



Key Questions

PEER REVIEW

14th-15th September
Athens, Greece

Pre-meeting questions

Feedback from Gezinsbond, Belgium

On Sept 14-15, you will attend the Peer Review meeting of the platform Live Without Bullying.

Prior to the meeting, we would appreciate your thoughts on the following subjects:

1. What examples have you seen regarding the importance of anonymity/technology in anti-bullying measures?

Anonymity for sure is a good thing as it comes to easy accessing help. On the other hand, since there is no personal contact, really intervening when necessary is more difficult.

Since tools are only online available, I also wonder how people with lower or no digital access get help.

2. What best practices have you encountered in expanding children's knowledge about their rights or what bullying means?

The best practices are those who don't only work on the incident that occurred. It is very important to work also (and maybe even more) on **prevention**. It is known that prevention and early detection can solve up to 85 % of the problems.

Prevention is needed on different levels. You need to work with a wider approach. In the context of a school for example, a whole school approach means that all school staff, students and education partners should be included. The purpose must be to create an environment where all children feel safe and welcome. But apart from that, you need specific prevention on bullying also. Only this does not work if the average climate is negative.

3. What programmes or policies have you identified that educate children and their parents in life skills, such as communication tools, empathy and more?

Veilig online, the educational program from Gezinsbond and Child Focus for parents has recently received a complete make-over. In five different modules, our trainers show

parents how children act on the internet, what they expect from their parents and what the role of parents can be. One of these modules is about cyberbullying. The educational program is highly demanded, also by schools and the website had about 50.000 unique visitors a year.

It helps parents to see that they must not be an internet expert to be able to educate their children, also digitally. It reinforces them to see their role and to pick it up. Proximity, safety and open communication are key words. And on the other side it gives them insight in the mechanisms of cyberbullying is and how they can play a role in preventing or curing.

On school level, there is an evidence based program that runs in Flanders and that comes originally from Finland: KIVA. It is based on the principles explained under question 2.

In Flanders, we created a Network against bullying with different organizations that have the theme on their agenda. Gezinsbond is part of this Network. That way we can share knowledge and expertise on a regular basis. Every year, this Network organizes 'the week against bullying' to keep the issue high on everybody's agenda. In that week, we work together with national TV and with celebrities to encourage every school, every youth movement and every sports club to pay attention to bullying. We are convinced it is important to do this kind of action every year, to make clear that we need to keep working on every level to decrease the number of children being bullied.

The Network has a very small budget of 8.000 euro per year, but works on the effort of every membership-organization to provide time of their employees.

4. What are some of the challenges that you believe an anti-bullying programme may encounter?

First of all it is very important that anti bullying programs are being tested on their effectivity before being introduced. Evidence based material only should be used.

Moreover, it can only be conducted by experts. The impact of an anti-bullying program of even an exercise can be huge, and it is very important to have someone to guide the children in this process. Without professional support, some anti-bullying programs do more harm than good.

5. What would be an indicator of success for an anti-bullying programme?

There has to be a measurement before and after conducting the program. If the rate of bullying-cases has declined, it is a successful program. Not only counting the official number of cases declared, but also questioning the children about their experiences and taking those into account.

6. How anti-bullying programmes can be inclusive to the needs of all children and promote diversity?

First off all there should be a possibility for those with limited digital access to get help. Might be by telephone or through face to face contact.



Key Questions

Inclusiveness is a matter of general climate of the environment, and is very difficult to measure through an online tool.

7. Is there anything that you have seen in other European anti-bullying programs that will provide a benefit to Live Without Bullying?