	Human Rights and Democracy in Action **Pilot Projects on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education**

**Addressing Violence in Schools
through Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education**

A review of research results and action programs on combatting school violence

in Hungary (Draft report)

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1 Introduction

The present report aims to review research projects and action programs in the fields of the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of school violence in Hungary. Only a few articles and books have been published on school violence, and there have been some research projects but few of them have aimed at this issue in a way that would yield generalizable results. This way data about bullying in Hungary can mostly be obtained from the HBSC surveys. However, some very recent local research projects are also worthy of our attention in this area of study.

The second part of this report presents an overview of the many action programs that have been implemented by a variety of governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations to prevent, diagnose and treat cases of bullying.

The definition of bullying in the studies and programs below all take a definition by Olweus as their starting point: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly, and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (1993, p. 9). However, as it can be seen from the review below, the frequency of bullying and the number of students affected in Hungary vary considerably in the different research studies. As Buda (2015) notes in an excellent overview of research conducted in Hungary on school violence, all Hungarian research projects found that the proportions of bullies and victims were considerably higher than the reported figures in the international surveys for Hungary (e.g. HBSC). According to all local studies, Hungarian teachers have long found that students' aggressive behavior is difficult to handle. Buda (2015) also cites the HBSC statistics on fighting, where Hungary's position is far from ideal as we are 6th to 9th in the ranking depending on the age group in question. She notes that with such high ranking in school fights and with teachers' reportedly serious difficulties with aggressive behavior it is indeed surprising that the frequency of bullying is found to be relatively low in Hungary. Buda claims that the study of bullying is still a new area of study in Hungary and there is no consensus on how to define types of bullying and frequency of occurrence or what research tool would be most suitable to measure the problem considering that students do not

necessarily have the same understanding of the terms used in questionnaires due to cultural and linguistic differences and their varying degrees of reading skills even within the same country (2015, p. 17).

2 Documentation of existing research

2.1 The WHO Health Behavior in School-aged Children report on school violence

Contributors to the WHO study from Hungary: Ágnes Németh, Gyöngyi Kökönyei, András Költő, Ágota Örkényi, Gabriella Páll, Dóra Várnai, Ildikó Zakariás, Emese Zsiros (National Institute of Child Health, Budapest)

http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/163857/Social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.pdf?ua=1

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) international report (Currie et al. 2012) based on the 2009/2010 survey found that in Hungary 25% of 13-year-old boys had been involved in a physical fight at least three times in the previous year and the proportion of the same for 15-year-old boys was 20%. For Hungarian girls, the proportion was 6% in both age groups. These proportions reflect the European average.

The study claims that observed gender differences show that boys are involved three times more than girls across all countries and within each age group. Prevalence of reported physical fighting in most countries is lower among 15-year-olds than those aged 11 and 13.

These findings are consistent with previous research in suggesting that girls are less involved in physical violence and that children engage in emotional and verbal, rather than physical violence as they grow older.

As for bullying as defined by Olweus (1993) for this HBSC study, in Hungary 8% of 11-year-old girls and 13% of 11-year-old boys reported having been bullied at school at least twice in the previous months. The same was 8% for girls and 9% for boys among 13-year olds, and 4% for girls and 5% for boys among 15-year olds.

The proportion of 11-year olds who admitted to have bullied others at least twice in the previous months was 2% for girls and 7% for boys. Among 13-year olds, 2% of girls and 9% of boys reported the same. In the 15-year old group, these proportions were 2% and 8% respectively.

Prevalence rates vary considerably across Europe and with the above results the proportion of bullies and victims of bullying is not very high in Hungary compared to other countries. However, the HBSC findings show that prevalence rates change and remain high in some countries, suggesting the continuing need for prevention and intervention programs.

Citing research studies by Vreeman and Carroll (2007) and Ahlfors (2010), the HBSC report claims that "Fairly consistent evidence suggests that school-based interventions can significantly reduce adolescents' bullying behaviour, with the opportunities for success being greatest if the intervention incorporates a whole-school approach involving multiple disciplines and the entire school community. Staff commitment to implementing the intervention plays a crucial role in its success. Curriculum-based interventions or targeted social-skills groups are less effective and may sometimes worsen bullying and victimization. Public health policies may play an important role in supporting the implementation of effective programmes at schools and in facilitating future research to identify factors that increase their effectiveness and cost efficiency" (p. 200).

The emergence of cyber-bullying means that prevention and intervention programs are now challenged to cover a wider range of behaviors. Many programs have been developed in recent years, including web-based tools addressing parents, adolescents (victims and perpetrators) and educators. Authors of the HBSC survey suggest that research on the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs on cyber-bullying is therefore strongly encouraged.

2.2 Bullies and victims – The first study on violence in schools in Hungary
Author: Erika Figula (2004, Szabolcs-Szatmár County)
Erika Figula conducted the first rigorous study on school violence in Szabolcs- Szatmár

County in Hungary in 2004. The sample was small as only 505 upper-primary students participated. The research tools included self-report questionnaires and interviews. Figula found that the frequency of bullying acts was significantly higher than expected. Among the participants she found 26% victims, 13% bullies, 27% "aggressor victims" and 34% bystanders. There were also significant differences in distribution according to gender and age group. Girls tended to be victims or bystanders and boys were more likely to be bullies or aggressor victims.

2.3 Dangers at School - A study on school aggression initiated by the Commissioner of Educational Rights

Edited by Gábor Hajdú and Géza Sáska (2009)

http://www.oktbiztos.hu/ugyek/iskolai_agresszio_jelentes.pdf

An online questionnaire and an interview based study was conducted in 186 secondary schools (one randomly chosen class from a number of schools in Budapest) as well as their teachers and school heads or deputy heads in addition to 50 classes of 7th graders from primary schools. The total number of secondary school students participating was 4,375 and their average age was 17.88 years. The number of teachers was 980.

The most common forms of violent behavior were yelling/cursing (59.9% of 11th graders did this at least once), humiliation (47.5% admitted to have done this to others) and exclusion (25% claimed to have excluded others). Another finding worth mentioning is that 38.3% of students claimed to have been shouted or cursed at by their teachers and 33.5% said that they had been humiliated by their teachers at least once.

This 120-page study further examines the results according to school type, personality traits, parental behavior, teacher intervention and teachers' practice of asking for help when faced with aggressive behavior. Some more key findings:

- The type of school is not relevant (only the homogeneous grammar schools show less aggression)
- Aggression as a personality trait is more frequent in vocational schools (also true for teachers)

- Protective factor: when the parents know the best friends of their child
- Aggressive friends are risk factors
- In schools where children find their teachers to be fair the rate of aggressive acts is lower

2.4 Bullying in the Primary School. Summary and extracts from a Report of Research Conducted in Hajdú-Bihar County (Hungary)

Authors: Mariann Buda – Erika Szirmai (2010)

http://www.researchgate.net/publication/46146441_School_Bullying_in_the_Primary_School._Report_of_a_Research_in_Hajd-Bihar_County_(Hungary)

This was the first (regionally) representative research study conducted in Hungary in 2008 in 23 randomly selected schools. The key findings include the following:

- Only 9.6% of children said that there was no bullied child in their class
- 50.9% of children said that mockery happens several times a week
- 26.7% of children bullied a peer in the past few months, several times per month
- 13.6% of children experience frequent harassment (1-2 times/weekly)
- There was correlation between school climate and violence
- Attitudes towards bullying: blaming the victim was a general attitude

According to the authors the research conducted by WHO - Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, HBSC – is especially important. In their questionnaire a few questions are aimed at bullying, which makes it possible to compare results of different countries in this area as well. In 2001/2002 in 25 countries – in a representative sample - 113 200 youth aged 11-15 took part in the research. Involvement in bullying was between 9-54 %.

In 2006 41 countries took part in the same research. A minute sheet available online reporting the findings shows that the proportion of those bullied at least twice over the last month was between 4% and 32% in the participating countries. The average value is 15%.

The proportion of 11 year-old bullies is between 2-24% in the participating countries, 9% being the full sample average (Currie et al., 2008).

In 2002, nearly 80% of the children asked were never bullied by their peers, 15.2% of them were occasionally bullied, 5.2% of them more frequently. The proportion of those bullying frequently was 4.7% and those who bully sometimes was 19.8%. In the 2006 study 15% perpetrators, 12% victims and 10% bully-victims were registered.

In the Buda and Szirmai study (2010) 1,006 5th graders participated from towns and villages in Hajdú-Bihar county. Some of the results of their study are detailed below.

School bullying seemed to be a prevailing problem in the upper section of primary school (grades 5-8) where only 9.6% of children claimed that there was no bullying in their class.

Seventh graders called their peers names more often, fifth graders were more frequent in spreading rumours and in beating. Girls, as they indicated, did less bullying in all types of bullying acts altogether; the difference is strongly significant except for ostracising and spreading rumours. This supports earlier findings, which concluded relational bullying to be typically a girls' type of bullying.

According to the three groups of academic achievement the authors experienced that weak students – except for ostracizing and spreading rumors – bullied others significantly more often. Good students consistently showed less aggression, though this difference is not significant as compared to the middle group.

In the groups set up according to the mothers' school attendance no general tendencies were found. This result falls in line with the finding that school bullying can hardly be associated with socio-economic status.

The findings of the study conducted by Buda and Szirmai (2010) are different from those in the literature of other countries, which show that bullying events most frequently happen in places where children are out of adult surveillance. Answers in this study showed that pupils

were most often bullied in places where they are together and should be under surveillance (in the changing rooms, in the classroom when the teacher is not there, or in the corridor). It is especially surprising to see that 30% of the pupils say that bullying events also happen during the lessons.

Results of Hungary in the 2006 HBSC research show that the proportion of bullies is lowest among those who like their schools (very much or at least a little); it is the highest among those not involved, which is followed by victims and then bully-victims.

The affective relationship index obtained by adding up the items shows that victims show the weakest bonding and not bullies. This is understandable when we consider that ordeals of school life make it difficult for them to develop affective relations. Most probably similar reasons stand behind the result that shows that the proportion of those who find school difficult is highest among victims. The last two statements show that this difficulty is not caused by their studies or rules, but rather by the less satisfactory nature of the time spent together with their peers. Work load and rules are the hardest for bullies.

2.5 The link between bullying and class climate (2012)

A study by Ildikó Nagy, Attila Körmendi and Nóra Pataky (Debrecen)

http://www.magyarpedagogia.hu/indexe.php?pid=10e_item&cid=370

This study investigates the frequency of school bullying among schoolchildren in grades 6, 7, and 8 and changes in class climate based on ratings by pupils with different participation roles in the bullying situation. In their paper, the authors introduce the phenomenon of school bullying, types, roles (victim, bully, bully-victim, bystander), and prevalence. Beyond the possible consequences of bullying and potential solutions, they discuss the class climate which may have an impact on bullying levels in school.

2.6 TABBY project – threat assessment of cyber-bullying (2012)

A European project funded by the EU's Daphne program (with 11 partner organizations) consisting of a Threat Assessment of Bullying Behavior in Youth online questionnaire which addresses negative challenges faced by teachers, school counselors, instructors, school

heads, parents and students related to youths' use of digital media, the Internet, cell phones and other interactive devices. These include mainly cyber-bullying, cyber threats and sexting. Answers provided were useful to estimate the extent to which students' behavior in real life and on the Internet put them at risk to commit or suffer from cyber-bullying.

This study was conducted in 2012 with 600 students. It identified risk factors such as dangerous internet use (long hours/day spent online, huge number of online friends, level of addiction etc.), established 4 different profiles – depending on the level of risks and found that approximately 20% of the participating students experience cyber-bullying. Moreover, they found a strong correlation between school and online harassment.

2.7 School violence in the 5th to 8th grade student population: an analysis of phenomena in regular and alternative schools
Dávid Simon, Barbara Zerinváry, and Gábor Velkey (2015)
Hungarian Institute of Educational Research and Development (OFI)
http://iskon.opkm.hu/admin/upload/Osszegzo_tanulmany.pdf

The aim of the study was to explore the types of aggressive behaviors and their frequency among students in the age group 10 to 14. The methods used consisted of questionnaire surveys and focus group interviews. In addition, the behavior and conflict resolution strategies of teachers working with the surveyed students were also examined. The final aim was to find pedagogical and sociological correlations between bullying events, opinions about them, the atmosphere in the classrooms and teachers' conflict resolution strategies. Their sample was a representative random sample: nearly 3000 students and their 450 teachers participated in the study at the beginning of the year 2015.

The results of the study indicate that the proportion of students who felt they had been bullied was between 15.2% and 31.2% depending on age group, type of school and perceived frequency of bullying. This result was found using a complex many-item research tool and it was much higher than the proportion of students who claimed to have been bullied according to a simple perception tool (7%).

The proportion of bullied students was lower in 6 and 8-year secondary schools than in primary schools. It was also lower in schools maintained by churches. 13 types of bullying including physical, verbal and online forms of aggression were described in the questionnaire. Unlike teachers, students considered virtual online aggression more serious than physical aggression, and stealing or damaging property more serious than beating.

According to student perceptions physical aggression provokes stronger teacher reactions than any other form of bullying. Students would prefer more frequent teacher intervention in the case of verbal offence and humiliation and online bullying as well.

As for the reasons behind bullying there was a huge difference in student and teacher perceptions. The majority of teachers participating in the study believed that bullying was the result of the "otherness" of students who become bullies whereas the majority of students thought that it was because of peer pressure and bullies' compulsion to please or to conform.

The authors' concluding remarks warn about a general lack of information among all those concerned about types of bullying and prevention/treatment methods regarding school violence. They emphasize the importance of class atmosphere and school climate. More sensitive and reserved students with low self-confidence tend to become victims more easily but the values, expectations and climate of the school has a significant influence on the number of bullied students. As a result, if teachers, school leaders and other school personnel are well informed and qualified to diagnose, prevent and treat cases of school violence including online bullying, then the frequency of these will be very likely to decrease.

A summary of the innovative features and the key findings of this study:
- Instead of definitions of bullying the study used descriptions of 13 situations (including online harassment)
- Other innovative elements: compares the answers of children and the perceptions of teachers and examines the correlations between diversity and bullying
- 15% children were identified as victims of repeated harassment
- Violent acts are less frequent in secondary grammar schools

- No correlation was found with socio-economic status but the social intelligence of the community, the conflict resolution methods used among the members are crucial factors.
- Verbal harassment is the most common form of school violence but students regard verbal aggression as the least serious form.
- Teachers rarely intervene in cases of verbal harassment and tend to overlook these incidents.
- Teachers underestimate the prevalence of the problems but they regard the detected cases as more serious than what the children themselves think about them.
- As for teachers' violent behaviour, 20% of students experienced some kind of aggression from their teachers (harsh, offensive, humiliating words).

3 Action programs: tools and training courses for teachers to combat violence

3. 1 Tools for teachers

A variety of tools have been developed for teachers to help them prevent, notice diagnose and treat cases of school violence in Hungary. Some of the most important ones include:

A collection of detailed lesson plans, teachers' guides and videos that help teachers develop social competences was developed from ESF funds for teachers of different age groups (2003-2004). Unfortunately, at the moment these materials are not available online on their website:

http://hirmagazin.sulinet.hu/hu/hirek/kompetencia-alapu-programcsomagok

A School Conflict Information Center has been established recently (HIER-ISKON) with an online annotated bibliography, important documents in connection with school violence and a collection of best practices:

http://iskon.opkm.hu

Another collection of best practices, development of a module for secondary schools (HIER-SROP 3.1.15: physical and mental health education)

Adaptation of the Finnish anti-bullying KIVA program is in progress as described in a study by Jármi, Péter-Szarka and Fehérpataky (2015): The opportunities offered by the adpatation of the KiVa-program in Hungary

http://iskon.opkm.hu/admin/upload/KIVA_adaptacios_tanulmany.pdf

Anti-bullying program (Hungarian acronym MEP) of the Public Foundation for a Responsible Society

The program called MEP was developed by the Public Foundation for a Responsible Society in 2013 in response to the absence of programs addressing the increasing occurrence of bullying and cyber-bullying in Hungary. Their aim is to educate the public on Responsible Digital Citizenship in order to prevent the victimisation of online users. It seeks to change attitudes and values in dealing with and witnessing bullying, cyber-bullying and cybercrime. The program focuses on potential targets, bystanders and witnesses to act and break their silence to create an environment that does not tolerate crime.

http://www.megfelemlites.hu/#!home/mainPage

Blue Line Child Crisis Foundation

The Blue Line Child Crisis Foundation was established in 1993 and its primary task is to listen to the children and young people and help those of them who are in need. They work on implementing the rights of the child as defined by the United Nations. Their mission is to achieve that adults as well as professional and governmental bodies working with children serve the interests of children above all other interests. Their main values are: child-centered approach, trust, responsibility and cooperation. They operate child helplines, organize activities, programs, clubs for children, and provide training and services for professional staff working with children. In 2015-16 they train the whole staff of three schools to help them prevent bullying and cyber-bullying.

http://www.kek-vonal.hu/index.php/en/

3.2 Teacher training programs

Currently there are 101 accredited teacher training programs addressing school violence in Hungary. Some of these programs were funded by the Daphne program that offered a 1.5

million euro grant to support projects involved in the prevention of bullying in 2014 and 2015.

There are programs in:

- Mediation and conflict resolution, crisis intervention
- Development of social competences
- Stress management and burnout prevention
- Classroom management
- Domestic violence (in relationships)

Data collection about the number of participants is envisaged.

4   Reflective commentary

The present report aimed to review research projects and action programs in the fields of the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of school violence in Hungary. As a final summary it has to be stressed that many efforts have been made to conduct research and design prevention and treatment programs as well as teacher training modules with a focus on school violence but there is unfortunately no systematic (unified or complementary) approach and mutually agreed definitions in the research studies and teacher training programs. Finally, attempts have only recently been made at collecting information about a diversity of tools and training events for teachers onto one single website that will need to be disseminated so that teachers, school heads, students and parents all become better informed and more competent in preventing, noticing, and treating cases of school violence.

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