



Ministry of Education



Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs

5<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Forum on Transformative Education

for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship,

Health and Well-being

The implementation of transformative education  
– where do we stand?

# Whole Education Approach to Tackling Bullying

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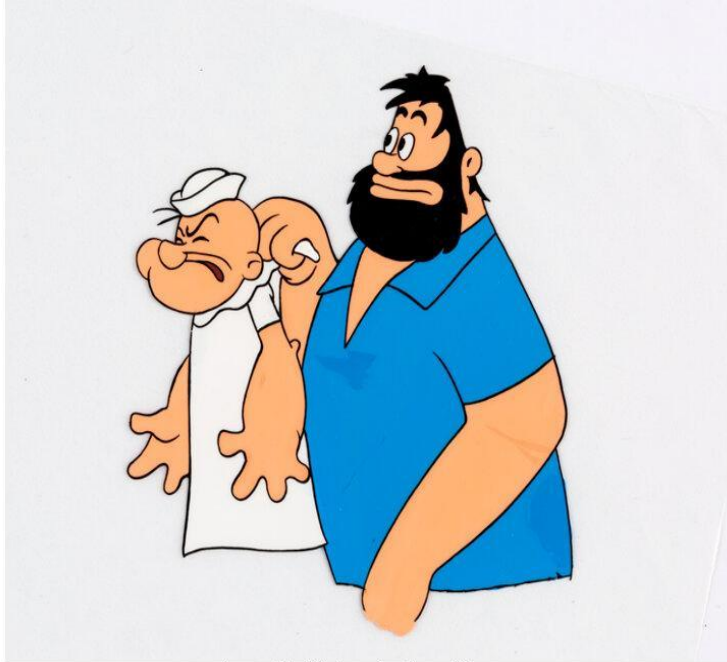


# Bullying Definition

- Current understanding of bullying is strongly influenced by the foundational work of Dan Olweus and other scholars.
- According to this understanding, bullying is defined as intentional “**unwanted aggressive** behavior that is **repeated** over time and involves an **imbalance of power** or strength”.

(Olweus, 1991/Smith, 2014)

# Assumptions about bullying



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- occurs within a dyad
- is mostly related to interpersonal individual traits/interpersonal power
- is related to psychological deficits in the perpetrator
- is reduced through increased supervision/control
- can be defined, measured and described by value free researchers
  - (Temko, 2019; Canty et al., 2016)

# Implications bullying initiatives



- One-size fits all model for anti-bullying education
- Children are subjects rather than collaborators in their education

(Canty, 2016; O'Higgins Norman, 2020)

# The 9 components of the whole-education approach



Strong political leadership and robust legal and policy framework



Safe psychological and physical school and classroom environment



Learner empowerment and participation



Training and support for teachers and other school staff



Reporting mechanisms for learners affected by bullying, together with support and referral services



Collaboration and partnerships between the education sector and a wide range of partners



Curriculum, learning & teaching to promote caring school climate



Involvement of all stakeholders in the school community, including parents



Evidence: monitoring of school bullying and evaluation of responses

# Strong Political leadership & robust legal and policy framework



- Leadership from national level to school level
- Anti-bullying laws, policies, frameworks and guidelines at national level + corresponding policies at local and school levels
- Laws and policies on inclusive education that address identity-based bullying (for example race or sexuality)
- Laws, policies, frameworks and guidelines adapted to cyberbullying

# Example from Ireland

- Government convened **Anti-Bullying Forum** (2012)
- Government [Action Plan on Bullying](#) (2013)
- [Anti-Bullying Procedures](#) for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)
- Government [Circular 45/13](#)
- Government [Children First Legislation](#) (2015)
- Ministry's [Child Protection Procedures](#) (2017)
- [Action Plan for Online Safety](#) (2018-2019)
- Ministry's [Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice](#) (2018-2023).

# Safe psychological & physical school and classroom environment



- Create an environment where learners and the whole school community feel safe, secure, welcomed and supported
- All school staff should be sensitized and supported to foster a caring school environment free of bullying
- The school leadership needs to model caring relationships
- Every bullying situation should be recognized and responded to in a timely, consistent and effective way



# Example from Ireland

- Increased provision of counsellors, chaplains and other personal supports in schools
- Schools required to have an Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator
- Pastoral Care systems in each school, i.e. tutors, year heads etc
- Support from Department regarding school climate surveys and whole-school initiatives

# Training and support for teachers and other school staff



Teachers and other school staff should be supported through:

- Pre- and in-service training
- Mentoring
- Provision of resources, e.g. teaching and learning materials for teachers
- Appropriate work conditions

# Example from Ireland

- Dedicated Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)
- Establishment of “[Webwise](#)” online safety resource
- Funding for training for parents and school staff
- National anti-bullying website [www.tacklebullying.ie](http://www.tacklebullying.ie)

# Curriculum, learning & teaching to promote caring school climate



- Schools need to provide a learner-centred and caring school climate
- Curriculum, learning and teaching, plus teacher-learner relationships should all be geared towards fostering a learner-centred and caring school environment
- Learner-centred teaching and learning is essential

# Example from Ireland

- Progress at primary in terms of learner centred curriculum
- Slower at post-primary
- Government pushing move away from terminal examinations towards continuous assessment but meeting resistance
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment key role

## Reporting mechanisms for learners affected by bullying, together with support and referral services



- Staff responsible for monitoring bullying
- Consistent and age-appropriate reporting channels and mechanisms known and accessible to the school community
- School reporting system integrated with known and accessible community support and referral services
- Learners as well as school staff able to talk about bullying to a trusted person
- Collaboration with social media platforms to report cyberbullying

# Example from Ireland

- All schools required to record and report on cases of bullying at board of management
- Ministry Inspectorate monitor reports and actions from school

# Collaboration and partnerships between the education sector & a wide range of partners



- Collaboration between the education authorities and different sectors including health, social services, law enforcement, justice, etc.
- Other relevant sectors should provide resources and support to reduce bullying and cyberbullying, including social media companies
- Collaboration between the educational sector and academia to better understand bullying and how to reduce it
- Collaboration between the educational sector and other partners including local NGOs



# Example from Ireland

## FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme

- Collaboration between DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, Facebook, and Ministry of Education.
- Focuses on resilience, **recognising, responding, and reporting**

## National Advisory Council on Online Safety

- Includes representatives from education sectors, government, police, social media companies, academia, etc

# Involvement of all stakeholders in the school community, including parents



All stakeholders in the school community should be involved in anti-bullying initiatives

- Staff: Principals, teachers, other school staff
- Board
- Learners
- Children and adults who participate in extra-curricular activities
- Parents, including groups such as Parent Teacher Associations

# Example from Ireland

- FUSE programme (Connection, Action, Inclusion)
- Moving all bullying in one national unit in the Ministry

# Learner empowerment and participation



- All learners should be involved in prevention programmes, including protection and promotion of positive behaviours
- Bystanders should be empowered to support learners targeted by bullying
- Involvement of minority groups learners in the design and implementation of bullying prevention strategies
- Combining learner-led initiatives to programmes involving school staff and other adults

# Example from Ireland

- FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme
- Lot more to do here....

## Evidence: monitoring of school bullying & evaluation of responses



- Monitoring bullying within schools and across the education system
- Regular assessment of the effectiveness of preventative and intervention measures at a school and system level
- Monitoring and assessment should involve both learners and school staff and should include questions about the school climate

# Example from Ireland

- [DCU Anti-Bullying Centre](#), a national centre for education and research on bullying and online safety.
- Role of individual schools and role of Ministry inspectorate



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# Thank you

