the bully.



## Quality Circle Experience – Belfast, Northern Ireland

### 1. How we ran the QCs and School Schedules/ QC Sequence, length of sessions, combining sessions

In Belfast, we ran 10-11 QC sessions in each of the two schools. We had originally planned for 7 sessions, however we found that, for a number of different reasons, we needed more time with the pupils. We contacted the schools in June 2018 and arranged to meet with the organising teachers in August 2018.

We had planned to have the QC sessions completed before Christmas 2018 however in hindsight this was unrealistic. We found that we needed to ask for additional sessions for several main reasons: each period was very short (as short as 35 minutes but this meant no more than 20-25 minutes of working time once pupils had arrived, got settled and logged on to their computers); there were unavoidable days lost due to other school events such as examinations, year group meetings and exceptional closures.

We began each series of quality circles with an overview presentation about the project and also some team building games which the pupils really enjoyed and which certainly helped to generate conversation and team skills *across* friendship groups. It did take 3-4 sessions for the pupils to really grasp what the project was about and what was involved. After these first few sessions, they were then able to brainstorm a few ideas for their own target audience. During the latter sessions, a lot of time was spent using computers/laptops to help create the resources.

In School 1, we were given a 30min period every Tuesday morning with 21 year 12 pupils in a normal classroom with desks and chairs, although this classroom venue changed a lot during the first three weeks. This classroom was quite small for the Y12 group to allow any team building games beyond those that can be played around a table. Sometimes the tables were in rows and sometimes in groups, so we often had to spend a little time rearranging the classroom every period. This took up valuable time.

In School 2, we were given a 40minute period every Tuesday afternoon with 19 year 11 pupils before the end of school. This ran alongside the Y11 PE period so some pupils were very happy to miss this whilst others said that that was one of the downsides of the project. This classroom environment was much better as it was a large drama room with big tables and chairs, along with a separate comfy sofa area. The pupils had lots of space to play team building games and different areas to work in groups. This classroom was very appropriate for the project. The school was very good at notifying us in advanced what dates were not suitable, for example, term examinations.

### 2. Age, gender of pupils

In School 1, the 21 pupils were all in Year 12, aged 15 and 16. This year group would be sitting external GCSE examinations so we were aware that taking up too much of their time could be detrimental. There were 12 boys and 9 girls and all but one of the groups was mixed gender.

In School 2, the 19 pupils were a year younger (year 11), aged 14 and 15. Although this year group wouldn't be sitting their GCSE examinations until the following year, some would be completing modules and coursework. We were again mindful not to use up too much of their time. There were 9 boys and 10 girls: two groups were mixed, while there was one all-girls group and one all-boys group.

### 3. Advantage of having helpers

In Belfast, the groups were mostly led solely by one facilitator with occasional support from a colleague. In hindsight this made it much more challenging to circulate around the different groups and to ensure that the groups remained focused and on-task. Pupils would undoubtedly have benefited from additional adult support, had it been available. Consequently the pupils were tasked with working largely independently with occasional support and advice being offered.

### 4. Scaffolding the pupils work

It was difficult to strike the right balance between implementing a fully co-participatory project and producing intellectual outputs that would be of high quality and fit for purpose. At the beginning of the project, many of the pupils did find it difficult to come up with their own ideas for the outputs because they are rarely asked to do this in their other subjects. The facilitator therefore had to spend a lot of time with each group to help them to come up with ideas for the project and to develop and refine these original ideas.

When the first draft of the resources were completed, some additional support was required by the university team to ensure that no copyrighted images had been used, to check for accuracy of expression and content, and to enhance the design work, for instance adding the project logo. Here there was a concern that the pupils might resent the interference by adults but in the end the final focus group revealed that the pupils really liked the final versions of their work and felt that their ideas had been captured in a way "we never could have."

### 5. Pupil Engagement/Group size and Equality of participation

In School 1 the pupils were engaged to an extent, although towards the end of the project, some of the boys used the time to chat rather than help their group members with the resource. The girls were more engaged throughout and were able to tie the ideas of their resources together more effectively. The group that were targeting the social media providers had great ideas but these were not articulated well into a resource. This had to be redrafted significantly by the university team using their original ideas. Similarly, another group of pupils drew (by hand) a large poster which they obviously spent a lot of time and effort on, however, a lot of the information on this poster was factually incorrect, and the drawing was so faint that it was barely legible. Again, this had to be edited and digitalised by the university team so that it could be distributed.

There were 2 more boys in this class at the beginning of the process however, they were removed from the group by the school because they were completely disengaged from the

group work and were becoming a distraction for some of the other pupils who were more committed to the process.

There were also a few other boys from the class who did not attend school often and were therefore rarely present in the sessions. These were newcomer children and their lack of attendance along with their limited grasp of English meant that their level of engagement was minimal, despite the best efforts of the project team.

In School 2 the pupils were more engaged than in School 1 (despite being a year younger) and seemed to be able to work better in groups. In this school, the pupils were engaged with each other and participated more with pupils that they did not have a previous friendship with. One of the groups in this school was slightly bigger and they split into two further groups to facilitate creating the resources. One of the groups worked well together but often some of the pupils were at another event or simply “forgot” to come to the session. One girl was left a few times to work on the resource by herself but she was happy to do this. In the end, despite working alone for most of the time, she produced an excellent resource and took real pride in the finished result.

The group working on the resource for social media providers had the most difficult task as this target group seemed to be the least tangible and/or furthest from their own context. The boys in the group did not know each other at all at the start of the process. We were concerned that this group might not produce anything at all but they surprised us by working extremely well together and by producing an original resource. One of the boys from that group in the focus group said that his team work skills improved throughout the project and that he had made new friends.

## 6. Use or not use of computers

In both schools we had the opportunity to use laptops which were advantageous to an extent. It gave the pupils the opportunity to research some ideas and some of the content that they wanted to include. In School 1, the pupils were given access to the laptop suite for 7 sessions. This meant that most of the pupils had access to a laptop to gather information and put together their resource. In School 2, the pupils borrowed one or two laptops for their group. This meant that only one person in each group could put the resource together. However, the rest of the group were generally helpful in researching ideas and information using their smart phones. They took notes on this and then used the information to create their resource.

Although it was generally helpful to have the laptops in each school, they did also cause a hindrance. The pupils had to be well policed when using the laptops and their phones to make sure they were doing the work required of them. The laptops were also slow to turn on and took a long time to log the pupils on to their accounts. This meant that at least ten minutes was wasted during every session simply logging on and off. In School 2, the laptops were often not fully charged so the pupils had to sit near a plug socket. The classroom used was quite far away from the WiFi hub. This meant that they had limited space in which to access the internet. Although each of these seem like minor details, the combination of limited time, supervision and resourcing were definitely contributory factors to the success

of the quality circle experience, the learning gained and the quality of the resources produced.

## 7. Feedback from pupils

The pupils generally thought the quality circle approach was really useful and “different to what we are used to.” They enjoyed having external facilitators and felt that this meant that they were hearing from people who really knew about the subject, rather than having their normal class teachers.

They enjoyed working in groups (which they claimed they do less frequently now as they approach examinations) and enjoyed it when “everyone summarised what they had done” every week as in their other classes they rarely got to see anyone else’s work. They enjoyed working with pupils that they weren’t friends with as they were able to see “a different side to them.” One pupil explained that she felt the method encouraged all pupils, including very shy pupils, to express their ideas in a way that they normally wouldn’t.

While they may have heard something about cyberbullying before in other subjects, one pupil explained that their involvement in the QCs “actually gave a proper insight into it and helped us learn different things about it.” One pupil explained that being able to research the topic helped to give them the “bigger picture”, while another noted that “It was good because it gave me a different insight on it, because I never really knew much about the matter, to be honest, so I learned a good lot.” Several pupils explained that they hadn’t previously been aware of the potential negative impact of cyberbullying and through the QCs had learnt practical ways to “help or stop it, and prevent things like that happening.”

They enjoyed the level of interaction that was possible in the QCs which the pupils saw as more beneficial than an assembly presentation:

“It is more interactive. You can actually get involved instead of just sitting there listening. People hardly pay attention in assemblies. You just sit there, whereas here you sort of have to pay attention.”

Pupils explained that it was “fun”, a “breather” after a busy day and that it “didn’t feel like work”. The pupils unanimously felt proud of the work they had created, and especially proud that their work would be made available across Europe and might actually “help someone”. Finally the pupils felt that the QC approach should be used to address other pastoral issues within schools.



## Quality Circle Experience – London, England

### 1. School selection, samples, attendance, running of QCs, length of sessions

Two out of the five survey schools agreed to continue with pupil participation via sequential focus groups and quality circles. Both schools were in areas of socio-economic disadvantage in London. School 1 had Church of England affiliation and School 2 had Roman Catholic affiliation.

In School 1, the assistant principal and form teacher selected 31 students from Year 9 and divided them into 4 equal groups. The criteria for participation were: to be able work well together; to avoid potential disruptive/conflict clashes; a mix of gender; special educational needs represented; loud and quiet students. The QC class was composed of 14 girls and 17 boys aged between 13 and 14 (Year 9). The 4 resource groups were mixed fairly evenly with only the group creating the pupil resource containing mostly female students.

In School 2, the Pastoral lead and Head of Year selected 28 students from Year 10 using the same criteria for participation. However, the research team had to divide the students into 4 unequal groups with no prior knowledge of the different pupil personalities selected for the process. The QC class was composed of 14 girls and 14 boys aged between 14 and 15 (Year 10). Two of the groups were fairly evenly mixed whilst the other two groups were predominantly boys (teachers' resource) or predominantly girls (pupil resource).

Having the sample divided into resource groups by staff members (in School 1) as opposed to a research team was an advantage, as less time was lost during a session; in School 2, adjustments in two out of the four groups were made at the beginning of QC2.

Attendance by the students in School 1 was mostly consistent, with absences being due to illness. School 2 was less predictable; often time was lost wondering where students were, and the research team often had to ask other students if they were ill, had dropped out or were in after-school detention. Both of the schools often had students who had forgotten about the sessions and time was lost with other students going to find them.

In both schools, we ran 7 QC sessions as planned, weekly (with a 1-week half-term break in the middle). At School 1 this was from October- December 2018, and School 2 from January through February 2019. Each session lasted one hour. Given delays in arriving, this period in practice became about 50 minutes, and was found to be a good and necessary length of time. Sessions generally started with an introduction, then pupil work in four resource groups, then a short feedback session from each group at the end.

In School 1, each QC session replaced a school lesson and was held in the school Chapel. This was not only a place of worship but provided a safe space for SEN students to have their break and lunchtimes. In School 2 the QC sessions were held after school for one hour in an allocated classroom. Additional parent/carers consent was required for School 2 due to sessions taking place after school hours.

The format rolled out was identical for both schools. At QC1 the project was introduced and the approach explained, group formation exercises undertaken and presentation of the

online survey findings from part 1. Groups were introduced to confidentiality rules, election of scribe and feedback person for each session, and 1-minute feedback at the end of the session.

For QC2 onward, using the results from the quantitative and qualitative survey findings, the research team extracted relevant data for each of the four resource topics, so that each group could familiarise themselves with it and begin extracting the data that they found most interesting and appropriate for their resource development. The work involved for all of the groups in both schools was daunting and was generally met with apprehension and in some cases, disengagement. All of the groups progressed at different paces with some groups clearly knowing what to do from QC2 whilst other groups were floundering even at QC5. Reasons behind this variation was often highlighted by the research team throughout the process. The resources developed by each group were peer reviewed during QC6. This was in preparation for QC7, where they showcased their work to the Senior Leadership Teams of each school. This was a wonderful opportunity for the students to deliver their resources and be exposed to questions by the audience of teachers and researchers: a truly fitting end to the QC experience.

We had initially planned to run QCs at both schools concurrently. However we had to postpone QCs at School 2 so in fact they ran sequentially. This actually had a number of positive implications: at School 2 we made adjustments with less time needed for ice-breaker games; paired versus individual working time; advantages of not using computers; and more effective use of time with just three QC sessions for main resource development, and both QC 5 and 6 for feedback and resource alteration.

## 2. Synergy of Sequential Focus Groups (SFGs) and QCs

The sequencing of SFGs and QCs was a complex process and required a great deal of time to organise and deliver in each school. In School 1, SFG1 was performed first and this led into the seven QC sessions. Next, SFG2 was performed where students could reflect on the resources, making suggestions and alterations where necessary. SFG3 was the last of the focus groups and gave students one more opportunity to alter the resources. In School 2, the sequence was identical apart from SFG2 and SFG3 being combined into one session.

## 3. Advantage of having helpers

No teachers were present at the QC sessions, but the research team recruited a pool of highly qualified helpers to assist, ideally one helper per resource group with a lead facilitator overseeing the general running and timing. Given only 7 QC sessions to complete the work, the presence of these helpers was very important in facilitating the approach in order to keep the students focused, group dynamics maintained and task-orientated. This enabled the process to be completed on time and the quality of the work developed to be higher. The students varied greatly in emotional maturity and this could be addressed on an individual level. Each helper remained with the same group for the duration of the sessions which promoted trust, confidence and reassurance for the students. If a helper could not attend, their group would often be disappointed, and inconsistencies occurred. The helpers also collected information about how each session ran, giving a general overview (School 1) or filling in a pre-written template for the evaluation (School 2).



#### 4. Scaffolding the pupil's work/pupil engagement/equality of participation

School 1 was a completely different experience to School 2 when addressing the co-participatory and student-led aspects of the design. The approach required the students to be in charge of creating each of the resources and their lack of experience and exposure to this style of working was apparent. As a consequence, the facilitators had to engage and direct the students a great deal more than was anticipated, especially during the first four sessions. It was extremely difficult to strike the right balance of support and independent working. During the early stages of the approach, there was often a lack of participation from certain students and despite the best efforts from the research team, the engagement was minimal; this did improve through the sessions, at least for many pupils.

The Social Network Providers (SNP) and the teacher resources groups were the most problematic for understanding the task required. Sometimes the work produced after a session was minimal and incomprehensible which required a great deal of reorganising and prompting suggestions. However, some of the students creating the teacher resource worked on this in their own time, producing a role-play script. The pupil resource appeared the least problematic with all the students participating in their group.

School 2 was interesting because although the students were more challenging in their behaviour and attendance, they appeared to be more at ease with the student-led aspect of this approach. This was obvious from QC1 onwards, with more questions being asked and interactions across groups. Each group contained a few strong characters who contributed a lot to proceedings. The helpers reflected and questioned whether this was a developmental difference with pupils being a year older.

The SNP and parent/carer resource groups appeared to be at some disharmony with the task and initially required more intervention by the helpers. However once engaged, these two groups were dynamic, effective, creative and protective of their work. Once again, the group creating the pupil resource had a clear direction from the start; this was despite having mercurial members within the group who had a confrontation with another student from a different group. Some pupils also went to extra lengths outside of the sessions to work on their resource.

During one of the sessions, the SNP group exposed a cyberbullying situation that occurred within the year group. The students appeared angry and emotional over how the school dealt with the case and the helper expertly walked them through their varied emotions.

School 2 contained students of all different abilities but what was interesting here is that the other students knew how to compensate for their inabilities in participation.

#### 5. Use or not use computers

The access to computers was different in both schools. When School 1 reached QC3, in order to enhance their researching of allocated resources, students were given access to a computer room which was quite far away from the Chapel, so time was lost just moving between the two rooms. Other issues included logging on speeds, copy and pasting

uncritically from the Internet, students forgetting their passwords, not knowing where to save their work, students listening to music or surfing the Internet, and groups splitting up between the two rooms making it very difficult for the helpers to monitor their progress. Nevertheless some of the students successfully completed their task using the computers and created useful PowerPoint slides.

School 2 had computers on desks around the edges of the room with permission to use if desired. However, given the experience in School 1, the research team decided not to use computers for School 2. The advantages of this decision were plentiful, allowing more time for creativity to flow and conversations to occur within each resource group and between the four groups. Overall, the quality of each resource created was completely authentic to the groups. It gave a true insight into their thoughts, beliefs and understanding of cyberbullying without any influences from pre-existing resources on the Internet. This enhanced their learning experience and gave them true ownership of their work.

## 6. Pupil's evaluation and follow-up

In School 1, students were asked to complete an evaluation and feedback survey after showcasing their resources at QC7, and in School 2, this was performed at the end of QC6. These were generally very positive. Examples of some of the answers are given below in order to show and fully capture the range of experiences they felt from participating in the quality circle approach. Overall, and despite many difficulties on the way, the QC experience was felt to have been very valuable, as much for the process as for the products produced.

*How have you felt the Quality Circle sessions have gone each week?*

School 1:

- "A lot of fun"
- "Worked well together"
- "Very lucky to be part of a group that accepts you"
- "More equipped to deal with cyberbullying"

School 2:

- "I have felt surprised"
- "We have all been able to express our ideas"
- "I am happy I joined"
- "Very comfortable and productive"

*Have you learnt any new techniques?*

School 1:

- "Problem solving"
- "Teamwork"
- "Presenting my work"
- "Standing up to read my work"
- "Information gathering"
- "How to look at problems differently"

School 2:

- "Yes, assigning group rules"

"I have improved my social speaking"

"How to work better in a group"

"I have learnt that if you wish to appeal to someone you have to make it interesting"

*Have you enjoyed working in your groups? Best session? Why?*

School 1:

"Best session was producing the PowerPoint"

"I liked how we gave each other feedback"

"I loved working with my group"

"I enjoyed all the sessions because of the treats and making new friends"

"Session 5 was the best session as our research was completed and we got to practice what we were going to say for QC7"

"I enjoyed making the leaflet because everyone worked hard and put their ideas in"

School 2:

"Yes, because it was fun"

"All of the sessions were good because everyone followed the rules which we set and took each personal story seriously"

"Yes, because the discussions were fun and productive"

"Yes, because everyone gets involved and it is interesting to create a presentation and put it all together"

"Yes- it gave me a chance to work with people I don't usually work with"

"Yes, it helps discuss the idea better"

"Yes, because I have joined more friendships"

*Did you have any difficult moments in your group?*

School 1:

"No"

"When our comic strip got muddled up in the wrong order"

"No, everyone was supportive of each other"

"When we were presenting our presentation in the Chapel, it was disorganised and boring. We had difficulty in finishing our PowerPoint on time"

"Only when we had our presentation the first time and our work was disorganised"

"Some, but we worked as a group and got over them"

School 2:

"No"

"Only debating about the topics to discuss"

"Not really- a heated discussion but not too difficult"

"Attendance- having everyone here at the same time"

"Yes, my views may have clashed with other group members"

"I believe that the most difficult moment was picking a story to make a comic"

*Could you have worked differently with one another? Please explain*

School 1:

"We all worked well together as a team"

"If we had not been in a team, it would not have been fun"

"I think that we worked well as a team however one of our group members never showed up"

"Yes, we could have worked more fluently"

"I really liked how we worked together so I wouldn't change it for the World"

School 2:

"Yes, with personal tensions out"

"A bit more team work would help"

"Less arguing"

"No, we were effective and efficient"

"Could have shown up"

"If I had been able to be more confident and express my opinions"

*Did you understand your task each week? Was it clearly described?*

School 1:

"Yes, everything was clearly described"

"Each task had a clear objective"

"Yes, our team leader made sure we knew what was happening"

"Yes, because we had great helpers"

"Yes, it was clear however the scribe/feedback was confusing"

School 2:

"It was described clearly"

"It was clear and precise"

"I believe my mentor was very clear and was able to guide us"

"Yes, I knew what to do"

"We all understood what we had to do"

*What do you think about the Quality Circle approach?*

School 1:

"It was a good approach because it targeted multiple audiences"

"It makes people feel their opinions are valued"

"I think that it was a really good experience"

"Very fun"

"It was amazing how we worked together"

"I thought it was really useful to work in a team"

"I felt comfortable and felt that I could be myself"

School 2:

"It was good for brainstorming ideas"

"It helps discussions to occur and helped improve our teamwork"

"It helps everyone to help each other"

"Very good"

"It makes more people aware of specific topics"

"Good for ideas and communication and I believe that it is very good, and they allowed us to be very creative"

Goldsmiths College are holding a multiplier event where the resources created will be showcased by the students to an invited audience within the fields of Psychology and Education. This is scheduled for July 2019.

## Quality Circle Experience – Berlin, Germany

### 1. Participating schools and collaboration with the schools

*Sampling.* Thirty-eight schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods were contacted by research staff via telephone. Additionally we collaborated with “Pfefferwerk e.V.”, a Berlin-wide operating provider of child and youth welfare that offers all-day care and complementary care for students with special needs at integrated secondary schools in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> From the six schools that participated in the online survey at stage 1, we invited two schools to take part in the sequential focus groups (SFG’s) and quality circles (QC’s) at stage 2.

The two schools involved both were Integrated Secondary Schools<sup>2</sup> located in the Eastern part of Berlin. School 1 was sampled based on its location outside the city centre in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, while school 2 was located in a “good” neighbourhood and closer to the city centre, yet had been in the media due to their problematic situation, as well as had established a long-term collaboration with “Pfefferwerk e.V.”. The project was presented in a letter highlighting the co-participatory approach, including a timeline, and descriptions of the methods (QC’s and SFG’s). The classes involved in the QC’s were selected by the schools’ social workers. In both schools students were in year 9, aged between 14 and 16 (21 students in school 1, 6 girls and 15 boys; 24 students in school 2, 8 girls and 16 boys).

*Collaboration.* While session scheduling was trouble-free in school 1, the start of the project in our second school had to be delayed by five months. Their social worker seemed interested in the project, yet initially had difficulties finding a teacher to offer their class time to conduct the sessions. In school 1, the social worker, as well as another teacher were present during all QC’s and SFG’s actively participating and connecting with the students. In our second school, sessions were conducted by the research team, sometimes supported by the ethics teacher who would usually teach during that time, or the social worker.

### 2. How we ran the QCs

*Procedure.* QC’s were facilitated during a five-month period (school 1: January-March 2019, school 2: March-May 2019), and sessions were combined into two as both schools wished to have finished the project shortly before or after the Easter break. We conducted four sessions with a duration of 120 minutes in school 1 (60-minute lessons) on Tuesday mornings, and 90 minutes in school 2 (45-minute lessons) on Monday afternoons. In school 2 a break within the session was used for exchange among the facilitators and the social worker. Additionally, facilitators reflected on the progress in each Intellectual Output (IO) group after each session, discussing how to respond to critical situations, e.g., conflicts

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pfefferwerk.de/pfefferwerk/in-english/>

<sup>2</sup> After primary school, children and young people in Berlin attend an “integrierte Sekundarschule” (integrated secondary school) or a “Gymnasium” (grammar school). In the integrated secondary school, pupils are supported depending on their needs (e.g., special educational needs, such as learning disabilities etc.) and looked after the entire day. Source: <https://www.berlin.de/willkommenszentrum/en/families/schools/>

within the groups, or lack of motivation and focus. Since the students needed far more guidance than expected, we aimed to have at least 3-4 project staff members (including additional student interns, and a second research assistant) present during the sessions. Staff members were assigned to the same group consistently across the sessions, if possible, and their main task being to keep the groups involved and focused. However, the necessity to manage two groups at the same time might have confused the students and decreased productivity. Throughout all sessions, one of the facilitators kept a written record of the students' work documenting activities, themes that emerged, and group climate.

*Description of sessions.* In the first session (QC1+2) the project was introduced, and after a series of group activities, students assigned themselves to the four IO groups, allowing friends to work together. The second session (QC3+4) started with a brainstorming, yet students were rapidly encouraged to evaluate the feasibility of their ideas and to agree on an output they would like to produce. Creative concepts were developed, and elaborated, then implemented during the third session (QC5+6). In the last session (QC7+8) school 1 presented their work to a class of 7<sup>th</sup> graders from their school who were invited by the social worker, as well as to the principal in a showcase session. QC participants received feedback, which was discussed afterwards, however, there was no time to edit the materials, yet some students wanted to take the products home and finish them over the holidays. In school 2 the last session was used to continue working on the outputs. Nevertheless, a showcase session might be scheduled later on if the school is interested. A laptop was used in school 1 to create the PowerPoint presentation for the Teacher resource; all other IO groups used their smartphones to occasionally research information as needed (e.g., examples for flyers, definitions), and to record the video for social network providers in school 1.

To conclude, while every group had a concept and output to (possibly) present, more time in general would have allowed each group to fine-tune their work and finish their outputs – only one group managed to finish their project fully on time. However, it is questionable if schools would have been willing to extend the project period, even if project funding would have allowed to do so.

### 3. Pupil engagement and group dynamics

*Engagement.* As we introduced the project and IO's, we were surprised that multiple students in both schools voiced the opinion that the topic "bullying" does not affect their school or themselves. Taking into account that both schools are attended by a majority of students who have other multiple problems (i.e., in their families, academically, or with regard to their psychoemotional development), we would assume that (cyber)bullying probably was not their most pressuring concern. Students were easily distracted (e.g. changing topic when being asked to discuss an issue in the group, insulting each other, standing up and walking around the room, throwing rubber balls around). This calmed down slightly once the working groups were formed and the class was split into different working areas. Yet, especially in our second school where the sessions were held in the afternoon, students complained about a lack of concentration. Nevertheless, the general level of engagement was good, however motivation and enthusiasm varied, mostly between group members, regardless of which output they were working on.

*Group dynamics.* In particular, many groups had at least one "outsider", rarely taking part in the activities unless being directly addressed by the facilitators or other students. On the other hand, in at least two groups only one student was actively creating the output

while the others were on their phones, making jokes, or seemed bored. According to the teachers who participated in the sessions, the students would work better if not paired up with their friends, but mixed together randomly. Additionally, roles in the groups might need to be allocated by the project leaders, instead of letting them nominate a group leader or moderator. A clear hierarchy among group members (given by project leaders) also could help students to take ownership of their work sooner.

#### 4. Scaffolding the pupils' work

In both schools students were not used to working in groups over several weeks, and completing a project with only little guidance. Thus, choosing a self-regulated learning style created more challenges for the students than initially expected. While they came up with a lot of helpful recommendations and ideas in the first session, as well as in the SFG's, a main challenge was to guide them into actually creating the outputs, and stay focused during the upcoming weeks.

We used several materials to scaffold the students' work:

- *Session plans:* We used detailed session plans that outlined the goals, tasks, and group activities in the first two QC's, then made task lists for each group that were adapted based on how the last session was going.
- *Example outputs:* We brought flyers to the first session and printed out guides for teachers and parents, as well as short comic stories in order to make suggestions on how the final outputs could look like.
- *Results from the survey:* We made a presentation that included the results and easy-to-understand diagrams from the survey to get the discussion going.
- *Handouts:* For each group, we made several handouts to visualize common answers from the questionnaires, e.g., colourful boxes that included their responses to "How could teachers help prevent cyberbullying?"
- *Checklist:* Based on our experiences in the first school, we prepared a goals checklist for each group of the second school that included single steps, as well as mile stones, which helped keeping the work on track and understand the goals for each quality circle.

*Directiveness and co-participation.* In sum, based on our experience with that specific target group in both schools, we would suggest that a more directive approach seems more suitable - at least for the case that students are not familiar with the methods used. Participating students in Berlin required a lot more guidance and intervention by the facilitators in order to be productive. We felt, the degrees of freedom we granted to the students have been overwhelming to them considering the level of self-regulation that was required. While the co-participatory approach is valid and resource-oriented, in order to produce actual outputs, future projects with this target group would benefit if more (personnel) resources for conducting the QC's would be granted, as well as additional time to review and complete the students' work in between the individual sessions. Taking over tasks the students struggled with due to the limited amount of sessions, issues related to self-regulation, or lacking technical devices could help them to stay focused by providing new stimuli every week based on what they have produced in the last session (e.g., creating a digital version of a flyer draft, nicely formulating their ideas into bullet points etc.). That

being said, having helpers (two student interns, another research assistant) that were present at the sessions was a necessary precondition in order to conduct the QCs. Of course, it is possible that this would change given that students are more and more familiar with methods of work and how to self-organize. Thus, before producing outputs, "pilot" QC's may be helpful and recommendable.

*Students' voice versus expected output formats.* In school 1, as we introduced the IO formats, the students did not like the idea of a comic book. Instead, they suggested to make an Instagram story<sup>3</sup>. Since their arguments on why an Instagram story would be a better way to reach the target group (i.e. peers of the young people) seemed convincing to us (e.g., "I never read comics myself.", "Everyone is just online all the time."), and they became increasingly excited about the idea, we decided to not interrupt their workflow and let them make an Instagram story. As a compromise, and to meet the project guidelines, we additionally created a comic story "ex post facto". Our motivation was to document the creation process, discussions, and arguments that were raised by the students, and to present the Instagram story as the central output.

## 5. Synergy of SFGs and QCs

*Procedure.* In school 1 SFG2 was carried out six weeks after the QC's have been completed following the schools' winter break and other appointments; SFG3 took place three weeks after SFG2 (40-45 minutes each). In our second school we combined SFG 2+3 into a one-hour session due to the late start of the project at this school, and in order to complete data collection as soon as possible. In school 1 eight students from the QC class were chosen by the social worker to participate in the focus groups. Additionally, we conducted a separate series of focus groups with five students from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade who did not participate in the QC's. We aimed at finding out if their answers in SFG2 and 3 would be different from the students who participated in the quality circles. In school 2, since there was no selection made by the social worker, we decided to split the QC class, and conducted two parallel SFG's with a group size of 9-12 students (several being sick or had an appointment during all three SFGs).

*Description of sessions and synergy.* In both schools two interviewers used semi-structured interview guides to conduct the three SFG's. In SFG1 we additionally presented results from the questionnaire, as well as fictional case examples of cyberbullying to initiate the discussion. In SFG's 2+3 the students were asked to reflect on their experiences with the QC's, group dynamics, and make suggestions on how to advertise and promote their outputs. After that, we asked them to be honest about how confident they were with their outputs. While the students in school 2 seemed a little indifferent and had a hard time answering all of our questions, the students in school 1 critically reflected on what they (and we, the facilitators) could have done differently in order to complete the outputs. To continue, we explained that we could help them to complete the outputs in their interest, but would need suggestions on what exactly to add. While this was not part of the guidelines for SFG3, they seemed to enjoy being the ones to give tasks, while we were granted their permission to complete their QC work. Additionally, the focus group comprised of 10<sup>th</sup> graders who did not participate in the quality circles gave an extensive feedback to the outputs that later was forwarded to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders. We felt that this produced some

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<sup>3</sup> <https://buffer.com/library/instagram-stories>



additional appreciation, and noticed that they carefully listened to the feedback from the older students.

To conclude, the guided focus groups were well-accepted by the students and encouraged them to make recommendations on what could be done to prevent cyberbullying, and what their experiences are. In fact, we even felt that the focus groups were additionally empowering to the students, introducing them as “expert discussions”. As soon as the recordings started, students’ discipline and motivation increased. Surprisingly, even those who showed aggressive and disturbing behaviour during the QC’s, were now focused. Before making a statement, some of the students would introduce themselves (with a pseudonym) in the style of a podcast or YouTube video. Speaking of social media, we were wondering, if *recording* their voice and ideas would make them feel like a famous YouTuber or podcaster people listen to, and thus increased their motivation to “perform”.

## 6. Feedback from pupils

In the last session, students were asked to complete a two-page evaluation sheet and to report their experiences with the QC’s. Feedback was collected from 17 students in school 1, and is listed below (answers from school 2 are still being translated). Overall, answers indicate that the students generally enjoyed the sessions, and have learned something new (specific: how to respond to bullying; unspecific: how to collaborate in a group). Yet, some students gave negative feedback to their group members who reportedly didn’t contribute to the development of the outputs.

### 1. *How have you felt the Quality Circle sessions have gone each week?*

- “Very good”
- “Good”
- “I liked that we supported each other in the groups.”
- “Good”
- “Yes, I like to work together with the whole class.”
- “Very interesting, informative”
- “School grade: 2”
- “I think it was exciting and interesting.”
- “I didn’t like that because of the sessions other important lessons (such as German and maths) were stolen from us.”
- “I generally liked the sessions, but didn’t like working in our group.”
- “Interesting”
- “Good.”
- “I liked that we supported each other in the group.”
- “I think it was ok.”
- “I think it was good.”

### 2. *Have you learnt any new techniques / have you learnt something?*

- “Team work”
- “Yes, that it’s possible to help each other in a team.”
- “No, actually not.”
- “Yes”
- “Yes, I learned something new, e.g. team work.”

- “What you can do against it [cyberbullying]”
- “How to make a PowerPoint presentation”
- “Yes, indeed, e.g., how I can help others.”
- “Yes, to work in a team more.”
- “Yes, about bullying, and how to respond to it.”
- “Yes I have, how to work in a team.”
- “Yes, how to help each other in the team.”
- “No, I didn’t.”
- “No”
- “No, it was all rather normal [routine, nothing special], well, I don’t know.”

3. *Have you enjoyed working in your groups? – Best sessions? Why?*

- “Yes, people were actually quite cool.”
- “All of them, and the cookies.”
- “Yes, it was fun. I think we collaborated well within our group.”
- “The first session, and yes, it was fun.”
- “Well, some group members didn’t contribute much, and I presented it all alone [at showcase session]. The first session was the best one.”
- “Yes, working in the groups was fun with the right persons involved.”
- “I didn’t enjoy working with the group, because I did it all alone.”
- “The best session was the first one.”
- “Yes, I enjoyed working in the group.”
- “I quite liked my group because of the video.”
- “Nothing”
- “No, because I did everything alone in my ‘group’.”
- “Yes, it was fun.”

4. *Did you have any difficult moments in your group?*

- “Yes, had a difficult situation with the group leader [another student].”
- “No”
- “A few, but not all of them”
- “Yes”
- “No”
- “Yes. We had different opinions in some situations, but could eventually come to an agreement.”
- “Nominating a group leader in the very beginning.”
- “No”
- “Yes, the others should have contributed more.”
- “Yes, the issue with the video [social media group recorded a video].”
- “No”
- “No”
- “Yes, when we were collecting ideas for the email [for social media providers].”
- “No, actually not.”

5. *Could you have worked differently with one another? Please explain.*

- “No”
- “No”

- “No, actually not.”
- “I don’t know.”
- “Yes, talking to each other.”
- “Yes, if everyone would have contributed effectively – all of us!”
- “No”
- “Yes, if everyone would have contributed their ideas.”
- “No, we got on really well with each other.”
- “Yes, I wish we would have worked as a team.”
- “I wish the facilitators would have assigned people to the groups.”
- “No, I think it was ok.”
- “No”
- “Work quieter and more calm.”
- “No, it’s good as it is.”

6. *Did you understand your task each week? Was it clearly described?*

- “Yes, and also we managed to complete everything.”
- “Yes”
- “I wasn’t present all the time (due to illness).”
- “Yes”
- “Yes”
- “Yes, one could understand everything.”
- “Yes, it was.”
- “Yes”
- “I wasn’t present at all the sessions.”
- “Yes, I understood the tasks well.”
- “Yes it was.”
- “Yes”
- “Yes”
- “Yes, they were.”
- “Well, in case we didn’t understand we could ask the teachers.”

7. *What do think about the Quality circle approach?*

- “Very good, it was quite comprehensive.”
- “I really like the method.”
- “I don’t know what it is.”
- “Yes”
- “Good”
- “Doable/One can do it [Not too bad].”
- “I like them.”
- “Great idea! Helps to improve the ability to work in a team.”
- “I like them. Adds some variety.”
- “Pretty good.”
- “Ok”
- “Good”

8. *Anything you would like to add?*

- “Thank you for bearing with us :-D”
- “Please, let’s do it again.”
- “Thank you for everything.”
- “Randomly assign people to groups”
- “It was quite fun, and thanks for the cookies. :-P”
- “It was a lot of fun.”

## Quality Circle Experience – Bologna, Italy

### 1. School selection and methodological procedures

In line with the project guidelines, three schools attended by young people from disadvantaged socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds were selected to participate in this project. A first meeting with principals, teachers and USR (USR - Ufficio Scolastico Regionale; Regional office of the Italian Ministry of Education) delegates was held on October 2018 at the Department of Education of the University of Bologna, in order to introduce the Blurred Lives Project. The three schools involved were, respectively, a public technical and vocational school from the south-west of Bologna (School 1), a public vocational school for craftsmanship and services (School 2) and a private (catholic) vocational school for food service and commerce (School 3). All schools are located near the city centre.

The three classes involved for Quality Circles activities were selected by the respective principals and teachers, and were corresponding to the 9th grade, except for the class from the private school, which was corresponding to the 10th grade. As indicated by the previously administered survey (where 18% of respondents from the three schools reported to suffer from learning disabilities), a significant portion of participants in QCs had special educational needs.

In a preliminary stage, different materials were selected by the research team with the aim to provide some triggers for facilitating the discussion in the different subgroups foreseen by the research design (comics about cyberbullying, guidelines for teachers and parents, policies and tools against cyberbullying on different social networks). Moreover, specific guidelines were provided and shared among facilitators, detailing the suggested timing and goals for each session, and including general discussions, group-work and pair-work activities across the sessions. Both the handouts and the guidelines were developed by the research group, referring to the data collected in the survey and to the themes emerged through the first session of sequential Focus Groups (sFG1).

Quality Circle (QC) sessions took place over a two months period, between December 2018 and February 2019. In the first one-hour session (QC1), the project was introduced to the class and groups were formed; each group was then (quasi-randomly) assigned to a specific target of the suggestions to be elaborated during the QC process (i.e. parents, students, IP, teachers). The following QC sessions were combined into three meetings, each lasting two-hours. This choice was aimed at fostering continuity in the groups' work, reducing "dead times" and was the result of a process of negotiation with the schools.

The research team proposed the possibility to guarantee the presence of one facilitator for each group involved into the project, so that four facilitators were working in parallel in each classroom. Moreover, the facilitators were assigned to the same group consistently across the sessions. These decisions have been proven to be extremely valuable for the quality of the group work: the facilitator helped in organising the pupils' work without interfering excessively, established a trusting relationship with pupils, and kept them involved and focussed, while monitoring and monitoring the activities and the group dynamics throughout the sessions.

Along the sessions, the facilitators kept a record of their groups' work, including information about the activities performed, themes and ideas that had emerged, group climate and potential issues or criticalities to be discussed with the whole research group. Since only one computer was available for each classroom, facilitators supplied their own laptops when it was requested for searching the Web or for other group activities. A few groups also proposed to use their own personal computers at home in order to finalise the activities they had started at school.

## 2. Participants and pupils' engagement

The classes involved were composed of 24 boys (School 1), 26 pupils (School 2; 18 girls and 8 boys) and 16 pupils (School 3; 6 girls and 10 boys), respectively. Participants who already took part in sFG1 were equally distributed between the four groups, while remaining pupils were assigned quasi-randomly to a group. The group size varied from three to eight participants ( $M = 5.50$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ).

Facilitators reported a high variability in the level of engagement among the different groups as well as of individual participants within the same group. In particular, many groups had at least an "outsider", rarely taking part into the activities unless being directly addressed by the facilitators or by other students. Facilitators observed that groups wherein a good cooperative climate was established during the first sessions, and common goals were set, were often able to keep a higher level of engagement among their participants. The general level of engagement, however, was deemed to be good, with some cases of groups and individual participants who went well beyond what was required from them, e.g. organising spontaneous group meetings after school to further discuss the project topics and in order to work on their respective outputs. In particular, since some pupils were willing to organise and keep track of their group's work, the possibility to communicate with the facilitators via e-mail, has proved to be extremely useful.

## 3. Youth Voice: Scaffolding the pupils' work

Some more systematic issues have arisen from the facilitators' diaries and were addressed in the context of internal meetings of the Italian research group and, when deemed necessary, discussed with other European teams. In particular, the level and type of intervention required from the facilitator varied greatly both among groups and classes. Target-specific challenges were highlighted, e.g.: groups assigned to Recommendations for Networking Sites Providers often encountered some difficulties in focusing on the level of analysis they were being asked to undertake, thus requiring a more directive approach from the facilitator to keep the discussion focussed on the topic. Moreover, the high rate of high-risk students in

two of the schools involved were reflected by a generally lower independence in discussing issues and possible solutions, as well as in designing and producing intellectual outputs. Especially for these groups, the facilitator's presence was crucial for conducting the work. These dissimilarities among the classes might have been exacerbated by the different approaches adopted for the class selection by the different schools. In particular, one school admittedly selected a particularly problematic class, both because of individual and group difficulties, hoping that they would have benefit from participating into the project. Conversely, another school proposed to include into the study a class from a degree course focused on IT: this may have favoured the selection of students who were more motivated and familiar with the topic of the research, thus influencing also the quality of the output materials.

Moreover, as QC sessions proceeded, some tensions became apparent between the aim of prioritising youth voice, on the one hand, and the need of carrying out a project with pre-defined aims, focus and expected outputs, on the other. In particular, since the research design foresaw the random assignment of the pupils to specific topics/targets, a relevant level of intervention from facilitators, especially during the first two sessions was necessary. This might also have played a role in undermining the engagement of pupils who felt that the project's aims were not aligned with their own problems and interests. For instance, one of the students referred to the facilitator to be living in a foster care community and to experience serious problems of physical bullying; he argued that cyberbullying was not a real problem to him.

In addition, the limitations concerning the formats and admissible media for different intellectual outputs were sometimes in contrast with the preferred pupils' choices (e.g. regarding Comic Book Guide for Pupils). As a compromise, various groups produced multiple outputs, or rearranged their outputs in different formats in order to be able to comply with the project's demands, while still pursuing their original ideas.

#### 4. Pupils' evaluation and follow-up

At the end of the last session, a final survey was administered to pupils, in order to evaluate their individual experience with QCs. Consistently with the facilitators' observations, the feedback was mixed and heterogeneous, as highlighted by the following answers to the different questions asked in the brief survey:

*How have you felt the Quality Circle sessions have gone each week?*

- ✓ Case1, School 1: "I think they went well. This whole thing has been very productive"
- ✓ Case 1, School 2: "Very badly, because my group did not work well"
- ✓ Case 2, School 2: "To me, the sessions were very useful, because I learned a lot of things I did not know"
- ✓ Case 1, School 3: "Sh\*\*ty"

*Have you learnt any new techniques / have you learnt something?*

- ✓ Case 2, School 1: "I was already aware of the topics we addressed, but talking about them is always good"
- ✓ Case 3, School 1: "I learned to work in groups with my classmates"

- ✓ Case 3, School 2: "Yes, I've learned how to behave in some difficult moments of my life"
- ✓ Case 4, School 2: "Honestly, not, because I already knew all of this since primary school"
- ✓ Case 2, School 3: "I learned that if a friend or a stranger needs help I'll be there"

*Have you enjoyed working in your groups? – Best sessions? Why?*

- ✓ Case 2, School 1: "I enjoyed it very much. The best session, in my opinion, was the third one [QC4-5], because some very interesting ideas emerged"
- ✓ Case 3, School 1: "The first session was the best one, because we got to know each other"
- ✓ Case 4, School 1: "No, I did not enjoy it, the creation of groups should not be random. The last one was the best."
- ✓ Case 5, School 2: "Yes, I loved it. I don't know which the best session was, they were all great"
- ✓ Case 6, School 2: "No, it was awful working with my group, because nobody was working"
- ✓ Case 1, School 3: "I don't care"
- ✓ Case 3, School 3: "The last one was more fun"

*Did you have any difficult moments in your group?*

- ✓ Case 5, School 1: "Yes, initially we had another idea, but for several reasons we changed our first project"
- ✓ Case 4, School 2: "Yes, in the selection of the scribe/secretary and when some people in my group did not want to do something"
- ✓ Case 3, School 2: "No, there were no difficult times"

*Could you have worked differently with one another? Please explain.*

- ✓ Case 6, School 1: "Yes, we could have met after school"
- ✓ Case 1, School 2: "Yes, if all the group would have taken part in the project actively"
- ✓ Case 4, School 2: "Yes, we could have cooperated more. Sometimes, some group members were just minding their own business all the time"
- ✓ Case 2, School 2: "No, I think we worked well together"

*Did you understand your task each week? Was it clearly described?*

- ✓ Case 7, School 1: "Yes, facilitators were very good"
- ✓ Case 5, School 2: "Yes, tasks could not have been clearer"
- ✓ Case 1, School 2: "No, tasks were not explained clearly"

*What do think about the Quality circle Approach?*

- ✓ Case 2, School 1: "The only thing I would change is adding one more session"
- ✓ Case 6, School 1: "I think that it can be helpful if done in a funny and productive way"
- ✓ Case 5, School 2: "I think it's wonderful. Thanks for everything you've done for us"
- ✓ Case 6, School 2: "I don't think at all"
- ✓ Case 3, School 3: "Nothing"
- ✓ Case 4, School 3: "I think it helped us a lot"



Within two weeks from the end of QC sessions, sFG2 and sFG3 were carried out in a single two-hours long session. In these focus groups, the intellectual outputs produced in the context of Quality Circles were presented, and pupils were asked to evaluate them in terms of the messages they conveyed, as well as of the chosen media and expected effectiveness to combat cyberbullying. Besides some general follow-up questions about the severity of cyberbullying and the most relevant themes and aspects regarding this phenomenon, groups who had took part in QCs were also asked to evaluate their experience working in groups in the context of this project and to provide some critical insights. The general feedback regarding both intellectual outputs and the QC experience was good. Nevertheless, the familiarity that pupils involved in QC had developed with facilitators and researchers might have played a role in their approach to this final FG session.

Finally, a multiplier event has been scheduled for May 2019. In this occasion, pupils will present the intellectual outputs produced in the QCs (both from Italy and other European countries) to an audience of other students, teachers and school principals, and representatives of parents' committees.

## Quality Circle Experience – Heerlen, The Netherlands

### 1. School selection and methodological procedures: how we ran the QC.

In the Netherlands, we ran the QC in one school with two different groups of students aged between 14-15 years. The recruitment of the school was done by the following procedure: A call for an internship for a master students Psychology was posted on the social media platforms LinkedIn, Facebook and on the Open University e-learning platform yOUlearn. This is the online education platform for students of the Open University. On the internship website of yOUlearn, students can find practical and substantive information about internship. There we posted our call.

The Master student that wanted to participate was a Master student Psychology and teacher of a Green Pre-vocational secondary education school (VMBO school) in Eindhoven. This city located in the southern part of the Netherlands is the fifth largest city (230.000 citizens in 2018) of the Netherlands. The teacher was also mentor of one of the groups that participated in the QCs and the SFGs.

### 2. Procedure of planning and organizing

The 2x3 SFGs (plus 2x2 independent focus groups) and the 2x7 QCs where scheduled within 7 weeks (starting at February 21<sup>st</sup> till April 4<sup>th</sup> 2019). For each SFG and QC we had 45 minutes. QC 1 and 2 for both groups, as well as QC 3 and 4 and QC 5 and 6 (for group 2), and QC 6 and 7 (for group 1) where combined in a block of 2x45 minutes in total.

Scheduling the SFGs and QCs was a challenge since there was little time between agreement of school to participate and the first SFG. The primary reason we could achieve this was due our master's student, who – with her position as school teacher – was able to ask her colleagues whether the students were allowed to participate in the SFGs and QCs instead of following regular lessons. She took the responsibility for the recruitment of the students,

planning and scheduling the SFGs and the QCs and collecting the informed consents of the participating students and their parents. During the SFGs and the QCs, she was involved as a helper/supervisor and motivated the students to take responsibility for delivering good quality materials. In addition, she took the lead during the final 3 SFGs.

The different tasks of the SFGs and the QCs were divided among three project members: the project leader of the Blurred Lives Project of the Netherlands, the researcher of the Blurred Lives project and the teacher (i.e., master student). In every SFG or QC session there were at least two of three supervisors present. The researcher took the lead in the QC sessions and the project leader in applying the SFGs. The other supervisor(s) were present to coach the students during the QCs and to make notes during the SFGs.

Although groups were run with at least two supervisors, in one occasion, the teacher ran one block of two QCs alone. Our experience was that two supervisors was enough to run the quality circles. One person only does not work effectively, because the students cannot be helped sufficiently. Having one helper per group might be too much and might take away freedom from groups to develop their own material.

### 3. Combining groups

As mentioned before, some QCs were combined into sessions of 2x45 minutes. Our experience was that these groups were much more effective in terms of output from students. In single 45-minute sessions, much time (10-15 minutes) is lost for students to get started and to end the sessions. In the combined sessions, there also was more time for plenary discussion. We would recommend to have working groups of 90 minutes.

### 4. Group size, age, and gender

The two groups of students that participated were from a different age group and different educational levels. The first group consisted of 12 students (9 girls and 3 boys), 14-15 years old from the highest level of pre-vocational secondary education school. These were students from the same class knowing each other already. These students came from the mentor group of our master student.

The second group comprised of 15 students (9 girls and 6 boys) of 14 years old from two different classes (lower and middle educational level). Some of them already knew each other others didn't.

### 5. Overview of the QC

In the first QC, the researcher presented a short PowerPoint presentation (lasting about 10 minutes) presenting the goal of program and the outline of the QCs. Secondly a short summary of the most important outcomes of the first SFG and the survey were presented, including most frequently experienced negative online experiences, and the need for help and support from parents, teachers and friends. The researcher told the students that the material they would produce was actually going to be used and would be made available for everyone. Finally, the students were informed that they would get a certificate for their contribution on the QCs and the SFGs.

## 6. Procedure of making subgroups

The same procedure for group assignment was used in both groups. In each group the students were divided by the teacher – with agreement of the students – into four subgroups (i.e., parents, teachers, peers and social network providers group). Students had the possibility to tell whether they had a strong preference to make materials for a specific target population. Students were told that they were free to choose what kind of materials they wanted to develop except for the group that would make materials for the peers. This group had to make a comic.

## 7. Scaffolding the pupils work

The aim of the first QC was to develop a group logo and a group name and to think about the materials they wanted to make for their target population. It was explained to the group that they should take the results of the study as a guideline when making decisions: what do victims need from peers, teachers, parents and social network providers, what kind of materials could be helpful to support them, what do they need to know about the do's and don'ts when a victim is asking for help? During the QCs, at least two project members were present to answer questions and to guide students in developing the materials. Students had to cooperate, make shared decisions, and translate their ideas in practical application. The group members had to decide how to present the material to the other students. Presenting for a group was very stressful but afterwards they were very proud that they had succeeded in overcoming their fear and standing in front of the group.

Our experience was that it was challenging to find a good balance between providing advice, guidance, and structure, and providing freedom. Experience was that these students found it very difficult to take leadership in their work, managing time, and planning steps to undertake. Therefore, students were structurally guided and tasks were assigned, while still letting them create their own ideas.

## 8. Differences between group 1 and group 2

The SFGs as well as the QCs went in very different ways.

Group 1 was very open minded and were very involved from the start. Quality between subgroups varied, but the contribution of the students in the four sub groups was fairly equal. This group was very enthusiastic and motivated to make good quality materials. They found their work important to do. The quality of the outputs was mediocre to high. The following examples and statements can illustrate the cooperation in the group and advantages of working together as a team:

- Members were enthusiastic about the collaboration and proud about the materials they had made as a team
- They mentioned that they had gained more confidence in each other and liked each other more by working together on an important topic

- One girl told during the evaluation that it was the first time that she talked about her own (cyber-) bullying experience. She felt more safety in her class and felt that that the bond with her class mates was improved.
- During SFG 2 – evaluation of the materials – they agreed that students should do more to address cyberbullying in their school.

But also, some issues occurred:

- The parents group initially had a great idea for an intervention, but were difficult to motivate to get the best out of their idea. Although they found the project and their participation important, they also seemed to be disinterested.
- The teachers group existed of three girls. One of the girls was absent during the first three QC's. In these QCs important decisions were already made. She felt unnecessary and not really involved and responsible for the output of her group. The other two girls preferred to work together and found it time consuming to involve her. At that stage it was already very hard for the supervisor to get her involved. Although we assigned her specific tasks to encourage her to participate, the girl decided to stop participating.

Group 2 were students from different classes not everybody knowing each other at the start of the QCs. This caused a very different group dynamic that diminished group collaboration. In addition, this group had more difficulties with planning and time management, and were easily distracted. For example, the comic group was very enthusiastic but they needed more support and instructions from the supervisor in the beginning before they succeeded in developing a story line and translate the story into frames. The supervisors also needed to assign different tasks to the group members (i.e., two drawers and two scenario writers), because groups members did not know what to do and how to do it. The other groups also experienced similar difficulties, resulting in low to mediocre quality outputs.

Not knowing each other, different education levels and the fact that they were 1 year younger are probably important factors that caused less constructive group dynamics. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

- Decisions about the materials were made by one or two group members of the subgroups that took the lead, ignoring the opinion of the other group member.
- During the evaluation some group members expressed their dissatisfaction about the cooperation of some of the group members. They had the feeling that some decisions were made without taking into account their opinion. This had a negative impact of feeling the owner of the produced materials.
- One boy was very dominant, and sometimes influenced the atmosphere in the whole group. He could be intimidating and provoking at certain times and needed special attention from the project members. The school teacher knew this person well and was able to guide him positively.

Despite these issues, both groups were enthusiastic about participating and found it very important that they were involved in making practical application. Overall both groups were enthusiastic and found it very important that they had made something that would be used by others and could help peers, teachers and parents to communicate better about cyberbullying. The process of developing materials, presenting the materials as a group to

other students and the fact that the materials will be available on a website made them proud, increased their confidence and empowered them.

## 9. Use or not of computers

Using computers both had advantages and disadvantages. The computers were especially necessary in the third QC, in which students got the assignment to search for already existing materials online. In the following sessions, computers were available if students needed them. For some subgroups, the computer was actually needed for their intervention and made good use of it. Other subgroups – for which a laptop was not necessary, just got one because they were available. In these instances, the computer hindered the creativity of the group.

## 10. Synergy of SFGs and QCs

There were 8 SFGs in total. Three with a part of the members of QC group 1, three with part of the member of QC group 2. There SFGs comprised: 1. Discussion of survey results, 2. Reviewing of materials, and 3. Evaluation of the QCs. The first two SFGs were also held with an independent group. Experiences were that SFGs were extremely useful, but felt more as an extension of the QCs, instead of a separate research method. The two SFGs with independent members were not per se necessary, as they did not provide different results.

## 11. Some recommendations

- Respect for each other, taking responsibility, shared decision making, taking care for each are important are important preconditions for the group to flourish and to empower
- Younger students from lower level education need more precise guidelines and more structured supervision.
- Working with students from the same class can contribute to safety feeling, respect and strengthen the group bond.
- Working with younger students not knowing each other very well coming from different classes makes it more important to invest time in group building activities before starting with the developing the materials.
- It is important that a teacher is involved in the QC and wants to schedule the QCs in the regular schedule. In addition, a well-respected teacher is crucial to keep (challenging) students involved.
- Combining QCs leads to more productive sessions.
- Use of computers can be very beneficial, but should be offered only if necessary.



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