

The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in schools

Case Studies by all Partners

The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Greece

Maria Efthimiou. KMOP

Starting in February 2017 and until June, KMOP coordinated and implemented the testing phase of the ComBuS Toolkit that was developed as part of the ComBuS programme. To ensure that the testing would reach the high quality standards that were set, various activities were carried out across three schools in Thessaloniki (the second largest city in Greece), involving school leaders, teachers, school staff, parents, and students, as well as disseminating the progress of the programme throughout the country in national newspapers and various events.

The Toolkit had a diversity in actions, serving the purposes of informing everyone involved about the different forms of bullying, the different roles a person may take in a bullying incident, how to respond to and resolve such instances, and finally how to prevent anything like that from occurring in the school environment. The actions involved specially designed blended learning modules for school leaders, teachers, and parents, experiential workshops and in-class activities for students, as well as peer-to-peer support guidelines that were distributed to them and material for thematic days that were organized in the school communities. It should be highlighted that school leaders ensured us that they will keep implementing the actions of the ComBuS Toolkit in future classes, have all teachers undergo the training in the blended learning modules, and finally form anti-bullying committees with teachers, parents and children.

The total number of people that participated in the implementation phase of the ComBuS toolkit in Greece breaks down to 978 students, 60 teachers, 8 school leaders, 150 parents and more than 40.000 people reached through the dissemination of the project. The results are very promising and the students involved directly in the project showed a genuine interest on the Toolkit and its components, clearly showing how important and necessary projects like this are.

The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Italy

Tiziana Reali, FORIUM

Starting in February 2017 and throughout until June, FORIUM coordinated the implementation and testing of the ComBuS Toolkit in local schools, more precisely in the municipalities of Pontedera and San Miniato, which are part of three big Comprehensive Institutes:

- Istituto Comprensivo Franco Sacchetti (<http://www.istitutosacchetti.it/>)
- Istituto Comprensivo M. Buonarroti (<http://www.istitutocomprensivobuonarroti.gov.it>)
- Istituto Comprensivo Curtatone e Montanara (<http://www.scuolacurtatone.it/>)

The implementation of the toolkit was carried out in several stages and in different actions. All target groups expected by the project were involved with tailored tools:

- **Students** participated in at least two informative and interactive workshops in which they were introduced to the different types of bullying, its roles, and effects as well as how and to whom report episodes of bullying. Special attention was paid to cyberbullying and pupils were trained to stay safe online. Students worked with their teachers on in-class activities and lesson plans too. The Istituto Comprensivo Curtatone e Montanara held thematic school days where students showed to their parents and stakeholders their works and sang their songs against bullying. Other 1,000 students were involved through the peer to peer guidelines and the ComBuS mobile app which teachers introduce as an effective tool to prevent and combat bullying. It is interesting that a lot of students experienced the difficulty of perceiving others' suffering, while it was easier to recognize it when they felt victim of an episode. This gave everyone the opportunity to face the difficulty of understanding the needs and feelings of others, and to question more closely the consequences of their actions.
- **Parents**, about 180, and **Teachers**, about 150, were trained through the Combus platform which made them reflect on issues such as understanding and identifying bullying and cyberbullying, responding to bullying, reporting, and resolving bullying.

Starting from simple class struggles, the uneasy signs that children can manifest both at home and at school, progressively their attention and sensitivity grew with a greater understanding of the real difficulties children and students can face on a daily basis.



It was pointed out with all these three main targets that bullying is not only related to the abusive behavior of someone (more striking and recognizable episodes) but also to the concept of vulnerability that is related to the repeated and continuous exposure of someone to injuring behaviors even if they are mild and not necessarily with the intention of hurting. This in particular was the focus of teachers' and parents' training as well as students.





The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Cyprus

Eria Makridou, CARDET

The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit was successfully completed in more than 10 schools in Cyprus. School leaders, teachers, school staff, parents, and students expressed their gratitude and satisfaction of their participation in the program.

Schools participated and used all the material of the ComBuS Toolkit including the blended learning modules for school leaders, teachers, and parents, the experiential workshops for students, the peer to peer support guidelines, the lesson plans, and the material for the thematic school days.

A great effort was made to reach as many stakeholders as possible. More than 600 students were actively engaged in the ComBuS project, whereas more than 120 teachers, 20 school leaders, 91 people from school staff, and 109 parents were informed about and participated during the implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Cyprus.

Participants and in particular teachers, school staff, and school leaders reported that the ComBuS Toolkit is a powerful tool, which offers support to them, especially since the time they have is limited. It was also indicated by stakeholders that the ComBuS project had a great impact in their schools. In addition, parents mentioned that they benefited from the project's material. Lastly, without a doubt, students enjoyed the anti-bullying activities and learned to be appreciative, supportive, and more respectful to one another. Overall, feedback was very encouraging and positive!





The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Romania

Ramona Ciuca, GIE

The project was implemented in Romania by two organizations: the University of Pitești and the Group for European Integration.

The University of Pitești, is a state university, its objectives being to provide high quality education training, and research services in order to train specialists in different fields and to create an intellectual community accredited by national and international quality agencies.

The Group for European Integration is an NGO actively contributing to the integration process of the EU, by educational, cultural, and other types of actions.

The two Romanian partners have implemented project activities in collaboration. The core of the implementation was represented by Workstream 3 – Implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit. The implementation of the toolkit was performed in three schools from three localities. 458 students, 121 parents, 95 teachers, 29 school leaders, 21 school staff were involved in this phase of ComBuS project.

All the tools and resources, the ComBuS site and App were presented to the teachers, school leaders, school staff, and parents.

103 teachers, school leaders, school staff and parents obtained Certificates of Completion of the on-line Blended Learning Modules.

A representative of the two partners conducted 21 In-class activities (an adapted “Why I Should not Be a Bully” Lesson Plan) and presented the Peer-to-Peer Guidelines, the ComBuS App and site to the 458 students.

The project was very well received, due to its integrated approach, involving both adults and students.

The students became aware of the impact of their activities on their colleagues:

- There were students that, at the end of the In-Class Activity, stood up voluntarily and declared that they were bullied before, but they did not know how harmful that was for their colleagues.

Students in some classes drew a „No Bully Zone” sign and posted it in the classroom. Students stopped playing war like games and started to think of other ways of playing during the breaks.



The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Spain

Eduardo Linares, ITC

Due to the substantial differences in terms of the educational legal framework, culture and demography in a large and multicultural country as Spain, ITC has implemented the ComBuS Toolkit in three regions of the national geography, covering all the educational levels and age ranges addressed by the Toolkit design, with the aim of obtaining relevant feedback from the perspective of diverse educational communities, in which even several official languages coexist.

Therefore, three educational centers from three Spanish regions implemented and tested the ComBuS Toolkit: the upper childhood and primary School San Sebastian in Padul from the autonomous community of Andalusia, the upper childhood and primary School Badies in Badia Gran, located in the autonomous community of Illes Balears and the secondary and upper secondary school Las Veredillas in Torrejón de Ardoz, located in the region of Madrid.

During the implementation, ITC tried to follow a logical process. In this sense, the first step consisted of providing principals, teachers, school staff and parents with the necessary skills and abilities in key fields as identifying, understanding and preventing bullying. Thus, these target groups were able to test the Specialized Online Training Modules of the Toolkit and attended face-to-face training and practical workshops provided by ITC researchers.

The second logical step was to implement the toolkit resources (Experiential Workshops for Students, Peer to Peer Support Guidelines, Combat Bullying in Class Activities, Reading against Bullying, and Materials for thematic school days/weeks) in the schools with students. The resources to be implemented were previously chosen and adapted to the needs of each training center and group in particular, dealing with topics as types and effects of bullying (also cyberbullying) on children, the roles of the different actors involved in a bullying incident and how to report, amongst others.

In terms of scope, the implementation process in Spain managed to involve 348 students, 97 teachers, 22 principals, 26 school staff, and 134 parents, figures that reveal the impact and success achieved during the eight months that the complete process lasted.



The feedback achieved has been positive and it mainly recognizes the need of a whole school program addressing a deep and trending problem of the current educational communities as Bullying is.

Also, ITC conducted practical workshops in international training events addressing teachers from other European countries such as Austria, Slovenia, Germany, Croatia, and Bulgaria.





The implementation of the ComBuS Toolkit in Ireland

Sarah Land, Meath Partnership

With the support of 3 local schools, Meath Partnership coordinated the implementation and testing of the ComBuS Toolkit across County Meath in March and April 2017. As part of our local implementation, as well as delivering the training resources and toolkit online, we also provided local school communities with the opportunity to develop and deliver a series of workshops on the topics of identifying, understanding and preventing bullying. To deliver these workshops with students, Meath Partnership worked with school principals and teachers to adapt the in-class activities, extra-curricular activities, lesson plans and peer-to-peer support guidelines, developed as part of the Toolkit, to the needs and priorities of each school community. These activities and resources were piloted in a series of thematic school days held in Gilson National School in Oldcastle, Scoil Mhuire in Moylagh and Scoil Catriona Naofa in Oristown, Kells.

These thematic school days were planned and delivered as informative, fun and interactive workshops. As part of these thematic workshops, students were introduced to the different types of bullying, the effects which bullying can have on the victim and on others, the different roles involved in bullying and how to stay safe online and to report cyberbullying. Feedback from these workshops has been very positive and encouraging, highlighting the importance of combatting bullying through the engagement of all the partners in a child's education such as teachers, parents, school support staff, principals, and importantly, the children and young people.

In total, with the support and collaboration of local school communities, resources and activities developed as part of the ComBuS Toolkit have been implemented with 539 students, 74 teachers and 107 parents across the county. In addition, Meath Partnership has secured the support of 8 schools in Meath; who have each committed to use the resources, activities and training materials developed as part of the ComBuS Toolkit to tackle the incidence of bullying in their schools. This presents a major success of the local implementation activities of Meath Partnership and highlights the importance of the Combat Bullying project locally.

