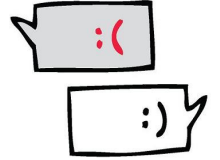


EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON CYBERBULLYING



CONFERENCE REPORT

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SUMMARY

“I actually forgot what it felt like to be happy” were the very touching words of 17 year old Nathalie, a former victim of bullying and cyberbullying, who shared her very personal story with the participants of the European #DeleteCyberbullying conference.

The cyberbullying conference, organised by COFACE on May 28, gathered over 80 participants in Madrid, all experts in the field from all over **Europe**.

As part of the #DeleteCyberbullying project, the conference took on ambitious goals to bring together a great **variety of actors** involved in the fight against cyberbullying, such as families, young people, NGOs, schools, law enforcement and the industry.

Over the course of the day, in different **plenary and interactive sessions** the participants shared their experience, learned from each other and showed great interest in cooperating further to address the challenges of cyberbullying together.

Peer mentoring emerged as one of the most successful approaches in preventing and addressing cyberbullying, notably by empowering young people to talk about their bad experiences, and to seek help from young people of the same age group.

The highlights of the day were the **honest testimonies** of the 4 teenagers who shared their personal stories and experiences with the conference participants, which really brought home the core of the issue.

A consensus emerged around the idea, that cyberbullying is not only about technology but also about behaviour. Strengthening young people's **empathy** and their sense of **responsibility** are key in fostering a bullying free environment.

The conference provided a great opportunity to exchange ideas and practices and to shed a light on the very different approaches between the different EU countries, concerning the available materials to help teachers, the use of mobile phones in schools, the different levels of parent-empowerment or what we see as the role for the industry players and law enforcement.

We hope that this report will do the conference justice by summarizing the key ideas, and emerging knowledge and awareness about cyberbullying. It also contains the necessary links to the project website and the actual presentations by the speakers.

Please do not hesitate to circulate widely, and for any questions, follow-up or interest in taking part in our awareness raising effort, you can always get in touch!

FIGURES, STATISTICS AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Whether in the US or Europe, statistics and figures tend to broadly agree. **Between one and five and one in three children tend to experience cyberbullying at some point in their lives.** Also, most cyberbullying perpetrators are girls.

While many **teens talk to a friend** about such incidents, which is a very positive development, a much lower proportion talks about their experience with cyberbullying to adults (parents or teachers). The reasons vary but often it is out of fear that their technology privileges might be taken away from them. However, the help and support of adults can be key to ensure that victims are assisted in dealing with cyberbullying appropriately.

Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become perpetrators by forwarding cyberbullying.

The FOSI (Family Online Safety Institute) GRID ¹ initiative was developed to assess whether the internet was getting safer and what were the risks and challenges globally in all 194 countries around the world. The study identified 26 global risks and challenges and the **number one risk was cyberbullying.**

In addition to building resilience in children, **parents need to be more empowered** in their use and understanding of new technologies. According to a FOSI survey, while 84% of parents felt they used appropriate filtering for their teens, when checking the configurations, only 37% had a suitable filtering in place.

The **effects of cyberbullying** on victims are well known. It affects their self-esteem, academic achievement, it can cause absenteeism; it feeds moderate school delinquency and violence, and can even lead to suicidal thoughts and attempts. Cyberbullying also has an impact on perpetrators, bystanders (who don't feel safe in school wondering if they will be cyberbullied next), parents (the family environment) and schools (especially the school learning environment).

A **positive school climate** greatly influences the prevalence of incidents such as cyberbullying and can therefore be an important step to prevent it. Examples for creating a positive school climate include: curriculum enhancements (resources and lessons about conflict resolution, socio-emotional learning), peer mentoring and social norming (changing mentality about what is acceptable behavior), and the development of an anti-bullying policy or charter for the school, jointly by the teaching staff and the pupils.

Whilst there are no laws dedicated to cyberbullying specifically, there is **much legislation development in harassment**, violence, sexting and so on. In many US states, there was also progress in bullying related legislation, notably by ensuring that **school policies** include measures against bullying and cyberbullying.

¹ <http://www.fosigrd.org/>

PANEL: THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Participants agreed that hearing directly the experience of young people brought such a powerful, real-life sense to the conference, that it was one of the most valuable aspects of the conference.

During the youth panel, four teenagers had the chance to react to key questions related to cyberbullying and share their thoughts and experiences.

The key messages from the panel were the following:

- The figures of cyberbullying might be underestimated as young people underreport out of shame or simply because they are not even aware they are being cyberbullied.
- Many cyberbullying victims are not aware of what cyberbullying is, and therefore cannot react accordingly, and even if they would want to react, they do not know how and where to seek help.
- Perpetrators often lack awareness about the consequence of their actions and so do **bystanders**, not realizing the seriousness of the situation or even being afraid to speak up.
- Some **technical solutions** can be put in place to prevent or tackle cyberbullying: for instance via prior permission before tagging, more active use of parental controls and high privacy settings by default.
- **Curriculums in schools** should include lessons on social and emotional education to remind students regularly of the consequences of behaviors such as bullying and cyberbullying. Peer mentoring within school is also a good practice that needs to be further developed.
- **Parents** have a key role to play and should do their best to keep up to date with the technological developments online and what their children are doing online and develop an open relationship with their children. More involvement of parents in schools or even lessons in the parents' place of work during lunchtime can also empower them to deal with issues such as cyberbullying.
- Online helplines and awareness centers are very useful to victims but need to include **peer mentoring** in their activities since teenagers learn best by talking to someone in their age category. A "cascade model" training would help to put in place a peer mentoring network in schools or online.

PANEL2: INDUSTRY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The industry and law enforcement engage in many activities and initiatives to contribute to curtailing cyberbullying and more generally to ensure that children enjoy a safe online experience.

From the industry, initiatives include:

- Awareness raising campaigns and education material developed for parents, children, teachers and more broadly the general public. The awareness raising is also carried out by cooperating with other stakeholders such as NGOs or schools.
- Setting up mechanisms relevant to help users with their online experience. This includes reporting mechanisms with prompt and appropriate feedback, content classification, parental controls provision, applications on mobile phones, chat filters, ignore/block buttons, online moderation, banning system, strong privacy settings,
- Engaging in European-wide self-regulatory initiatives for the development of a safer internet such as the CEO Coalition and the ICT Coalition and signing up to common guidelines at EU level (safer social networking principles, ICT principles).
- Through developing clear terms of service for children and teenagers on specific platforms such as social networks that explicit the do's and don'ts.
- Cooperation with NGOs and law enforcement with regards to reporting, take down and follow up of incidents such as cyberbullying.

In some countries and regions the police force and law enforcement have found a role and recognised the importance of their role in the prevention, victim-support and empowerment around cyberbullying:

- Providing advice for children who seek information or contact the law enforcement hotline: not to answer to any of the perpetrators' threats, block the perpetrator or remove him/her from their contacts list, report the incident to the administrator of the online service, talk about it to a person of trust (parent, teacher or close friend) and finally, if the threats become more serious, report the incident to the police.
- Providing advice for parents to help them deal with an incident of cyberbullying: block the sender of the offensive emails, help their children create a new email account, social media profile or change the security and privacy settings on existing accounts, contact the parents of a known perpetrator and report the incident to the police.
- Actively searching the web to identify individuals expressing their intention to commit suicide in order to prevent it.
- Carrying out web streamed conferences, teleconferences with schools, information and awareness raising campaigns amongst internet users to inform them about the consequences of the misuse of new technologies.
- Putting in place several ways to reach the law enforcement unit to report cyberbullying or ask questions including a 24/7 phone line, an email and chat.

PANEL3: AWARENESS RAISING AND EMPOWERMENT OF PARENTS, CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

NGOs working in the field of safer internet, parenting support or empowerment of children **share common strategies** on preventing and dealing with cyberbullying whether via general online safety tips or more targeted advice on cyberbullying directly. Awareness raising strategies targeting children, parents and teachers include the development of physical material (brochures, leaflets, stickers, posters,...), multimedia material (videos, pictures), online interactive websites with live chat helplines run by either adult professionals or peer mentors.

The material provided to children, parents and teachers needed to be highly customized to respond to the specific needs of these three groups. Some would prefer clear-cut step by step practical solutions in how to react to cyberbullying, others would rather receive a more general information with a nuanced approach in responding to cyberbullying, recognizing that each cyberbullying case is unique and one size fits all solutions are not always possible.

Some notable examples of innovative awareness raising campaigns include:

- **the Safer Internet Day** which is a yearly event run by INSAFE and involving a great number of actors on an international level, encouraging them to carry out an activity related to Safer Internet.
- **the Big March** run by BeatBullying which is a digital demonstration where anyone can sign up and demonstrate online, marching across websites, interacting with other demonstrators and visiting sponsor tents which include material and information about bullying and cyberbullying.
- **interactive material such as video games** as developed by Pantallas Amigas or **board games** such as developed by Childfocus.
- **targeted material for schools** such as via the Superkids project run by Protegeles.
- **local training sessions and TV spots** reaching out directly to parents and children in their community, such as the ones carried out by the Gezinsbond, the Flemish league of families,

Peer mentoring has been increasingly identified and recognized as a key action to both prevent and intervene effectively against bullying and cyberbullying as it involves young people directly and has a great potential in terms of outreach by positive role modeling and cascading knowledge. Examples of peer mentoring programs include BeatBullying and their cybermentors or Pantallas Amigas and their cybermanagers.

HUB 1: HOW CAN WE BETTER EMPOWER AND REACH PARENTS?

In order for parents to support their children and help them with any kind of problems they may encounter online, parents need to be empowered and supported. Parents are one of the target groups that is hardest to reach. When organizing conferences and seminars, the parents that attend are usually the tech-savvy ones and not the parents that would need it most. By comparison, it is much easier to reach teachers and children via schools whereas to reach parents, one must develop multiple outreach strategies. We also have to highlight the technological divide that exists between parents and their children, especially in countries or regions, or parts of society that are worse off economically, hit hard by unemployment and poverty. In such cases parents don't have the skills or the devices to understand what their children are doing online. In addition teenagers from these families lag behind in their own ICT skills, as they don't have access in the family, and have more difficulty in understanding whether they are being cyberbullied.

The hub session dedicated to parents brought up several ways that parents can be empowered:

- **Parental control tools** can help in the digital parenting exercise and protect children when using a mobile device or a computer to access the internet. The way parents and/or children configure these tools can make a real difference in the online experience of children. Ideally, parents and children should both be involved in the use of such tools, agreeing on some principles and regularly exchanging on e-safety matters. Tools, however, can never be an end in and of itself. The need to discuss and exchange remains key to guarantee that children acquire the right ICT skills and develop a responsible behavior online. Vodafone has developed a parental control application running on Android in all its EU markets.
- **Training for parents at their place of work**, especially in large companies or public organisations, is a way to reach parents directly without the need for them to dedicate an evening to attend training sessions. To enhance the reach of awareness raising and training sessions, organizations also put in place "**training of trainers**" who will be able to reach parents in their own local community. Protegeles has been organizing trainings in a large number of companies in Spain and training trainers who will be able to organize a session for parents locally.
- Another strategy, as developed by Childfocus, consists in **cooperating with other actors** such as family associations (Gezinsbond) or schools to reach the parents. Also, reaching parents can also be done via the **mass media** but the message content needs to be carefully drafted so as not to be alarmist and conveying a positive message that really helps to empower parents and spark their interest, encouraging them to get more information about such issues as cyberbullying. One important point to underline for all awareness raising strategies is the need to have material available **in as many languages as possible**.

HUB 2: HOW CAN WE BETTER EMPOWER AND REACH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

Empowering children and young people is key, but even more so, enabling children and teenagers to **mutually empower themselves via peer mentoring** has been proven to be highly effective. How can we support the development of peer mentoring?

The prerequisites of peer mentoring: **involving young people:**

- Young people need to be more broadly involved by all actors in order to learn the set of skills needed (i.e participation, listening skills and communication skills) to set strong foundations for the development of peer mentors. Involving youth in the democratic public discourse, in companies, in civil society organisations and NGOs, in think tanks, in schools, will help foster a culture of participation and engagement amongst youth. This is also true inside the family, where young people need to exchange with their parents, discuss internet safety issues amongst many other things to develop the necessary skills to express their ideas, concerns and wishes and gain strong moral values.
- Prevention strategies are also necessary to compliment peer mentoring. These include: PSHE lessons (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) at an early age to ensure all students acquire strong moral values, anti-bullying action plans at the national level, better alert systems monitoring signs of cyberbullying (smart filters), more training and e-safety courses in cooperation with NGOs, privacy by default settings on online services used by minors.

How to start a peer mentoring programme?

- A peer mentoring programme must be **initiated in the school, because this is the place where young people are during the day**. There must be a strong support of the school administration and motivated staff (specifically teachers) with good peer mentoring qualities to start a peer mentoring programme. Once the system is in place and works well, the teachers and staff can take a step back and let students (peer mentors) take control. Finally, dedicated resources and quality material is also needed to jumpstart and sustain a peer mentoring programme.

How can the model be supported?

- The school must always provide support to the programme, ensure that regular peer mentoring meetings take place to keep peer mentors motivated and enable exchange of experience and mutual support. More specifically, peer mentors also need someone they can turn to when they face a difficulty. The involvement of parents is also a key factor for support. Finally, once peer mentoring systems are in place in multiple schools of an area, meetings between these schools' peer mentors can be a great source of enrichment.

What are the criteria for becoming a good peer mentor?

Based on the feedback and experience of peer mentors present during the workshop, a good peer mentor should have the following qualities:

- Be motivated, have the will to be involved including in school councils or be a class representative, be respectful to others, have good communication skills, be a good listener, have some therapeutic skills and make it "cool" or appealing to other students to become a peer mentor or engage with one.

HUB 3: HOW CAN WE BETTER EMPOWER AND REACH TEACHERS/SCHOOLS?

Schools and teachers are one of the most "easy" ways to raise the awareness of children and at the same time, it is also the place where most of the bullying and cyberbullying takes place.

In order to be able to carry out their role as educators, and more specifically help prevent, intervene early and respond to bullying and cyberbullying, teachers need to be empowered. However, this is not an easy task. There are many challenges to address in order to ensure that schools and teachers help tackle these issues:

- Firstly, while it may seem that children spend a lot of time in school, and therefore that there is plenty of time to raise issues such as bullying and cyberbullying, the reality is that the curriculum and educational programmes are quite dense already. Fitting e-safety and digital literacy along with awareness-raising about issues related to the online world like cyberbullying is not an easy task.
- Secondly, teachers may feel overwhelmed and overloaded by issues and problems such as cyberbullying. They sometimes see these issues as an extra burden on their curriculum, or feel that they do not have the competences necessary have a meaningful impact and raise awareness of their students.
- Thirdly, even if some teachers recognize the need for such lessons in their curricula, they do not always know where to find appropriate material to substantiate their lessons.
- Finally, there are clear legal obstacles that prevent teachers and schools from acting efficiently against cyberbullying. It is very hard to balance the right to privacy of students (their mobile phones) especially in cases of sexting for instance. Are teachers allowed to confiscate students' devices or forcefully remove pictures or texts from their devices?

There are however some measures that can be taken at the level of schools that helps alleviate the pressure put on teachers and ensures that issues such as cyberbullying are not left unaddressed:

- Implementing a school policy that explicitly mentions cyberbullying and clarifies the role of each actor within the school, one which develops a step by step protocol in the case of cyberbullying and the consequences for engaging in such actions. This also helps to give the school a legal basis for action. In parallel to the development of a school policy, schools must ask parents for a written permission to be able to intervene in cases of cyberbullying.
- Help from external actors such as NGOs working in the field of e-safety or more specifically cyberbullying can greatly help schools and teachers, especially if the latter feel less confident in providing e-safety lessons themselves. Such actors can also provide useful material to teachers who are seeking to integrate these issues into their curriculum.
- Teacher training in university needs to include ICT related issues to ensure that teachers in the future will be well equipped to raise awareness of their students on these issues. Material provided to teachers on ICT related topics need to be integrated to their existing responsibilities and not adding to their workload. Such is the trend for instance, to use new technologies within the context of a "traditional" lesson. In schools, governments need to foster the development of "future labs" or specific classes that address the new opportunities but also the challenges that come with new technologies, promoting their ethical and responsible use.

- Even if teachers feel less comfortable teaching digital literacy or e-safety topics, teaching principles of morality, ethics and empathy is just as important especially on the preventive side.
- More generally, schools need to foster a healthy and positive school climate which greatly prevents behavior related problems such as bullying and cyberbullying.
- Cooperation between school and parents about media literacy and ICT are key to effectively trickle down to children. This ensures that parents as well as teachers speak with a common voice and partner up in raising the awareness of children on the issues surrounding new technologies.

/END OF THE REPORT/

PRESENTATIONS

Opening Key note speeches

- [Agnes Uherezky](#), Coordinator of the #DeleteCyberbullying project
- [MEP Georgios Koumoutsakos](#) [VIDEO]
- [Evangelia Markidou](#), European Commission, DG Connect
- [Teenager cyberbullying victim](#), BeatBullying, UK

Figures, statistics and law: a quick overview of the latest findings and state of play

- [Sameer Hinduja](#), Cyberbullying Research Center School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Florida Atlantic University [VIDEO]
- [Dave Miles](#), Family Online Safety Institute

Panel 1: The youth perspective

- Introduction by [Janice Richardson](#), INSAFE
- Teenagers cyberbullying victims from BeatBullying, UK and Protégeles, Spain

Panel 2: Industry and Law enforcement

- [Maria José Cantarino de Frías](#), Telefónica
- [Raquel Álvarez](#), Habbo
- [Maria de Sousa-Valadas](#), Tuenti
- [Lamprini Konsta](#), Cybercrime unit of Hellenic Police

Panel 3: Awareness raising and empowerment of Parents, Children and Schools

- [Philippe Seidel](#), Child Focus
- [Ana Luisa Rotta](#), Protégeles
- [Richard Piggin](#), BeatBullying
- [Urko Fernández](#), Pantallas Amigas
- [Michaël Op de Beeck](#), Gezinsbond

Open Space: An exchange of existing projects, tools, websites, training and other material, followed by a discussion

Hub 1: How can we better empower and reach parents?

- [Paul Cording](#), Vodafone, UK
- [Ana Luisa Rotta](#), Protégeles, Spain
- [Noemy Kostic](#), Action Innocence, Monaco

Hub 2: How can we better empower and reach children and youth?

- [Ioanna Avloniti](#), Smile of the Child, Greece
- [Miguel Comín](#), Alia2, Spain
- [Ewa Dziemidowicz](#), FDN, Poland

Hub 3: How can we better empower and reach teachers/schools?

- [JorgeFlores](#), Pantallas Amigas, Spain
- [Ina Brecheis](#), Klicksafe, Germany
- [Alla Kulikova](#), e-Enfance, France

ABOUT
PROGRAMME
PRESENTATIONS
PARTICIPANTS
PICTURES
VIDEOS
MEDIA COVERAGE

All the videos, presentations and pictures are available on the project's blog:

<http://deletocyberbullying.eu/euconference/>

For more information on the project, go to:

www.deletecyberbullying.eu

[@dcyberbullying](https://twitter.com/dcyberbullying)

#DeleteCyberbullying 

European Awareness Raising Campaign on Cyberbullying



About COFACE: www.coface-eu.org



This conference was funded by the Daphne III programme. This programme aims to contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence and attain a high level of health protection, well-being and social cohesion.

More: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/programmes/daphne/index_en.htm