



ComBuS Toolkit Implementation Guidelines

Project Title: Combat Bullying: A Whole School Program

Project Acronym: ComBuS

Project Number: JUST/2014/RDAP/AG/BULL/7698

Supported by the Rights, Equality
and Citizenship (REC) Programme
of the European Union



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of CARDET and its Partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

Table of contents

PREAMBLE

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE COMBUS PROJECT

III. THE COMBUS TOOLKIT

A. Toolkit description

B. How to use the ComBuS Toolkit

C. How to use the ComBuS Toolkit's different components

IV. FINAL ASPECTS

70%
of young people have
experienced some
form of **bullying**

1 000 000
children are bullied
every week
inside and outside of school

Combat Bullying in Schools



Students who experience bullying are
at increased risk for
poor school adjustment,
sleep difficulties,
anxiety, and
depression

Bullying is the biggest concern for children as they grow up...

PREAMBLE

Despite the current efforts in national and European level, bullying appears to be an escalating challenge. According to Beat Bullying, recent studies have shown that:

- 70% of young people have experienced some form of bullying;
- one million children are bullied every week, inside and outside of school;
- bullying is the biggest concern for children as they grow up;
- at least 20 children every year commit suicide because they are being – or have been – bullied.

Children who experience bullying are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, and poor school adjustment.

The effects of school bullying on children's stress levels, depressive tendencies, and self-concept are not only a barrier to their learning and development but also for wider society. Early, effective and school-based intervention is necessary to deal with bullying and its collateral effects (Tremblay & Craig, 1995). Bullying is approached as a challenge to the learning process and the active integration and participation in the school environment of European children, following the directives of the European Parliament's report "Rethinking Education" (2013). There remains a need for a comprehensive 'whole-school' framework which explores the origins of bullying, its effects in and beyond the school-life of the child, and subsequent policies and procedures for its detection and eradication. The ComBuS project approaches the school as a learning environment for all stakeholders, and not only students, developing educational, capacity building and awareness raising activities for all direct stakeholders.

I. INTRODUCTION

These implementation guidelines aim at providing the necessary information on the ComBuS Toolkit developed and tested within the scope of the “*Combat Bullying: A Whole School Program*” project, which has been produced with the financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union.

They provide teachers and school staffs, decision makers, parents, other stakeholders and multipliers with concrete and practice-oriented information and suggestions on how to integrate the ComBuS Toolkit in their normal activities. More than a scientific, theoretical instrument, these guidelines instead intend to be a useful hands-on resource.

Thus, these Guidelines represent only a concise material about the ComBuS Toolkit and its place in the framework of the ComBuS project, and the project partners intentionally designed them this way, for the benefit of its clarity and practicality. If additional information and explanations on how to use the ComBuS Toolkit is required, the project partnership will provide further assistance (you may directly contact any of the partner institutions; their contact information is available on the ComBuS website at www.combatbullying.eu).

II. THE COMBUS PROJECT

“*Combat Bullying: A Whole School Program (ComBuS)*” (ref. no. JUST/2014/RDAP/AG/BULL/7698) is a project financed by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union.

The ComBuS project aims to fight bullying in schools by developing a whole school program that supports directly: students, school staff, teachers, parents, school leaders.

The ComBuS objectives were to:

- conduct literature review and analysis of the needs of students, teachers, school staff, school leaders and parents in 6 European countries;
- build a participatory, whole school program (ComBuS Toolkit) that will engage students, teachers, school staff, school leaders and parents in fighting bullying using blended (face-to-face, online and mobile) methodologies, tools and activities;
- implement the program in at least 2 schools for each of the chosen 6 European countries;
- disseminate the model widely in the EU.

The activities and outcomes of the ComBuS project have been achieved by a consortium composed of seven partners from 6 EU countries: Cyprus, Romania, Spain, Greece, Italy and Ireland. The project was coordinated by the Centre for the Advancement for Research and Development in Educational Technology LTD (CARDET) from Cyprus.

III. THE COMBUS TOOLKIT

A. Toolkit description

The ComBuS Toolkit is the most important outcome of the project. It is addressed to school leaders, teachers/school staff, students and parents.

The ComBuS Toolkit was developed using a participatory framework with the direct involvement of all target groups, thus addressing their capacity and awareness needs in combating bullying, providing a series of blended components, which are easily adaptable in the partner countries and any EU member state.

Multiple innovative aspects can be identified in our ComBuS Toolkit, in terms of design, development and implementation. The Toolkit contains a series of multidimensional blended activities and components, in terms of content, format (training, awareness raising, peer to peer support, pedagogical activities, online tools) and target groups (leaders, community staff, teachers, parents, students, decision makers). It was designed to allow maximal adaptability to national and European contexts.

The Toolkit supports the engagement of school leaders, students, teachers, school staff and parents in detecting and combating bullying, through various forms and activities, including: (1) face-to-face; (2) online; (3) mobile. These can be carried out individually or in groups.

The ComBuS Toolkit designed by all project partners, comprises the following components:

- ComBuS Online Platform and Digital Tools (<http://combatbullying.eu/>)
- ComBuS Mobile Application (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=cardet.combus>)
- Blended Learning Modules for School Leaders, Teachers, School Staff and Parents
- Experiential Workshops for Students
- Peer to Peer Support Guidelines
- ComBuS Classroom Activities
- Reading Against Bullying
- Material for thematic school days
- ComBuS Evaluation Rubrics
- ComBuS Implementation Guidelines
- Localisation and adaptation in national contexts

B. How to use the ComBuS Toolkit

The ComBuS Toolkit may be a useful resource for all project target groups:

The *school leaders* may use it to make successful any intervention and improvement of the school climate from a bully-related perspective. Majority of programs did not place specific emphasis on school leaders. ComBuS does – and the Toolkit offers them on one hand an integrated instrument (all components as a whole) as well as a series of specific, professional, ready-to-be-applied resources (i.e. the blended learning modules for school leaders, the ComBuS online platform, digital tools and mobile application).

The *students* can be victims, witnesses and perpetrators. Through its contents, good practices and the plurality of activities and materials, the Toolkit provides them peer support and prepares them to fight bullying.

The *teachers* are key-factors in fighting bullying. They interact most with all categories of participants in the bullying (bullies, bullied students, bystanders, parents) and can control, diminish and even eradicate the phenomenon through a continuous and systematic effort. The ComBuS Toolkit enables them with necessary knowledge, skills and competence which are delivered within an attractive and flexible combination of resources: from blended learning modules for teachers, online platform and mobile application, to lesson plans, extra-curricular activities, informational materials, reading activities, experiential workshops and many other.

School staff (ie. support staff, counsellors) have an active involvement in the overall school management and deal with issues of psychological support and orientation towards students. They can use the ComBuS blended learning modules designed for the school staff to empower themselves for better coping with the bullying and for becoming an effective aid to principals, teachers, parents and students.

To engage *parents* and family to identify and fight bullying is important for a whole school program. The ComBuS Toolkit involves the parents not only through the blended learning modules but also by their access to the online platform, digital tools and the mobile application.

The online platform allows users to customise tools, activities and resources needed for each school. The platform serves as a “One Stop Shop” for combating bullying, loaded with case studies, examples of programs, rubrics, assessment tools, and videos with guidelines and reflections on lessons learned. Each school will be able to customise its program and download it.

The Mobile App allows all stakeholders to install in their mobile devices and have access to guidelines, practical tips, and resources in tackling bullying in real contexts. Some components of the ComBuS Toolkit focus on stories, storytelling, and reading against bullying. The power of stories has the potential to transform school culture and student behaviour, and as such was used in designing many of the toolkit resources.

Each toolkit component is user-friendly, easy accessible and abundant in explanations and examples. The combined use of the toolkit components and resources will ensure more efficient results in fighting bullying.

C. How to use the ComBuS Toolkit's different components



Toolkit

The ComBuS Toolkit can be found at <http://combatbullying.eu/index.php/en/toolkit> and contains the following:

Blended Learning Modules for School Leaders Teachers and Parents

As part of the ComBuS approach to tackling bullying, it was decided that the project would pilot a 'whole-school programme'; this means involving all actors in the school community to raise awareness of the issue of bullying, to convey real understanding of the issue and to instruct all actors on how to react to and report incidents of bullying when uncovered. To ensure that school leaders, teachers and parents are all involved in this process and

informed of the reality of bullying in schools, the toolkit includes specialised blended learning modules for each of these target groups. There are individual modules for school leaders and principals, teachers and parents; and these have been designed as four 90-minute units; three of which can be completed online and one to be completed in an interactive face-to-face workshop. These units cover topics such as understanding and defining bullying, identifying bullying, responding to bullying, reporting and resolving bullying and an introduction to cyberbullying; and aim to directly address the needs of these target groups in combatting bullying.



Blended Learning Modules for School Leaders Teachers and Parents



Module 1: Combat Bullying – Guidelines and Tools for school leaders



Module 2: Efficiency coping with bullying in school: A practical approach for teachers



Module 3: Anti-Bullying Tools and Resources for Parents: Protect Your Children and Support Safe Schools



Experiential Workshops for Students

Experiential Workshops for Students

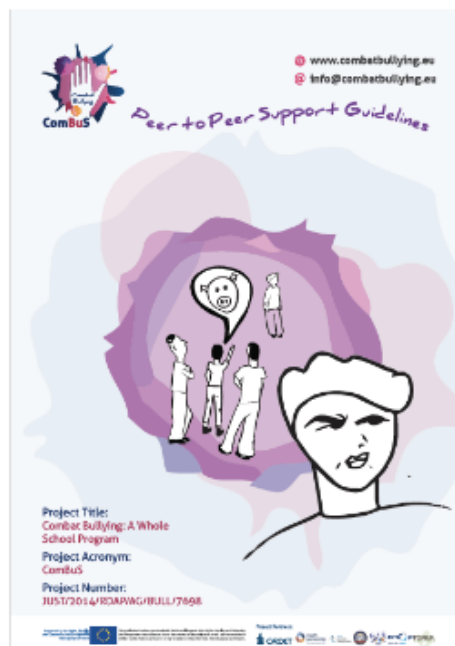
The target group of the experiential workshops are students aged from 6 to 14 years. The overall aim of these workshops is to raise awareness amongst students on a range of bully-related issues which can affect them at any stage in school. These workshops aim to involve students in combating bullying, by improving their understanding of the topic and of the causes of bullying; educating them on how they can identify bullying and how to address the issue with the help of teachers, parents and other school actors if they discover that bullying is taking place in their school. These students are the end-user target group of these workshops; however the workshop outlines and resources have been designed to be delivered by teachers. They can be easily integrated into the school curricula, delivered using typical classroom resources and they address the needs of the students in upper primary and lower post-primary school in understanding and responding to episodes of bullying.

Peer to Peer Support Guidelines

The Peer to Peer Support Guidelines have been designed to act as a guide for students aged between six and fourteen years old to be able to support each other in order to combat bullying in schools. These Guidelines have been designed to encourage students to become actively involved in tackling the issue of bullying in their schools, and to develop advocacy skills to be able to support and speak up for those peers who need their help. The Guidelines are available through the Mobile App so that students can access them on-the-go, ensuring they always have the support and advice they need to help to put a stop to the bullying of their peers, wherever they may encounter it.



Peer to Peer Support Guidelines



In-Class Activities/Lesson Plans

The ComBuS Toolkit includes lesson plans and activities to be completed with students in a classroom setting. These activities follow a cross-thematic approach, and are intended to be used by teachers in planning their anti-bullying activities which they complete with students. The aim of these activities is to raise awareness of bullying among students and teachers, and to teach both target groups how to identify, report and eradicate instances of bullying. These anti-bullying lesson plans focus on activities which include music, acting, art, etc. meaning that they can be easily integrated into the school curriculum, and teachers will have the skills and resources necessary to successfully implement these activities with their class group.



In-Class Activities/Lesson Plans

Reading Against Bullying

An important and innovative component of the ComBuS Toolkit is the activities designed around the theme of 'Reading Against Bullying'. This component of the Toolkit consists of a profile of relevant books and reading materials which are appropriate for students aged from six to fourteen and which deal with the topics of bullying, building relationships with classmates, dealing with conflicts and dilemmas in school, understanding different cultures and other topics relevant to the issue of bullying. These profiles of books include a short synopsis of the book and explain why the book is relevant to school-based bullying. They are also accompanied by a sample activities and lesson plans which teachers can use with their class to get students reading about and discussing the issue of bullying in schools. These activities are a useful resource for teachers, and are targeted at students; with the aim of empowering them to talk about and understand bullying behaviour so that a change can be brought about in their attitudes and behaviours towards bullying in schools.



Reading Against Bullying

Material for Thematic School Days/Weeks

As well as providing in class and learning materials for individual classes, the ComBuS Toolkit also includes extra-curricular activities for teachers to use when planning thematic days in school, highlighting the issue of bullying. These materials are aimed at students but can be implemented in the school by teachers, school leaders and support staff. Certain projects may also be implemented outside of school hours with the support of parents, if possible. These materials take a less formal approach to the topic of bullying, encouraging students to collaborate on art competitions, song-writing and performing activities, theatrical plays, etc. These materials also include resources which will help to spread information and raise



Material for Thematic School Days/Weeks

awareness throughout the school on the issue of bullying, such as posters, leaflets, podcasts, etc.



Evaluation Rubrics

Evaluation Rubrics

To finalise the ComBuS Toolkit and to support the evaluation of the Toolkit resources, ComBuS project partners worked to develop specialised evaluation rubrics for practitioners. These are specifically aimed at school leaders and principals, teachers and school staff, and will aid them in assessing and providing feedback on the suitability of the ComBuS Toolkit resources to tackling bullying in their school communities. The aim of these evaluation rubrics is to support the ComBuS project consortium to gather data and feedback on the relevance of the Toolkit resources and tools to the needs of local schools in each partner country and ultimately to assess the success of the ComBuS Toolkit.

IV. FINAL ASPECTS

The Toolkit was produced in all partners languages – Greek, Romanian, Spanish, Italian and English and it is accessible on our project website.

During the piloting and testing phases we received positive feedback on the Toolkit use, from school leaders, students, teachers, school staff and parents. They found the Toolkit a valuable practical resource, which provides the necessary knowledge and concrete ways to increase awareness on bullying and also to efficiently combat it at the school level.

We hope that you will also discover how the ComBuS Toolkit can help you and we remind that you may access it on our website at www.combatbullying.eu!