

Connect fi-006 Proposal for an Action Plan to Combat Violence in Schools

Author Ulla Salomäki

Foreword

This document emphasises the importance of promoting wellbeing in school in a comprehensive manner. Prevention of violence and other harmful effects on the quality of schooling and education is also underlined.

The new strategic goal for the European Union is to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

To reach this goal a broad school policy is needed, which takes into consideration also the mental, physical and social resources and conditions at school. Schools should be attractive working and learning environments for both teachers and students.

The Framework for Action in this document provides policy makers and the programme planners with a map of the different levels of promotion and interventions. All levels should be considered when attempting to prevent violence and promote wellbeing comprehensively in schools.

An important message is also given to those responsible for teacher training. Both initial and in-service teacher training need a greater emphasis placed upon the development of life skills, empathy and the capacity to cope with stress and change.

All teachers need basic education on counselling and career guidance. The teachers' career development should be combined with overall life planning and lifelong learning skills. Thus counselling could also emphasise such life skills, that help the individual to cope with new and unpredicted situations and to support others in their emotional problems.

This document is an output of the Connect fi 006 project (1999-2001) to promote mental health and prevent violence in European schools.

As Ministers of Education and Culture, and respectively, of Health and Social Services, we warmly encourage all school policy makers in the Member States to consider implementing in their own countries the recommendations given in this Action Plan.

Maija Rask
Minister of Education and Science
Finland

Osmo Soininvaara
Minister of Health and Social Services
Finland

1. Aim

The aim of this proposal is to make legislators and policy makers in the EU Member States and Candidate Countries more aware of the magnitude, risk factors and possible multiple causes of violence in schools and to provide them with a plan of action to address the problem of violence through a comprehensive mental health promotion approach.

Each country is encouraged to consider the recommendations and to look at the application of this Action Plan to their country. In addition policymakers are encouraged to use this document as a tool to integrate violence prevention within national educational policies. This action plan can also be disseminated at school level as a guiding resource to assist violence prevention programmes.

This document offers a set of guiding principles that each country can modify to its own needs. The educational philosophy at the core of this proposal is that wellbeing of school children and young people be underpinned by a “*whole school*” approach. (page 3).

2. Background

Violence prevention and mental health promotion have in recent years had a high political agenda in Europe.

Safety at schools was highlighted during the Dutch EU-presidency in 1997. As a result the Council of the Ministers of Education of the European Union called upon the member states to continue, and where necessary improve their activities in fostering safety at school¹. The Council also set up an experts group on Violence in Schools to support the specific exchange of information and experience concerning safety at school and to support transnational pilot projects and conferences in the field. The work of the expert group was finished in the end of 1999.

Finland has worked persistently to highlight the importance of putting mental health promotion on the European Public Health Agenda. September 1999 was also organised the 1st International Conference on Mental Health Promotion at School “*From Ripples to Waves*”, in Helsinki.² During the Finnish EU presidency the Conference Mental Health Promotion and Social Inclusion was arranged in October 1999. On November 18th 1999 a resolution on the propositions of the conference was accepted in the Council of Health Ministers³. Based on an initiative of the European Parliament, the CONNECT programme was launched in 1999⁴ with the aim of promoting synergy and links in the area of education, training and culture through combining innovation, research and new technologies. Six CONNECT projects combating violence in schools were co-financed by DG Education and Culture:

- 1) Connect UK-001 Goldsmiths College: Understanding and effective intervention against violence in schools on an European-wide basis (United Kingdom)
- 2) Connect FI-006 Finnish Centre for Health Promotion: Mental health promotion of children and young people and combating violent behaviour of girls and boys in Europe (Finland)

¹ EYVL C 303,4.10.1997,s.3.

² Finnish Centre for Health Promotion as a responsible organiser

³ OJ C 165, 17.6.1994,p.1, and OJ C 390.15.12.1998,p.1.

⁴ Call for proposals O.J. 1999/C 133/26 of 13.05.1999

- 3) Connect PT-001 Universidade Aberta : GEPOSIT – Gestão de Conflitos e da Violência pela Mediação Social (Escolar / Familiar), Programa de Educação Pessoal e Social (Portugal)
- 4) Connect IT-019 Citta di Torino – Divisione Servizi Socio-Educativi – Vice Direzione Gioventù e tempo Libero: Novas Res No Violenza A Scuola-partenariato europeo (Italy)
- 5) Connect BE- 010 International Yehudi Menuhi Foundation: MUS-E – Source d'équilibre et de tolérance. Un projet européen multiculturel pour lutter contre la violence à l'école (Belgium)
- 6) Connect FR-013 Université Victor Segalen, Bordeaux 2: Réseau européen contre la violence scolaire. Structuration d'un observatoire européen de la violence en milieu scolaire (France)

Combating violence in schools is at the heart of these 6 EU co-funded CONNECT projects. The origins of the projects arise from the growing concern about the increasing incidence of violent behaviour among and towards children and young people.

In the CONNECT fit project (2000-2001) both education and health sectors at the national level have agreed to combine their efforts in this undertaking. This includes the elaboration of a Proposal for an European Action Plan to Combat Violence in School along with practical work in schools.⁵

The international group of experts and professionals from educational and health sectors was given the task to write the proposal. All through the writing process comments on the proposal were invited from various experts in different countries. The names of the experts and of those who have made a contribution are listed at the end of this document

There is the belief that improving the quality of education and promoting positive mental health to prevent violence in school should be both an educational and health priority. It is also widely recognised that schooling should be about the development of the whole child and young person and not just the pursuit of academic accomplishments.

3. Definitions

3.1. School violence

By violence we mean the intended use of physical and psychological aggression or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community. This either results in, or has a high degree of likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, and deprivation to the individual or disintegration of the social fabric.

School violence is mostly non-fatal, but can cause serious damage to the development of a child and young person. Violence can be expressed through threats in verbal cues, intentional exclusion, intimidation, physical fighting and sexual harassment / abuse and weapon carrying. It can be perpetrated against and by students, staff, higher institutional representatives, and or the community.

School violence causes impairment of positive mental health by increasing anxiety, fears and perceptions of defencelessness and hopelessness.

3.2. Positive mental health includes:

- a positive sense of well-being

⁵ The press release Ministry of Education, 15.2.2000, The Ministerial letter from the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health to the same Ministers in EU Countries 18.12.2000

- individual resources including self-esteem, social skills, optimism and sense of mastery and coherence
- the ability to initiate, develop and sustain mutually satisfying personal relationships
- the ability to cope with adversities
- the ability to rationalise, understand and confer with peers, adults and social institutions about various rationales for legitimising violence⁶

3.3. The Whole School Approach

In the “Whole school” approach, taught curriculum is just one of the building blocks which define the effective and quality school. Equally important are the school environment, the ethos of the school, the social relations within the school, with the parents and the school’s links within the wider community, including families and relevant community institutions.⁷

4. Rationale

“European co-operation opens many doors to education. Systems and practices in education vary enormously from one country to another. This is a feature of our Europe. In this context, European co operation, whether through mobility, pilot projects, European networks or comparative studies offers huge advantages. It provides a fertile ground for innovation, the quest for quality, and the implementation of new ideas.” (Socrates, European Community action programme in the field of education 2000-2006).

This plan of action aims to promote quality learning by first of all preventing violence occurring at school and secondly managing the consequences of violence that occurs in the wider community.

The first step towards achieving quality education may be sought both through the identification of the processes and determinants involved in an effective educational provision, and through the identification of the obstacles to learning and to the promotion of student wellbeing. Obstacles may be linked with poor socio-economic background or be connected with delinquency, difficulties in relationships, difficulties in communication, having been abused, drug and substance abuse, continuous stress, crisis situations and emergencies, sudden changes in the family, in society and also structural and cultural circumstances which tend to legitimise violent responses.⁸ Violence is an obstacle to the promotion of learning and well-being. The second step to achieving quality is to engage in training and support activities to promote whole school wellbeing and to diminish the obstacles as will be mentioned in the framework for action. (page 6)

⁶ Public Health Action Framework on Mental Health, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, STAKES, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland

⁷ Burgher Mary Stewart, Barnekow Rasmussen Vivian, Rivett David (1999), The European Network of Health Promoting Schools, the alliance of education and health, Copenhagen WHO Regional Office for Europe

Weare, K & Gray, G. (1995) Promoting mental and emotional health in the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. A training manual for teachers and others working with young people. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe

Weare, K. (1999) Promoting Mental, Emotional and Social Health: A Whole School Approach. Routledge, UK

⁸ De Santana Correia, Joao (1999); Education and Mental Health Promotion of Children and Adolescents – An European Perspective. Workshop presentation in the European Conference on Mental Health Promotion and Social Inclusion, Tampere, Finland.

4.1. Quality of school education

The quality of education and training is considered in all Member States⁹ to be a concern of the highest political priority. High levels on knowledge, competencies and skills are considered to be the very basic conditions for active citizenship, employment and social cohesion. The European Report on Quality of education is based on the 16 indicators. These indicators cover four broad areas: attainment levels, educational success and transition, monitoring of school education and educational resources and structures. For this action plan the indicators Civics in the attainment area is of special interest

All societies have a continuing interest in the way their young people are prepared for citizenship and how they learn to take part in public affairs. In most countries considerable number of people tend to attribute problems such as violence, unemployment and criminality to those who are different, without the deeper understanding of the root causes of the issues. The question of what effective citizenship means and the role of formal education in building a civic culture is important, not only for governments and policy makers but also for the public in general.

4.2. Violence: an important concern for school

In this document the definition of school violence includes bullying behaviour, but also goes beyond it to include other types of violent behaviours that occur in schools, such as physical fighting, sexual abuse, weapon-carrying and gang violence. In some countries, like Finland, Ireland, Norway and UK there are more systematic studies on the theme “school bullying” than on “school violence”.¹⁰ The underlying message remains the same: Violence constitutes a key obstacle to child development in schools and communities.

Bullying and physical fighting are two of the most widespread types of violence in European Schools. Physical fighting is prevalent among school-age youth both within and across countries. In Sweden, for example, 22% of school-aged males aged 13-17 were involved in three or more physical fights in the past year¹¹. In Nuremberg, Germany, 53% of boys admitted to having been involved in fights in the previous half of the school year.¹² In French-speaking Switzerland, 44% of boys in lower secondary school were involved in fights in the past year.¹³

Girls and boys tend express themselves differently in violent behaviour. Boys are more prone to antisocial and openly violent behaviour, girls often express themselves in indirect aggression which is defined as social manipulation, attacking the target in circuitous ways. In the cross-cultural study on Female Indirect Aggression (Finland, Israel, Italy and Poland) indirect aggression was, in proportional terms, the aggressive style mostly used by girls, across nations, ethnic groups and age groups studied. Verbal aggression was their second most used style, and physical aggression was

⁹ European report on Quality of School Education, report based on the work of the Working Committee on Quality Indicators, European Commission

¹⁰ More extensive information on magnitude and typology of violence in schools in Europe are available in the CONNECT UK-001 reports from the EU countries on the world wide web <http://www.gold.ac.uk/connect>

¹¹ Grufman M, and Berg-Kelly K. "Physical fighting and associated health behaviours among Swedish adolescents" *Acta Paediatrica*, VOL.86.No.1.Jan.1997:77-81

¹² Funk, W."Violence in German Schools: The Current Situation." In Debarbieux, E. and Blaya, C. *Violence in Schools: Ten Approaches in Europe*.2001 ESF éditeur, Issy-les-Molineaux, France.

¹³ Clémense,A."Violence and Incivility at School: The Situation in Switzerland."In Debarbieux, E.andBlaya,C.Idem.

applied least often by girls. Among boys, indirect aggression was, in all ages, the least used aggressive style.¹⁴

In the Irish survey the prevalence of bullying behaviour match those in other European countries i.e. bullying in general, and physical bullying in particular, is more frequently observed amongst boys than girls, whom tend to favour “indirect” forms of bullying (verbal or social exclusion).¹⁵

Belgian research projects ordered by the Flemish and the Walloon Minister of Education show that there is very little physical violence in schools in Flanders and Wallonia. But pupils as well as teachers are victims of verbal aggression.

In a Finnish sample of sixth-graders¹⁶ the participant’s roles in the bullying process were first assessed and later successfully identified in a group of English students aged 7-10 years by Sutton and Smith (1999).¹⁷ These diverse social roles are the roles of victims, bullies, assistants (of bullies), reinforces (of bullies), defenders (of victims) and outsiders.

The general impression from studies addressing the participant roles is that when bullying goes on, most students do nothing to intervene or support the victim.¹⁸ At least in preadolescence and adolescence, as many as 20-30% of students encourage the bully, acting as assistants or reinforces. The outsiders, who silently witness what is happening, are as frequent, constituting another 20-30% of preadolescent / adolescent students. Fortunately there are also those who take sides with the victim – less than 20% of students are defenders, however.

4.3. Protective and risk factors for violence

A lot of research has been made about the magnitude of youth violence and the trends in that violence over time. But what do we know about the causes of violence, why young people become involved in violence, and what protects them from such actions? The data shows that violence in schools is a serious concern. In order to know what type of actions can effectively prevent this problem, it is important to identify and understand the factors that place young people at risk for violence, and that reduce the likelihood of involvement in violent behaviour. Risk and protective factors can be found in every stage of society, from the individual to the family and social environment of young people.

4.3.1 Protective factors

Protective factors are those aspects of the individual and his or her environment that buffer or moderate the effect of risk.¹⁹ Research on protective factors is still quite new, and knowledge about

¹⁴ Karin Österman, Kaj Björkqvist, Kirsti M.J.Lagerspetz, Ari Kaukiainen, Simha F.Landau, Adam Fraczek, and Gian Vittorio Caprara (1998). Cross-Cultural Evidence of Female Indirect Aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*. Volume 24, pp 1-8 (1998)

¹⁵ All in the O’Moore et al (1997) paper, see footnote 10

¹⁶ Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Björkqvist, K., Österman, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process: Participant roles and their relations to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22, 1-15.

¹⁷ Sutton j, Smith PK (1999) Bullying as a group process. An adaptation of the participant role approach. *Aggressive Behaviour* 25:87-111.

¹⁸ See footnote 16

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General – Executive Summary, Rockville, MD; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Centre for Mental Health Service and National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health

the quality of the associations between the identified factors and violence is limited. This does not mean that protective factors do not exist, just that more research is needed.

The individual level refers to biological or personal history factors that lead to a lower likelihood of becoming involved in violence. At an individual level, an intolerant attitude toward deviance, including violent behaviour, is the strongest proposed protective factor.

The family level refers to the close interpersonal relationships that reduce the vulnerability of individuals to perpetrate violence or suffer from victimization. A warm, supportive relationship with parents or other adults, and friends who engage in conventional behaviour have been shown to protect against antisocial behaviour.

At school level these adults exist e.g. in helpful teacher's, school doctors or –nurses, school social workers or counselling teachers who have due to their job description more or less time to take care of children at risk.

The community level refers to the social context where social relationships are embedded, including the school, the workplace, and the neighbourhood. The commitment to school and participation to pro social activities are protective factors at school and in the community.

4.3.2. Risk Factors

Risk factors increase the probability of violence, but they are not necessarily causes. Researchers identify risk factors for youth violence by tracking the development of children and adolescents over the first two decades of life and measuring how frequently particular personal characteristics and social conditions at a given age are linked to violence at later stages of the life course. The reason risk factors are not considered causes is that, in most cases, scientists lack experimental evidence that changing a risk factor produces changes in the onset of violence.²⁰

Risk factors at an individual level refer to biological or personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator. Early aggression predicts later delinquency and crime, while involvement in general offences and substance use before age 12 act as powerful early risk factors for violence at age 15 to 18.²¹ Experimentation with drugs, alcohol, tobacco or some combination of these substances is not particularly unusual by age 18, but use of these substances by children under the age 12 is. Not only are these substances harmful for health, they are illegal. High daring and low intelligence are also important risk factors at this level.

Risk factors at the family level refer to the close interpersonal relationships that increase the vulnerability of individuals to perpetrate violence or suffer from victimization. At this level, it has been concluded that one of the most important early precursors of aggression and violence is the harsh attitude and discipline of a child's parents at age 8. Other important early precursors are low family income, parental criminality, poor parental supervision, and separations from parents.²²

Risk factors at the community level refer to the social context where social relationships are embedded, including the school, the workplace, and the neighbourhood. In the case of violence

²⁰ See previous footnote

²¹ See previous footnote

²² Ferrington, David P.(1991) Childhood Aggression and Adult Violence: Early Precursors and Later-Life Outcomes. The Development and Treatment of Childhood aggression. Debra J. Pepler, Kenneth H. Rubin (eds) Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Hillsdale, New Jersey 5-27.

among school-aged children, the school is a key environment of influence. Poor academic achievement and early failure, along with perceived inability to receive extra help from teachers can lead to heightened aggressive and other problem behaviours by adolescence.²³ The perception of rules as unfair or too strict, and the implementation of poor, variable and weak discipline in classrooms have also been found to be risk factors for the development of aggressive and confrontational behavioural reactions.

Antisocial behaviour often leads to poor attitude toward or performance in school – particularly if it leads to academic failure, and it has additionally effect also in school life. Students exposed to violence at school may react by staying home to avoid the threat or by taking weapons to school in order to defend themselves. For their part, teachers may burn out after years of dealing with discipline problems and threats of violence. Burn out teachers lack interest and motivation in their work and also consider themselves unvalued and hopeless.

The esteem of teachers has been cast as an integral part of the education process. The individual teacher's self esteem affects her or his interactions with pupils and other staff members, and thus her or his communication style; low staff morale means that the school as a whole inevitably suffers.²⁴ On the other hand teachers' occupational roles in the school community may lead to victimisation. Teachers have to guard the rules and the norms at school. Every teacher has to interfere to the fights between the pupils and in this situation might get violent actions towards him or herself also. In this situation the teacher is not necessarily acting authoritarian way but according to their official role.²⁵

Moral acceptance of violent behaviour in the “right” circumstances can also help explain youth violence. If young hockey players are encouraged to “hit back” and are constantly given morally supportive arguments then this attitude in itself constitutes probably the strongest predictor of subsequent fighting behaviour. Salmivalli in her studies has shown that when systematic victimisation goes on in a school class, most students are not only aware of it, but many of them are present in actual bullying situations.²⁶

Schools located in socially disorganised neighbourhoods are more likely to have a high rate of violence than schools in other neighbourhoods. Some school violence has its roots within the wider community and is carried into school by the children themselves. This kind of violence may include gang rivalries, social and ethnic tensions, religious conflicts, sporting rivalries and inter-individual conflicts including intimate violence.

Problems such as concentrated poverty, limited or non existent opportunities for social and professional development, presence of alternative crime-inducing economic opportunities such as drug trafficking, high levels of transience and social isolation add together to increase hopelessness,

²³ Kokko Katja, (2001) Antecedents and consequences of long term employment, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

²⁴ Humphreys, T. (1993). *Self-esteem: The Key to your Child's Education*. Cork: Tom Humphreys

²⁵ Janne Kivivuori (1997) *Opettajien kohdistuva häirintä ja väkivalta* (The harassment and violence towards the teaching staff) National Research Institute of Legal Policy. Research Communications 33.

²⁶ Salmivalli, C. (1992) *Kouluväkivalta ryhmäilmionä* (Bullying as a group process). Master's Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Turku. Pepler, D. & Craig, W. (1995). A peek behind the fence: Naturalistic observations of aggressive children with remote audiovisual recording. *Developmental Psychology*, 31, 548-553. O'Connell, P., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (1999). Peer involvement in bullying: Insights and challenges for intervention. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 437-452.

diminish opportunities for the development of pro-social behaviours, and increase the risk of involvement in potentially violent situations²⁷.

The erosion of appropriate infrastructure, social space and opportunities results in increased mistrust and stress. The presence of gangs, in the proximate environment or even in the schools, increases the risk of involvement in violent interactions to a very high level, due to the nature of peer influence, the desire to belong to a group and have an identity, and the probability of secondary exposure to intergang conflict.²⁸ Cultural norms that support violence are also important, as they are assimilated into the socialization process and define individual behavior

Taking into consideration the socio-economic background is not only a question of poverty but also of class distinctions and social gaps. It is mainly the difference of socio-economic levels that provokes social tensions and can be a source of violent acts. School policy has the possibility to compensate social gaps (no fees; free meals, books, transport; scholarships etc) and should aim for a rate of social distribution adequate to the society it belongs to.

Violence results from a complex interplay of determinants at all levels of society. Each level of influence also represents a point of intervention, where risk factors can be reduced and protective factors can be promoted. In this sense, preventive action that acts at multiple spheres of society, and that addresses multiple determinants of violence, will be much more effective than interventions that focus on a single determinant or sector.

4.4. Effects of violence

Unwanted violence has negative effects on the physical, mental health and social development of school-aged youth. Victims and perpetrators may suffer from physical injury and in some cases of death. Violence has been linked with mental health problems, including trauma, distress, impairment of attachment, and a drop in self-esteem that makes it difficult to form strong peer relationships. Youth affected by violence may adopt high-risk behaviours to deal with the anxiety and perceptions of helplessness. High risk behaviours may include substance abuse, school absenteeism and even drop-out, premature sexual relations, and in some cases, self injury that can result in suicide.

Violence can become a vicious cycle: students who have been aggressed tend to have few friends with whom they can easily communicate and often feel left alone at school. Such youth, who often feel they lack the capacity to engage in social situations and feel helpless, unable to control their environment, have a limited opportunity to engage in prosocial activities. This leads to further marginalisation, and definition of the self towards others in a confrontational manner, and impedes the development of social, non-violent skills. These students are also more inclined to aggress against others.

Violence - experienced at school - may impact on injury risks incurred by children -in various environments. Depressive mood, fear, leading to lack of concentration or error by omission -not

²⁷ Høgh E, Wolf P. Violent Crime in a birth cohort: Copenhagen 1953-1977. In van Dusen K.T. Mednick S A (eds.) Prospective studies of crime and delinquency. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff 1983:249-267.; Wikström P-O H. Everyday violence in contemporary Sweden. Stockholm National Council for Crime Prevention 1985.

²⁸ M.W. Klein et al (eds), The Eurogang Paradox: Street Gangs and Youth Groups in U.S. and Europe. Kluwer Academic Publishers, The Netherlands.

looking before crossing the street or not following an instruction in the gym class or by commission - not using glasses because the friends. Make fun of one when doing it and missing a street sign.²⁹

Violence impedes effective education. Students affected by violence may be repeatedly absent from school, may have problems of concentration in class, and may be impeded from optimum cognitive development. Students exposed to violence at school may react by staying home to avoid the threat or by taking weapons to school in order to defend themselves. In some cases, students have dropped out from school after experiencing repeated violent acts. For their part, teachers may burn out after years of dealing with discipline problems and threats of violence..

4.5. Links between mental health problems and violence

4.5.1. Mental health problems can result from violence

a) Depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders. The experience of violence can lead to depression in many cases. Children who are depressive are more vulnerable to engage themselves to self harm and suicidal ideation. Depression can occur in any phase of the life cycle. It has been diagnosed in small infants, and its prevalence among 8 years old children has been reported to be 3-6%.³⁰ In the teen ages the risk of depression increases rapidly and achieves the rate found in adults.

The main features of depression are lowered state of mood, and inability to experience joy and pleasure. Depressive mood is the basic reaction of a human being to psychological pain and emotional ill-being. In itself depression is a normal emotion which has an important adaptive meaning and is familiar to everybody. Grief and sadness can be described as a “wound of the soul”. In depression this wound becomes “infected” and needs special treatment.³¹

Children with depression often cannot verbalise their distress and may express it only through somatic symptoms, irritability and withdrawal. As a result the child with depressive symptoms may not be recognised. Many children with depression will not necessarily be troublesome to parents and teachers. On the other hand, depressed adolescents often complain of feeling sad and apathetic and lacking energy. They may have difficulty in going to sleep and their appetite is impaired and they tend either to eat too little or to overeat. Suicidal thoughts are relatively common. A sense of futility and hopelessness may also be experienced.

b) Alcohol and drug abuse

When entering from childhood to adolescence young people experience many physical and psychological changes. This is a time when young people experiment more, take more risks and try out modes of adult behaviour. The use of alcohol is included in this, and evidence shows us that alcohol has become a more natural and important part of the young European lifestyle than before. This applies also to drug use, especially in urban youth cultures. The main trends in drinking patterns seem to be an increase in drunkenness and the mixing of alcohol with other drugs.

²⁹ L.Laflamme, E.Menckel (2001), Pupil injury risks as a function of physical and psychosocial environmental problems experienced at school. *Injury Prevention* 7:0-3

³⁰ Puura,K., Almqvist, F., Tamminen, T., Piha, J. Et al (1998). Psychiatric Disturbances among Prepubertal Children in Southern Finland. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 33:310-318

³¹ Juha Lavikainen, Eero Lahtinen and Ville Lehtinen , Eds (2000) *Public Health Approach on Mental Health*, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, STAKES, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland.76-77.

Young people are more vulnerable to suffering physical, emotional and social harm from their own or other people's drinking. There are strong links between high-risk drinking and violence, unsafe sexual behaviour, accidents, permanent disabilities and death. Also drug abuse is linked to same harms although there are differences between various types of drugs and the ways these are used. Additionally intravenous drug use is often connected to HIV and other serious health damages.

Alcohol dependence is one of the most prevalent mental diseases throughout the world. The resultant alcohol-related diseases, such as cardiovascular and gastrointestinal diseases, make up a large part of the disease burden among the adult population in western industrialised countries. Although the proportion of young people with alcohol dependency is initially small – alcohol-related diseases do not occur, as a rule, until later in life. Drug-related health damage (dependence, HIV, hepatitis, overdoses, etc) as well as social harms (social exclusion, stigmatisation, delinquency, etc), however, do occur and should be tackled already in young age. But the foundations for misuse of alcohol and other psychoactive substances are laid in childhood and adolescence.³²

4.5.2. Mental health problems can lead to violence

Various psychological conditions, such as hyperactivity, impulsiveness, daring and short attention span, pose a small risk for certain kind of violence. A consistent individual predictor is hyperactivity. This is characterised by restlessness, excessive activity, and difficulty paying attention, traits that may also contribute to low academic performance, a risk factor in school.³³

For a substantial number of children the learning goals set in the school are relatively demanding. The concerns especially learning disabled (LD) children who have problems in acquiring fluent reading skills needed for acquisition of knowledge or in maintaining goal-directed attention to be able to concentrate on school related tasks. It has been shown that 3-5% of children have these problems already due to genetic reasons making them vulnerable to LDs and thus unable to fully understand their difficulties. This leads often to behavioural and mood problems. The consequent accumulation of difficulties also exposes these children to increased risk of exclusion from the continuation of their school career.³⁴

4.6. The role of the family, community and media in the school violence

The central role of the family and in particular parents, in the prevention of violent behaviour cannot be overstated. A child growing up in a family with high expressed levels of aggression is more likely in turn to internalise this behaviour as acceptable. On the other hand, a child growing up

³² Wolfgang Settertobulte, Bjarne Bruun Jensen and Klaus Hurrelmann; Drinking among young Europeans (2001). Key note presentation in WHO European Ministerial Conference EUR/00/5020274/3 on Young People and Alcohol, Stockholm, Sweden, 19–21 February 2001.

Drug Situation in Europe 2000.EMCDDA 2001.

³³ Blair Burns Potter (2000) Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Public Health Services, 65.

Ferrington, David P.(1991) Childhood Aggression and Adult Violence: Early Precursors and Later-Life Outcomes. The Development and Treatment of Childhood aggression. Debra J. Pepler, Kenneth H. Rubin (eds) Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Hillsdale, New Jersey 5-27.

Pulkkinen, L, & Hurme, H. (1984). Aggression as a predictor of weak self control, In L.Pulkkinen, & P.Lyytinen (eds) Human action and personality (pp, 172-189), Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

³⁴ Lyytikäinen Heikki (1999) Mental health and early intervention of learning disabilities. Key note presentation in the From Ripples to Waves –conference, Workshop Learning Disabilities. Helsinki, Finland.

in a family where values such as warmth, openness and firmness are present is less likely to engage in or be a victim of violent behaviour.

The job of parenting is an ever increasingly demanding one, which requires attention and support. Peer support parenting programmes, which aim to empower parents, should be encouraged. When a violent incident occurs between children the reaction and response of parents is important. When this happens within the school context its best if the school and parents work together to deal with the situation. The overall school ethos in relation to parents must be actively positive so that parents feel included and valued by the system.

Parenting programmes should include opportunities for parents to discuss the issue of violence and their role in preventing and managing this issue. Opportunities for parents to develop effective strategies for dealing with violent or bullying incidents should also be included. Children and their parents live within a community context and the attitudes and beliefs of the community at micro and macro levels are an important influence. The socio-economic factors, which determine health also, apply to violence and policies addressing poverty and disadvantage will impact on the incidence of violence.

4.6.1 The connection between domestic violence and school children

Schools can be similarly proactive and effective in supporting children who have witnessed and or experienced violence at home. In the comparative research project of the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelter in Finland and UK organisation Refuge³⁵ it was found out that in both countries the domestic violence experienced or witnessed by children and young people in the home did come to light in school. In most cases the school worker got to know of it from the child or young person him/ herself, a colleague, through the child protection team or the pupil's mother.

In the same study the educational personnel said the domestic violence, the atmosphere and events in the home have great influence of on the behaviour at school of children and young people. According to the respondents, collaboration between various authorities was hindered by the regulations on confidentiality. One of the main problems knew what information they could pass on, to whom, and who should definitely be informed. Shortage of time and lack of human resources were also regarded by the school workers as obstacles to co-operation with other authorities.³⁶

The risk to pass the violent behaviour from generation to generation is very high. According to research of Bentovim children try to hide their experiences of violence.³⁷ Projects and programmes to prevent violence in schools should include aspects of or create co-operation to the projects preventing domestic violence.

³⁵ Virpi Dufa ; What's troubling the child? Domestic violence as seen by workers in school. The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters, Helsinki Publication 26 (2001).

³⁶ The survey was part of the EU Daphne Initiative. The aim of the Daphne Initiative is to protect children, young people and women from violence, to prevent violence and to provide support for its victims. According to the Commission, the consequences of violence are so great that a separate project is called for at Union level with a view to preventing it. Finds for new co-projects have been granted within the framework of this programme since 1997.

³⁷ Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2000. Recommendations of the E.U., Expert Meeting on Violence Against Women. Helsinki 2001, reports 2000:13. Bentovim: Breaking the Cycle of Family Violence- A Systemic Perspective, 179-193.

4.6.2 The role of the community and society in school violence

Young pupils and teenagers in particular are subjected to a wide range of influences from their surrounding community on a daily basis. The school is an important part of a young person's community, but equally (and perhaps more) important are the influences that come from neighbours, peers, the religious community, sports and recreation teams, social clubs, and so on. In more extreme cases, other forces within the community, such as youth gangs, may be the strongest influence upon a young person's behaviour. The attitudes and codes of behaviour fostered by these different players can often be at odds with the goal of positive mental health.

This complex combination of external individuals and groups exert a tremendous influence on young people. The multiple facets of the local community contribute greatly to a young person's culture and ultimately to their own identity. In this sense, it is vital not to underestimate the impact of these external forces on an individual's behaviour. In most instances, local community structures strive to exert a positive influence over youngsters. However, this is not always the case

Youth gang violence is often directly imported into the school environment. This violence includes everything from individuals carrying weapons to school to intimidation, harassment, and even violent physical attacks. This type of violence can have a massive impact within the peer group. However, manifestations of violence can also exist in other forms within the community. Some examples of this could include a local sports team whose goal is not physical fitness and sportsmanship, but rather to win at any cost even if this means foul play. Similarly, a local church group may preach a doctrine, which has less to do with spiritual guidance than with fundamentalism and intolerance. These are more indirect forms of violence that may not originate among the young people themselves, but they are forms that can quickly become integrated into a young person's personality and thus carried into the school.

Rather than becoming overwhelmed by the potential of the community at large to become a threatening risk factor, it is important to remember that individuals and institutions on community level are in a good position to contribute towards eliminating school violence. To do so, these players must take on an active role in support of the "Whole School" concept. At a certain moment of their development, young people often respect community leaders (doctors, sport coaches, religious leaders, youth workers, etc.) more highly than their teachers or even their own parents. This may be especially true among minority populations. For example, a community leader from the same ethnic or national background may exert more influence upon a young person than the same leader from the native population. As such, it is crucial that these members of the community recognise the weight that their words and deeds carry. It is fundamental that the role of such persons be recognised and used to its full potential in eliminating school violence.

Pilot activities carried out on national and European-level have indicated that some of the most influential leadership can come from within the peer group itself.³⁸ No one has a greater stake in the situation of young people than the youngsters themselves. Of all potential external influences, peer pressure is arguably one of the strongest. It stands to reason, therefore, that one of the greatest sources of anti-violent behaviour could come from future peer leaders.

An old proverb states that "It takes a village to raise a child." This adage still holds true today. The composition of the old-fashioned village may have changed, but the roles and responsibilities of the

³⁸ Cowie, H. & Wallace, P. (2000). *Peer Support in Action*. London: Sage, Cowie, H and Wallace, P. (1998). *Peer Support: A Teacher Manual*, London The Prince's Trust

community at large have not. Peer groups, community leaders and local-level institutions can be some of the greatest allies in effectively combating school violence.

4.6.3 The role of media in the school violence

The Green paper on the protection of minors and human dignity says that the development of the audio-visual and information services industry in the European Union requires not only the right economic and political conditions but also a certain level of protection for the general interest of the European citizen.³⁹

The Committee of Ministers adopted recommendation on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media on 30 October 1997.⁴⁰ This recommendation deals with the gratuitous portrayal of violence in the various electronic media at national and transfrontier level.⁴¹

The Committee concludes that, as an immediate consequence, media violence may impair the physical, mental or moral development of the public, particularly young people, by creating, for instance, insensitivity to suffering, feelings of insecurity and mistrust.

In particular, operators of electronic media have certain responsibilities if they disseminate messages, words and images containing violence, in view of the potentially harmful effects on the public, especially young people. Nevertheless, the various other sectors in the society are not excused and parents and teachers particularly have a special responsibility.

They may assume this responsibility, inter alia, by;

- developing and maintaining a critical attitude towards the gratuitous portrayal of violence
- using the electronic media in a conscious and selective manner, as well as by demanding quality products and services
- stimulating children and adolescents to develop a critical attitude, e.g. through media education (media literacy) within the family and in schools
- help children understand and cope with non fictive portrayal of violence
- examining ways to restrict access by children and adolescents to violence portrayed in the electronic media where this is likely to impair their physical, mental or moral development⁴²

³⁹ Green paper on the protection of minors and human dignity (COM (96) 483 final)

⁴⁰ Recommendation No. R (97) 19- On the portrayal of violence in the electronic media

⁴¹ “Electronic media” is defined as “radio and television programme services, services such as video-on-demand, Internet, interactive television etc., and products such as video games, CD-ROM, etc. With the exception of private communications which are not accessible to the public” while “gratuitous portrayal of violence” is defined as “the dissemination of messages, words and images, the violent content or presentation of which is given a prominence which is not justified in the context”.

⁴² Oxford University Centre for Socio-legal Studies: Parental control of Television Broadcasting, PCMLP

5. A Framework for Action to Tackle Violence in Schools with whole school approach

5.1. Introduction to the table

The Framework for Action to Combat Violence in Schools in this proposal looks at prevention across the school community. Each type of prevention is described at the levels of pupils, staffs, classrooms, schools, physical environments, families and community. Actions are divided into promotion or primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention.

Prevention and intervention strategies⁴³

1. Primary prevention (pro active interventions) refers to approaches implemented on a universal scale, that aim to prevent the onset of violence and related risk factors.
2. Secondary prevention (reactive interventions) refers to approaches implemented on a selected scale, for people at enhanced risk of violence, and are aimed at preventing the onset and reducing the risk of violence
3. Tertiary prevention (curative) refers to strategies implemented on an indicated scale, once the problem is already clearly evident and causing harm, e.g. for individuals or groups that have already demonstrated violent behaviour and / or been victimised by perpetrators of violence.

The Framework for Action presents the policymaker and the programme planner with a map of the different levels of intervention that should be considered when attempting to prevent violence in schools. At each level, interventions that have been shown to be promising or confirmed to be successful at preventing violence, are presented. The framework can be used as a flexible guide to determine possibilities for intervention in specific contexts. Information on the specific strategies can be found in the resources cited in the end of this document.

Before any intervention or action can be defined, it is necessary to define the school and the community's strengths, weaknesses, and target problems related to violence prevention. This involves an assessment of existing resources to invest in prevention programming (human and financial) and of the willingness of education staff to invest time, human and financial resources in the design of violence prevention programmes. The training needs of staff and their willingness to participate to the training should also be defined as well the whole schools willingness to invest in combating violence and creating an anti bullying policy.

Needs assessment also implies an analysis of the profile of violence in the local environment. Accurate information on the level and type of violence seen at the local level, will help ensure that efforts focus on the real needs, rather than on perceived ones. In addition, collection of data on the profile of violence before beginning the intervention will provide planners a baseline that can be later compared with post-intervention violence data, to evaluate the changes brought about by the programme.

Prior to intervention, it is also recommended to identify the environmental characteristics that ought to be addressed in a specific prevention programme. These might include “physical hotspots” for violence – playgrounds, toilets, bathrooms and other isolated areas. Once these areas are identified,

⁴³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General – Executive Summary, Rockville, MD; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Centre for Mental Health Service and National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health

actions can be taken to reduce the risk of violence: for example: student traffic flow in the corridors can be modified to avoid crowding and possible confrontations, the playground infrastructure can be improved to provide recreation alternatives to students, and lighting can be increased to discourage violent activity in highly visible areas.

The existing co-operation between school, family and community should also be defined. Their willingness to co-operate in violence prevention and finding the existing resources creates cost effectiveness and helps the school in its efforts.

The promotion and primary prevention actions are targeted universally to schools who have not yet become involved in severe violence and the aim is to prevent the onset of violence in school. This includes social skills training and co-operative learning, promotion of pupils active participation and exchange between pupils in different levels. Information should be given on school bullying and raising awareness on school violence.⁴⁴

The school staff also has needs. If the teachers feel relaxed, content and valued they will be more likely to approach their students with respect, sympathy and understanding. Particular attention should be paid to the management of stress as teachers see it as key areas of need. Teachers also need training in group dynamics to find out in the early stages the problems in the classroom, and to create a positive learning environment.

Secondary and tertiary prevention includes actions aiming to prevent the initiation of violence in schools that exhibit a marked risk, or to reduce the likelihood of further violence in schools that already face this problem. Coping skills to respond to peer and partner pressure as well the coping skills to stand up for themselves are examples of secondary prevention.

Violent act in school should be dealt with immediately. To be successful in this task every school needs a plan of crisis and values clarification at classroom and at school level.. Also education for social skills and social competence give tools to mediate the conflict situations, methods to solve problems constructive ways in relationships and also helps to build mutually content relationships.⁴⁵

The Whole School approach is essential to combat violence in school. This involves the inclusion of teachers, young people and parents in the development of the school environment and the appreciation's of the key role played by each group in the overall development of the child. Curriculum work must be relevant to their needs and their active participation must be encouraged. In developing positive links with the community a multi-disciplinary networking approach is important to be encouraged. Community institutions can work with the school to replicate non-violent messages beyond the school environment. They will also provide services to manage and protect children at risk or suffering harm from violence.

⁴⁴ Turunen H, Tossavainen K, Jakonen S, Salomäki U, Vertio H (2000) Improving health in the European Network of Health Promoting Schools in Finland. Health Education Vol 1000, Number 6, 252-260, Ortega R., Del Ray R, Mora-Merchán Joaquin (2001) Save-model, an anti-bullying intervention proposal in Spain, Dpt pf Developmental and Educational Psychology, University of Seville.

⁴⁵ Comenius 3.1.project European teacher training module on Group Dynamics and Social Skills in the Classroom.Co-ordinated by the Finnish Centre for Health Promotion.71545-CP-2-2000-1-FI-COMENIUS-C 31

Table 1. Framework for Action to Tackle Violence in Schools

Tackling violence in schools	Assessment	Primary prevention (proactive)	Secondary prevention (reactive)	Tertiary prevention (curative)
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing of pupils • self image of pupils • social cognition of pupils • ability to understand feelings and emotions from others and themselves • attribution and perspectives • degree of belonging • risk behaviour levels and attitudes towards school • the magnitude of the problem • the degree of implementation of child-oriented approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training of emotional competence, self control and assertive behaviour • social skills, problem solving and social competence • promote pupil's active participation • relaxation exercises • promote hobbies • co-operative learning, promoting exchange between pupils with different skills levels • raise students political awareness • participation: increase opportunity for students to have a say in school life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peer-mediation • counselling, career guidance to reduce likelihood of academic failure • mentoring, assertiveness training: for those at risk of being a victim • coping skills and ability to stand up for themselves • coping skills to respnd to peer and partner pressure • attitudes towards weaker person • information on school bullying, different roles in bullying situation, raising awareness on school violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychological therapeutical, social and medical treatments • access to immediate crisis help • active follow-up
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training needs, willingness for training • health guidance: how many pupils attend and staff available • the problem profile • promote team teaching • assessment of wellbeing of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training: group dynamics and social skills, • psycho sexual knowledge on children's psychosocial development, aggressive behaviour • information on work place bullying, defining roles among staff, agreement • clinical supervision, coaching and counselling for teachers • promotion of team work • mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crisis meeting immediately after severe bullying situation • counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serious talks with bullies and victims • serious talks with parents of involved students • PIKAS / No blame approach: empathy with bullies • psychological , social and medical treatments • access to immediate crisis help • active follow-up

		promotion at workplace		
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the degree of implementation of child oriented approach assessment of class -climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> behavioural techniques for class positive reinforcement, clear rules, non-violent discipline management anti-violence policy for classroom level, created in dialogue with pupils. 		
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessment of school climate how ready the school is to invest in combating violence, bullying policy determine administrative / principal support: staff and time resources. Conduct analysis of relevant policies on punishment / disciplinary methods, student participation, staff support Study resources / data recorded by health clinic: injury risk behaviours and problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> school-wide anti violence policy, created in dialogue with pupils non stigmatising policy for perpetrators or victims general policy on student and teacher conduct and safety precautions promotion of democratic structures in school and classroom behaviour monitoring and reinforcement information on all levels about the school rules and anti violence policy European Non Violent Week at School-awareness raising campaign Parent-Teacher Association meetings building school capacity to implement positive changes in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open discussion, informing the situations but also confidence when needed determine incentives for positive behaviour and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Clear rules punishment defined in the school anti bullying policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> whole school meetings open sharing positive disciplinary measures.
Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> study environmental characteristics, such as physical hot spots for violence physical characteristics of playground conditions of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embellishing school and classrooms cleanness small class size respect for pupils creativity improve sustainable development improve playground supervision and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification of student flows through school grounds in order to prevent the proliferation of “hot spots” of violence. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building and classrooms, number and type of exits, design and location of bathrooms, lighting and isolated areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make environment of playground more interesting safety at playground furnishing classroom nicely. 		
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the existing co-operation between school and family willingness for co-operation and involvement in school based violence prevention programme socio-economic characteristics of student families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect parents expertise, positive co-operation give positive feedback to the parents information for families about the same as pupils and staff training parents to use appropriate child management techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open discussion with all the families involved supporting family-family discussions enhanced communication with parents and students through class meetings and reports to parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> psychological social and medical treatments access to immediate crisis help active follow-up
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> willingness of the community to join the project co-operation with health and education, police and justice, youth and social sectors existing resources the programme can link up with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-operative projects and programmes with the community, common activities shared responsibility information in Media and local services about the school anti - violence policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> after-school and summer activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locally tailored programmes. access to local services for early detection and treatment

6. Indicators to measure outcomes of interventions

School-based violence prevention programmes need to be evaluated in order to determine whether they have been effective in reducing violent behaviours. The design of an evaluation component within a programme is essential in order to measure a change, and to determine whether the change was due to the intervention or to other factors in the environment. By using outcome evaluation, for example, practitioners can determine whether the programme achieved its objectives, and whether it should be continued, modified and / or replicated in other sites. Evaluation results can be critical element to advocate for the continuation or expansion of the programme, and to involve other players in its implementation. It also serves that limited resources are invested in activities that actually lead to desired changes.

Reliable measures must be used to monitor changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Using data items that are already available in existing records may facilitate the evaluation process.

An outcome evaluation involves several steps⁴⁶:

- 1) Definition of problem
 - Target population
 - Risk factors to address
- 2) Define indicators to evaluate
 - matched to programme objectives
 - based on the literature and country experiences
- 3) Selection of evaluation design
- 4) Selection of appropriate measurement instruments
 - appropriate to culture and education level of target
 - reliable and valid
- 5) Collection of data
 - baseline (before programme)
 - process (during implementation –about activities implemented)
 - summative (after programme)
- 6) Analyse of data
- 7) Dissemination of findings

Risk indicators⁴⁷

- Types and magnitude of risk behaviours practised by students (drinking, fighting, carrying weapons, threats, bullying, etc) This can include
 - level of violence between students
 - level of violence towards students
 - level of violence towards adults, threats and attacks
 - ethnic conflict; fights between students of different ethnic groups
 - gang violence: gang members making trouble, conflict between students who are gang members
- Rate of possession of illegal substances
- Rates of violent injury, suicide and suicide attempts
- Arrest for crime on school grounds
- Level on vandalism in school property
- Absenteeism
- Number and type of disciplinary measures enacted
- Number of out-of-school suspensions in a month
- Drop-out rates
- Number and type of weapons confiscated
- Perceptions of risk of victimisation

⁴⁶ Dahlberg, L., Toal, S.B., and Behrens, C.B. "Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviours Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools." National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, United States Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia, 1998, Nutbeam Don (1998) Evaluating health promotion progress, problems and solutions in Health Promotion International Vol.13. No 1. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁷ Based on indicators listed in: Birdthistle I. et al. "Violence Prevention: An Important Element of a Health-Promoting School." World Health Organization. Geneva, 1999; Janosz M. et al. "L'environnement socioéducatif à l'école secondaire: un modèle théorique pour guider l'évaluation du milieu." Revue Canadienne de Psycho-éducation, Vol. 27, num ro 2, 1998, 285-306; and Dwyer, K. and Osher, D. (2000). Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, American Institutes for Research; St Leger Lawrence (2000) Developing Indicators to enhance school health, Health Education Research, Theory and Practice. Oxford University Press 2000, Vol.15.no.6.719-728

Social Climate indicators:

- Adoption of peaceful and constructive methods of resolving conflict
- Type of disciplinary and violence-related policies; participation in their formulation, acceptance by staff and students, rejection of corporal punishment and harassment by staff and students
- School investment in staff training for violence prevention and social climate promotion and response
- School practises that encourage and give opportunities for staff and families to establish close, caring and supportive relationships with children and youth
- Policies, practices and procedures that foster collaboration between the school and the students' families
- Number and type of people involved in community violence prevention activities
- Students and teachers presence at school
- Student and teacher attitude toward school
- Active participation to the school life (both pupils and staff)
- Communication and openness at school and with the community
- Effective communication skills
- School recreational facilities; quality, level of safety, isolated areas, appropriate lighting, public spaces for movement and interaction, level of cleanliness, adequacy of classrooms
- Perceptions of safety in school, and trust in other persons
- Pride in belonging to the institution
- Acceptance of school values and adhesion to them

Educational practice indicators:

- Learning ability, attendance and learning achievement, e.g. literacy and numeracy skills, basic learning competencies
- Co-operation in different levels (teaching methods, team working etc)
- Emphasis on educational success of students
- System of positive material and social recognition and selective, reduced punishment
- Quality and time spent in teaching
- Parental participation in education
- Appropriate educational structure: clarity of norms, consistency in application, student participation and adherence to norm
- Opportunities to develop personal, social or technical skills in the school environment
- Supportive administrative leadership for personnel

Evaluation should be made "attractive" and it should be considered as a needed tool to measure changes in the individual, its social and physical environment, and the interaction between the two⁴⁸. Through such construction of knowledge, practitioners will be able effective ways to reduce the obstacles to learning and development

⁴⁸ Janosz M. et al. Idem

7. Teacher training needs

There is a strong need for overall caring for pupils and effective support actions at school. As well there is an increasing need to take care of the staff wellbeing by providing good quality and adequate continuous training and teachers supervision. Both initial and in-service teacher training need to place greater emphasis upon the development of life skills, empathy and the capacity to cope with stress and change.

The recent evaluation of teacher education in Finland⁴⁹ brought into discussion the needs for multiple contents and skills neglected in the present teacher education. Although the Finnish teacher education was reported to be scientifically of a high European level, real shortcomings and urgent needs for renewals were reported. For example, the content of teacher education was reported to ignore the changes that occurred in the society and the pressure to renew the contents of the present education.

Teaching contents related to knowledge of psychological and social psychological processes and social skills were lacking. The need for personal development as a teacher in order to be able to understand and support the growth of children was highlighted. The approach of introductory courses to the problems of children needing special support, remedial or special education were reported to be too restricted. The students felt there is a gap between theoretical instruction and practical training.⁵⁰

All the teachers need basic education on counselling and career guidance. Career development should be combined with overall life planning and lifelong learning. Thus counselling should also support those life planning skills, which equip the individual to cope with new and unforeseeable situations. An additional task for counselling is to foresee and help people's emotional problems, e.g. prevention of burn out and becoming overloaded.

The teacher education also on group processes in the classroom is needed for several reasons. The increasing complexity of social conditions and the large concentrations of people have brought to the forefront the need for and the importance of learning to work effectively in-groups. Contemporary life places a premium on citizens' abilities to relate well to others. The future will hold an even more compelling need to deal with interpersonal tensions and conflicts, for instance relationships between races, ethnic groups and sexes. People cannot simply to avoid these problems; they must learn to handle them constructively and creatively if we are to live and work well together.

Teacher training on media literacy has become more and more important issue. Media literacy is defined as "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms".⁵¹ It can not only facilitate informed, positive television viewing, it can also assist in the

⁴⁹ Jussila, Saari (ed) Opettajankoulutus tulevaisuuden tekijänä. Yliopistoissa annettavan opettajankoulutuksen arviointi. Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvoston julkaisuja Edita 11:1999. Luukkainen; Opettaja vuonna 2010, opettajien perus- ja täydennyskoulutuksen ennakointihankkeen (OPEPRO) selvitys 15. Loppuraportti. Opetushallitus, Helsinki 2000
Onnismaa, Viljamaa; Guidance and Counselling in Finland. Best Practises and Current Policy Issues, National Board of Education, Finland, 1999.

⁵⁰ A special support system has been developed since 1976 in the Department for Compulsory Education of the Vienna Board of Education to support children with special psychosocial needs. Support is given by specially trained schoolteachers. Important part of the training is 150 hours of self-encounter or psychotherapy in order to develop ones own personality.

⁵¹ Oxford University Centre for Socio-legal Studies: Parental control of Television Broadcasting, PCMLP

development of citizenship skills, promoting the development of information literacy skills, offering access to diverse sources of information, and providing opportunities to practise leadership and responsible self-expression.

8. The supervision and coaching of the school staff

Supervision and coaching as a continual professional guidance to clarify one's occupational roles, responsibility and limits in schoolwork.

The supervisor, who is not involved in the actual working field of the supervisee, helps to understand the interaction between teacher and pupil, between teacher and colleague or the institution.

Supervision has become an essential resource in the field of social work and can help teachers to raise and maintain psychological stability.

Introspection in and awareness of the professional's own psychic structure with all its manifestations are necessary to act responsible in human relations and to avoid phenomenons like burn out.

9. The Whole School and Policy Recommendations

The whole school and political recommendations are listed separately although it is recognised that the integration of both together are required if real structural change is possible.

The whole school

- Violence prevention needs to start early: target students at a young age, before negative behavioural patterns are set.
- Teacher education must include child development, group dynamics, psycho dynamics, social skills, conflict management, coping and a focus on how teachers can look after their own mental health.
- Pupils active participation should be promoted as well in teaching methods as in overall school life
- An evaluation "cookbook" should be available to teachers to provide them with practical tools for evaluation and indicators for wellbeing and ill being at school. And evaluation method used should in itself empower the individual and be in keeping with the aim of promoting positive mental health.

Political

- In the EU Concrete Objectives of Education and Training Systems-document, COM (2001) 501 final, should include under the Basic Skills the promotion of mental, physical and social resources at school
- The European Observatory of the Child Wellbeing should be established to provide research findings for Mental Health Promotion at the key stages of child development
- An EU forum for debate on mental health promotion at school community should be established
- A minimum set of mental health services for children and young people should be agreed by each member state

- Legislation to protect children should be promoted at EU level
- A minimum set of standards to combat violence in schools should be adopted
- The results of the research / survey programmes should be disseminated widely
- Countries should aim to set up regular surveillance systems to monitor the magnitude and patterns of youth risk behaviours
- A system must be established to facilitate the continued documentation, co-ordination and dissemination of “best practice” on a national and EU level.

Useful addresses:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/connect/selection.html> (EU Commission Connect Initiative)

www.health.fi/connect (Connect fi, Finnish Centre for Health Promotion)

www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/connect (Connect uk, Country reports: Tackling Violence in Schools)

www.obsviolence.pratique.fr (Connect fr, European Observatory of School Violence)

www.menuhin-foundation.com (Connect be, Art -source of tolerance, Yehudi-Menuhin Foundation)

www.who.dk/tech/inv/hps/htm (European Network of Health Promoting Schools)

www.peersupport.co.uk (CHIPS -Childline in partnership with schools, Mental Health Foundation, Peer support networker)

www.gold.ac.uk/tmr/ (European anti-bullying project)

www.samaritans.org (Free teaching pack designed to help secondary schools tackle subjects such as stress, anxiety and isolation)

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash (US Department of Health and Human Services, Adolescent and School Health; Federal Activities Addressing Violence in Schools)

www.mhe-sme.org (Mental Health Europe)

The comments and feedback are asked to send to

Ms Ulla Salomäki
European Bridges Consulting
Lehdesniityntie 3 D 65
00340 Helsinki, Finland
Tel +358-50-3827997
Email ulla.salomaki@kolumbus.fi

CONNECT –fi 006 Proposal for an Action Plan to Combat Violence in Schools

The Writer:

Ms. Ulla Salomäki, MA
Project Manager
Finnish Centre for Health Promotion, Finland

Contributing Writers:

Ms. Magdalena Cerda, MPH
Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention
Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
World Health Organisation, Switzerland

Ms. Christine de Coninck
Flemish Ministry of Education, Belgium

Mr. Peter Gill, B.A., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D.,
Professor of Education
Department of Education
University College Gävle, Sweden

Mr. Stephen James Minton, PhD
Institute of Technology, Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Ms. Lucie Laflamme, PhD
Associate Professor
Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

Ms. Christiina Salmivalli, PhD
Researcher, University of Turku, Finland

Ms. Anne Sheridan
North Western Health Board. Ireland

Ms Hemma Stallegger
Email hstallegger@aon.at
SPZ-Sonderpädagogisches Zentrum für Integrative Betreuungsformen
Vienna Board of Education, Austria

Planning Board:

Ms Ulla Salomäki (chair)
Email ulla.salomaki@health.fi

Mr Hartmut Balsler
Email balsler.hartmut@t-online.de
Netzwerk Verantwortungsübernahme und Gewaltprävention, Germany

Ms Anne Sheridan
 Email Anne.Sheridan@nwhb.ie
 North Western Health Board, Ireland

Ms Hemma Stallegger
 Email hstallegger@aon.at
 SPZ-Sonderpädagogisches Zentrum für integrative Betreuungsformen
 Vienna Board of Education, Austria

Director, Ms Randi Talseth
 Email randitalseth@vfb.no
 Organisation Adults for Children, Norway

Senior Advisor
 Ms Elsi Veijola
 Email elsi.veijola@MINEDU.fi
 Ministry of Education, Finland

Reviewers:

Ms. Regina Aigner
 Vienna Board of Education, Austria

Dr. Alexander Butchart
 Scientist and team leader
 Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention
 Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
 World Health Organisation, Switzerland

Professor, Helen Cowie
 School of Psychology and Counselling
 University of Surrey Roehampton, UK

Ms. Marja-Kirsti Eliasson
 City of Helsinki, Finland

Ms. Janet Geynor
 Director, North Western Health Board, Ireland

Ms. Tarja Heiskanen
 Project Manager, Finnish Association for Mental Health, Finland

Mr. Michael Katschnig
 Vienna Board of Education, Austria

Mr. Tapio Kuure
 Researcher, University of Tampere, Finland

Ms. Marja-Liisa Niemi
 Senior Adviser, Ministry of Education, Finland

Professor Mona O'More
 Anti Bullying Centre, Dublin, Ireland

Ms. Liisa Meriläinen
 Senior Adviser, National Board of Education, Finland

Professor Rosario Ortega-Ruiz
 University of Sevilla, Spain

Ms. Kristina Salonen, Director of the Mental Health Promotion Line
of the Finnish Association for Mental Health in Finland

Professor Peter Smith
Coldsmiths College, London, UK

Mr. Petteri Sveins
Stakes, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Finland

Dr. Miroslava Vassinova
European Centre for Bioethics and Quality of Life, Italy

Mr. Gerard Wulleman
Inspector, Flemish Ministry of Education, Belgium

Mr Duncan Wallace
ISF MÜNCHEN, Institut für Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung e.v., Germany

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