

## GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS - ARBAX - AGAINST RACIAL BULLYING AND XENOPHOBIA PROJECT

### ARBAX: Aim of Project

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**ARBAX** is a multilateral project which commenced in January 2012 and is funded by a grant from the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme, Comenius initiative, grant number 518614-LLP-1-2011-1-ES-COMENIUS-CMP.

The main aim of the project is to contribute to preventing and combating bullying in schools, focusing on racial bullying. Multi-ethnic school environments, resulting from migration and globalization, are experiencing new forms of violence directed towards students coming from different social, cultural and ethnical environments. ARBAX will help teachers, youth leaders and others involved in educational activities with young people show how students from different identities and cultures can peacefully coexist together and how ethnic stereotypes and prejudices can contribute to bullying incidents.

The project has designed a 3D video game together with teacher guidelines to be used with young people of secondary age (i.e.11/12 -17/18 years). The objective is that there will be a reduction in anti-bullying, anti-racism and anti-xenophobia among young people.

### What is Bullying

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Any form of behaviour which is repeated over time which has the effect of humiliating, ridiculing, intimidating and/or undermining the confidence of an individual or group of people due to the skin colour, nationality, ethnic grouping or by their religious and cultural practices. Like other prejudiced/identity based bullying, racial behaviour may involve both "**traditional**" or **cyber-bullying** methods.

By **traditional bullying** we mean bullying which is predominantly face-to-face. This can be verbal (e.g. name calling, threats), physical (hitting, kicking), gesturing (threatening, ridiculing looks), extortion (personal property, anti-social behaviour) or it can be indirect and psychological (spreading rumours, damage to personal property, graffiti and social exclusion).

**Cyber-bullying**, on the other hand, is an aggressive wilful act carried out by an individual or group using electronic forms of communication (texting, e-mails, social networking) to

threaten, harass, insult, embarrass and humiliate with words or images another young person or group. There are distinguishing features between traditional and cyber-bullying. In contrast to traditional bullying, cyber-bullying:

- Has the potential to reach large audiences for an infinite period of time
- The perpetrator can be anonymous
- There is no safe haven for the victim
- The aggressor does not see the victim's reaction, at least not in the first instance thus providing little opportunity for empathy or remorse
- There is less opportunity for bystander intervention

It is to be noted also that traditional bullying is defined by three main criteria:

- Intention to cause harm to the victim
- Repetition to cause harm to the victim
- Imbalance of power between the victim and the bully/bullies

However, a once off cyber-attack, e.g. a hurtful, offensive racist text message or posting on a social networking site or visual image can be regarded as bullying, because it is commonly accepted that one cyber-attack can be viewed and repeated by other people and has the capacity to stay in cyber space indefinitely.

## **The Effects of Bullying**

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The effects of racial bullying are similar to any other form of bullying. However it can have a greater impact than other forms of bullying as it is most often impossible for victims of racial bullying to change the attributes which are mocked or ridiculed, e.g. skin colour, language, ethnic origin, religious beliefs. Also racial bullying has the effect of not only undermining the victims own identity but also that of the victims whole family and culture. However, how bullying impacts on a young person will depend on the bullying behaviours (e.g. verbal, written or image), the duration, intensity, their psychological sturdiness, their attachment to parent and family, their connectedness to the school and their level of social support.

To be bullied or to bully others in a traditional or a cyber-bullying manner has been found to be associated with a wide range of psychiatric, psychosomatic and physical health problems. The most troubled are those who are both bullies and victim. To be both cyber and traditionally bullied has been found to increase the risk of depression and loneliness and also suicide.

Some of the effects of bullying, which ever form it takes, include:

- ✓ Stress
- ✓ Reduced ability to concentrate
- ✓ Lack of motivation or energy

- ✓ Poor or deteriorating school work
- ✓ Anxiety about going to school
- ✓ Physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches, vomiting
- ✓ Skipping classes and school
- ✓ Erosion of confidence and self-esteem
- ✓ Mood changes
- ✓ Anger
- ✓ Sadness, hopelessness
- ✓ Comfort eating
- ✓ Problems sleeping
- ✓ Alcohol, drug or substance abuse
- ✓ Distrustful of others
- ✓ Staying offline
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Refusal to say what is wrong
- ✓ Self-harm
- ✓ Suicidal thoughts
- ✓ Suicide

## **Actions to be taken if racial and/or other forms of bullying are witnessed or are reported**

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### ***Short-term***

Respond quickly and consistently to every incident, no matter how minor it may appear to be. It will send out a strong message that bullying is not tolerated by the school. By responding to reports of bullying, including those which are anonymous it will give young people confidence in reporting incidents. All too often young people do not report bullying because they are afraid of not being believed, of being perceived as a tell-tale and reprimanded as a result. Sometimes they fear that the punishment which the bully might receive will result in reprisals from either the bully and/or the peer group. Teachers response should involve:

- ✓ Supporting the victim, reassuring he/she is not to blame
- ✓ Apprehend the offender
- ✓ Keep a record whether proven or not
- ✓ The incident book should be scrutinized weekly to look for patterns

In disciplining the offender make use of a restorative approach such as the ***No Blame Approach*** as this will prevent resentment and revengeful behaviour on the part of the offender and his/her friends. The restorative approach will help the offender/s:

- ✓ To develop empathy
- ✓ To take responsibility

- ✓ To make good

If the restorative approach does not have the effect of stopping the racial and/or other forms of bullying then sanctions which are included in the School's Code of Conduct should be applied (e.g. suspension, expulsion etc)

In dealing with victim and offender of racial bullying, it is to be recommended as with other forms of bullying that families are contacted so that they can become a source of support for the actions taken by the school to promote a culture of diversity and respect for individual differences.

### ***The No Blame Approach***

The No Blame Approach involves 7 steps. George Robinson and Barbara Maines (2000) in *Safe to Tell* (Lucky Duck Publishing Ltd.) describe the Approach as follows:

#### **Step one - Talk with the victim**

When the facilitator finds out that bullying has happened, she starts by talking to the victim. During the conversation the listener encourages the victim to describe how he feels with reflective comments such as *"That must be very hard for you ... So you have felt really upset"*.

The purpose is not to discover factual evidence about this or other events; if the victim wants to include evidence in the account this is always reframed to establish the resulting distress. For example a comment like *"They have all been ignoring me, nobody will talk to me."* might be replied to with a response like *"So you felt really lonely and you were upset that you had nobody to talk to"*.

It is important that the victim understands and gives consent to the process. Sometimes there may be a fear that it could lead to further victimisation, but the non-punitive aspect is fully explained the victim usually feels safe and relieved that something is being done. He may want the perpetrators to understand how much distress has been caused. Talking to someone else who has been through the experience might give further reassurance.

The facilitator should end the meeting by:

- ✓ Checking that nothing confidential has been discussed which should not be disclosed to the group
- ✓ Asking the victim to suggest the names of those involved, some colluders or observers and some friends who will make up the group
- ✓ Inviting the victim to produce a piece of writing or a picture which will illustrate his unhappiness
- ✓ Offering the victim an opportunity to talk again at any time during the procedure if things are not going well.

The victim is not invited to join the group to present his own account as it is possible that he will make accusations, provoke denial or justification and undermine the problem-solving approach.

## **Step two - Convene a meeting with the people involved**

The facilitator arranges to meet with the group of students who have been involved and suggested by the victim. A group of six to eight works well.

This is an opportunity for the facilitator to use his/her judgement to balance the group so that helpful and reliable young people are included alongside those whose behaviour has been causing distress. The aim is to use the strengths of group members to bring about the best outcome.

## **Step three - Explain the problem**

The facilitator starts by telling the group that he/she has a problem: he/she is worried about "John" who is having a very hard time at the moment. She recounts the story of the victims' unhappiness and uses the piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise his distress. At no time does he/she discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.

## **Step four - Share responsibility**

When the account is finished, the listeners may look downcast or uncomfortable and be uncertain about the reason for the meeting. Some may be anxious about possible punishment. The facilitator makes a change in the mood here by stating explicitly that:

- No-one is in trouble or going to be punished
- There is a joint responsibility to help "John" to be happy and safe
- The group has been convened to help solve the problem

## **Step five - Ask the group members for their ideas**

Group members are usually genuinely moved by the account of John's distress and relieved that they are not in trouble. No-one has been pushed into a defensive corner by accusations and the power of the group has shifted from the "bully leader" to the group as a whole, whose members withdraw consent for the behaviour to continue.

Each member of the group is then encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. These ideas are stated in the "I" language of intention. "*I will walk to school with him.*" "*I will ask him to sit with me in classroom*". Ideas are owned by the group members and not imposed by the facilitator. He/she makes positive responses but he/she does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

## **Step six - Leave it up to them**

The facilitator ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. No written record is made - it is left as a matter of trust. He/she thanks them, expresses confidence in a positive outcome and arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

## **Step seven - Meet them again**

About a week later, the teacher discusses with each student, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process.

These meetings are with a group member at a time so that each can give a statement about his contribution without creating a competitive atmosphere. It does not matter if everyone has not kept his intention as long as the bullying has stopped. The victim does not have to become the most popular person in school, just to be safe and happy.

The entire process showing the seven steps is available as a training video (*Michael's story - The No Blame Approach*, Maines and Robinson, 1992). A fuller account of the development of the work is published in a book *Crying for Help*, Robinson and Maines, 1997, Lucky Duck Publishing Ltd.

## ***Long-Term Approach***

To reduce racial bullying it will be necessary to develop and implement a whole school community approach to bullying. This approach requires schools to take action on 4 key grounds:

- ✓ To build and review annually its policy and practice so that bullying is consistently and effectively addressed
- ✓ To build understanding and skills
- ✓ To build a positive and supportive school culture
- ✓ To build on collaborative partnerships between staff (teaching and non-teaching) students, families, the wider community and external agencies and professional bodies.

**Most important is that all members of the school community, especially the young people are invited to contribute to the policy development process and that all take responsibility and work collaboratively to prevent and intervene in incidents of all forms of bullying, traditional and cyber.**

For more information on developing and implementing a whole school community approach see

- Chapters 6 & 7 in *Understanding School Bullying: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* (Mona O'Moore, 2010; Veritas Publishing).
- *Guidelines for preventing cyber-bullying in the school environment: a review and recommendations.* (<http://sites.google.com/site/costis0801>)
- Page 17-23 in *Safe to Learn*, U.K. Department for Children, Schools and Families (<http://www.abatoolsforschools.org.uk>)

## Using the 3D video game in the classroom

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The 3D video game comprises 6 elements developed to portray the phenomenon of bullying. The elements are taught with the help of an educational video and an interactive game, allowing the users to interact in the scenarios, The users can choose the role to play and the path to take followed. The scenarios show an average European school with fictional characters, representing different ethnic, social and cultural groups. The units are designed to be shown to students with teacher/facilitator guidance, allowing students to discuss and reflect on bullying and its consequences.

Each scenario follows the same pattern: bullying occurring in the school environment. The user has two roles to choose from: victim and bystander. Whichever option the user takes, he/she has to decide how to respond to the bullying. There are three decisions for each option. Each decision has three different sub-decisions or ways to deal with the situation. The 3D game will show what the consequences of each decision are. During the game, bubbles with reflection questions/thoughts will appear in order to facilitate a deeper insight into the consequences of bullying.

Using the video-game demands the teachers/facilitators to have a high level of sensitivity and a keen awareness of the complexity of the subject matter. In the following paragraphs we suggest actions and questions to be asked in each scenario that will encourage students to discuss the different stories and actions of the characters. Older students can be encouraged to explore varying aspects of human behavior such as fear, conflict, resolution and difficult decision making.

Given the sensitivity of the subject it's a good idea to plan carefully before using the 3D game. Teacher/facilitators should ensure they have played the relevant scenario several times before presenting it to a class. It is also important to pay attention to timing, teachers/facilitators must ensure that there is adequate time for structured discussion of the material. Each scenario requires a period of two hours to play the two roles and to discuss the options and consequences of decisions.. If it's necessary to split the scenario into two different lessons/hours it is very important that the decisions of each chosen role must be played and discussed during the same lesson (in order to have a continuous and coherent approach).

Suggestions on how to use the material:

1. Prepare the lesson in advance, reflecting on what you would like to achieve, for the particular class group you are working with. Choose the scenario/unit to play according to the objectives that you decide for the lesson;
2. Make sure that the atmosphere of the classroom is appropriate for discussing this subject (you might start with 3-5 minutes of classical music or other methods for creating a calm environment). Use a reflective tone, move students from passive to active learning, indicate to students that their ideas and opinions matter;



3. Briefly introduce the bullying subject to the class; allow students to ask questions, if they have, but it is recommended to avoid providing answers that they could find themselves by using the 3D game;
4. Start the game and stop it after the bullying has occurred; ask the class to choose a role and discuss the reasons/feelings of the choice;
5. Choose the role that the majority decided, but assure the "minority" that the role they chose will be played after it. In some cases the teacher/facilitator may decide to choose the role, in this instance assurances can be provided to the class that you will play the other role also.
6. Start the game and ask the class to decide the actions based on the given options; allow them to explain their decision;
7. Teachers/facilitators should be sensitive to the possibility that strong opinions and emotions around race issues could be triggered by the game leading to conflict between students if not handled appropriately. Therefore discussions need to be carefully managed with rules around respect and confidentiality to ensure safety.
8. Use key questions in order to allow students to express their feelings and to deeply understand the nature of bullying
9. Guide students through each option which the characters have, in order that they may experience all the possible responses to bullying, stressing the outcome of each decision taken
10. Close the lesson by encouraging students to further reflect on what they have learned.

Essentially, the actions will show that:

- ✓ racial bullying takes many forms (e.g. physical, verbal, exclusion, gestures, extortion and cyber);
- ✓ young people who are bullied do not always conform to stereotypes
- ✓ young people can play the dual-role of bully and victim i.e. they bully but are also bullied by others (bully-victims);
- ✓ victims are reluctant to tell, especially if cyber-bullied; peers in this instance tend to be passive bystanders;
- ✓ there is a responsibility on all to intervene when witness to bullying.

Using the multimedia tool the students will:

- ✓ experience what it means to be responsible;
- ✓ understand that silence and indifference to the suffering of others can perpetuate the problem;
- ✓ be inspired to use critical thought in order to improve their personal growth;
- ✓ develop an awareness of the value of pluralism and diversity in a multicultural society.

***Traditional Scenario:***

1. Have you ever been pushed around in or around school?
2. Have you ever seen someone being pushed around because of the colour of their skin or ethnicity?



3. Did you ever get involved to try and stop it? If you didn't how do you feel about that now?
4. Why do you think someone would pick on someone of a different ethnicity?
5. If you were a friend of somebody who used racial slurs to pick on someone, would you be more or less inclined to speak up? If yes (more) why do you think it's worse than regular bullying?
6. If you disagreed with a friend's use of racial or ethnic slurs, how would you approach them?
7. Putting yourself into Prisha's shoes, how would you react if someone picked on you using your race, ethnicity, nationality against you?
8. If you are Prisha or Sarah would you look to someone in school (aside from your friends) for advice or support? If not, why?
9. If Prisha was very annoying, would you support Tara's actions?
10. Do you think Prisha and Sarah could learn to be friends? If so, how?

***Verbal bullying scenario:***

1. Is it important to differentiate between joking around and bullying?
2. If you do not react to a classmate being bullied, does that mean that you approve of what is happening? Do you consider the behaviour of bystander as important in the development of bullying?
3. If you are insulted, do you think it is right to react in a violent manner?
4. Why do you think the bully is with a group of students when he/she insults and picks on their victim?
5. Have you ever felt alone when you have been picked on? How did you deal with the situation?
6. Whose conduct or behaviour can be corrected and what should be addressed: the actions of the bystanders or those of the bully?
7. Have you ever helped a classmate who was the victim of abuse? Did you ever not help because you were afraid of retaliation?
8. Do you think that continually insulting someone is a form of bullying?
9. In a situation of bullying, would you go to a teacher or the headmaster for assistance? How do you think this person should deal with the situation?
10. What can you do to feel more self-confident?

***Every day racism and humour scenario:***

1. Can jokes and this kind of behavior be hurtful to someone even when they are not meant as an attack?
2. What other issues besides ethnicity might come up in jokes?
3. Does everyone have the ability to stop bullying? Who can prevent bullying in schools?
4. Why do you think some students are bullied? Why are they targeted?
5. Can someone hurt another person unintentionally?
6. How does one know when a joke is hurtful or racist?

7. What could be done in schools to prevent this kind of bullying? How can schools create a safe environment for everyone?
8. What kind of a role do media play in creating stereotypes?
9. Do you think media shares any responsibility for school bullying?
10. Do social media and different forums on the internet affect school life?

***Physical bullying scenario:***

1. Do you think that violence is a way to solve the conflicts between people?
2. Have you had a newcomer in your class? How did you treat him/her?
3. What kind of barriers does a student face when he/she arrives at a new school?
4. If you were a newcomer, what attitudes would you assume in order to fit in with your new peers?
5. How do you think the victim feels? How do you think the bullies feel?
6. What does self-esteem mean to you?
7. How do you think she? The Victim? should respond to the bully?
8. Have you ever reacted violently to someone Why?
9. Why do you think people are tempted to react violently in tense situations ?
10. Do you see any relationship between attitudes and values in the home and those in school? between the education received at home and student's attitude in school? Please explain.

***Extortion Scenario:***

1. Have you ever been threatened to make you do something you don't want to do by your peers in or around school?
2. Have you ever pressurised (teased, insulted) someone to do something they didn't want to do and then continued to do so until they did it?
3. Do you see a difference between being pressurised by your peers and being threatened by them?
4. If you were in Paul's shoes, would you do as Thomas wanted? Do you think if you did what he wanted, would the bullying stop or would it get worse?
5. Why do you think Michael supports Thomas?
6. Why do you think Thomas is angry with Paul?
7. If you were Paul, what would you do? Would you talk to your friends, parents and teachers?
8. Would you fight back physically? What might happen if you did?
9. If you told this to someone in authority, do you think they would believe you?
10. If you were Paul would you talk to Michael alone? Do you think this might help?

***Cyber-bullying Scenario:***

1. How many of you have a social media account?
2. Have you ever either experienced or taken part in trolling (post negative messages about someone) online?

*A discussion with students about trolling with racist content could be useful here. Full Definition of trolling: In Internet slang, a **troll** (*/ˈtroʊl/*, */ˈtrɒl/*) is a person who sows discord on the Internet by starting arguments or upsetting people, by posting inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community (such as a forum, chat room, or blog), either accidentally or with the deliberate intent of provoking readers into an emotional response—or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion.*

3. Have you ever been bullied or picked on by an individual or a number of people online?
4. Have you ever witnessed online bullying?
5. If you were a witness to bullying of someone like Petra, would you help?
6. If you were to do nothing, why?
7. How would you feel if you found yourself in a situation like Petra, and received no help from your friends?
8. If you were the witness (Peter) how would you approach this or what would you say to defend or diffuse this particular situation?
9. If you were Petra, how would you respond to the bullies and to your friends who do nothing to help?
10. What do you think the benefits and repercussions could be to speaking up (for witness and for victim)?

## Recommended Readings and Resources:

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To stimulate discussion on all forms of bullying and especially how bystanders can become more responsible see Silent Witnesses: A DVD which can be gained from the Anti-Bullying Centre, [www.abc.tcd.ie](http://www.abc.tcd.ie) or [www.abc.dcu.ie](http://www.abc.dcu.ie)