

There are a few students that laugh at me without any reason and I get ~~back~~ back at them immediately, but it doesn't make me feel any better. I haven't given them any reason to hate me. But they made me a bully, too. I don't see a way out of it. Sometimes I wonder why I was born in the first place... So somebody could laugh at me? If somebody has something against me, I can take care of that.

Programme Summary

Prevention of peer violence
FOR A SAFE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IN SCHOOLS



Prevention of peer violence

FOR A SAFE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IN SCHOOLS

A programme designed and implemented in Croatia

English language edition



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Introduction

One of the goals of the SEES programme was to include children in the development of policies and activities against violence.

The programme, For a Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools (SEES), was developed and implemented¹ in primary schools throughout Croatia from 2003 to 2011. At the time the programme was initiated in 2003, a number of local and international studies² confirmed the importance of confronting the problem of violence among children (both boys and girls). The research undertaken in primary schools throughout the country's capital indicated that the level of peer violence in Croatia was similar to that of other parts of Europe. Peer violence was also emerging as a problem in the public and the media, but was not yet fully recognized by society and did not have a corresponding social response. UNICEF, therefore, initiated the programme in response to a Croatian public opinion survey conducted in 2003,³ which indicated that citizens perceived violence among children and youth as a serious problem. The programme also resonated with the contemporary strategic directions of both UNICEF and the Council of Europe.

A steering committee of fifteen recognized national experts was created to guide the early development of the overall programme, comprising representatives from universities, government and non-governmental organizations, specialized institutions for child protection, and parents. The programme itself consisted of two parts: a public campaign and a school programme. **The goals of the public campaign 'Stop Violence Among Children'** included increasing public awareness of violence among children (both boys and girls) and its consequences; reducing tolerance towards violent behaviour; and motivating citizens to participate in and support the programme. **The goals of the school programme 'For a Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools'** aimed at reducing the number of peer violence incidents in schools; fostering a safe and child development-oriented school environment; and including children in the development of policies and activities against violence.

- 1 The programme was developed by Jasenka Pregrad, psychologist, psychotherapist and supervisor. After the pilot implementation, the programme was adjusted and enriched through the input of mentor trainers and based on ongoing monitoring results of programme implementation under her guidance.
- 2 Elez, K., *Nasilništvo i samopojmanje u djece osnovnoškolske dobi (Bullying and the self-concept of school children)*, Odsjek za psihologiju, Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Zagreb, 2003; Olweus, D., *Bullying at School: What we know and what we can do*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1993.
- 3 Source: PULS' Research Report submitted to the UNICEF Office for Croatia, 2003.

The programme's proposal was developed with clearly stated goals, objectives, beneficiaries, and indicators. Initially, it was intended to last for only three years: Year 1 for the public campaign, the development of the programme, and a pilot implementation of the school programme in three schools; Year 2 for the implementation of the school programme in 100 locations; and Year 3 for follow-up, external evaluation of the programme, and dissemination of lessons learned. By the end of Year 3, there was strong interest from new schools in implementing the programme while, at the same time, there was still a high demand for continued support from schools already participating in the programme.

In order to achieve quality implementation of the SEES programme, a support network of schools and mentor trainers was founded, and UNICEF included this programme in its 2007–2011 Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP). Furthermore, the original programme was amended, upgraded and extended based on the findings of an external evaluation and the recommendations of school mentors, trainers, coordinators, teachers, and other stakeholders.

BOYS, GIVE GIRLS A
FLOWER AS A PRESENT,
DON'T PULL THEIR HAIR



The public campaign 'Stop Violence Among Children'

The findings of the public opinion survey clearly showed that citizens were aware of the problem of violence among children. The educational feature of the campaign aimed to raise public awareness of less commonly recognized types of violence (such as emotional bullying and social exclusion). The campaign also highlighted the psychological and developmental consequences of peer violence.

Other important objectives included strengthening public opinion against violence and promoting social values that would encourage schools and local communities to participate in the programme. In Croatia, schools are often assigned programmes designed to prevent or mitigate social problems, but they are usually left to implement these programmes in isolation from the rest of society. The whole-school response is a standard feature of any effective school prevention programme. Following this rationale, the public campaign endeavoured to invoke a comprehensive societal response, by motivating the public to participate in and support the programme financially and in other practical ways. At the same time, the programme sought to raise awareness about the problem and promote values that would foster support among society for the school programme.

The campaign was spread throughout the entire country using various channels and was supported by UNICEF's national goodwill ambassador and pop singer Zlatan Stipišić-Gibonni. During the first three years of the programme's implementation, individual donations and other citizen-led initiatives raised the majority of funds.

By the end of 2010, many companies had 'adopted a school' supported by the programme. The programme also became part of the United Nations Joint Programme 2009–2011 and was partially funded through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F). See Figure 2 for the breakdown of programme funding for the period 2007–2010, which also shows the ongoing support provided by citizens.

A public opinion survey undertaken during the first external evaluation in 2005 indicated that 92 per cent of citizens knew of the SEES programme, and 43 per cent took part in one way or another.

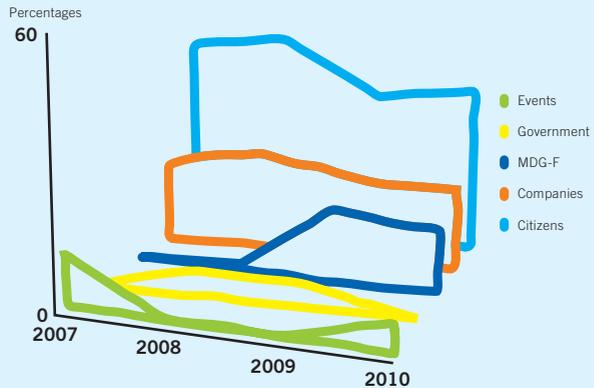
Figure 1.
PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF CAMPAIGN FUNDING, BY SOURCE (2003-2006)

Source: Internal data provided by the UNICEF Office for Croatia.



Figure 2.
PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN BY SOURCE OF TOTAL FUNDS COLLECTED DURING THE CAMPAIGN (2007-2010)

Note: Subject matter experts are included in 'citizens' column.
 Source: Internal data provided by the UNICEF Office for Croatia.



A public opinion survey undertaken during the 2005 external evaluation indicated that 92 per cent of citizens knew of the SEES programme, and 43 per cent took part in it in one way or another.

Every child is special.

The school programme 'For a Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools'

Goals, objectives and indicators

Rather than focusing solely on violence prevention, the school programme concentrated on creating a school atmosphere conducive to child development and, more importantly, to children's participation in violence prevention activities and school policy-making. UNICEF spared no efforts to help make schools safe and enabling places and develop and strengthen a protective environment for children. The goals consisted of raising awareness of existing violence among children, reducing tolerance for violent behaviour and involving children, parents and teachers in creating protective environments.

Based on reviewed research and literature cited in the Programme Handbook, the SEES school programme developed the following seven operational steps to address problems related to violence in schools:

- Step 1. Raising awareness of a problem's existence
- Step 2. Defining the elements of a protective network
- Step 3. Establishing and implementing a protective network
- Step 4. Collaborating with other stakeholders in the local community
- Step 5. Encouraging students to seek help
- Step 6. Supporting schools to react according to their own school protocols
- Step 7. Enabling schools to become safer places.

Programme principles and approaches

During the development phase of the programme, there was extensive global experience of different approaches but relatively little evidence of their effectiveness. Rigby's⁴ meta-evaluation of methods and approaches to reducing bullying and local experience with other preventive school programmes provided the foundations of the 'violence-free schools' approach. Later work by Smith and collaborators⁵ on the synthesis of evaluative research confirmed the value of most of UNICEF's strategies. New strategies were also devised during the programme's development phase.

4 Rigby, K., *A Meta-evaluation of Methods and Approaches to Reducing Bullying in Pre-schools and in Early Primary School in Australia*, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, 2002.

5 Smith, J. D., Schneider, B. H., Smith, P. K., Ananiadou, K., 'The Effectiveness of Whole-School Antibullying Programs: A Synthesis of Evaluation Research' in *School Psychology Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2004, pp. 547-560.



1 KG MORE HONESTY

5 KG FEWER LIES

Principles and approaches adopted from the existing meta-evaluations included:

- fostering a comprehensive whole-school response (including teachers' formal acceptance of the programme as an indication of their ownership);
- placing major focus on primary schools,⁶ although secondary schools interested in the programme were not excluded;
- assuming a 'no blame' approach⁷ with emphasis on consequences jointly agreed upon, and restoring values that have been violated rather than using punishment;
- raising awareness of the problem in society, communities and schools;
- prompting multilevel interventions (including schools, classrooms, individuals, and communities);
- imparting specific skills training for teachers on how to help both children who are violent and children suffering from violence;
- providing children with the social and emotional skills they need to cope with violent behaviour, and supporting those who behave violently, those who suffer from violence and those who are spectators;⁸
- integrating the theme of violence into the regular school curriculum and other activities;
- empowering children and ensuring their participation in preventive activities (through peer support groups, mediation, students' councils, etc.);
- increasing parents' participation in school activities;
- ensuring that regular teachers monitor the school and bus areas;
- supporting children in enlisting the help of adults;
- agreeing on procedural protocols to deal with cases of violence.

International studies indicate that preventive programmes are more effective for children who are bullied or watch bullying than for those who bully. UNICEF's aim was to foster an approach offering improved responses to violent behaviour and providing formative support to children who are violent, thus adopting an equity approach that accommodates the needs of all children (while not excluding the most vulnerable groups). The rationale behind this approach was that various groups of children need equal support because they are all at great developmental risk (both to themselves and society as unchecked bullying can escalate into delinquency).

6 In Croatia, primary schools include children aged 7–14 years.

7 The 'no blame' approach aims at supporting children when bullying occurs. It acknowledges that mistakes will always happen and sees them as learning opportunities. It allows an open discussion of what has happened, so that all issues can be taken into consideration without fear of condemnation from others.

8 The terms 'victim' and 'bully' (perpetrator) were deliberately and systematically avoided in order not to label children, and instead maintain the focus on changing their behaviour. Such rhetoric could also be considered 'name calling'.

Specific features added to the SEES programme included:

- Discussions on violent behaviour were held in each classroom, leading to the adoption of an acknowledged set of common values and rules regarding social behaviour among children and the consequences of transgressions in order to create an empowering atmosphere. The outcome of these discussions was translated into a **VRC (values, rules and consequences) procedure** and displayed on highly visible classroom posters. This process not only raised awareness of the problem, it also established a set of values, rules and consequences known in advance, and allowed children to design policies for their own classroom.
- **The restoration of values** approach⁹ (which in general follows the procedure of restitution discussed by Diane Gossen)¹⁰ was introduced and explained to children and parents early in the programme. Although this option was available to children at all times, it was best used when violence was particularly strong and/or when a child repeatedly engaged in violent behaviour. Additionally, by helping children to modify their behaviour within the agreed set of values and rules, teachers ensured that their integrity or needs were respected. It was important that children themselves decided how to reaffirm the values that they had violated. According to an internal evaluation conducted in 2008, the rate of bullying was reduced more than any other benchmark of school violence, making such an approach an extremely effective method of developing more socially acceptable forms of behaviour.

⁹ The 'restoration of values' approach is a method that gives teachers the possibility of responding to violent behaviour by avoiding punishment. Children who break the rules or violate previously defined classroom values are provided opportunities to re-establish the observation of threatened values or repair damaged relationships through some constructive activity of their choice that is acceptable to everyone.

¹⁰ Gossen, D. C., *Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline*, New View Publications, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992.

- **Amending the in-school statute** was a final step following the values, rules and consequences procedure in each classroom. It summed up all the school's values and rules, added the restoration of values approach as a school-recognized procedure and proclaimed the school's commitment to a violence-free environment. It also confirmed that the changes had been discussed and defined by students, parents and the school. The rationale was to reinforce ownership of the programme by the school; formally link parents, children and teachers as collaborators of the programme; and base the school's values on students' values, thereby promoting children's participation in policy-making.
- The schools that completed all seven steps of the SEES programme were awarded '**violence-free school**' status. Besides enhancing the programme's public recognition and connecting schools' efforts to the values expressed in the campaign, the procedure for obtaining this status also introduced a new evaluative procedure. The schools looked closely at their own accomplishments and decided when to apply for violence-free school status. It was up to them, along with their mentor and the help of guidelines, to collect evidence and justify their accreditation. The evaluation took into account the starting point of each school (size, rate of violence, competence of teachers, etc.). This **self-evaluative procedure** was not only a means to assess their success, it was also a way of boosting staff's ability to learn from their own experiences and plan future activities.
- After the first three years of implementation, an external evaluation showed that the programme's fundamentals were strong but not necessarily sustainable within schools. UNICEF asked representatives from schools with violence-free status what type of support they needed to pursue their efforts. As there was strong consensus on the idea of linking the schools in a network, UNICEF and the violence-free schools created a national **Network of**

Violence-Free Schools. Regional branches offering mutual support were established as a means of sharing experiences and helping the various participants function independently without external assistance. This was a substantial proof of ownership, and it definitely deepened the schools' commitment to the programme.

- One of the outcomes of the Network of Violence-Free Schools was the initiation of a supplement to the main programme called '**Break the Chain**', which dealt with issues related to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying remained unaddressed by many programmes focusing on schools, as it was often regarded as being too distinct to warrant inclusion. Research indicated that it deserved consideration as it was just another type of violence and stemmed from the same causes as more traditional types of bullying (physical, emotional, social isolation, etc.). Even though this type of violence took place in cyberspace, not school, it was evident that for children there was no firm line between virtual and physical contact: they were all part of social communication and behaviour, and often reflected

and affected relationships at school. The school representatives perceived it as a growing problem that required school-based solutions.

- Evaluations recommended **mentor training and a year-long follow-up** of schools. Although these features were already part of some recognized school programmes, mentor training had never been practised in similar programmes implemented in Croatian schools. By introducing mentor trainers into schools, UNICEF ensured that teachers were prepared for violence prevention and intervention activities. UNICEF's expert team also took into account the delayed effects of teacher training (the so-called 'sleeping effect'), meaning that its full implications can be seen only after 2–3 years, the time teachers need to integrate the new knowledge and skills into existing practices.¹¹ Mentor trainers maintained close contact with the schools and, in later programme phases, did follow-up consultations to help teachers assimilate new techniques.

¹¹ Vulić Prtorić, A., 'Oblici psihoedukacije učitelja u malim grupama' in *Psychologia Croatica*, vols. 3–4, 1995, pp. 197–215.

Important rationales of the SEES programme include: reinforcing ownership by schools; formally linking parents, children and teachers as collaborators; and basing the school's values on students' values, thereby promoting children's participation in policy-making.

EVERY CHILD NEEDS CARE.

Programme implementation stages

This section provides an overview of the programme with its seven-step workflow.

The schools interested in participating in the SEES programme contact the UNICEF programme coordinator. After a mentor trainer presents the programme at a teachers' meeting, the decision to participate in the programme is put to vote in order to guarantee a process of free consent.

The school is assigned a mentor who trains teachers and supports activities for at least one year.

Participating schools follow the seven steps below:

Step 1.

RAISING AWARENESS OF A PROBLEM'S EXISTENCE

- Teachers receive the Bully/Victim Questionnaire with instructions for its assignment.
- The questionnaire is administered to all children aged 11–14 years. The results are summed up for each classroom by the head teacher, and for the entire school by the coordinator of the programme.
- A teachers' meeting is convened with the following objectives: disclosing school results, comparing them to national and international data, informing teachers about the basics of peer violence among children, profiling children who behave violently and children likely to endure violence, and planning future school activities to address the problem.
- All the students are informed of the results (for their classroom, their school and their country), thus the problem becomes evident, and grounds for further discussion and next steps are established.

Step 2.**DEFINING THE ELEMENTS
OF A PROTECTIVE
NETWORK**

IT'S MORE FUN TO PLAY
THAN TO FIGHT

- Teachers are trained to support their students in defining values, rules and consequences for their classroom and reaffirming these values when they are violated.
- Each classroom organizes workshops to provide opportunities for discussions with the head teacher, defines consensual class values and rules and also agrees to the consequences of breaking the rules. The teacher explains how to enact the restoration of values procedure. All of the teachers commit to respecting and implementing these values, rules and consequences.
- During the first parent-teacher meeting, parents are informed of the school's decision to implement the programme; its commitment to becoming a violence-free school; the results of research; the values, rules and consequences adopted by their children's classes; and the restoration of values procedure. While discussing these issues, parents are invited to provide their input and give their approval. They are also encouraged to take an active role in the programme (as professionals, liaisons with the local community, assistants in school activities and on school buses, fundraisers, etc.).
- The school's Coordination Committee sums up the values and rules from the classes and displays the values, rules and consequences approved by the students, parents, and teachers' councils in a highly visible spot within the school. The consequences (at school level) are incorporated into the school's ordinance and related regulations.
- The school amends its statute and related regulations accordingly. The defined values, rules and consequences should not replace existing pedagogical measures, but they may be added to the school's statute so that they are put into effect before other disciplinary measures are taken.

Each class organizes workshops to provide opportunities for discussions with the head teacher, defines consensual class values and rules and also agrees to the consequences of breaking the rules.

Step 3.**ESTABLISHING AND
IMPLEMENTING
A PROTECTIVE
NETWORK¹²**

- The teachers are trained to lead workshops aimed at helping students develop the social and emotional skills they need to cope with violence. They also receive guidance on how to conduct parent-teacher meetings on parenting styles.
- All school personnel are gathered and tasks and responsibilities regarding the programme are assigned (including to receptionists, cooks, housekeepers, etc.).
- The teachers (divided into subject matter groups) brainstorm on how to include topics related to violence in regular subject classes and school activity groups (drama, newspaper, ecology, art, etc.).
- A 'mailbox of trust' is installed in a visible place, which allows students to anonymously insert their questions, thoughts, opinions and suggestions related to bullying.
- Various extracurricular activities initiated by students, parents or teachers can be dedicated as part of endeavours to prevent and reduce peer bullying.
- The school organizes social and emotional skills trainings and workshops throughout the school year(s). The themes include: What pushes us towards violence? How do we react to violence? How do we recover from violence? What is my responsibility for my behaviour? Who am I? Is it okay to be emotional? These themes connect with the main reasons for bullying among children: lack of empathy and need to humiliate and control others; lack of social resistance skills and self-respect; silent acceptance and tolerance of violence by school staff, teachers and students.
- The school organizes a teacher-parent meeting on parenting styles. The meeting is tailored to follow one of the 'reading and writing for creative thinking' procedures, enabling the head teacher to coordinate parental discussions and activities rather than to lecture. The intent is to avoid compelling teachers to provide instruction on something they are not qualified for, and also to maintain a no blame approach¹³ to the topic.
- The school continues to facilitate discussions about violence, integrated into different subjects and extracurricular activities.

¹² Steps 3, 4, 5 and 6 usually overlap. Each school implements them when they deem it reasonable and convenient.

¹³ See footnote 7, p. 7.

The school organizes social and emotional skills trainings and workshops in all classes that address the main reasons for bullying among children: lack of empathy and need to humiliate and control others; lack of social resistance skills and self-respect; and silent acceptance and tolerance of violence by school staff, teachers and students.

Step 4.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- All personnel accomplish their duties (monitoring, referring students that need help, fixing lights in dark corners, etc.).
- The school ensures that the values, rules and consequences are respected and implemented by all teachers and students.
- Student volunteers are encouraged to form peer support groups who will be trained in communication and social skills. The school should also arrange activities for these groups and provide ongoing supervision and support. These activities are optional and should be organized only if the school can afford to provide professional guidance to student volunteers.
- UNICEF's team of experts and the mentor trainers adjust the programme to the needs of marginalized groups. In Croatia, these have included Roma children and parents and Italian minority schools. In some cases, only language adjustments are necessary, but in others (for example, dealing with illiterate parents or culturally different parenting approaches) the programme may require more substantial changes.
- The school's principal and the Coordination Committee hold meetings with various stakeholders in the local community to elicit support for the school's violence prevention efforts. Potential stakeholders can include local radio stations and newspapers, NGOs, sports associations, churches or other religious organizations. Connections also have to be made with formal government organizations and health services that the school may refer to for those students and parents in need of professional help and support beyond the school's capabilities.
- The school plans joint activities with community stakeholders to be accomplished over time.
- Collaboration with parents (both individuals and in groups) is refreshed as the scope of activities broadens and takes shape, allowing for a more efficient connection between the school and the local community.

Step 5.**ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO SEEK HELP**

- Teachers are offered refresher courses on violent behaviour (how to spot it, how witnesses react to it, how to deal with those who are violent, and how to support those who suffer from violence). These courses are provided in line with the school's protocol, taking into consideration different types of violence, their magnitude and frequency, and the restoration of values procedure.
- If all previous steps have been completed, students tend to seek help automatically. Nevertheless, supporting student bystanders to seek help is still welcomed and sometimes necessary. During this phase, schools can assess their activities, identify weak points and make improvements.
- Mentor trainers monitor teachers and hold consultations on specific cases.

Step 6.**SUPPORTING SCHOOLS TO REACT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN SCHOOL PROTOCOLS**

- Mentor trainers support head teachers, along with school associates, to design individual treatment programmes for students who need substantial help. These programmes can include working in different settings and/or running activities at school (extracurricular group activities, peer support, counselling, writing a contract, etc.). They can also involve social and health services outside of school. Cooperation with the parents of such children proved to be the weakest part of the programme's implementation. It was also one of the least effective features of the school system in general. Teachers and school professionals need additional assistance during this phase.
- It is important to keep records of individual interventions. The process is partly defined by legally binding school regulations and partly left to each school's discretion.

Table 1.
GUIDELINES FOR AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO PEER VIOLENCE

BULLYING LEVELS	SCHOOL RESPONSE
<p>MINOR Breaking the rules</p>	<p>Stop the violence Evaluate the rule that has been broken Apply consequence (disciplining)</p>
<p>REPEATED Frequently breaking the rules</p>	<p>Use the school protocol form for student follow-up Apply the restoration of values approach Evaluate whether there is a need for parental involvement</p>
<p>SERIOUS Abuse of power</p>	<p>Adopt an individually tailored treatment plan/meet with the parents Apply the restoration of values approach Involve the student in additional programmes</p>
<p>SEVERE Continual abuse of power</p>	<p>Initiate psychosocial assessment Report student to other services Involve parents in programme(s) Respond in accordance with school disciplinary measures</p>
<p>UNMANAGEABLE Beyond the child's control</p>	<p>Refer to individual treatment by specialized institutions Place student in a different environment (change classroom/school)</p>

Networking and connecting with governmental organizations, community and health care services needs to be in place so that the school staff can refer students and parents who need additional help and support that exceed the capacity of the school.



EVERY CHILD NEEDS
LOVE

and that needs to be respected

Table 2.
SCHOOL PROCEDURAL PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS

	CHILD WHO IS BULLIED	CHILD WHO BULLIES	BYSTANDER
1.	Stop the violence		Be active in stopping violence and seeking help
	<i>Avoid comments and explanations at the site of the incident if the situation is emotionally charged</i>		
	Calm the child and ensure his/her protection	Calm the child who is behaving violently	
2.	<i>Name the value and/or rule that was broken</i>		
	Engage in one-to-one conversation	Engage in one-to-one conversation	Encourage bystander to help the child who suffers and the child who bullies
	Implement consequence (disciplining) or restoration of values approach		
	Carry out surveillance and follow-up		
3.	Facilitate involvement in different groups, including assistance of peer helpers		Monitor future behaviour
	Include parents	Include parents	
4.	Build the child's capacity to stand up and care for him/herself	Consider using additional methods (such as writing a contract)	
5.		Use disciplinary measures (according to school ordinance)	
6.	Refer to professional help/treatment	Refer to professional help/treatment	

Step 7.**ENABLING SCHOOLS
TO BECOME SAFER
PLACES**

I AM IMPORTANT



14 Parker Roerden, L., *Don't Laugh at Me. Teachers Guide (Grades 2-5 and 6-8)*, Educators for Social Responsibility, Cambridge, 2000.

- After completing all the steps, the school assesses the level of violence using a questionnaire and school documents related to violence reduction.
- Together with its mentor trainer, the school evaluates the whole process (including strong and weak points) and decides whether it meets the criteria required for obtaining violence-free school status. As described earlier, the procedure allows for individual differences between schools and reinforces the sustainable and self-learning processes and rapport between school and programme.
- The school submits the documentation. Violence-free school status is awarded on the basis of this feedback.

Schools that obtained violence-free status renewed the values, rules and consequences for each classroom in subsequent years and continued to work in accordance with the methods established during the programme's implementation. The kit 'Don't Laugh at Me'¹⁴ provided a refresher course and resources for work in the classroom (especially for head teachers). The kit was translated (and adapted) for schools in Croatia and distributed on CD-ROM.

The cyberbullying prevention supplementary programme '**Break the Chain**' was launched in a similar fashion to the basic programme and consisted of a public campaign and activities at schools. Professional challenges included: how to motivate and assist teachers and parents to take a guiding role in an area where children are more proficient than adults; how to talk about the dangers of the Internet in a manner that would not scare teachers and parents or produce a negative attitude towards it; how to deal with violence in a medium that hides users' real identity and gives a false impression of anonymity; and how to define this type of violence in a manner that allows teachers to feel confident to address it even if it happens outside of the school area. The workshops developed for Break the Chain consisted mostly of discussions; sharing experiences and attitudes; clarifying what violence in cyberspace is and what it is not; how to respect one's own and others' privacy and integrity; and how formal legislation and laws define behaviour in cyberspace. The programme also provided hands-on experience of computers with different features (dangers and protective methods) and discussions of

SMS and MMS on cellular phones, identity theft, tracking people, using social networks, the dangers of pornography and paedophilia, meeting cyber friends, etc. Questionnaires created specifically for Break the Chain were administered to teachers, parents and students. They served as an awareness-raising tool and a starting point enabling schools to follow up on the results of the programme.¹⁵

In 2007, 102 schools that had completed the SEES programme created the **Network of Violence-Free Schools** to ensure ongoing, mutual support in coping with violence. A procedure was suggested for renewing violence-free school status every three years, thus encouraging schools' steady participation in the programme. This procedure, which led to the formulation of **Criteria for Quality and Sustainability of Violence-Free School Status**, required that coordinators from neighbouring schools as well as a representative of the group of mentor trainers (not the original mentor trainer assigned to the school) visit the school upon invitation. The renewal of violence-free school status was voluntary just like the school's initial application. The Network of Violence-Free Schools held annual meetings attended by school representatives (the principal, coordinators, teachers, students, parents and, in some cases, representatives of the local community). As children shared an equal role in these meetings, their interests were reflected in the agenda. Every year, the Network's board determined the weak points to be addressed at the meetings in an attempt to

¹⁵ Pregrad, J., Tomić Latinac, M., Mikulić, M., Šeparović, N., Izvještaj o rezultatima istraživanja. Iskustva i stavovi djece, roditelja i učitelja prema elektroničkim medijima (Report on research results. Experiences and attitudes of children, parents and teachers towards electronic media), UNICEF Office for Croatia, 2011.

strengthen them. These meetings were an inspiration for the development of regional network branches that offered mutual support, shared experiences and provided other functions facilitating the sustainability of the programme's goals.

Materials accompanying the school programme

After the first four years of implementation, a teachers' handbook was published. It provided schools with both a record of implementation and a toolkit. This handbook shared all the experience gained during the implementation of the bullying prevention programme, but it also served as an incentive for coming to grips with the problem of bullying in schools, and to support its resolution. The handbook was accompanied by a CD-ROM containing all the materials (workshops, parents' meetings, etc.) that teachers required to copy the protocols and guidelines needed to implement the restoration of values approach. It also contained a teachers' guide 'Don't Laugh at Me'. In addition, a booklet and a leaflet were prepared to support the parents of children who are spectators, children who endure violence and children who behave violently. This material was designed to help readers deal with issues of violence in general, but it also answered questions about the causes of violent behaviour and the different types of bullying, and provided guidance on how to respond in both the short and the long term. Within the supplementary programme Break the Chain, a handbook for schools was published, which explained the rationale and the general frame of the initiative, described experiences gathered in the pilot phase and offered available workshops for parents and students (with guidelines for teachers).



Outcomes of the school programme

The SEES programme was evaluated three times over a period of eight years. The first external evaluation was undertaken in 2005 by the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb under the supervision of Iris Marušić, PhD. An internal follow-up evaluation was carried out in 2008, after the first generation of violence-free schools renewed their status. The Institute of Social Sciences 'Ivo Pilar' in Zagreb completed the third external evaluation, which took place in 2012 under the guidance of Andreja Brajša-Žganec, PhD.¹⁶

RESULTS OF THE 2005 FIRST EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The results of the first external independent evaluation conducted in 2005 showed that the schools had experienced significant changes. Students were more conscious and less afraid of violence, and adults' response to violent incidents was more effective. According to the findings, responses to violence appeared to have decreased in all categories except for 'ignoring' and 'social exclusion'. There are two different ways to interpret these findings: first, since this kind of bullying is the least visible, teachers had not responded; or second, students did not consider social exclusion as bullying before the programme started.

The percentage of children who responded by supporting those who were bullied or by intervening to try to stop bullying increased, although some children did nothing or withdrew.

16 A brief overview of evaluation data follows. The comprehensive evaluation reports can be obtained upon request.

Table 3.
STUDENTS' MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN SOMEBODY BULLIED YOU DURING THIS SCHOOL YEAR?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2005)

"What did you do when somebody bullied you this school year?"	%
I told someone about what was happening and asked for help	29
I responded in a similar way	18
I talked to the bully (or responded in some other, non-violent way)	18
Nothing	18
I withdrew and cried where nobody could see me	9

These results compared favourably with other international programmes, especially considering that the evaluation took place only one year after the programme was launched.

Teachers' perceptions of their own competence in dealing with bullying was assessed three times as well – during step 1, at the beginning of the programme; during the 2005 first external evaluation, one year after completing all seven steps; during the 2008 internal follow-up evaluation, three years after completing all seven steps. The findings, illustrated in Figure 3 below, highlight a delayed training effect (the so-called 'sleeping effect') and indicate that teachers' perception of their own competence increased gradually after their training.

At the time of the 2005 first external evaluation, teachers felt that they had received sufficient preparation for the programme.

The 2005 external evaluation also found that 78 per cent of parents knew of the programme, but only 6 per cent were 'actively involved' (attending parent-teacher

meetings was not classified as involvement). The same evaluation called attention to another weak point of the programme: students and teachers scarcely referred to classroom values and rules. After the evaluation, mentors met to clarify weak points and focused on refining and improving the programme.

RESULTS OF THE 2008 INTERNAL FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION

The 2008 internal follow-up evaluation provided reassuring results. Comparison of student responses from 2004 and 2008 showed a decrease in the percentage of children subjected to violence, and the percentage of those who were frequently bullied was cut in half (from 10.4 per cent in 2004 to 4.64 per cent in 2008).

In addition, there was a decline in the percentage of children who behaved violently, and the percentage of those who bullied others was cut by almost three fourths (from 11.98 per cent in 2004 to 3.21 per cent in 2008).

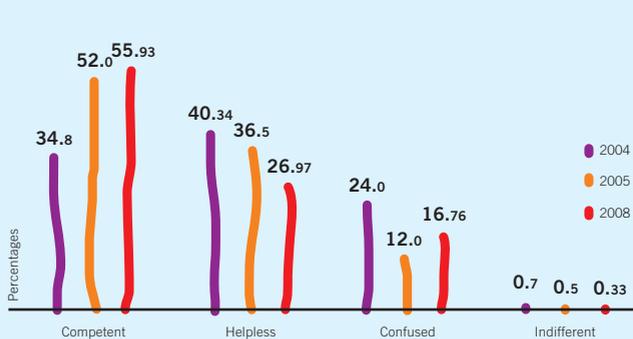


Figure 3. TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR OWN COMPETENCE WITH PEER VIOLENCE?" (RESPONSES BEFORE AND AFTER TRAINING, IN PERCENTAGES, 2004, 2005 AND 2008)

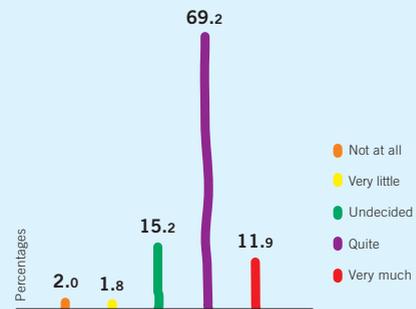


Figure 4. TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "DID YOU GET THE NECESSARY BASICS FOR TAKING PART IN THE PROGRAMME?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2005)

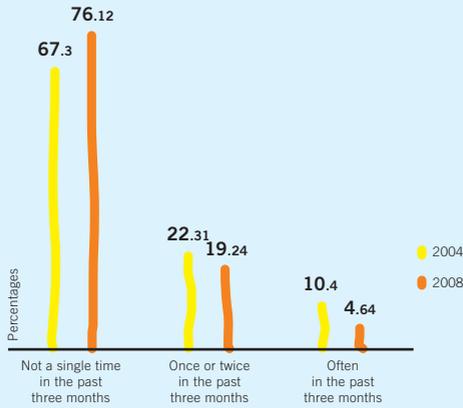


Figure 5. STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HAS ANOTHER STUDENT BEEN VIOLENT TOWARDS YOU?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2004 AND 2008)

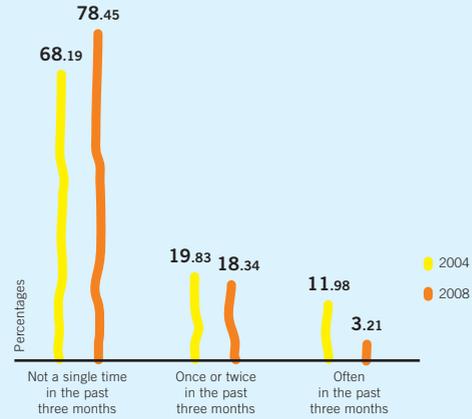


Figure 6. STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HAVE YOU BEEN VIOLENT TOWARDS ANOTHER STUDENT?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2004 AND 2008)

The other most significant findings were:

- Teachers felt that their competence in dealing with peer violence had increased (from 34.8 per cent in 2005 to 55.93 per cent in 2008) and fewer teachers felt helpless (down from 40 per cent in 2004 to 27 per cent in 2008).
- Over 55 per cent of children reported feeling safe at school.
- Children felt that teachers' intervention to stop peer violence at school had increased (from 30 per cent in 2004 to 63 per cent in 2008).
- Up to 70 per cent of parents were familiar with activities implemented by the school to prevent bullying.
- Between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of parents thought that the various violence prevention activities produced very good results (percentages varied according to a given activity).
- Up to 73 per cent of parents felt that cooperation with the school was excellent.

RESULTS OF THE 2012 FINAL EVALUATION

Another external independent evaluation was conducted in 2012, three years after most of the schools participating in the programme had renewed violence-free school status. As schools were no longer monitored by their mentors or UNICEF, this evaluation provided insights into the possibility that the programme produced sustainable results.

Unfortunately, in line with other international evaluations,¹⁷ the impact of the programme tended to decline over time, especially regarding children's involvement in violent forms of behaviour in schools.

¹⁷ Smith, P. K., Pepler, D. J., Rigby, K., *Bullying in Schools: How Successful Can Interventions Be?* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004; Twemlow, S. W., Sacco, F. C., *Why School Antibullying Programs Don't Work?* Jason Aronson, New York, 2008.

A brief overview of the findings shows that the amount of violent behaviour observed in ‘programme schools’ was similar to the violence found in ‘control schools’ (that did not implement the SEES programme). There is some evidence suggesting that the rate of violent behaviour among children had been declining in comparison with the results obtained before the beginning of the programme in 2004. This decrease might be attributed, at least in part, to the impact of the 2003 public campaign, whose goal was to raise awareness and educate the public about different types of violence and their adverse effect on children’s development. It may have motivated schools that did not join the programme to refocus and change their strategies in order to address violence.

Figure 7.

STUDENTS’ RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, “HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED AT SCHOOL DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS?” (IN PERCENTAGES, 2012)

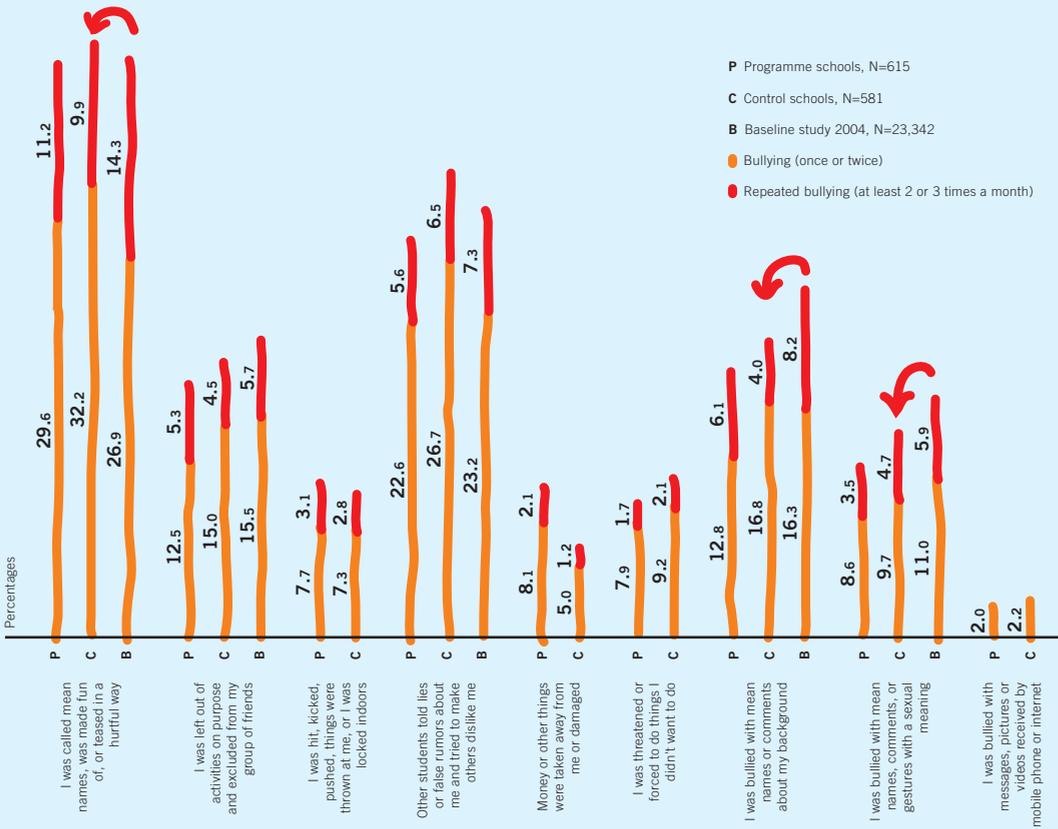
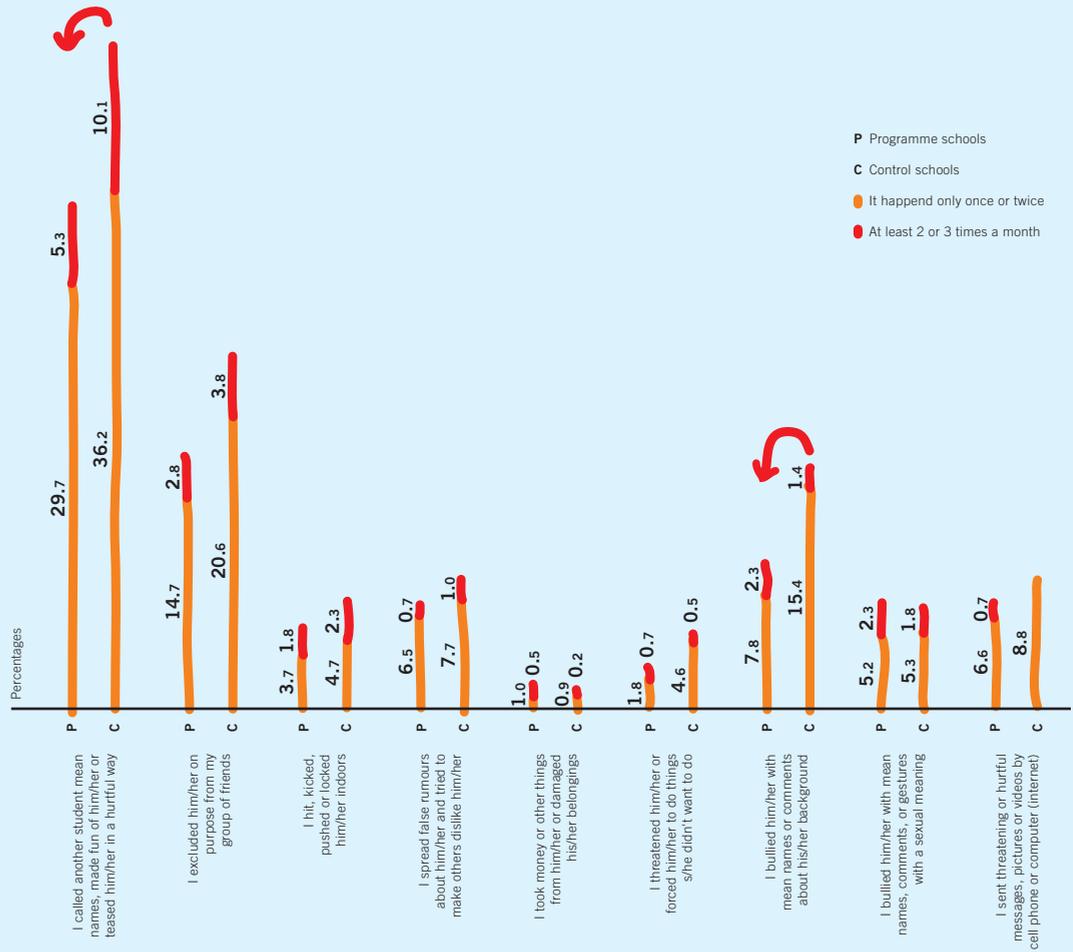


Figure 8.
STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HAVE YOU BULLIED ANOTHER STUDENT(S) DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2012)



Based on students' appraisal, the evaluation found that there was less verbal violence (previously the most frequent type) in programme schools than in control schools. The data gathered from the children who acted violently confirmed this finding.



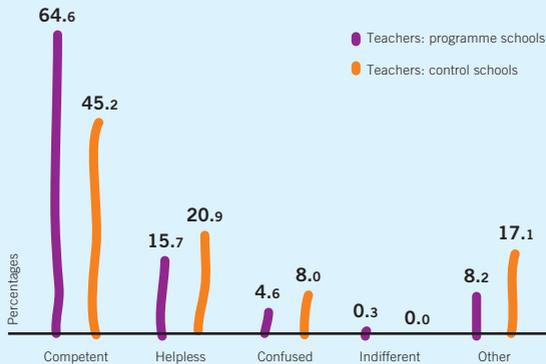


Figure 9.
TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW DO YOU FEEL REGARDING VIOLENCE AMONG STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2012)

Programme-school teachers and students felt that their schools had more elements of a protective network than control schools. In violent situations, students usually referred to adults – parents, teachers or other personnel at school. According to programme-school students and teachers, students learned to detect violence, protect themselves and help those who were violent or suffered from violence, recognize why some students behaved aggressively and others were targeted, and became familiarized with children's rights. On a 5-point scale, students' responses ranged from 3.21 to 3.88, and teachers' responses from 3.01 to 3.30. In terms of behaviour, they were as likely to prevent someone from behaving violently and helping those who had suffered from violence as the students in control schools.

Programme-school students (on average) considered themselves to be more socially competent than their counterparts from control schools and were more critical of aggressive behaviour. The parents of programme-school students rated their children as being more

socially competent than parents of children attending control schools (all differences are $p \leq .01$). Programme-school teachers felt that they were mostly competent in coping with students' violence and significantly more competent than control-school teachers.

Only 10 per cent of parents participated in programme activities, but the majority (50–60 per cent) stated that they would be willing to do so in the future. Teachers felt that both the parents and the local community were relatively well informed about the problem of peer violence and the school's activities and endeavours. These findings (combined with other evidence) may lead to the conclusion that parents valued the efforts undertaken to cope with peer violence and were disposed to support these initiatives. However, they were not sufficiently motivated to engage in programme activities.

Students', parents' and teachers' perception of school safety was relatively high (around 4 on a 5-point scale), but there was no difference between programme and control schools in this regard. Another interesting statistical difference is that all programme- and control-school students perceived their school to be safer than their parents and teachers did. However, programme-school students rated the relationships among students in their classes as more positive ($p = .004$). This was not the case with relationships between teachers and students; the findings were similar in both programme and control schools. Programme-school teachers stated that they did notice improvements, namely, less violence, students' tendency to help other students in trouble, increased self-esteem, and better communication between teachers and students.

Programme-school teachers recognized that the programme was useful and interesting for students who approached activities with a positive attitude. It was estimated that their motivation to participate in activities increased throughout the programme.

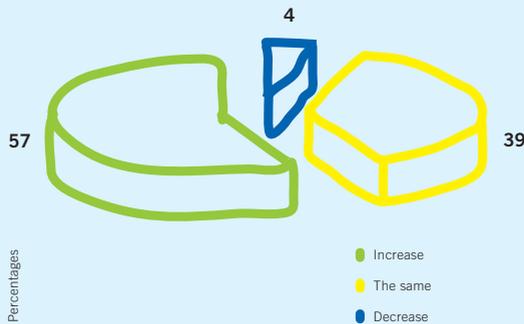


Figure 10.

PROGRAMME-SCHOOL TEACHERS' ESTIMATIONS OF CHANGES IN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION COMPARED TO THAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAMME'S IMPLEMENTATION (IN PERCENTAGES, 2012)

The apparent rise in students' positive experiences may be attributed to the fact that teachers and adults became more likely to respond to incidents of violence and that schools treated the problem seriously.

On average, teachers' satisfaction with the overall programme was 4.03 on a 5-point scale. According to their responses, the programme's strengths and advantages included: raising awareness about the consequences of violence; teaching teachers, students and parents how to respond to violence; reducing violence; running quality workshops; establishing clear rules; educating staff; creating better relationships between students; and improving preventive measures in the local community. Among its weaknesses and disadvantages, teachers mentioned: parents' lack of involvement; technical and material difficulties; permissive attitude towards students who bully; erratic implementation; insufficient inclusion of institutions and professional services; lack of time. Concerning potential additional measures, teachers often suggested greater parental responsibility, more (and better) education for all participants, and stricter punishments.

Three years after renewing their violence-free school status, and six to eight years after initiation of the programme, teachers and students at all schools (both programme and control schools) had an extremely positive attitude towards the programme.

Although the level of violent behaviour was almost identical in both programme and control schools (accompanied by some changes in attitudes and social competencies in students and teachers), both programme and control schools advocated strongly for the programme's sustainability in the Croatian education system.

The vast majority of programme-school students (81 per cent) believed that the SEES programme should be continued in their schools and offered to other schools as well (80.4 per cent).

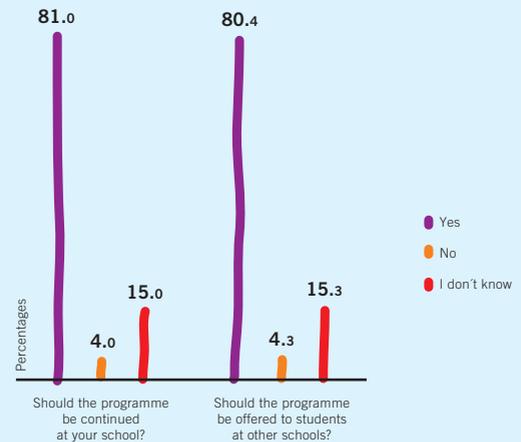


Figure 11.

PROGRAMME-SCHOOL STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU THINK THAT THE SEES PROGRAMME SHOULD BE CONTINUED AT YOUR SCHOOL? AND DO YOU THINK THAT THE SEES PROGRAMME SHOULD BE OFFERED TO STUDENTS AT OTHER SCHOOLS?" (IN PERCENTAGES, 2012)

The majority of control-school students (54 per cent) thought that a programme aimed at reducing violence should be implemented in their school.

Up to 75.3 per cent of programme-school teachers indicated that they were prepared to collaborate further in the programme's implementation and 73.6 per cent that they would recommend it to other schools. A total of 71.6 per cent of control-school teachers said that they would support the implementation of the SEES programme in their schools.

Nearly all programme-school parents (94.8 per cent) stated that the programme should continue. A total of 61.3 per cent of control-school parents declared that they would like a similar programme to be implemented in their children's schools.

The representatives from the government agencies who were interviewed did acknowledge the value of both the campaign and the school programme and UNICEF's endorsement that 'legitimized' it. However, according to the evaluators, "there is still a lack of either political will or available resources to bring the programme to scale and mainstream the programme's concepts and principles in the education system."

Conclusions from all evaluations

Evaluations showed that during the intense implementation phase, the programme was successful in noticeably reducing rates of bullying in schools.

The programme also far exceeded expectations in terms of the number of participating schools (301) and the proportion of funds contributed by individual citizens from their personal resources (which increased over time from an average of 44 per cent during the period 2003–2006 to over 60 per cent of all programme funds in 2008).

The evaluation of schools several years after the implementation of the SEES programme showed the need for constant renewal and guidance; strong, explicit, general education policies against (peer) violence; and clear political will to support activities preventing violence and ensuring lasting impact, especially regarding students' behaviour.

These conclusions indicate the importance of institutionalizing the SEES programme within the general curriculum and the national framework of school responsibilities.

Several years after the implementation of the programme, an evaluation was conducted comparing schools that had implemented the programme with those that had not. The evaluation found that parents from programme schools rated their children as more socially competent. Teachers from programme schools felt mostly competent in coping with students' violence and significantly more competent than teachers from control schools.

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A CHILD HAS A
RIGHT TO A HUG!



Levels of peer violence cannot decline unless a deliberate and systematic effort is made to reduce them. This is the main premise of the programme 'For a Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools' (SEES), designed and implemented in Croatia with full support from the UNICEF Office for Croatia, and adopted by several neighbouring countries.

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