



Cyber Training

CyberTraining

**A Research-based Training Manual
On Cyberbullying**

Final Report

Public Part



Project information

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Executive Summary

Cyberbullying is a new form of school bullying that involves the use of electronic devices such as e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, mobiles, or other forms of information technology. In contrast to other forms of bullying, it reaches a far wider audience at rapid speed, transcending boundaries of time, and physical and personal space.

The CyberTraining project aimed at providing a well-grounded, research-based training manual for trainers focusing on cyberbullying. The training manual 'Taking Action Against Cyberbullying'¹ consists of seven modules. While the first four modules provide introductions e.g. in 'basic principles and strategies of training', 'ICT and Internet safety', 'cyberbullying' and 'approaches tackling cyberbullying', the final three modules focus on the practical work with parents, school staff and young people. The manual is practice-oriented and aims to prepare trainers for working with different target groups. It has been made available online in form of an eBook in English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Bulgarian versions.

The development of the training manual built on a multi-level research process that started with an initial analysis of trainers' needs and preferences in terms of a training manual as well as a multi-level qualitative questioning process that aims at structuring experts' views on the cyberbullying problem. In national research processes the partners deepened these insights and findings through target oriented research activities. The outcomes were summarised in national and transnational reports that formed the basis for the development of the training manual.

¹ <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/book/>

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1. Project Objectives

Overall objective: Creation of a training manual focusing on cyberbullying

The CyberTraining project aimed to develop a training manual focusing on cyberbullying that provides trainers with clear guidance, support and resources. The training manual '*Taking Action Against Cyberbullying – Training Manual*² primarily addresses trainers from across Europe working with schools, parents and young people affected by or dealing with cyberbullying on various levels. The manual aims at being both practical-oriented and well-grounded on the latest research outcomes on cyberbullying. It has been made available online in form of an eBook in English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese and Bulgarian versions.

Involvement of trainers and experts in an initial needs assessment phase

The project put a specific emphasis on involving its target group – trainers from across Europe – in the process of developing the manual by means of assessing their needs, interests and preferences in terms of the training manual. Furthermore experts in the field of school bullying and violence on the one side and information and communication technologies (ICT) and Internet safety on the other side were involved in the project's first research-oriented phase.

Providing an overview about the state-of-the art on cyberbullying in Europe

In the project's first research-oriented first phase prior to developing the training manual the partners outlined their countries' situation in form of country reports in the project's that partly provided the basis for the development of the training manual. For each of the partner countries - Germany, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and the UK - two sets of reports were created that differ in terms of their thematic focus. While the first set of reports outlined each country's situation in terms of cyberbullying (i.e. definitions and terms used for cyberbullying in this country, studies on cyberbullying available in this country and their outcomes) the second set of reports provided an overview about approaches tackling cyberbullying in each of the partner countries (i.e. government actions, activities by NGO, activities on the level of school as well as brochures, guidelines or manuals focusing on cyberbullying).

European orientation makes professionals learn from other countries' experiences

The project explicitly approached the cyberbullying problem from a European perspective by analysing initiatives from throughout Europe. Cyberbullying research as well as tackling cyberbullying on a practical level is still in a relatively early stage, so that trainers and other professionals can profit from experiences that have been made in other parts of Europe. This has contributed to promoting the realisation of a common European approach in a rather new field of research where there is less national experience than in other fields.

² <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/book/>

2. Project Approach

Methodologies: needs assessment and analysis of state of the art

The project's first, research-oriented phase aimed at providing a well-grounded basis for the development of the training manual for trainers. This research-oriented phase in the project's first year approached the topic of cyberbullying on various levels, by means of needs assessment and a description of the state of the art in each partner country.

Trainers' needs assessment: online questioning and online focus group

In an early phase of the project trainers were questioned in order to get concrete information about their state of information on the cyberbullying problem and intervention strategies as well as their needs and preferences in terms of a training manual. The outcomes of an initial qualitative online questioning of 55 trainers from throughout Europe were discussed and deepened by 16 trainers in a moderated online focus group. The outcomes of the discussions' analysis were summarized in a report that were considered in the process of development of the training manual.

The experts' perspectives: online questioning and online focus group

Parallel to the questioning of trainers, 46 experts on school bullying and violence on the one side and ICT and Internet safety on the other side participated in an online questioning. The outcomes were discussed in an online focus group in which 25 experts were involved. Again, the main outcomes and conclusions were made available in form of a report that was one of several starting points for developing the training manual.

National reports on cyberbullying in the partner countries and beyond

The outcomes of the partners' research on cyberbullying were summarized in form of two reports for each of the partner countries, one that focuses on the countries' situation in terms of studies or research initiatives focusing on cyberbullying, terms used for cyberbullying, reactions of media, public, policy makers etc. and a second one that outlines approaches tackling bullying in the respective countries.

The project's evaluation strategy

Evaluation of the training manual by trainers and experts

In order to ensure a high-quality of the project's main product, the training manual 'Taking Action Against Cyberbullying – Training Manual' each of the manual's seven modules was reviewed and evaluated by 2-4 trainers and experts by means of a questionnaire that contained both quantitative but also qualitative questions. The trainers' and experts' feedback was the basis for the creation of the final versions of the modules. In order to obtain experts' feedback, the project's concept and products were also presented and discussed at conferences, workshops and other events that involved experts in the field of cyberbullying, school bullying and violence and Internet safety.

External evaluation

In their evaluation activities the partners were supported by independent, external evaluator from Gareth Long Project Management (GLPM). The main areas monitored by the external evaluator are i.e. the progress made towards the contractual outcomes, the manner in which the partnership performs as a transnational collaboration, the extent of the inclusion of the target group in project planning and activities or the effectiveness and impact of dissemination activities. The external evaluators' feedback and advice contributed to an effective project management and helped the partners to get the best possible outcomes.

Dissemination and exploitation

In the project's first year there have been two small, target group oriented web-based campaigns, mainly aiming at involving trainers and experts in the working process. Furthermore, all partners have been actively involved in dissemination and networking activities such as presentations of the project at conferences, workshops and other events.

Dissemination campaigns in the project's second year, mainly in the project's final phase after the publication of the training manual, aimed at attracting the target group's attention to the project's outputs. This included a web campaign (e.g. postings in newsgroups, forums, blogs etc.), press releases, presentations at conferences, dissemination via networks the partners are involved in as well as research articles in scientific journals. Moreover, the partners' active involvement in various national and transnational networks of researchers and experts on cyberbullying and school bullying and violence ensured a wide International attention in Europe and beyond.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Project meetings

The partners held four meetings, namely in Landau (Germany), Coimbra (Portugal), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Seville (Spain). A final dissemination conferences organized by the Swiss 'silent partner' Yinternet.org was held in Lausanne (Switzerland).

Online questioning and online focus group for trainers

As mentioned previously one of the first steps in the research-oriented first year of the project was a multi-level information gathering process that aimed at assessing trainers` needs and preferences in terms of a training manual. This process included the development of a qualitative questionnaire for trainers and its online implementation, a qualitative analysis of the questionings outcomes and their summary in form of an interim report. Selected outcomes were deepened in a moderated online focus group of trainers that was held in Moodle, a virtual learning environment (VLE). The overall outcomes and conclusions of both the online questioning and the online focus group`s discussions were summarized in a report that is available online³.

Online questioning and online focus group for experts

Parallel to the information gathering process that focused on trainers, experts were invited to online questionings and online focus groups. Again, this included the development and application of online questionnaires, an analysis and summary of the main outcomes, their discussion in an online focus group in Moodle as well as the delivery of a report that summarizes the main outcomes and conclusions of this information gathering process. The report is available online⁴

National reports and book: Cyberbullying in the partner countries

As outlined above one of the outputs of the project`s first year was the delivery of country reports on cyberbullying in Germany, Spain, Ireland, Portugal and the UK. The reports outline each country`s situation in terms of cyberbullying (i.e. definitions and terms used for cyberbullying in this country, studies on cyberbullying available in this country and their outcomes). The report is available online⁵.

³ <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/reports/CyberTraining - Trainers Needs Analysis - Outcomes and Conclusions.doc>

⁴ <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/reports/CyberTraining Online Focus Group - Outcomes and Implications.doc>

⁵ <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/page.php?lang=En&page=8>

National reports: Tackling cyberbullying - approaches in the partner countries

The partners also delivered country reports that outline approaches in their countries that aim at tackling cyberbullying. The reports provide an overview about approaches tackling cyberbullying in each of the partner countries (i.e. government actions, activities by NGO, activities on the level of school as well as brochures, guidelines or manuals focusing on cyberbullying). The report is available online⁶.

Book ‘Cyberbullying: A cross-national comparison’

Partly building on the national reports, the book ‘Cyberbullying: A cross-national comparison’ (Mora-Merchan, & Jäger, 2010⁷) summarizes research outcomes from across Europe and beyond. Apart from the national reports from the UK, Ireland, Germany, Portugal, Spain the book includes additional chapters outlining the situation in France, the Benelux countries, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Poland, Bulgaria, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, USA and Japan. The book is an additional side product of the CyberTraining project not foreseen in the project’s proposal. Its creation has been funded by the partners.

eBook ‘Taking Action Against Cyberbullying – Training Manual’

The main product of the CyberTraining project is the training manual “Taking Action Against Cyberbullying’ that has been made available in eBook format⁸. The eBook includes the following seven modules:

- Module 1 ‘Introduction to the training manual - principles and strategies’
- Module 2 ‘Introduction to ICT and Internet safety’
- Module 3 ‘Introduction to cyberbullying’
- Module 4 ‘Tackling cyberbullying’
- Module 5 ‘Working with parents’
- Module 6 ‘Working with schools’
- Module 7 ‘Working with young people’

Apart from a theory-based introduction into the topic, each module includes practical-oriented activities and resources (e.g. narratives, video clips, case examples or links to external online resources). All in all, the manual has a length of approximately 300 pages and includes 45 activities and 83 resources. It is available online in English, Spanish, German, Portuguese and Bulgarian.

⁶ <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/page.php?lang=En&page=9>

⁷ Mora-Merchan, J. & Jäger, T. (Eds.) (2010). Cyberbullying: A cross-national comparison. Landau: Verlag Empirische Padagogik.

⁸ <http://www.cybertraining-project.org/book/>

4. Partnerships

The partners formed a multi-actor consortium that possesses the skills and expertise required for achieving the objectives envisaged in the CyberTraining project.

The majority of partners was formed by Universities – the Centre for Educational Research (zef) of the University of Koblenz-Landau (Germany), the Universities of Seville, Cordoba and Madrid (Spain), the Anti-Bullying-Centre, Trinity College, Dublin (Ireland), the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra (Portugal) and the University of Surrey (UK). These partners have a long and wide-reaching International expertise in the field of school bullying and violence.

This expertise was complemented by two further “silent partners”, Yinternet.org (Switzerland) and “Barne Vakten – Kids and Media” (Norway) that contributed a broad expertise in the field of new information and communication technologies, e-culture and Internet Safety. The Bulgarian partner, Infoart, contributed its broad expertise in web design, layout and web usability, which is crucial for adapting the project’s overall outcome, the training manual for trainers, to eBook format.

In terms of their geographical location, their cultural background, their different educational systems and also their languages the partners on many levels reflect the diversity of the European Union. For a relatively new phenomenon such as cyberbullying exchanging experiences and comparing the situations in different European countries, regions and cultures, it can be especially helpful that experts and practitioners from across Europe can learn from each other. Another useful side effect of the selection of partners is that the project’s overall output, the training manual for trainers, can be made available in different languages: English, Spanish, German, French, Portuguese and Bulgarian.

Most of the consortium’s members have already cooperated within different transnational projects and contexts, so that the project can build on well established cooperation structures. Furthermore, most partners are included in national and transnational networks in the field of school bullying and violence as well as cyberbullying.

The CyberTraining project and its partners are well integrated in the COST Action ISO801 ‘Cyberbullying: coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings’⁹, an International network of 28 European countries and Australia, probably the most relevant transnational network of cyberbullying researchers. While the partners from Spain, Ireland and the UK are the national representatives of their country, the partners from Germany and Portugal have been associated to the COST network, for instance by presenting the state of work of the CyberTraining project at two COST conferences as well as by participating at the first Australian training school on cyberbullying¹⁰ in Melbourne that brought together 10 experienced faculty and 50 early career researchers from Europe and Australia.

⁹ <http://sites.google.com/site/costis0801/> and <http://www.gold.ac.uk/is0801/>

¹⁰ <http://sites.google.com/site/costis0801trainingschoolsite/home>

5. Plans for the Future

Most partners offer training (e.g. for parents, school staff, young people or policy makers) and have incorporated the CyberTraining training manual in their training activities. Also, the partners established contacts to trainers within their countries and beyond for disseminating the CyberTraining training manual. Moreover, the partners' involvement in national and International networks helped attracting the attention of a wide transnational audience to the CyberTraining project and its outcomes.

Due to the active involvement of the Spanish, Irish, and British partners in the COST Action ISO801 "Cyberbullying: coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings"¹¹, the CyberTraining training manual has the potential of being disseminated and perceived as one of the most prominent and outstanding training manuals on cyberbullying.

Furthermore, the recently approved project 'CyberTraining-4-Parents' funded by the Grundtvig / Lifelong Learning Programme that partly builds on the CyberTraining project opens the possibility to implement the training manual in practice in form of face-to-face courses, as well in form of moderated and self-directed online courses. Both the f-2-f courses and the online course open up the chance for a more comprehensive evaluation of the training concept in practice. Furthermore, especially the self-directed online course opens the course for a broader, International audience.

¹¹ <http://sites.google.com/site/costis0801/> and <http://www.gold.ac.uk/is0801/>

6. Contribution to EU policies

In terms of its content and overall focus the CyberTraining project contributed to various key EU policies, objectives and priorities, some of which we will outline below.

Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence

As studies revealed cyberbullying is a massive threat for the personal development of young people and can have severe consequences that can go as far as suicide. Addressing the problem of cyberbullying has to involve activities related to the development of social and civic competences of pupils and young people. This was - indirectly – realised by providing knowledge and resources to trainers who act as multipliers, so that in consequence persons affected by cyberbullying such as victims and perpetrators can be reached.

Developing the skills and competences of VET teachers, trainers and tutors

The project aimed at qualifying trainers who address a target audience that deals with problems related to school bullying and problems of young people and their social environment. As both research and approaches aiming at tackling cyberbullying are in a relatively early stage, trainers in most countries do not have an overview about well-grounded facts on the cyberbullying problem and how to tackle it. The training manual for trainers provides a valuable contribution to qualifying trainers and widens their competences and skills in dealing with the cyberbullying.

Development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning

The project all in all aimed at providing ICT- / web-based content. The project's main objective was the development of a research-based manual for trainers focusing on the topic of cyberbullying. The manual was made available in form of an electronic book in order to make it accessible to a wide European audience of trainers and others interested in the topic. Apart from the eBook itself also all the other project outcomes such as national and transnational research reports as well as discussion outcomes (of the online focus group and weblogs) were made available online.

Raising competence levels of groups at risk

Trainers act as multipliers as they qualify professionals who are dealing with cyberbullying and other school-related problems at different levels. Indirectly the project aimed at raising the competence levels of groups at risk - pupils and young people affected by cyberbullying as well as their parents and others in their social environment – by means of providing trainers and professionals trained by these trainers with expertise and resources related to the cyberbullying problem.

Promoting an awareness of the need to combat racism, prejudice and xenophobia

Cyberbullying includes the spreading of racist and xenophobic messages and threats by means of new information technologies such as mobile phones or the Internet. Like with other forms of cyberbullying perpetrators use new information technologies as their anonymity makes it relatively easy to stay incognito, whereas victims perceive this anonymity as an even bigger threat than “face-to-face” bullying. The training manual explicitly includes aspects related to the need to combat racism and xenophobia and will provide trainers with strategies and advice on how to deal with these problems.