Cyberbullying

A proactive action

Editors
Luís Coutinho
José Alberto Lencastre

Erasmus+

cbPROact PROJECT

Cyberbullying: a proactive action

KA220-SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education

2024-1-PT01-KA220-SCH-000252617

Editors

Luís Coutinho

José Alberto Lencastre

Authors

Luís Coutinho – Portugal

José Alberto Lencastre – Portugal

Marco Bento – Portugal

Georgios Nastos – Greece

Hülya Çam – Türkiye

Jolanta Šiurnienė – Lithuania

Kristina Jačunskienė – Lithuania

Published by Research Centre on Education

Institute of Education, University of Minho

Braga, Portugal.

First Published: 2025 in eBook format, 107pp.

ISBN: 978-989-8525-86-4

The cbPROact project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The content of this publication reflects the views only of the authors and editors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Index

Editors' Introduction

The cbPROact Project

The cbPROact Project, developed under the framework of the Erasmus+ KA220 initiative, represents a collaborative approach to tackling the pressing issue of cyberbullying in schools. Erasmus+ KA220 projects are strategic partnerships that aim to foster innovation, collaboration, and the exchange of best practices across Europe in the fields of education, training, youth, and sports. Within this context, cbPROact leverages a transnational partnership to address the growing impact of cyberbullying on students' well-being, equipping schools, educators, and students with the tools and knowledge to combat this pervasive issue effectively.

The cbPROact initiative brings together a consortium of European partners, each contributing their unique expertise to create a comprehensive and scalable solution. The partnership includes schools and organizations specializing in teacher training, educational technology, and student engagement. This interdisciplinary collaboration ensures that the project's outputs are grounded in evidence-based practices and reflect diverse perspectives, making them adaptable across different educational contexts in Europe.

The **cbPROact Project** is built upon the collaboration of five partners from different European countries. Each organization contributes its unique strengths, expertise, and vision, ensuring that the project meets its ambitious goals. Below is an overview of the consortium members and their respective roles:

The consortium reflects the diverse educational and cultural landscapes of Europe. By leveraging the strengths of its members, cbPROact is positioned to deliver innovative solutions to combat cyberbullying, foster inclusion, and promote digital citizenship. Together, these partners form a robust foundation for the project's success, ensuring its impact extends across the European educational community.

The project focuses on achieving a dual goal: empowering educators to identify and respond to cyberbullying and fostering student-led initiatives to promote responsible digital behaviour. By aligning with the priorities of Erasmus+, including inclusion, digital transformation, and the promotion of common European values, cbPROact seeks to create a safer, more inclusive educational environment where diversity is celebrated, and all individuals feel respected.

The cbPROact Project is guided by clear and impactful objectives aimed at addressing cyberbullying through education and innovation:

1. **Enhance Teacher Training and Preparedness**: Develop targeted training programs to equip educators with the skills and strategies needed to identify, prevent, and respond to cyberbullying incidents effectively.

2. **Foster Student Engagement in Combating Cyberbullying**: Encourage proactive participation from students in promoting digital citizenship and recognizing harmful online behaviours.

3. **Promote Inclusion and Diversity**: Create tools and materials that support the development of inclusive school environments where differences are respected, and marginalized groups are protected from cyberbullying.

4. **Leverage Technology for Education**: Use gamification and innovative educational technologies to raise awareness and provide practical solutions for students and teachers alike.

These objectives are designed to address the root causes of cyberbullying while empowering the entire educational community to work collaboratively towards a solution.

To achieve its ambitious goals, cbPROact has been structured into a series of well-defined work packages (WPs), each addressing a critical component of the project's implementation.

The key WPs and their expected outputs include:

1. **Development of the cbPROact Handbook**

   This work package focuses on creating a comprehensive manual for teachers, providing clear guidelines on recognizing, preventing, and intervening in cyberbullying cases. The handbook will serve as a practical resource for educators and be tailored for use in diverse European educational contexts.

2. **Creation of the cbPROact Training Kit**

   Designed to enhance teachers' competencies, the training kit will offer modular training

materials that can be adapted and replicated across schools in Europe. This kit will focus on practical skills, scenarios, and evidence-based strategies to empower educators in addressing cyberbullying.

3. **Development of the cbPROact App**

   Leveraging gamification techniques, this mobile application will engage students through interactive educational games. The app will aim to increase awareness of cyberbullying, teach students to identify harmful behaviours, and promote responsible online interactions.

4. **Dissemination and Sustainability**

   Ensuring the long-term impact of cbPROact, this work package focuses on disseminating the project's results through conferences, workshops, and digital platforms. By engaging policymakers, educators, and the broader community, cbPROact aims to raise awareness of its findings and encourage adoption across Europe.

The cbPROact Project is a testament to the power of collaboration in addressing complex societal challenges. The consortium includes partners from various European countries, each selected for their expertise in education, digital innovation, and inclusion. Schools play a central role in piloting the project's outputs, ensuring they are practical and effective in real-world settings. Universities and research institutions contribute their academic rigor, providing evidence-based insights into cyberbullying and educational practices. Non-governmental organizations specializing in digital safety and child protection add critical expertise in developing tools that are both innovative and impactful.

This partnership enables cbPROact to transcend national boundaries, offering solutions that reflect Europe's diverse educational landscapes while adhering to shared values of respect, empathy, and tolerance.

The impact of cbPROact is envisioned on multiple levels:

- **For Teachers**: Enhanced confidence and preparedness to address cyberbullying, fostering a safer and more supportive school environment.
- **For Students**: Improved awareness of digital citizenship, reduced incidence of cyberbullying, and strengthened social skills and self-esteem.
- **For Schools**: A more inclusive and respectful culture that prioritizes the well-being of all community members.

To ensure these impacts are realized and sustained, cbPROact has developed a robust dissemination strategy. Key activities include:

- Publishing the handbook and training kit in multiple languages to ensure accessibility across Europe.
- Hosting workshops and webinars for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to share best practices and project outcomes.
- Promoting the mobile app through targeted campaigns aimed at engaging students and encouraging widespread adoption.
- Leveraging digital platforms and social media to amplify the project's reach and foster dialogue around cyberbullying prevention.

The cbPROact Project exemplifies the transformative potential of Erasmus+ KA220 initiatives in addressing contemporary challenges in education. By combining innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based practices, cbPROact provides a model for how European partnerships can create meaningful, lasting change. Through its commitment to inclusion, diversity, and the promotion of common values, the project not only combats cyberbullying but also fosters a generation of students and educators who are equipped to navigate the complexities of the digital age with empathy and resilience

1. Understanding Cyberbullying

Currently, the theme of cyberbullying has been occupying a prominent place in modern societies. According to Stevenson (2020), the huge increase in the use of technology, both professionally and socially, will have a set of effects and consequences on children and adolescents, with an exponential growth in cases of cyberbullying. Based on this assumption, to avoid the negative consequences of cyberbullying and the impact of the misuse of technology, **a holistic approach to the problem becomes imperative**, adapting pedagogical values to the development of social and human skills. Therefore, it is essential that there is effective cooperation between the different disciplines and knowledge, so that **the appropriate pedagogy is combined with technology to overcome this problem.**

Schools are the first line of action in the prevention of cyberbullying, since it is in this space that students interact socially and establish bonds with peers and adults. In many cases, teachers will be the only adults in whom the child or adolescent trusts and it is essential that there is an adequate response from all professionals in the school space. In this sense, the teacher must be prepared to deal quickly and effectively (Wachs et al., 2019), promoting positive social interactions in their students, helping them to distinguish appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, promoting attitudes of respect and assertiveness for the other.

Students who develop social skills and who have a positive outlook on themselves and others (Fredkove et al. 2019), who feel strong, empowered, successful in the

school and socially accepted, they are better prepared not to participate in cyberbullying (Aliyev & Gengec, 2019).

Teenagers are at a stage in their development where they need to feel integrated and find similarities and commonalities with other peers. Students must understand and learn to respect differences and this behaviour must be encouraged by teachers and the school. When students respect and value difference and diversity of perspectives and attitudes, they establish paths to better relate to others and to themselves. Once again, it is up to the school and teachers, in conjunction with parents/guardians, to promote the acquisition of skills to value difference and respect for others, because students who develop these skills are less likely to practice cyberbullying.

School boards play a leading role in supporting teachers and non-teachers, clearly conveying the guidelines that all stakeholders in the educational community should follow in cyberbullying situations.

If educational agents do not feel safe in intervening in cyberbullying situations, there will be a tendency to ignore or not act in situations that would otherwise have direct and immediate action. If students do not perceive support from adults of reference in the school space, they may feel helpless, avoiding the sharing of abusive behaviours directed at them and living in a solitary way the behavioural and emotional reactions that come from it.

According to Wachs et al., (2019), it is up to school principals to provide their professionals with specific and appropriate training to deal with this problem, as in many school contexts due to cyberbullying has not been given due attention given its complexity. It is impractical to control all the activities and interactions that children and adolescents have with each other. When we talk about the digital context, the problem takes on an even greater dimension. In this sense, **the**

focus of school intervention should be on prevention, and children and young people should be aware of the effects that bullying has on others and on themselves.

Several authors (Stewart and Fritsch (2011); Welker (2014)) argue that cyberbullying has disruptive effects on students and their educational process, leading to academic results below their potential, as it affects them in the various aspects of their development.

It is considered urgent the need to clarify the concept of cyberbullying and its consequences in all stakeholders, in order to design a strategic plan in order to develop uniform, clear and coherent action practices, focusing on prevention.

According to Notar et al. (2013), schools need to take the following steps in formulating their cyberbullying prevention program:

- Define the concept of cyberbullying;
- Have well-defined policies;
- Train staff, students and parents in politics and be able to identify cyberbullying when they see it;
- Employ Internet filtering technology to ensure law enforcement

Cyberbullying concept

The existing bibliography on the subject of cyberbullying points to the existence of five fundamental criteria for its characterization, as shown in Chart 1. The term cyberbullying was defined in 2005 by Bill Belsey, who combines the traditional concept of bullying with the term cyber because it implies the use of technologies to intentionally carry out repeated and hostile behaviours against an individual or group of individuals, with the intention of causing harm (Kowalski et al. (2019); Belsey (2006). For Jaishankar (2008) cyberbullying is the abuse/harassment, provoking or insulting the victim's physiognomy, or their intellect, or family background, way of dressing, or mother tongue, place of origin, race, or social class, through modern telecommunications networks such as mobile phones (SMS/MMS) and Internet (chat rooms, emails and groups).

Cyberbullying is an intentional and repeated act of sending aggressive or harmful messages online to a victim with the intent to harass, ridicule, or mistreat the target (Callaghan et al., 2015; Fousiani et al. 2016; Mehari & Farrell, 2018; Patchin 2016; Purdy & McGuckin 2015; Waasdorp and Bradshaw, 2015; Zaborskis, et. al, 2018). This happens whenever one of the actors perceives the existence of an inequality of power, and there is always one element that dominates and another that is dominated. Cyberbullying has similarities with traditional bullying, added to by the use of information technologies, providing cyber-aggressors with some level of anonymity aimed at a large audience (spectators), making them bolder and more malicious (Patchin, 2016; Tanrikulu, 2018; Waller et al., 2018) compared to traditional aggressors (Mehari & Farrell, 2018; Waller et al., 2018).

According to UNICEF, cyberbullying happens on social media, messaging systems, gaming platforms and mobile phones, among other places. It is repeated behaviour, intended to frighten, annoy, or embarrass those who are targeted. For example, spreading lies, posting embarrassing photos on social media, sending hurtful messages or threats through platforms, and impersonating someone by sending digital messages on their behalf.

Cyberbullying is a very serious issue as it affects all stakeholders, including the victim, the perpetrator, witnesses and their families.

Criteria for the definition of cyberbullying

Intentionality: The bully must have the intention of harming another person to define this behaviour as cyberbullying.

Repetition: In the virtual context, a single aggressive act can lead to an endless number of repetitions even without the proactive contribution of the aggressor, which raises the question of whether repetition can be less reliable as a criterion for cyberbullying.

Power imbalance: Someone who holds any form of power targets a person with less power. The imbalance of power causes a sense of powerlessness for the victim and also makes it difficult to defend oneself.

Anonymity: The possible anonymity of the aggressor is a unique characteristic of cyberbullying and can intensify negative feelings in the victim, such as powerlessness.

Public versus private: Young people consider the attack more serious when there is a large audience.

The effects of cyberbullying

When bullying happens online, it can seem to the victim that they are being attacked everywhere, even inside their own home, leaving them feeling that there is no escape. The effects of cyberbullying include mental health problems, namely increased stress and anxiety, depression, violent acting, low self-esteem, and a sense of general dissatisfaction with life (Vab Geel, et al. 2014; Mehari & Farrell, 2018; Zaborskis et al., 2018).

Cyberbullying can result in lasting emotional effects, even after it ends, and can lead to overwhelming feelings of exposure and distress, stress and anxiety, and even physical problems and behavioural changes in the individual.

Another side effect is the possibility of estrangement from peers for fear of being targeted by the aggressor, if they continue to maintain a close relationship with the victim. Consequently, they tend to feel isolated and ostracized, with no one to turn to at school or at home. The emotions experienced by the victim can also include anger, leading to feelings of revenge, in an attempt to regain a sense of empowerment.

Bullying is a risk factor for suicide in adolescence. As an example of this relationship, we refer to a recently published study (Koyanagi et al., 2018) that indicates that adolescents between 12 and 15 years old who suffer bullying at school have up to three times greater risk of attempting suicide. The positive correlation between bullying and self-injurious behaviours, of which suicide attempts are part, is enhanced when the victim has other problems.

The Severity of cyberbullying

Bullying is not a recent problem, exclusive to our days, manifesting itself long before the mass use of virtual environments. With the growing use of online platforms, this phenomenon has

taken on specific contours. Today's adults have not experienced this form of violence, hence some devalue cyberbullying when compared to bullying, since it can be considered that deactivating the platforms or blocking the aggressors would be the easy solution to prevent the continuation of the aggression. However, it is not that simple as the effects of cyberbullying behaviour can actually be much worse. There are several factors that can enhance the harmful effects of cyberbullying, especially related to continuous access to digital communication platforms.

For Caetano et al. (2017) the new generations that are continuously connected to cyberspace, in which everything happens very fast, almost instantaneously, the aggressors justify their behaviours as play, fun, escape from boredom, pleasure for pleasure's sake, which will imply serious consequences at many levels and, particularly, in the communicational, moral and ethical development of both the victim and the aggressor.

According to Seixas et al. (2016), communication mediated by a screen has its own characteristics that serve as enhancers and aggravators in the case of cyberbullying because the interlocutors feel that there is a minimization of authority, leading to a sense of impunity for the aggressor, who is not supervised and feels invisible, tending to exceed all limits (Araújo and Caldeira, 2018). This communicational context allows for a growing disinhibition, more relaxed and with less formality, enabling anonymity and the illusion of invisibility. At the same time, the abuser may not have access to the victim's reactions, which may cause them even less empathy or remorse towards them.

The authors (Seixas et al., 2016) draw attention to the replicability of digital content because it can be searched and used freely and repeatedly. The fact that they are online content means that

aggression can happen at any time and in any place, as both aggressors and victims are permanently connected to their mobile devices (Araújo and Caldeira, 2018).

Seixas et al. (2016) also argue that the relationship of inequality of power inherent to bullying can gain another perspective in the case of cyberbullying, as it is no longer about the aggressor being the strongest physically, but the one with the greatest technological expertise.

It is also mentioned that face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying can coexist, however cyberbullying leaves a digital footprint – a record that can prove useful and provide evidence for reporting and ascertaining consequences.

Specificities of the cyber-aggressor and the cyber-victim

Cyber- Aggressor

Feeling of impunity and invisibility, feeling that you can pass all barriers and limits without having to deal with the consequences of your actions.

Face-to-face distancing, being just something you watch through a screen, leading you to feel less remorse and empathy for the victim's suffering.

The immediacy of the virtual world, with an incessant search for new pleasures and new amusements that occur at an increasing speed, leads the aggressor to see his acts only as a moment of fun, without any reflection on the consequences.

Cyber-victim

The replicability of content in the virtual context means that aggression can be experienced countless times and escalate to those who watch the humiliation.

It is not limited to a space and time, unlike bullying that occurs in a certain space. Cyberbullying has no places or times because, with mobile devices and the internet, the pressure on the victim can be permanent.

Types of cyberbullying

There are different types of cyberbullying:

- Flaming: online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language;
- Harassment: repeatedly sending unpleasant, mean and insulting messages;
- Denigrating/"Dissing": sending or publishing false information or rumours about a person to damage their reputation or friendships;
- Impersonation: pretending to be another person and sending or publishing material to get them in trouble or damage their reputation or friendships;
- Outing: when the abuser shares private messages, photos or other information about the victim on the internet. This is done without the victim's knowledge or consent and is intended to embarrass them, shame them, or humiliate them;
- Trickery: convincing someone to reveal secrets, embarrassing information, or images online;
- Exclusion: intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group, blocking an individual from friend lists, and forcibly removing someone from an online group;
- Cyberstalking: repeatedly and intensely harassing and denigrating, including threatening or creating fear;
- Masquerading: occurs when the aggressor assumes another identity to anonymously harass the victim. You can impersonate someone else, use someone else's account or

phone number, or create a false identity. This occurs as an attempt to amuse or humiliate the victim;

- Fraping: access to someone's profile on social networks and publication of inappropriate content on their behalf. While many people consider this a joke, fraping can damage someone's reputation by creating problems with the family, shaming them and/or harming them;

- Trolling: intentionally upsetting others by posting defamatory comments. These aggressors tend to be more distant from their victims and do not have a personal relationship with them;

- Sexting: Capture, dissemination, transfer or sharing of obscene, pornographic or nude images, in photos or videos.

On the subject of sexting, an image submitted on a social networking site will be accessible indefinitely. The same happens when images are transmitted to a partner. When relationships end, many young people may use these sexts (sexual messages, images and videos) for revenge. These sexually graphic photographs and messages can be sent to colleagues or published on the internet, making it essential that the new generations understand that these images and information will remain forever on the internet.

Key Actors - Profiles of the cyber-aggressor, the cyber-victim and the cyber-observer

The main characteristics of those involved in cyberbullying are presented: victim, aggressor and observer.

Cyber- victim: the one who suffers attacks from an aggressor or groups of aggressors, being the target of negative messages. Victims of virtual violence often feel strong shame and humiliation, despair, negative thoughts about themselves and the world.

Cyber-aggressor: one who practices single or multiple acts of violence directed at another, through stalking, intimidation, harassment, ridiculing and using the Internet and electronic tools such as: SMS, email, websites, internet discussion forums, social networks and others. These behaviours affect the victim's self-esteem, generate suffering and violate their dignity.

Cyber- observer: one who does not cyberbully, but who contacts it, through observation and reception of messages, among others. The observer may take different attitudes towards cyberbullying. It can react against the aggressor by protecting the victim or joining him, either by actively participating in the violence, or with passive actions, for example, by sending/opening a message and not acting accordingly.

Observers are often reported as indifferent, for fear of revenge (Macháčková et al 2013); showing a low sense of responsibility or civic concerns (Runions & Bak, 2015) and revealing low empathy (Van Cleemput et al, 2014).

According to Horne & Orpinas (2006), cited by Gouveia (2011), two groups of observers are identified: those who are part of the problem and those who are part of the solution. The former reinforces the acts of aggression, providing an audience to the aggressor. The latter try to help

solve or mitigate the problem by defending the victims and helping them, for example, by calling an adult, comforting the victim or talking to the aggressor in order to dissuade him.

Signs of cyberbullying

It can be complex to identify the existence of cyberbullying, since the act itself may not be easily visible due to the technology involved and if the victim does not present the offensive content received. There are, however, some behavioural signs that we should be aware of, namely if the child or young person:

- Appearing upset or sad after being online;
- Appearing to be isolating yourself from friends or family;
- Be reserved about the use of telephone or internet;
- Feeling uncomfortable going to school or avoiding social situations;
- Have difficulty sleeping at night;
- Losing interest in your favourite hobbies;
- Making comments about self-injurious behaviour or suicide attempts.

In the case of the cyber-aggressor, we can identify warning signs such as:

- Hide the screen or device when someone is nearby;
- Use the devices at any time of the night and be unusually disturbed if you can't;
- Avoid talking about what you are doing online;
- Appear to be using multiple online accounts or an account that is not yours;
- Have increased behavioural problems at school or elsewhere;

- Appearing overly concerned about popularity or social issues;
- Showing increasing insensitivity or indifference to other adolescents;
- Starting to date the "wrong" friends and showing violent tendencies;
- Appearing overly conceited about your technological skills and competencies;
- Being increasingly isolated from family;
- Appearing to be rejected or isolated by some groups of friends/peers/colleagues;
- Have degrading attitudes towards victims.

2. Cyberbullying in Europe:

2.1. European context

Cyberbullying, understood as the use of digital technologies to carry out intentional and repeated behaviours that cause psychological harm to others, has become a priority concern in the European Union (EU). This phenomenon negatively affects the well-being of young people and adults, requiring a coordinated approach that articulates robust legislation and effective educational measures (Tokunaga, 2010; Kowalski et al., 2014).

Studies conducted in several European countries indicate an alarming prevalence of cyberbullying among young people. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2020), around 22% of European teenagers report being victims of cyberbullying. In addition, data from the EU Kids Online report (Smahel et al., 2020) show that 12% of children and young people between the ages of 9 and 16 have been exposed to cyberbullying in the previous 12 months. These rates vary significantly between countries, with a higher incidence recorded in countries such as Estonia and Romania, while countries such as Germany have comparatively lower numbers, reflecting cultural and structural differences (Livingstone et al., 2021).

The consequences of cyberbullying are profound, affecting the mental and emotional health of victims. Studies indicate that young people exposed to this type of violence have an increased risk of developing anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation (Modecki et al., 2014). In addition, the impact of cyberbullying tends to be more prolonged compared to traditional bullying, due to the permanence of online content and its global accessibility (Kowalski et al., 2018).

In the European Union, the fight against cyberbullying has been addressed through legislative instruments and policies related to data protection, online safety and children's rights. Although

cyberbullying is not explicitly criminalised in many Member States, several legal provisions deal indirectly with this phenomenon.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) is one of the legislative pillars in the fight against cyberbullying. This regulation, applicable since 2018, protects the personal data of European citizens, including minors, by imposing specific obligations on digital platforms to ensure the privacy and security of users (Van der Hof, 2018). For example, the GDPR reinforces the right to "digital oblivion" by allowing victims to request the removal of harmful content posted online.

In addition to the GDPR, Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual exploitation of children includes provisions to protect minors from abuse in the digital environment. Although it does not directly address cyberbullying, this directive complements the protection of vulnerable children against forms of online violence (European Commission, 2020).

The EU Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK), launched in 2012 and updated in 2022, sets out a more comprehensive approach to tackling cyberbullying. This strategy focuses on promoting digital skills, supporting victims and creating safe online content, while also requiring greater responsibility from digital platforms in detecting and removing abusive behaviour (Livingstone et al., 2021).

One of the main difficulties faced by the EU is the harmonisation of legal responses to cyberbullying. While Member States are encouraged to adapt their national laws, cultural, legal and political differences make it difficult to create a uniform framework. The work of the Council of Europe, through the Convention on Cybercrime (2001), has served as a reference for many

countries in criminalizing behaviours associated with cyberbullying, such as threats and online defamation (Council of Europe, 2021).

Schools play a crucial role in preventing cyberbullying, with digital education being a growing priority in the European context.

Educational programs in Europe have sought to empower children and young people with digital skills that allow them to navigate safely and responsibly in the online environment. One example is the European Commission's Digital Education Action Plan" project, which encourages Member States to integrate digital skills into school curricula, including raising awareness of the risks of cyberbullying (European Commission, 2020).

Studies suggest that empathy-based school interventions, such as the KiVa program developed in Finland, have been shown to be effective in reducing bullying and cyberbullying (Salmivalli et al., 2013). This programme, already implemented in several European countries, focuses on changing group norms and involving observers as agents of change.

Teacher training is another essential element in the fight against cyberbullying. Livingstone et al. (2021) highlight that many educators still feel unprepared to deal with this phenomenon, underlining the need for specific training. On the other hand, parental involvement in educational initiatives has been shown to be effective in preventing and managing cyberbullying, as demonstrated by studies conducted in countries such as Germany and Sweden (Kowalski et al., 2018).

Projects such as EU Kids Online and ENABLE (European Network Against Bullying in Learning and Leisure Environments) have contributed significantly to the research and development of good educational practices. ENABLE, for example, provides resources to empower young people and

educators in the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying by promoting social-emotional well-being (Smahel et al., 2020).

Tackling cyberbullying in the EU faces a number of challenges, including the rapid evolution of digital technologies, the difficulty in harmonising legislation, and insufficient resources to implement large-scale education programmes. In addition, the accountability of digital platforms remains a controversial topic, especially with regard to the balance between freedom of expression and the protection of victims (Van der Hof, 2018).

For the future, it is essential that the EU continues to invest in evidence-based research and policy development. Collaboration between governments, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and the private sector will be crucial to create a safe and inclusive digital environment for all European citizens.

2.2. National Context: Portugal

Cyberbullying, defined as the use of information and communication technologies to practice acts of bullying, has gained relevance in Portuguese society, especially among young people. This phenomenon, which includes insults, threats, defamation and social exclusion through digital platforms, represents a significant challenge for legislation and the education system in Portugal. This paper analyses the evolution of Portuguese legislation and educational policies in the fight against cyberbullying, based on data, values and academic publications. In Portugal, cyberbullying is not typified as an autonomous crime in the Penal Code. However, the conducts associated with cyberbullying can be framed in several legal types, such as injury, defamation, threat and offense to physical or psychological integrity. Article 180 of the Penal Code, which

criminalises crimes of domestic violence, has been extended to include situations of psychological violence, which may cover some cases of cyberbullying (Portugal, 2015). Law No 83/2015, which amended the Criminal Code, introduced stricter measures for crimes committed through digital means. This law strengthened the protection of victims of cybercrime, including cyberbullying, by criminalising conduct such as stalking and harassment through electronic means (Assembleia da República, 2015). Law No. 58/2019, which transposed the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) into the Portuguese legal system, also plays a crucial role in combating cyberbullying. This law establishes strict standards for the protection of personal data, including the prohibition of non-consensual sharing of private information, a common practice in cases of cyberbullying (National Data Protection Commission, 2019). The Portuguese education system has implemented several strategies to prevent and combat cyberbullying. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Education (DGE), has developed the "SeguraNet" program, which promotes the safe and responsible use of the internet in schools. This programme includes educational resources, training for teachers and awareness-raising actions for pupils and parents (Directorate-General for Education, 2021). In addition, the "Citizenship Education Framework" includes the theme of digital security, addressing issues such as cyberbullying, online privacy and digital literacy. This framework is implemented in Portuguese schools as part of the curriculum, aiming to provide students with skills to navigate safely in the digital world (Ministry of Education, 2017). According to a study conducted by the University of Minho in 2020, about 15% of Portuguese students between the ages of 12 and 18 reported having been victims of cyberbullying at least once in the last year (Pereira et al., 2020). The same study revealed that the most used platforms for cyberbullying practices are social networks, such as Instagram and Facebook, followed by instant

messaging applications, such as WhatsApp. A report by the Directorate-General for Education (2022) indicates that Portuguese schools have been registering an increase in the number of complaints related to cyberbullying, especially during the distance learning period imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This report highlights the need to strengthen prevention and support measures for victims, as well as the importance of continuous teacher training to deal with this phenomenon.

Despite legislative and educational advances, several challenges persist in combating cyberbullying in Portugal. One of the main challenges is the difficulty in identifying and reporting cases of cyberbullying, as many victims are afraid of reprisals or not being taken seriously. In addition, the rapid evolution of digital technologies requires a constant update of prevention and intervention strategies. One of the biggest advances in the fight against cyberbullying has been the reinforcement of psychological support services in schools. According to a study carried out by Matos et al. (2021), Portuguese schools have been investing more and more in psychological support services, ensuring that victims of cyberbullying have access to specialized support. In addition, the creation of telephone and online helplines, such as the Safe Internet Line, has allowed victims of cyberbullying to receive immediate and anonymous support. This line, managed by the Foundation for Science and Technology, has been fundamental in supporting victims and raising awareness of the risks associated with the use of the internet (Foundation for Science and Technology, 2023). Another challenge is the lack of awareness among parents about the risks associated with the use of the internet and social networks. Many parents and guardians are not familiar with the digital platforms used by young people, which makes it difficult to detect cyberbullying situations early. Cyberbullying is a complex phenomenon that requires a multidisciplinary approach, involving legislation, the education system and society in general. In

Portugal, significant steps have been taken to combat this problem, but there is still a lot of work to do. The evolution of legislation and educational policies reflects a growing commitment to the protection of young people in the digital world. However, it is essential to continue investing in prevention, training and support strategies to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all.

2.3. National Context: Türkiye

In Türkiye, the problem of cyberbullying is becoming more widely acknowledged, especially among kids, teens, and young people. Since smartphones, social media, and internet usage have all increased so quickly, cyberbullying has become an inevitable part of online communication. Teenagers are especially vulnerable because of their frequent internet activity and use of digital communication. Nearly one-third of Turkish high school students reported having experienced cyberbullying, according to a 2020 survey. This data highlights the severity of the issue. In Türkiye, online harassment, defamation, exclusion, and impersonation are common forms of cyberbullying that have a significant impact on victims.

Cyberbullying trends in Türkiye clearly show gender differences. Young women and female students are disproportionately targeted and frequently endure harassment that is a reflection of gender-based discrimination and wider society standards. These actions could involve unwelcome advances, moral policing, or appearance-related shame. However, disputes involving competitive gaming or public mockery are more common among male teenagers. The impact of cyberbullying on victims is frequently exacerbated by the confluence of gender and cultural norms, since social constraints may deter people from reporting or seeking assistance.

In Türkiye, cyberbullying is more common in urban areas due to higher internet penetration and social media usage rates. However, the number of reported cases is also rising in rural areas as internet infrastructure spreads there. Because victims and their families might not completely grasp how to respond or seek support, the problem may be made worse in rural regions due to a lack of digital literacy. The urban-rural divide emphasizes the necessity of focused initiatives that take into consideration regional differences in resources, awareness, and access.

Cyberbullying has significant negative social and psychological effects in Türkiye. High degrees of anxiety, depression, and loneliness are frequently reported by victims. Many people experience deteriorating academic performance as a result of stress and disengagement from school-related activities. Another frequent result is social disengagement, as victims frequently steer clear of both online and real relationships in an effort to prevent more harassment. Since these effects take place during crucial developmental years that mold social skills, self-esteem, and mental health, they are especially worrisome for teens.

The rising number of reports containing sophisticated types of abuse is one of the main markers of the rising incidence of cyberbullying in Türkiye. These include cyberstalking, which is defined by persistent and invasive behaviour intended to intimidate victims, and doxxing, in which offenders reveal private information without consent. The development of "cancel culture" on social media sites, in which people or groups are publicly shamed or collectively shunned, is another new trend. This behaviour frequently makes it difficult to distinguish between bullying and criticism, even if some people see it as a kind of social accountability.

Targeting vulnerable groups, including pupils with disabilities or members of minority communities, is another worrying trend. These people frequently experience intersectional

bullying, which blends online harassment with ingrained societal biases. This makes them even more marginalized and makes it more difficult to address the underlying roots of the issue.

One important contributing factor to the proliferation of cyberbullying is the anonymity provided by online platforms. Anonymity makes it more difficult to find and hold offenders accountable since it permits them to act aggressively without fear of instant repercussions. The ease with which people can employ encrypted communication technologies or fabricate profiles further enhances this anonymity. The distinction between online and offline harassment has also become hazier due to the pervasiveness of mobile technology and constant internet connectivity, which has increased the scope and severity of cyberbullying.

In order to combat cyberbullying, parental and educational awareness is essential. According to surveys, a large number of Turkish parents are not digitally literate enough to keep an eye on their kids' internet behaviour. Teenagers are frequently left to navigate the digital world alone due to this gap, lacking proper assistance and direction. Similar to this, teachers express a lack of readiness to deal with instances of cyberbullying in classrooms, highlighting the necessity of thorough training initiatives. To close the information gap and develop a cohesive strategy for prevention and intervention, it is imperative to increase awareness among these populations.

Türkiye has shown its dedication to tackling cybersecurity challenges by passing legislation beginning in the 1990s. Law No. 3756, which modified some sections of the Turkish Penal Code, was introduced on June 6, 1991, and was the first piece of legislation to particularly tackle cybercrimes. The unauthorized acquisition, transfer, or duplication of programs, data, or other elements from a computer system is recognized as a criminal conduct punishable by law under

Article 20 of this amendment, which created the category of "Crimes in the Field of Information" (TBMM, 1991; Bıçakçı et al., 2015, p. 4).

Türkiye started to broaden its institutional and legislative frameworks in the 2000s, and after 2010, it also introduced cybersecurity strategy documents. The goal of these advancements was to increase the country's ability to defend and attack cyberspace. There are many different definitions of cybersecurity in the literature from throughout the world, and Türkiye is no exception. Cybersecurity is "the collective tools, policies, security concepts, safeguards, guidelines, risk management approaches, activities, training, best practices, and technologies used to protect the assets of institutions, organizations, and users in cyberspace," according to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) (BTK, 2018a).

In Türkiye's National Cybersecurity Strategy and the 2013-2014 Action Plan, cybersecurity is delineated as "the safeguarding of information systems that constitute cyberspace from assaults; ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information processed within this environment; identifying attacks and cybersecurity incidents; initiating response mechanisms in reaction to such detections; and restoring systems to their condition prior to the incident" (Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications, 2013).

Likewise, the National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan for the years 2016 to 2019 underscored the critical necessity of protecting information systems, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of data, detecting and responding to cybersecurity incidents, and restoring systems to their pre-incident states following an attack (Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, 2016).

This concept is articulated in the National Cybersecurity Strategy and the 2013-2014 Action Plan as “infrastructures comprising information systems whose confidentiality, integrity, or

availability, when compromised, could result in loss of life, significant economic damage, vulnerabilities to national security, or disturbances to public order" (Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications, 2013). Simi

October 2012 marks a significant turning point in Türkiye's cybersecurity efforts with a concrete step taken through the establishment of the Cybersecurity Council (SGK) by a Cabinet decision. Chaired by the Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications, the Council included members such as the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, National Defense, and other high-level officials from various state institutions, including the Undersecretary of Public Order and Security (disbanded in 2018), the Chief of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), the Chief of the General Staff's Communication, Electronics, and Information Systems Division, the President of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK), the President of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK), the Head of the Financial Crimes Investigation Board (MASAK), and other senior officials designated by the Ministry (Official Gazette No. 28447, 2012).

The main duties of the SGK, detailed in the Cabinet decision, include determining and managing Türkiye's cybersecurity policies, ensuring the development of national software and hardware systems, raising societal awareness about cybersecurity, training cybersecurity experts, and fostering international collaboration in the field of cybersecurity (Official Gazette No. 28447, 2012).

The National Cybersecurity Strategy and 2013-2014 Action Plan was adopted in January 2013, marking the SGK's first significant decision following its creation. In order to protect and strengthen the country's vital infrastructures, encourage state institutions to create initiatives,

raise public awareness of cybersecurity, train IT professionals, organize cybersecurity exercises, and introduce related courses and disciplines in educational institutions, this ambitious plan outlined 29 actions. According to the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications (2013), it also included goals for BTK to prioritize cybersecurity in project funding, create mechanisms for detecting, monitoring, and preventing cyber threats, set up honeypot systems for identifying these threats, establish R&D laboratories at universities, and encourage cooperation between public institutions, private organizations, and academia to develop national cybersecurity solutions.

The creation of the National Cyber Incidents Response Center (USOM/TR-CERT) to identify cyberthreats and create defences was a noteworthy result of the National Cybersecurity Strategy and 2013-2014 Action Plan (USOM, 2018). In order to safeguard their vital infrastructures, public institutions were subsequently mandated by a 2013 directive to establish Cyber Incidents Response Teams (SOMEs) under USOM. The establishment of institutional SOMEs operating under sectoral SOMEs was required by the same regulation for both public and commercial entities in charge of vital infrastructures (BTK, 2018b).

The 2016-2019 National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted by Türkiye in September 2016, contained goals that were complimentary to and in line with the earlier plan. This approach suggested developing a vocabulary of cybersecurity terms and placed a strong emphasis on the development of domestic software and technology. While keeping its focus on important objectives including combating cyber espionage, tackling internet addiction, and enhancing coordination among cybersecurity organizations, the 2016-2019 Action strategy

employed simpler and more general language than the more intricate and ambitious 2013-2014 strategy.

The 2016–2019 plan also emphasized the necessity of integrating cybersecurity into national security plans and growing Türkiye's cyber ecosystem. It emphasized how crucial it is to establish institutional frameworks that can support the nation's offensive and defensive capabilities in cyberspace and guarantee efficient coordination across pertinent institutions.

Three main goals form the foundation of Türkiye's governmental cybersecurity institutions' organizational structure. Institutions created to combat cybercrime and carry out intelligence operations within their purview make up the first group. In addition to strengthening Türkiye's cyber defensive, offensive, and espionage capabilities, the second group consists of organizations dedicated to protecting the public and vital infrastructures against cyberattacks. Private companies with state support make up the third category. The Cybersecurity Council (SGK) is the main organization in charge of determining and overseeing the objectives of Türkiye's cybersecurity policies.

The Cybercrime Department of the General Directorate of Security (EGM) under the Ministry of Interior, the Directorate of Information and Technical Intelligence under the Gendarmerie General Command (JGK), and the Cybercrime Department under the Intelligence Directorate of the Coast Guard Command are among the organizations dedicated to fighting cybercrime and carrying out intelligence operations.

The Cyber Defense Command of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK), and TÜBİTAK (the Scientific and Technological

Research Council of Türkiye) comprise the second group of institutional structures. Notably, laws passed in 2008 and 2014 made BTK a crucial organization in charge of guaranteeing Türkiye's ability to defend itself online. Information security oversight, communication privacy protection, network security, and the implementation of national security, public order, and public service measures within the parameters of statutory regulations are among BTK's duties (BTK, 2018).

Furthermore, AFAD was given control for emergency management during disasters in Türkiye by a law passed in 2009. Under this law, disasters were divided into two categories: natural and technical. AFAD would oversee the crisis management procedure in the event that a significant cyberattack escalated to the point of calamity. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding the specifics of how this crisis management will be implemented, including institutional structures and procedures (Official Gazette No. 27261, 2009).

TÜBİTAK was the main organization in charge of cybersecurity operations in Türkiye until October 2012; however, in that year, it gave its power to the Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications (UDH). TÜBİTAK currently contributes significantly to the provision of national cryptography solutions. Additionally, it runs the nation's honey pot cyber threat detection system, which works with UDH and USOM to gather traffic data from 164 points throughout 81 provinces (Bıçakçı et al., 2015, p. 9).

The goals of MIT's Directorate of Electronic and Technical Intelligence (ETI) are specified in Law No. 2937, which established MIT. Its duties include penetrating encrypted communications, delivering and evaluating imaging intelligence (IMINT), analysing intelligence collected through telecommunications, and intercepting intelligence. Signal intelligence (SIGINT), intercepting the radar and communication signals of targeted entities, and evaluating the raw material gathered

are all under the purview of the Signals Intelligence Directorate (SIB) (MIT, 2018). After the General Staff's Electronic Systems Command (GES) was moved to MIT in 2012, the SIB was created (Sabah Newspaper, 2012).

For many years, the GES Command—which was renamed SIB under MIT—was the unit responsible for meeting the signal intelligence requirements of the Turkish Armed Forces in accordance with NATO standards. In an attempt to stop the Gülenist Terror Organization (FETÖ) from trying to infiltrate, it was transferred to MIT in 2012. The capabilities of the GES Command are similar to those of the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA). Global monitoring, data decryption, information gathering, signal intelligence, and counterintelligence against foreign groups are all under the purview of the NSA, an autonomous intelligence agency. Additionally, the NSA supports other intelligence organizations and the U.S. Armed Forces with cryptanalysis (NSA, 2018).

Although the circumstances at the time required the transfer of GES to MIT, it could be beneficial to include such a well-resourced agency as an autonomous body in Türkiye's cybersecurity policy, akin to the NSA's civilian-military staff structure. It would be more effective to turn the SIB into a separate organization to handle Türkiye's national cybersecurity and espionage demands, given MIT's expanding duties and workload under the new legislation.

In June 2012, the TSK made the decision to create a Cybersecurity Center, which at first operated as a Cyber Incident Response Team (SOME) dedicated to the TSK. The establishment of a regiment-level Cyber Defense Command was announced by the TSK in 2013. Participating in national and NATO cybersecurity exercises, conducting awareness and training activities, responding to cyber incidents 24/7, ensuring the cybersecurity of all systems within the TSK's

cyber environment, and routinely auditing and testing cybersecurity measures in TSK-operated networks are among the responsibilities of this unit (Bıçakçı et al., 2015, p. 18).

Understanding the TSK's Cyber Defense Command better may be possible by contrasting it with the US Cyber Command (CYBERCOM). Created in 2010 by the U.S. Department of Defense, CYBERCOM coordinates the defense of U.S. military computer networks, designs offensive and strategic defense strategies, and organizes the Army's current cyber resources. The 24th Air Force, Army Cyber Warfare Unit, Navy Cyber Warfare Unit, and Marine Corps Cyber Warfare Unit are among the divisions that make up CYBERCOM. A Joint Cyber Center (JCC) is also run by each branch, which is in charge of their particular tasks and coordination (Darıcılı, 2017, p. 88-90). The extensive operations and organizational design of CYBERCOM underscore the necessity for the TSK to improve its cyber capabilities in order to function efficiently in a cyber conflict setting. Companies like Defense Technologies Engineering (STM), Aviation Electronics Industry (HAVELSAN), and Military Electronics Industry (ASELSAN) are examples of state-sponsored commercial efforts in Türkiye. In May 2016, the Defense Industry Presidency subsidiary STM launched the Cyber Fusion Center (SFM). SFM coordinates intelligence flow and security function, maintains information technology operations, and carries out protective efforts to defend Türkiye's technological and information assets. The Cyber Defense Technology Center (SISATEM), established by HAVELSAN in March 2016, is a technology, R&D, testing, and monitoring center that is intended to provide innovative products and solutions in the cyber domain. In a similar vein, ASELSAN creates cutting-edge cybersecurity and cryptology initiatives, concentrating on domestic solutions for the public, military, and civil sectors while looking into export prospects (Ateş, 2018).

The Ministry of National Education (MEB) is a key player in the educational field when it comes to combating cyberbullying. The curricula of Turkish schools now include lessons on responsible internet use, online safety, and digital citizenship. The goal of these initiatives is to give students the information and abilities they need to properly navigate the digital environment. In order to promote a shared awareness of cyberbullying and ways to counter it, workshops, seminars, and training sessions are also planned for educators and parents.

Initiatives for education place a strong emphasis on the value of emotional intelligence and empathy in stopping cyberbullying. Schools seek to lessen the frequency of negative online behaviours by creating an atmosphere where students are aware of how their actions affect other people. Student councils and peer-led initiatives actively support the development of an accountable and respectful culture. In order to handle the particular difficulties presented by cyberbullying, anti-bullying regulations are also being reinforced, guaranteeing that educational institutions can react to situations in a proficient manner.

In order to prevent cyberbullying, Türkiye has developed a number of resources and programs that involve cooperation between government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and commercial sector enterprises. One such program is the Safe Internet Program of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, which provides resources and training to encourage safe online conduct. Features like parental controls, reporting tools, and advice on how to use online platforms properly are all part of the program.

With the use of publications like "Family Education Series: Cyberbullying Prevention," the Ministry of National Education hopes to give parents the skills they need to monitor their kids' online conduct. These websites highlight the value of honest communication between parents

and kids in addition to offering helpful tips for spotting and dealing with cyberbullying. Furthermore, nationwide initiatives such as "Güvenli İnternet Haftası" (Safe Internet Week) promote reporting of occurrences and increase awareness of cyberbullying.

Through lobbying, research, and support services, non-governmental organizations like the Turkish Informatics Foundation and the Child Protection Network aggressively fight cyberbullying. These groups provide victims with counselling services, lead preventative courses, and carry out research to determine the extent and effects of cyberbullying in Türkiye. Initiatives from the private sector, especially social media corporations, support their efforts by working with local authorities to enhance content filtering and put in place reporting systems that are appropriate for Türkiye's legal and cultural context.

Programs for digital literacy aimed at children, parents, and teachers are becoming more popular throughout Türkiye. These initiatives aim to promote a safer online environment and close the generational divide in technology use. A thorough understanding of cyberbullying and possible remedies is being aided by the growing involvement of academic institutions and universities in research and policy formulation. Town hall meetings and public forums are examples of community-driven activities that reinforce group efforts to address the problem.

Raising awareness of cyberbullying and its repercussions is greatly aided by grassroots efforts, especially in rural regions. Local groups frequently work with municipal officials and schools to plan activities that inform locals about the resources and support networks that are available. These initiatives are essential for creating resilient communities that can successfully combat cyberbullying and for encouraging a feeling of shared responsibility.

To address the problem of cyberbullying in Türkiye, the combined efforts of governmental agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private groups are essential. Even if there has been a lot of progress, issues including limited knowledge among some groups, online platforms' anonymity, and resource constraints still exist. A safer digital environment for all citizens requires sustained cooperation, funding for preventative measures, and the creation of creative solutions.

2.4. National Context: Greece

Cyberbullying has become a significant concern in Greece, aligning with trends observed across Europe. However, the specific patterns of cyberbullying in Greece exhibit both similarities and unique differences compared to other European countries. For instance, Greece's high social media engagement rates contribute to elevated cyberbullying exposure, particularly on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Additionally, cultural factors, including strong familial ties and social stigmas, often discourage victims from reporting incidents, leading to lower intervention rates. While European policies such as the Digital Services Act (DSA) influence national efforts, Greece still faces challenges in implementing comprehensive cyberbullying prevention policies due to gaps in legal enforcement and digital literacy education. The expansion of digital communication, particularly among young people, has exacerbated online harassment, necessitating targeted interventions and awareness programs (Smith et al., 2019). This document provides an overview of cyberbullying in Greece, its prevalence, legal and educational frameworks, and prevention strategies.

Recent studies, such as those conducted by Kokkinos and Antoniadou (2019) and Tsitsika et al. (2014), suggest that cyberbullying impacts a significant portion of Greek students. These studies indicate that approximately one in four students has reported experiencing cyberbullying. Approximately one in four students has reported experiencing cyberbullying, with the highest prevalence among adolescents aged 12 to 17 (Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2019). Social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, alongside messaging applications, are the primary venues for cyberbullying incidents. Gender differences have also been noted; girls are more susceptible to emotional cyberbullying, whereas boys tend to encounter cyber threats and online harassment (Tsitsika et al., 2014). Additionally, victims often refrain from reporting incidents due to fear, shame, or distrust in authorities (Hellenic Safer Internet Center, 2021).

Cyberbullying manifests through various psychological, behavioural, and digital markers. While traditional bullying typically involves physical intimidation and direct verbal aggression, cyberbullying exerts psychological pressure through persistent digital exposure, anonymity, and public humiliation. Victims of cyberbullying often experience heightened anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal, similar to those affected by traditional bullying. However, studies indicate that cyberbullying may have a more prolonged impact due to the accessibility of harmful content and the challenge of escaping online harassment. Moreover, unlike traditional bullying, which is often confined to school settings, cyberbullying follows victims into their personal spaces, contributing to a sense of powerlessness and continuous stress. Victims frequently experience heightened stress, anxiety, social withdrawal, and declining academic performance, while perpetrators exhibit aggressive online behaviour and may use anonymous accounts to target individuals (Willard, 2007). A digital footprint analysis often reveals offensive comments, threats, or impersonation through fake profiles. School and community reports highlight increased

complaints from students and parents, leading to greater efforts to integrate anti-cyberbullying programs into curricula. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies, such as the Greek Cybercrime Division, have recorded a rise in reports related to digital abuse, with helplines such as Help-Line.gr and the European Child Helpline (116111) witnessing increased calls from victims (Hellenic Police, 2020).

Cyberbullying in Greece is addressed through several national and European legal frameworks. The Greek Penal Code (Article 361) criminalizes online defamation and harassment. Additionally, Law 4577/2018 emphasizes digital safety, granting authority to the Cybercrime Division to investigate cyber-related offenses (Hellenic Ministry of Justice, 2018). Law 4624/2019 ensures compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), offering protections against data breaches and online threats (European Commission, 2019). Furthermore, Law 4322/2015 includes provisions for juvenile protection against digital exploitation (Hellenic Ministry of Justice, 2015). Greece is also a signatory to the Council of Europe's Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, reinforcing its commitment to international cooperation in combating cyber offenses.

The Greek Ministry of Education has introduced anti-bullying programs that incorporate digital literacy into school curricula. Campaigns such as "No to School Bullying" and "Safer Internet Hellas" provide students and teachers with educational materials on online safety (Hellenic Ministry of Education, 2021). European initiatives, including Erasmus+ and eTwinning, promote cross-border collaboration on digital ethics. Moreover, SaferInternet4Kids.gr serves as a national awareness center, offering resources on cyber risks and prevention.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges persist. One of the primary legal barriers is the lack of specific legislation that directly addresses cyberbullying, making it difficult for law enforcement to prosecute offenders effectively. Existing laws focus on broader cybercrime offenses, leaving gaps in addressing repeated online harassment among minors. Institutional barriers also include inadequate resources and training for educators and law enforcement officials, limiting their ability to intervene in cyberbullying cases effectively. Additionally, the bureaucratic nature of the Greek legal system often leads to delays in case processing, discouraging victims from reporting incidents. Public awareness remains another issue, as many parents and educators lack the digital literacy necessary to recognize and respond to cyberbullying incidents promptly. Limited awareness among parents and educators about digital risks, coupled with underreporting, hinders effective intervention (Kopecký, 2020). Law enforcement faces obstacles in enforcing cyberbullying-related legislation due to jurisdictional and evidentiary complexities. To enhance prevention strategies, structured digital literacy programs must be integrated into national education policies. The Erasmus KA2 Cyberbullying in Europe initiative aims to strengthen prevention, intervention, and policy-making, fostering a safer digital environment.

2.5. National Context: Lithuania

Cyberbullying is a social problem that has emerged with the development of information technologies and the universal availability of the Internet. Lithuania is no exception. This problem is becoming increasingly apparent as digital technologies become an integral part of our daily

lives. Cyberbullying takes various forms – from defamation or threats to the disclosure or humiliation of personal information on social networks.

In Lithuania, this topic is receiving more and more attention, however, there are still many challenges: prevention, legal regulation and education. Most often, such bullying in Lithuania is recorded on popular platforms used by young people – Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and others. According to the European initiative “Safer Internet”, about 20–30 percent children in Lithuania have encountered cyberbullying or negative behaviour on the Internet (European Safer Internet Project, 2016-2018).

Such bullying is often related to age, gender, appearance, social status, ethnicity, or even opinions on sensitive social issues. Bullying is carried out anonymously or through the creation of fake accounts, making it very difficult to identify the perpetrators and prevent similar behaviour in the future.

One of the reasons why this problem is relevant is because children and adolescents often use information technologies and social platforms available to them. Such constant access not only facilitates communication but also opens the door to harmful behaviour. In addition, anonymity on the Internet often provides a false sense of security - people feel impunity, which is why they behave carelessly and irresponsibly. Many young people do not yet have the emotional or social skills to be able to constructively resolve conflicts or empathize with another person. The education system also still lacks attention to the topics of emotional health or conflict management, digital etiquette. Although we already have initiatives, they are not always sufficient, or they are not yet effective enough.

Cyberbullying leaves a deep mark on both the individual's life and society. People who have experienced bullying often face emotional difficulties, anxiety, depression, social isolation or lack of self-confidence. Adolescents, whose psychological resilience is still developing, are particularly vulnerable: motivation disappears, it is difficult to concentrate, and sometimes they even skip school. Cyberbullying destroys mutual trust, deepens social conflicts and the division of communities.

Lithuania takes this problem seriously. The legal system provides for liability for actions that amount to cyberbullying, including defamation, threats and the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

Cyberbullying is given great attention in the education system. National programs, such as Safer Internet, help raise awareness about safe behaviour online, teach children and youth to recognize bullying and respond appropriately to it. There are also organizations, such as Children's Line, the association Window to the Future, or Youth Line, which provide emotional support and promote public discussions about prevention. Social campaigns, such as No Bullying, contribute to public awareness and promote respect and tolerance. (Lithuanian Agency for Non-Formal Education, 2025).

Prevention of cyberbullying requires a clear and concrete strategy. Schools should pay more attention not only to technological literacy, but also to the development of emotional intelligence and communication skills. Social platforms should be more responsible in their content management and ensure effective ways for users to protect themselves. Parents' input is also important - they should be interested in what their children are doing online, talk about digital ethics and safety. And information campaigns should be even more intensive - so that as many

people as possible are not afraid to report bullying and make it clear that such behaviour is not tolerated.

Technology is changing rapidly, which means that new challenges are emerging. Technology organizations should find a solution to find a balance between user privacy and the ability to prevent harm. Financial and human resources limit the implementation of prevention measures. In summary, it can be stated that the problem of cyberbullying remains relevant in Lithuania and requires consistent, coordinated actions. Although progress has been made, it is still necessary to strengthen the areas of education, legal liability, and psychological support. Only through cooperation among all levels of society – from schools and families to state institutions and technology companies – can real changes be achieved and a safer digital environment be created for everyone.

3. Cyberbullying Intervention Programs: Evidence-Based Analysis

3.1. Cyberprogram 2.0

Cyberprogram 2.0: A School-Based Approach is a psychopedagogical intervention program designed to prevent and reduce bullying and cyberbullying in school environments. Developed by Maite Garaigordobil and Vanesa Martínez-Valderrey, this program uses a cognitive-behavioural framework and focuses on cognitive restructuring and the development of socio-emotional skills in adolescents (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2014).

The program consists of 19 one-hour sessions, held weekly, which promote activities structured around four main objectives:

1. Understanding and conceptualizing bullying and cyberbullying, including identifying the roles involved (victims, aggressors, and observers).
2. Analysis of the consequences of bullying for all involved, encouraging denunciation and critical reflection.
3. Development of coping strategies, such as anger management, constructive conflict resolution, and tolerance of dissenting opinions.
4. Promotion of socio-emotional skills, including empathy, active listening, and collaboration (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2014; Garaigordobil, 2011).

Activities include techniques such as role-playing, role-playing and case studies. For example, a flagship activity called "Breaking the Law of Silence" aims to encourage observers to report bullying by promoting empathy with victims and proactive conflict resolution strategies (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2014).

The intervention is conducted by professionals with psychopedagogical training and follows a consistent methodological pattern, including:

1. Realization in large spaces free of distractions;
2. Regular sessions with a fixed structure, starting with explanations, followed by practical activities and reflective discussions;
3. Small group engagement to promote interaction and collaboration.

An experimental study was conducted with 176 students aged 13 to 15 years in schools in the Basque Country, Spain. The results indicated a significant reduction in face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying behaviours, increased empathy, and improvements in cooperative conflict resolution strategies (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2015).

Despite its promising results, Cyberprogram 2.0 has some limitations:

1. **Limited sample:** Most studies were conducted in specific contexts, such as the Basque Country, which may make it difficult to generalize the results to other regions or cultures.
2. **Limited duration:** Although the interventions are intensive, the long-term effects still need more comprehensive studies to verify the sustainability of the results (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2015).
3. **Need for specialized training:** Effective program implementation requires trained professionals, which can be a challenge in schools with limited resources.

In addition, like many anti-bullying programs, the impact can vary depending on the motivation of the participants, the school's involvement, and family support (Garaigordobil, 2011; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).

3.2. Media Heroes (Medienhelden)

The Medienhelden (Media Heroes) program, developed in Germany, is an evidence-based intervention designed to prevent cyberbullying and promote responsible online behaviour (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2018). The program is founded on psychological theories, including Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes behaviour modelling through peer-to-peer interactions (Bandura, 1977). It also integrates cognitive-behavioural approaches to encourage students to rethink their digital interactions and foster empathy (Beck, 1967).

The Medienhelden program is available in a full 10-week version and a condensed one-day workshop. The curriculum is age-appropriate, offering interactive games and role-playing exercises for younger students while engaging older students in complex discussions on digital safety. Key topics include cyberbullying awareness, empathy development, conflict resolution, and bystander intervention (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2018).

The cbPROact Perspective

The cbPROact initiative expands on Medienhelden by incorporating proactive, sustainable, and collaborative strategies. It emphasizes student empowerment through peer leadership programs, community engagement, and technology-based learning tools (Williford et al., 2013). The initiative promotes a whole-school approach, integrating cyberbullying prevention into school culture through structured training for educators and anonymous reporting systems for students.

A short-version implementation model of Medienhelden has been adapted for primary schools in Greece, focusing on interactive, age-appropriate learning methods. Unlike the original version, which spans ten weeks, the Greek adaptation consists of four condensed sessions tailored to younger students, emphasizing storytelling, role-playing, and guided discussions to foster empathy and online safety awareness. Additionally, cultural and linguistic adjustments have been made to align with the Greek educational system, ensuring better engagement and relevance for primary school students. The program consists of four structured sessions designed for students aged 8 to 11, with a focus on understanding cyberbullying, developing empathy, staying safe online, and fostering positive digital behaviour. Activities include storytelling, role-playing, interactive quizzes, and class pledge commitments to encourage responsible internet use (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2018).

Program Outcomes

By the end of the training, students demonstrate increased awareness of cyberbullying, develop empathy for peers, and acquire practical skills for online safety. The initiative aims to create a peer-support culture where students act as responsible digital citizens and uphold online safety norms.

Cyberbullying remains a critical issue in Greece, affecting children, teenagers, and young adults. While legal and educational frameworks provide a foundation for addressing online harassment, further efforts are needed to improve awareness, enforcement, and intervention. Initiatives such as Medienhelden and cbPROact play a vital role in fostering digital responsibility, empowering students, and enhancing cross-sector collaboration. Through a comprehensive approach that

includes education, policy development, and community engagement, Greece can ensure a safer and more inclusive online environment.

3.3. Cyber Friendly Schools Program

A methodical effort, the Cyber Friendly Schools (CFS) program aims to encourage courteous and safe online spaces in classrooms. This program, which is based on digital citizenship frameworks, social learning theory, and preventative intervention models, attempts to provide students, parents, and educators with the knowledge and abilities they need to use the internet in a responsible manner.

According to the social learning hypothesis, people pick up new behaviours through imitation, reinforcement, and observation. By encouraging a culture where students set an example of good digital behaviour for their peers, the CFS program makes use of this idea. CFS is based on the digital citizenship concept, which stresses moral, responsible, and knowledgeable online behaviour. Students are taught privacy protection, online etiquette, and the negative effects of cyberbullying using this framework.

Additionally, the program incorporates elements of public health approaches to behavioural change, treating cyberbullying as a social risk factor that impacts student well-being. By emphasizing resilience, emotional intelligence, and digital empathy, CFS aims to mitigate the negative psychological effects of cyberbullying and create a supportive digital community within schools.

In order to effectively prevent cyberbullying, the Cyber Friendly Schools program is a multi-phase intervention technique that combines a variety of technology, policy-based, and instructional components. The following are the program's main stages and elements:

1. Awareness and Training

One of the foundational elements of the CFS program is raising awareness among students, educators, and parents about the dangers of cyberbullying and the importance of digital citizenship. This phase includes:

- Student Workshops: Interactive sessions covering responsible online behaviour, recognizing cyberbullying, and understanding digital footprints.

- Teacher Training: Professional development programs to equip educators with strategies for identifying and addressing cyberbullying incidents.

- Parental Engagement: Information sessions to educate parents about digital risks, monitoring techniques, and open communication strategies with their children.

2. Policy Development and Implementation

The CFS program assists schools in developing and implementing clear, enforceable policies regarding cyber safety. These policies include:

- Guidelines on appropriate online behaviour for students and staff.

- Procedures for reporting and addressing cyberbullying incidents.

- Disciplinary actions for violations of digital conduct policies.

- Integration of cyber safety education into the school curriculum.

3. Peer Leadership and Student Involvement

A distinctive feature of the CFS program is the engagement of students as peer leaders and digital ambassadors. This approach capitalizes on the influence of peer-to-peer interactions to foster a cyber-friendly school culture. Key initiatives include:

- Cyber Safety Ambassadors: Selected students who receive training to support and mentor peers in responsible internet use.

- Student-Led Campaigns: Awareness programs, social media initiatives, and school events promoting positive online interactions.

- Peer Mediation Programs: Systems in place for students to resolve minor cyber conflicts among themselves under teacher supervision.

4. Technological Tools and Monitoring

To enhance cyber safety, many schools under the CFS program implement digital monitoring tools and reporting mechanisms, including:

- Anonymous Reporting Systems: Digital platforms where students can report cyberbullying incidents safely and confidentially.

- AI-Based Detection Systems: Advanced tools that monitor school networks and flag potential cyberbullying behaviours.

- Content Filtering Software: Restrictions on harmful or inappropriate online content to protect students.

5. Community and Parental Engagement

Recognizing that cyber safety extends beyond the school environment, the CFS program includes outreach efforts that involve parents and community organizations. This includes:

- Workshops for Parents and Guardians: Providing resources and guidance on digital parenting.

- Collaboration with NGOs and Law Enforcement: Partnering with cyber safety organizations for awareness campaigns and interventions.

- Public Information Campaigns: Dissemination of educational materials through local media and online platforms.

6. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

To assess the effectiveness of the program, schools conduct ongoing evaluations through:

Student and Teacher Surveys: Measuring changes in cyber safety awareness and incident rates.

Focus Groups: Discussions with students, educators, and parents to gather qualitative feedback.

Incident Tracking Systems: Recording and analysing trends in reported cyberbullying cases.

Periodic Policy Reviews: Ensuring school policies remain up-to-date with emerging cyber threats.

cbPROact Perspective

From the perspective of the cbPROact framework, which emphasizes proactive and dynamic strategies in cyber protection, the Cyber Friendly Schools program demonstrates several strengths but also presents areas where it can be enhanced.

Strengths of the CFS Program

The program integrates students, teachers, parents, and policymakers in its implementation, ensuring a comprehensive approach to cyber safety.

By leveraging peer influence, the program fosters student accountability and self-regulation in online interactions.

The formalization of cyber safety policies within schools ensures sustained intervention beyond individual efforts.

The use of AI-driven monitoring systems and anonymous reporting tools adds a level of security and responsiveness to cyber threats.

Emphasis on Preventative Education: Rather than focusing solely on punitive measures, the program builds a culture of awareness and responsibility.

The Cyber Friendly Schools program is an all-encompassing effort to promote a more secure and civil online environment in educational establishments. Its multifaceted strategy, which includes everything from technology monitoring to student empowerment, provides a strong foundation for combating cyberbullying. However, from the standpoint of cbPROact, its impact might be increased with more improvements in fair access, adaptive technology integration, and sustainability measures. Future deployments have to concentrate on utilizing AI, customizing

interventions for various student demographics, and guaranteeing sustained participation from all parties involved. In an increasingly digital environment, the Cyber Friendly Schools program may continue to be a useful and successful weapon in the fight against cyberbullying by consistently improving its tactics.

3.4. ViSC Social Competence Program

The ViSC Social Competence Program is an intervention program implemented in schools, the main goal of which is to reduce the prevalence of aggression and bullying and to develop students' social and intercultural skills (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). This program, developed in Austria, has already been successfully applied in education - in various countries, for example, in Turkey or Romania (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

The development and implementation of the program is based on several theoretical approaches that provide it with a solid conceptual foundation. First, it is based on the social learning theory developed by Albert Bandura. This theory states that behaviour is learned by observing, imitating, and modelling the actions of other people (Bandura, Social Learning Theory 1977). The program encourages positive behavioural models, which are demonstrated by teachers, peers, and program leaders. Encouraging positive behaviour, such as praise for empathy or cooperation, helps strengthen prosocial habits that allow children to function effectively and productively in groups (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

This program is based on the social information model, according to which individuals evaluate social situations based on how they perceive social signals. Inaccurate interpretation of signals can lead to inappropriate or aggressive responses, therefore ViSC aims to develop students'

ability to accurately process social information and find constructive solutions (Crick & Dodge, 1994, as cited in ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). This is achieved by using precise and structured tasks that allow students to understand the impact of their interpretations on behaviour and to develop appropriate response skills.

Furthermore, the Romanian REBE-ViSC program integrates the rational emotive behaviour theory (REBT) developed by Albert Ellis. This theory focuses on identifying and changing irrational beliefs that lead to negative emotions and inappropriate behaviour (Ellis, 1962, as cited in ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). Such interventions help both students and teachers to critically evaluate their thinking and behaviour, change their attitudes towards bullying, and develop rational problem-solving skills (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

This program is comprehensive, encompassing both universal and specific components that are implemented over the course of one school year. One of the most important parts is teacher training – specialized training helps educators respond appropriately to bullying, create inclusive learning environments, and promote prosocial behaviour (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). In addition, students participate in classroom projects and activities that are tailored to their developmental stage and promote empathy and collaboration. Activities such as role-playing or shared tasks allow for the practical development of social skills (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

Another important direction is the whole-school strategy. The implementation of the program involves not only students and teachers, but also the administration, parents and the community. There are inclusive solutions, such as seminars, workshops or dissemination of information

materials, contribute to the formation of a unified approach and create favourable conditions for long-term changes (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

The effectiveness of the program has been demonstrated in studies, including randomized trials. Studies in Turkey have shown significant reductions in aggressive behaviour, both physical and verbal, and social isolation (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). Long-term evaluations in Austria have shown that the program's effects persist even after the end of its implementation period, with both reductions in bullying and increases in social skills observed long after the program was implemented (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). In Romania, where cognitive behavioural principles were used, additional effectiveness was observed in addressing aggression and bullying in different cultural contexts (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

The program equips students with the skills to address a contemporary challenge, namely cyberbullying. Research shows that ViSC is successful in reducing both cyberbullying and victimization, demonstrating its applicability in the digital space (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

It is also important that the program is culturally adaptable and flexible. For example, in Turkey, it has been adapted to the national education system, becoming the first nationally implemented evidence-based anti-bullying initiative (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025). Meanwhile, in Austria, the program has become part of the national strategy "Together Against Violence", demonstrating that such initiatives can be successfully integrated into public policy (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

In summary, the ViSC program is a comprehensive, evidence-based response to the problems of aggression and social skills deficits in schools. By combining theoretical models with practical

interventions, the program helps create a safer and more inclusive educational environment, and its versatility allows it to be applied in various cultural and social settings (ViSC Social Competence Program, 2025).

The ViSC program is grounded in multiple theoretical frameworks that provide a solid foundation for its design and implementation. These frameworks include:

1. **Social Learning Theory.** Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and modelling. According to this theory, individuals acquire new behaviours by observing the actions of others and the consequences that follow. In the context of the ViSC program, this principle is applied by promoting positive role models within the school environment. Teachers, peers, and program facilitators exemplify prosocial behaviours, which students are encouraged to emulate. Reinforcement strategies, such as praise for cooperative and empathetic actions, further solidify these behaviours.

2. **Social Information-Processing Model.** This model posits that individuals interpret social cues and make decisions based on their perceptions of these cues. Misinterpretations can lead to inappropriate or aggressive responses. The ViSC program addresses this by teaching students to accurately process social information, improving their ability to identify non-aggressive solutions in interpersonal conflicts. Structured activities help students recognize the impact of their interpretations and develop skills to respond in a socially appropriate manner.

3. **Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory (REBT).** Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory, proposed by Albert Ellis, focuses on identifying and altering irrational beliefs that lead to

negative emotions and behaviours. This framework has been incorporated into the Romanian adaptation of the ViSC program, known as the REBE-ViSC Program. The integration of REBT principles helps students and teachers address bullying and aggression by challenging cognitive distortions and fostering rational thinking patterns. This approach is particularly useful in reshaping attitudes that perpetuate bullying behaviours.

Program Structure and Implementation

The ViSC program adopts a comprehensive approach, combining universal and specific components to address aggression and enhance social competencies. Implementation occurs over the course of one school year and includes the following key elements:

1. **Teacher Training.** Teachers play a pivotal role in the ViSC program. They undergo specialized training sessions designed to improve their skills in managing classroom dynamics, identifying bullying behaviours, and fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. The training also equips teachers with techniques to reinforce prosocial behaviour and address conflict effectively. This component ensures that teachers act as consistent role models and enforcers of the program's principles.

2. **Class Projects and Activities.** Students participate in class projects that are tailored to their developmental stages, typically targeting grades 5 through 8. These projects aim to build empathy, promote cooperative behaviour, and enhance social skills. Activities include role-playing, group discussions, and collaborative problem-solving exercises. These methods not only engage students actively but also provide opportunities for them to practice the social competencies emphasized by the program.

3. **Whole-School Approach.** The ViSC program encourages a whole-school approach, involving not just students and teachers but also school administrators, parents, and the wider community. Workshops, seminars, and informational materials are provided to ensure that all stakeholders understand and support the program's goals. This holistic approach fosters a consistent and supportive environment for behavioural change.

The ViSC program has undergone extensive evaluation using robust research methods, including randomized controlled trials. Results consistently demonstrate its effectiveness in reducing aggression and bullying. For example:

- A study conducted in Turkish schools reported a significant decrease in various types of problem behaviours, including physical aggression, verbal harassment, and exclusionary practices.
- In Austria, long-term assessments revealed that the program's impact extends beyond the intervention period, with sustained reductions in bullying behaviours and improvements in social competence.
- The Romanian adaptation, REBE-ViSC, showed notable success in integrating cognitive-behavioural strategies to address bullying and aggression, enhancing the program's relevance in diverse cultural settings.

Moreover, the program has proven effective in addressing contemporary challenges such as cyberbullying. Evaluations indicate that it reduces both cyberbullying and cyber-victimization, showcasing its adaptability to digital contexts.

One of the ViSC program's strengths is its flexibility and cultural adaptability. In Turkey, for instance, the program was tailored to align with the local educational system, making it the first evidence-based anti-bullying intervention implemented nationwide. This adaptation ensured cultural relevance and increased acceptance among educators and students.

Additionally, the ViSC program has been integrated into broader public policy initiatives. In Austria, it forms part of the national strategy "Together Against Violence," demonstrating the value of embedding evidence-based programs within policy frameworks. Such integration amplifies the program's reach and impact, ensuring that its principles are consistently applied across educational settings.

The ViSC Social Competence Program exemplifies a well-rounded approach to addressing aggression and promoting social competence in schools. By drawing on established psychological theories and combining them with practical, evidence-based interventions, the program has achieved notable success in creating safer and more inclusive educational environments. Its adaptability across cultures and effectiveness in addressing both traditional and modern forms of bullying make it a model for school-based interventions worldwide.

4. Involvement of the Educational Community

Cyberbullying, defined as the intentional harm inflicted through digital platforms, has emerged as a significant public health concern in recent years. Addressing this issue necessitates a comprehensive approach involving the entire educational community, encompassing educators, families, and students themselves. Recent studies underscore the pivotal role of collaborative strategies in mitigating and preventing cyberbullying incidents

A systematic review by Tozzo et al. (2022) highlights that most effective interventions are educational in nature, engaging both schools and families. These strategies aim to foster awareness and equip individuals with the skills necessary to navigate digital environments responsibly. The review emphasizes the importance of synergistic efforts among mental health professionals, educators, and digital experts to combat cyberbullying effectively.

In the educational sphere, integrating cyberbullying prevention programs into the curriculum has shown promising results. Flores Buils et al. (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study involving 159 primary education students, which demonstrated that embedding such programs within the school curriculum enhances students' emotional self-awareness, problem-solving abilities, and responsible use of digital technologies. Moreover, the study observed positive impacts on teachers' digital mentoring and family supervision practices, indicating that a holistic approach yields substantial benefits.

The involvement of families is equally crucial in cyberbullying prevention. Parental engagement in educational initiatives ensures that the values and behaviours promoted at school are reinforced at home, creating a consistent support system for students. Tozzo et al. (2022)

advocate for family-based strategies that complement school efforts, thereby establishing a unified front against cyberbullying.

Furthermore, the integration of technology-based practices has emerged as a contemporary approach to address cyberbullying. These practices involve utilizing the same digital tools favoured by minors to disseminate preventive measures and educational content. By aligning prevention strategies with the digital habits of students, educators can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of their interventions. Tozzo et al. (2022) note that combining educational and technological strategies offers a comprehensive framework to tackle cyberbullying, leveraging the strengths of both approaches.

The active involvement of the educational community is indispensable in the fight against cyberbullying. Collaborative efforts that integrate educational programs, family participation, and technological tools create a robust defense against this pervasive issue. As digital landscapes continue to evolve, so too must the strategies employed by educators and families to safeguard the well-being of students in both virtual and real-world settings.

Educational Community participation

The active participation of the educational community in cyberbullying prevention offers significant benefits, such as promoting a safe school environment and enhancing educators' and parents' roles. However, addressing challenges like resistance to change and monitoring limitations is essential. An integrated approach involving all stakeholders is fundamental to overcoming these challenges and ensuring the effectiveness of prevention strategies.

Advantages

A primary advantage of such involvement is the establishment of a safer and more supportive school environment. When educators, parents, and students collaborate, they can set clear behavioural standards and foster a culture of mutual respect. This collective effort contributes to the reduction of cyberbullying incidents and enhances the overall well-being of students. Moreover, integrating cyberbullying prevention programs into the school curriculum has demonstrated positive outcomes. For instance, a study by Flores Buils et al. (2020) revealed that embedding these programs within primary education enhances students' emotional self-awareness, problem-solving skills, and responsible digital usage. Additionally, the study noted improvements in teachers' digital mentoring and parental supervision practices, underscoring the benefits of a holistic approach.

Limitations

Despite these advantages, certain limitations exist in the educational community's involvement in cyberbullying prevention. One significant challenge is the reluctance to change among some community members. Educators and parents may resist adopting new practices or technologies, hindering the effective implementation of prevention programs. Furthermore, a systematic review by Tozzo et al. (2022) emphasizes that while educational and family-based strategies are crucial, their success often depends on the availability of resources and specific training. Another limitation is the difficulty in monitoring students' online interactions outside the school environment. Although schools can implement policies and programs, they have limited control over students' digital behaviour at home. This limitation highlights the necessity for a strong

partnership between schools and families to ensure consistent supervision of youths' technology use.

Teacher´s perspective

Teachers play a pivotal role in the prevention and intervention of cyberbullying within educational settings. Their active participation is essential in fostering a safe and respectful environment conducive to student well-being.

Advantages of Teacher Participation

One significant advantage of teacher involvement is the establishment of clear behavioural expectations and the promotion of digital citizenship. Educators who are proactive in addressing cyberbullying can effectively reduce its occurrence. Fredrick et al. (2023) found that teachers who felt prepared to handle cyberbullying incidents were more likely to implement preventive measures, thereby contributing to a safer school climate.

Additionally, teachers' self-efficacy—their belief in their ability to manage and resolve bullying situations—has been linked to more effective interventions. A systematic review by Long and Alexander (2021) highlighted that teachers with higher self-efficacy are more confident in addressing bullying behaviours, leading to more successful outcomes. This confidence enables them to implement strategies that deter potential bullies and support victims effectively.

Moreover, teacher-led programs have shown promise in enhancing students' coping strategies related to cyberbullying. The "Asegúrate" program, which emphasizes teachers' commitment and well-designed instructional materials, demonstrated positive effects on reducing cyber-

aggression among students (Del Rey et al., 2019). Such initiatives underscore the critical role teachers play in shaping students' online behaviours and responses to cyberbullying.

Limitations of Teacher Participation

Despite these advantages, certain limitations hinder the effectiveness of teacher participation in cyberbullying prevention. A notable challenge is the lack of adequate training and resources. Fredrick et al. (2023) reported that many teachers feel unprepared to tackle cyberbullying due to insufficient professional development opportunities. This gap can lead to inconsistent or ineffective responses to incidents, undermining prevention efforts.

Another limitation is the potential for variability in teachers' perceptions and responses to cyberbullying. Long and Alexander (2021) noted that differences in personal beliefs and experiences could influence how teachers identify and address such incidents. This variability may result in unequal support for students and inconsistent enforcement of anti-bullying policies.

Furthermore, the ever-evolving nature of digital platforms presents challenges for educators in keeping pace with new forms of cyberbullying. The rapid development of technology requires continuous learning and adaptation, which can be demanding for teachers already managing extensive responsibilities.

Recommendations for Enhancing Teacher Participation

To maximize the benefits of teacher involvement in cyberbullying prevention, several strategies can be implemented:

Professional Development: Providing comprehensive training programs that equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to identify, prevent, and intervene in cyberbullying incidents is crucial. Such programs should be ongoing to address the dynamic nature of digital interactions.

Collaborative Efforts: Encouraging collaboration among educators, parents, and students can lead to a unified approach to cyberbullying prevention. Establishing clear communication channels ensures consistency in addressing issues as they arise.

Policy Implementation: Developing and enforcing clear policies regarding acceptable online behaviour and consequences for cyberbullying can provide a framework for teachers to act decisively.

Resource Allocation: Ensuring that teachers have access to up-to-date resources, including counselling services and technological tools, can enhance their ability to support students effectively.

So, while teachers are integral to combating cyberbullying, addressing the challenges they face through targeted support and resources is essential. By empowering educators, schools can create a safer and more inclusive environment for all students.

Student´s proactiveness in Cyberbullying Prevention

An innovative approach to combating cyberbullying within educational settings is the implementation of student-led initiatives. These programs empower students to take active roles in promoting a positive school climate and addressing bullying behaviours among their peers.

One notable advantage of proactive student involvement is the promotion of peer-led interventions. When students take the initiative to address cyberbullying, they can effectively influence their peers' behaviours and attitudes. For instance, the Bystander Revolution initiative emphasizes the power of individuals to defuse bullying situations by offering simple, practical actions that bystanders can take, thereby reducing the prevalence of such incidents.

Moreover, proactive students can serve as digital ambassadors, promoting positive online behaviours and educating their peers about the consequences of cyberbullying. By organizing workshops, creating awareness campaigns, and leading by example, these students contribute to a more informed and conscientious student body. Such initiatives not only deter potential bullies but also provide support to victims, fostering a supportive community.

Student proactiveness in the fight against cyberbullying goes beyond passive awareness or compliance with school policies. It involves deliberate actions where students take initiative to prevent, intervene, and change the culture around online aggression. This proactive role is particularly effective because peer influence is a dominant factor in adolescent behaviour (Salmivalli, 2021).

Advantages of Student-Led Initiatives

One significant advantage of student-led initiatives is their ability to leverage peer influence to effect behavioural change. A study conducted in New Jersey middle schools demonstrated that when students designed and implemented anti-conflict campaigns, incidents of bullying and conflict decreased by an average of 30% compared to control schools. This outcome suggests that students are highly receptive to messages and norms established by their peers, making peer-led interventions particularly effective.

Moreover, student-led programs can enhance participants' sense of agency and responsibility. By involving students in the creation and dissemination of anti-bullying messages, these initiatives foster leadership skills and a deeper commitment to fostering a respectful school environment. The Cross-Age Teaching Zone (CATZ) intervention, for instance, involves older students teaching younger peers about online safety and cyberbullying. This approach has been effective in promoting anti-bullying beliefs, enhancing online safety knowledge, and increasing self-esteem among both mentors and mentees.

Students play a crucial role in shaping social norms related to cyberbullying. Research by Williford et al. (2022) demonstrates that peer-led interventions have a stronger impact on changing attitudes toward bullying than adult-led programs. This is because adolescents tend to model behaviour from their peers rather than authority figures. When students actively promote a no-tolerance stance toward online aggression, they help shift what is considered socially acceptable, discouraging participation in harmful digital behaviours.

Recommendations for Enhancing Student-Led Initiatives

To maximize the effectiveness of student-led cyberbullying prevention programs, the following strategies are recommended:

Comprehensive Training: Providing student leaders with thorough training on cyberbullying dynamics, intervention strategies, and leadership skills ensures they are well-prepared to guide their peers.

Ongoing Support: Establishing a support system where educators and mental health professionals mentor student leaders can enhance the quality and sustainability of these initiatives.

Integration into School Culture: Embedding student-led programs into the broader school culture and policies can reinforce their importance and encourage widespread participation.

Evaluation and Feedback: Implementing mechanisms for regular assessment and feedback allows for continuous improvement of the programs, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of the student body.

A growing aspect of student proactiveness is digital activism, where students use social media platforms to advocate for anti-cyberbullying policies and awareness campaigns. Hashtag movements like #ICANHELP and #CyberSmile have shown how student-driven digital advocacy can create widespread awareness and mobilize collective action (Kwan & Skoric, 2022). These initiatives allow students to extend their influence beyond their immediate school environment and engage in global conversations about digital ethics and cyber safety.

Another emerging form of student proactiveness is the development of technological solutions to address cyberbullying. Students involved in coding, app development, or media projects have created applications that facilitate anonymous reporting of bullying, track online harassment patterns, and provide resources for victims (Wang et al., 2023). These grassroots technological initiatives demonstrate how students can contribute not only socially but also technologically to cyberbullying prevention.

Limitations of Student-Led Initiatives

Despite their benefits, student-led initiatives face certain limitations. One challenge is ensuring the sustainability and consistency of these programs. As students graduate or move on, maintaining the momentum of peer-led interventions requires continuous recruitment and training of new student leaders. Additionally, without proper guidance and support from educators, these initiatives may lack structure, potentially diminishing their effectiveness.

Another limitation is the potential for variability in the quality of peer-led programs. The success of such initiatives often depends on the commitment and capability of the student leaders. Without adequate training and resources, student facilitators may struggle to address complex issues related to cyberbullying effectively.

Student´s proactiveness initiatives present a promising avenue for cyberbullying prevention within schools. By harnessing peer influence and fostering a sense of ownership among students, these programs can effectively promote a positive and safe educational environment. However, addressing the challenges associated with their implementation is crucial for their sustained success.

5. cbPROact Approach

While the book was being designed, the decision was accepted to understand the perspectives of teachers and students and, as a result, to draw an approach that matches the data collected by the questionnaires with our perspectives.

Thus, in the first phase, we started by listening to the teachers.

5.1. Questionnaire for teachers

Within the context of the cbPROact project, questionnaires were applied to try to understand the perceptions and opinions of teachers from partner schools. We opted for a scientifically validated questionnaire, adapted from LI, Quing (2008), which was applied by google forms.

For this analysis, the responses across the four countries (Greece, Lithuania, Portugal, Türkiye) have been aggregated. The total number of participants is 140. Specifically, there were 28 from Greece, 24 from Lithuania, 53 from Portugal, and 35 from Türkiye.

Here is the analysis by section and individual question:

Section 1: Initial Consents

All participants provided full consent and understanding regarding the study's objectives, voluntary participation, anonymity, right not to answer questions, and data usage.

Section 2: Demographics

Table 1 – Participants by Country

Country	Number of Participants
Greece	29
Lithuania	24
Portugal	53
Türkiye	34

Table 2 – Gender of Participants (n = 135)

Gender	Number of Participants
Female	98
Male	33
Rather not say	4

Section 3: Perceptions about Cyberbullying

Table 3 "Cyberbullying is a problem in school." (n = 140)

Response	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree	48
Agree	73
Neutral	15
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	1

Interpretation: A large majority (121 out of 140) agree or strongly agree that cyberbullying is a problem in school.

Table 4 – "Children are affected by cyberbullying."

Response	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree	76
Agree	55
Neutral	9
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Interpretation: There is an overwhelming consensus (131 out of 140) that children are affected by cyberbullying.

Section 4: Confidence in Dealing with Cyberbullying

Table 5 – I feel confident in identifying cyberbullying.

Response	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree	37
Agree	51
Neutral	39
Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	4

Interpretation: While the largest single group feels "Agree," a significant portion (39) are "Neutral," indicating a range of confidence levels in identifying cyberbullying (88 out of 140 feels Agree or Strongly Agree).

Table 6 – I am confident in managing cyberbullying.

Response	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree	11
Agree	37
Neutral	52
Disagree	28
Strongly Disagree	12

Interpretation: Confidence in managing cyberbullying is lower than in identifying it. The most frequent response is "Neutral" (52), and a substantial number (40) disagree or strongly disagree.

Table 7 – If I knew cyberbullying at a school, I would do something.

Response	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree	80
Agree	54
Neutral	6
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Interpretation: There is a very strong willingness among respondents to take action if they are aware of cyberbullying (134 out of 140 agree or strongly agree).

Section 5: School-Level Actions

Table 8 – School-Level Actions

Action/Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Schools should develop policies on cyberbullying.	88	47	5	0	0
Schools should use professional development days to train staff about cyberbullying.	81	48	11	0	0
Teachers should use a curriculum on cyberbullying to teach children.	56	66	16	2	0
Teachers should organize classroom activities to deal with cyberbullying.	60	62	15	3	0
School administrators should organize school-wide activities to deal with cyberbullying.	77	53	10	0	0
Surveys should be given to children to ask them about their experiences of being cyberbullied.	77	47	16	0	0
Committees should be formed in schools to look at the problem of cyberbullying.	62	50	23	3	2
Schools should discuss cyberbullying with parents.	73	53	14	0	0
School assemblies should address cyberbullying.	70	54	16	0	0
Schools should link with community resources to deal with cyberbullying.	62	58	20	0	0

Interpretation: Strong consensus on the need for school cyberbullying policies; Strong support for professional development on cyberbullying for school staff; Majority support for using a cyberbullying curriculum (122 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Strong support for teachers organizing classroom activities (122 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Strong support for school-wide activities organized by administrators (130 out of 140 agree or strongly agree);

Strong support for surveying students about their cyberbullying experiences (124 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Majority support for forming school committees to address cyberbullying (112 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Strong consensus on the importance of discussing cyberbullying with parents (126 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Strong support for addressing cyberbullying in school assemblies/councils (124 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Majority support for schools partnering with community resources (120 out of 140 agree or strongly agree).

Section 6: External Actions and Support

Table 9 – External Actions and Support

Action/Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
TV and other media should discuss cyberbullying.	71	57	11	1	0
Children should receive counselling to deal with cyberbullying.	76	51	12	1	0
School resources should be used to help teachers deal with cyberbullying.	59	61	20	0	0

Interpretation: Strong support for media discussing cyberbullying (128 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Strong support for providing students with resources/training to deal with cyberbullying (127 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); Strong support for utilizing school resources to assist teachers in dealing with cyberbullying (120 out of 140 agree or strongly agree).

Section 7: University Education

Table 10 – University Education

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My current university education has been preparing me to manage cyberbullying.	5	10	26	71	28
I want to learn more about cyberbullying in my university education.	38	77	23	1	1
Cyberbullying is just as important as other university topics.	36	74	26	3	1

Interpretation: The vast majority of respondents feel their university education did not adequately prepare them to manage cyberbullying (99 out of 140 disagree or strongly disagree); There is a strong desire among respondents to learn more about cyberbullying during their university education (115 out of 140 agree or strongly agree); The majority of respondents consider cyberbullying to be equally important as other topics in university education (110 out of 140 agree or strongly agree).

5.2. Questionnaire for students

Next, we decided to listen to the students in order to understand their opinions and perceptions about cyberbullying. To do so, we used the questionnaires adapted from "Cybervictimization Questionnaire for adolescents" (Álvarez-García, D. et al., 2016) and the "Cyber-aggression Questionnaire" (Álvarez-García, D. et al., 2016). All participants provided full consent and understanding regarding the study's objectives, voluntary participation, anonymity, right not to answer questions, and data usage. Also, students only answered the questions they felt comfortable in doing so and this fact is the justification why the total results as differ.

Table 11 - Demographic Overview

Country	*Total Respondents*	*Female*	*Male*	*Prefer not to say*	*Age Range*
Greece	*24*	*14*	*9*	*1*	*9-12*
Lithuania	*66*	*29*	*28*	*9*	*10-13*
Portugal	*221*	*92*	*128*	*1*	*10-18*
Türkiye	*67*	*32*	*35*	*0*	*11-17*

5.2.1. Questionnaire Results – "Cybervictimization Questionnaire for adolescents"

Table 12 – Someone impersonated me on the Internet, posting comments on my behalf.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	62	58	204
Rarely	1	2	1	4
Often/Freq.	2	3	0	7
Always	0	0	1	2

Table 13 – Someone took photos or videos of me (e.g., at the beach, in a changing room, etc.) without my consent and posted them online.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	15	63	57	214
Rarely	3	2	5	3
Often/Freq.	2	1	4	4
Always	1	1	0	1

Table 14 – I was excluded or removed from a chat list, contact list, or messaging app (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger), for no reason.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	22	63	60	194
Rarely	0	1	0	5
Often/Freq.	0	0	2	2
Always	0	2	0	2

Table 15 – I received calls on my mobile phone that were not answered, seemingly just to annoy me.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	57	55	215
Rarely	3	5	4	0
Often/Freq.	0	3	4	5
Always	1	0	2	2

Table 16 – Someone published compromising photos or videos of me on the Internet without my permission to hurt or mock me

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	22	64	60	203
Rarely	0	0	0	12
Often/Freq.	1	3	4	6
Always	1	0	1	0

Table 17 – I received phone calls with insults or jokes made to mock me.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	55	55	209
Rarely	3	6	4	4
Often/Freq.	1	3	2	3
Always	0	1	0	2

Table 18 – Someone made fun of me with offensive or insulting comments on social media.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	58	51	191
Rarely	2	6	3	1
Often/Freq.	2	3	4	7
Always	0	0	2	2

Table 19 – Someone shared compromising images or videos of me (of a sexual or suggestive nature) via mobile or the Internet without my consent.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	55	54	213
Rarely	1	1	4	7
Often/Freq.	1	1	4	0
Always	1	2	1	2

Table 20 – I was beaten, and others recorded it and then shared the video.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	63	56	204
Rarely	3	5	6	7
Often/Freq.	1	0	3	7
Always	0	0	1	0

Table 21 – I received insults via text messages or instant messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp).

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	63	52	211
Rarely	1	0	4	4
Often/Freq.	1	3	3	6
Always	1	1	2	2

Table 22 – I was impersonated on platforms like X (Twitter) using a fake profile with my photo or personal information.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	55	55	201
Rarely	3	0	5	2
Often/Freq.	0	0	3	1
Always	0	1	1	0

Table 23 – Someone made false complaints about me on forums, social networks, or online games that led to me being banned.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	57	56	215
Rarely	1	3	1	3
Often/Freq.	2	2	4	4
Always	0	1	2	0

Table 24 – I was pressured to do things I didn't want to do, under the threat that my private conversations or images would be exposed.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	56	53	194
Rarely	2	6	4	7
Often/Freq.	2	2	1	0
Always	0	2	1	2

Interpretation – Based on the data presented in Tables 12 through 24, the "Cybervictimization Questionnaire for adolescents" surveyed students across four countries (Greece, Türkiye, Lithuania, and Portugal) regarding their experiences of cybervictimization. The results indicate

that while the majority of students reported never experiencing most of the listed cybervictimization incidents, a non-negligible number of students across the countries reported experiencing various forms of cybervictimization "Rarely," "Often/Freq.," or "Always".

Specifically, looking at the combined results across the four countries, a large number of students reported never being impersonated online, having photos/videos posted without consent, being excluded from chats, receiving annoying calls, having compromising photos posted, receiving insulting calls or texts, being made fun of on social media, having sexual/suggestive images shared, being recorded while being beaten, being impersonated on X (Twitter) with fake profiles, or facing false complaints leading to bans.

However, for almost every type of cybervictimization listed, some students indicated experiencing it with some frequency (Rarely, Often/Freq., or Always). For instance, being made fun of with offensive comments on social media (Table 18), receiving insults via text messages (Table 21), and being pressured under threat of exposure of private conversations/images (Table 24) show instances of occurrence beyond "Never" in all or most countries.

It is important to note that the number of "Rarely," "Often/Freq.," or "Always" responses, while lower than "Never," still represents a significant number of students who have experienced these negative online interactions. For example, in Portugal, several categories show dozens of students reporting experiences other than "Never," such as being impersonated online (Table 12), being excluded from chats (Table 14), receiving insulting calls (Table 17), being made fun of on social media (Table 18), receiving insults via text messages (Table 21), and being pressured (Table 24).

In summary, the data from this section suggests that while widespread, frequent cybervictimization is not the norm, these incidents are occurring to some extent for a portion of the student population across the surveyed countries. The prevalence varies depending on the specific type of victimization behaviour.

5.2.2. Questionnaire Results – " Cyber-aggression Questionnaire"

Table 25 – Some people forced me to do something humiliating, recorded it, and then spread it to ridicule me.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	63	54	194
Rarely	0	2	5	10
Often/Freq.	2	0	3	3
Always	1	1	0	0

Table 26 – Some people agreed to ignore me on social media.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	19	59	53	194
Rarely	3	2	5	3
Often/Freq.	2	2	2	4
Always	0	2	1	1

Table 27 – I received anonymous phone calls to threaten or intimidate me.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	57	64	194
Rarely	1	6	0	0
Often/Freq.	2	3	0	6
Always	0	0	2	1

Table 28 – Someone who got my password sent annoying messages to others pretending to be me.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	58	57	210
Rarely	0	4	4	0
Often/Freq.	2	1	2	5
Always	0	2	1	2

Table 29 – False rumours about me were spread on social media.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	60	51	192
Rarely	0	3	6	1
Often/Freq.	0	2	1	2
Always	1	1	1	2

Table 30 – I insulted or ridiculed someone on social media or messaging groups like WhatsApp to annoy them

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	22	57	60	196
Rarely	1	6	0	11
Often/Freq.	0	0	2	0
Always	1	1	0	2

Table 31 – I called someone's mobile phone and hung up to scare or annoy them.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	58	60	215
Rarely	1	6	3	0
Often/Freq.	1	1	0	1
Always	0	1	1	2

Table 32 – I threatened someone to force them to do things on the Internet or smartphone (e.g., record a video, give me money, do something bad).

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	56	59	195
Rarely	1	4	0	13
Often/Freq.	2	2	1	8
Always	0	2	2	1

Table 33 – I told someone's secrets or revealed personal things about them on social media or messaging groups (WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.).

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	62	59	206
Rarely	3	3	4	5
Often/Freq.	1	0	3	0
Always	0	0	0	2

Table 34 – I made or manipulated videos or photos of someone and uploaded or shared them online to make fun of them.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	60	52	207
Rarely	0	3	5	3
Often/Freq.	2	2	4	4
Always	1	1	2	0

Table 35 – I accessed someone else's profile or accounts without their permission.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	59	55	212
Rarely	0	6	2	4
Often/Freq.	1	1	4	4
Always	1	0	0	2

Table 36 – I pretended to be someone else online to say or do bad things.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	60	61	192
Rarely	2	6	3	11
Often/Freq.	2	1	1	2
Always	0	0	1	0

Table 37 – I created a fake webpage, forum, or group to mock and criticize someone publicly.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	18	57	53	201
Rarely	3	0	6	9
Often/Freq.	2	1	1	3
Always	1	2	0	1

Table 38 – I posted someone's phone number on the Internet along with false or harmful statements to get them into trouble.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	61	62	215
Rarely	3	3	4	0
Often/Freq.	1	3	0	4
Always	0	0	0	2

Table 39 – I took someone's smartphone and used it to send inappropriate photos, videos, or messages to others to cause them trouble.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	57	60	206
Rarely	1	6	1	12
Often/Freq.	2	2	4	4
Always	1	2	1	0

Table 40 – I mocked or made fun of comments, photos, or videos someone shared on social media or messaging groups.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	59	57	205
Rarely	1	4	6	1
Often/Freq.	1	3	2	6
Always	0	0	1	2

Table 41 – I created a fake profile online using someone else's personal data to say or do bad things

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	23	57	56	190
Rarely	0	5	5	7
Often/Freq.	0	3	3	1
Always	0	0	1	0

Table 42 – I ignored and didn't respond to someone's messages or posts on social media just to make them feel bad.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	21	61	58	211
Rarely	2	4	4	4
Often/Freq.	1	1	3	6
Always	0	0	2	0

Table 43 – I provoked someone on social media or in a group by insulting them to trigger a big argument.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	22	55	60	201
Rarely	0	6	5	12
Often/Freq.	2	2	1	7
Always	0	2	0	1

Table 44 – I stole private photos, videos, or conversations and shared them with others.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	55	50	207
Rarely	1	5	1	0
Often/Freq.	0	3	4	4
Always	1	2	1	2

Table 45 – I changed someone's social media password so they could not access their account.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	20	54	56	215
Rarely	0	5	4	2
Often/Freq.	2	3	4	3
Always	0	2	2	2

Table 46 - I sent messages to someone with provocations to annoy and offend them.

Response	Greece	Türkiye	Lithuania	Portugal
Never	19	59	56	204
Rarely	2	2	4	12
Often/Freq.	2	2	1	1
Always	1	1	0	2

Interpretation – Based on the data presented in Tables 25 through 46, the "Cyber-aggression Questionnaire" collected data from students in Greece, Türkiye, Lithuania, and Portugal about their engagement in various cyber-aggressive behaviours. Similar to the cybervictimization section, the data shows that the majority of students reported never engaging in most of the listed cyber-aggressive actions, but a number of students indicated having performed these actions with some frequency ("Rarely," "Often/Freq.," or "Always").

Key observations from the combined results across the four countries include:

A large proportion of students stated they never forced someone into humiliating acts, agreed to ignore someone online, received anonymous threats, sent annoying messages pretending to be someone else, spread false rumours, insulted/ridiculed others, made prank calls, threatened others online, told secrets, manipulated photos/videos, accessed accounts without permission, pretended to be someone else online for bad deeds, created fake pages to mock others, posted phone numbers with harmful statements, used someone's phone to send inappropriate content, mocked comments/photos/videos, created fake profiles, ignored messages to hurt feelings, provoked arguments, stole and shared private content, or changed someone's password.

However, various forms of cyber-aggression were reported by a subset of students. Behaviours such as agreeing to ignore someone on social media (Table 26), insulting or ridiculing someone on social media (Table 30), telling someone's secrets online (Table 33), accessing someone's profile/accounts without permission (Table 35), pretending to be someone else online (Table 36), ignoring messages to make someone feel bad (Table 42), and provoking arguments (Table 43) show instances of occurrence beyond "Never" across multiple countries.

In Portugal, specifically, there are higher numbers of students reporting "Rarely," "Often/Freq.," or "Always" for several items compared to other countries, such as forcing humiliating acts (Table 25), ignoring someone (Table 26), receiving anonymous threats (Table 27), sending annoying messages as someone else (Table 28), insulting/ridiculing someone (Table 30), threatening others online (Table 32), telling secrets (Table 33), manipulating photos/videos (Table 34), accessing accounts without permission (Table 35), pretending to be someone else (Table 36), creating fake pages to mock (Table 37), posting phone numbers with harmful statements (Table 38), using someone's phone to send inappropriate content (Table 39), mocking content (Table 40), ignoring messages to hurt feelings (Table 42), provoking arguments (Table 43), stealing/sharing private content (Table 44), and changing passwords (Table 45).

Overall, the data from this section indicates that while a large proportion of students do not engage in cyber-aggression, these behaviours are still being practiced by a notable segment of the student population across the surveyed countries. The frequency and types of reported aggression vary, suggesting that different forms of online harmful behaviour are present within the student body.

5.3. cbPROact Approach

The cbPROact approach emerges from the synthesis of data collected across four countries—Greece, Lithuania, Portugal, and Türkiye—via validated questionnaires measuring cybervictimization and cyber-aggression among adolescents. The data reveal critical patterns that necessitate a paradigm shift from reactive to proactive strategies in addressing cyberbullying within educational environments.

While a majority of students across all countries reported never having been directly involved in or targeted by cyber-aggression, the non-negligible proportion who disclosed experiences of both victimization and perpetration—ranging from impersonation and dissemination of harmful content to exclusion, threats, and ridicule—underscores a latent and diffuse risk. In particular, Portuguese students consistently reported higher frequencies of negative online behaviours, both as victims and aggressors, highlighting national and local disparities in digital social dynamics.

These results suggest that cyberbullying is not merely episodic or isolated but embedded in the everyday digital interactions of students, often remaining unaddressed due to its subtle, normalized, or anonymized nature. Therefore, schools must transcend conventional disciplinary responses and instead cultivate resilient, informed, and proactive school communities.

The cbPROact approach advocates for three core pillars:

- Proactive Intervention
- Local Contextualization
- Student Empowerment and Action

Proactive Intervention

Prevention must precede remediation. Schools should implement early-detection systems, such as anonymous digital reporting tools and regular well-being check-ins, informed by the patterns surfaced in the questionnaire data. The evidence that students often experience peer exclusion, harassment via private messages, and manipulation of digital identities calls for anticipatory educational frameworks that teach recognition, resistance, and reporting strategies before escalation occurs.

Local Contextualization

The heterogeneity of experiences across countries—and even within national demographics—indicates that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient. Effective intervention must be grounded in local realities: cultural norms, levels of digital literacy, and existing social support structures. For example, the higher prevalence of cyber-aggression in Portugal may demand targeted campaigns co-developed with local stakeholders—students, educators, psychologists, and families—that respond to specific risk patterns and sociocultural factors.

Student Empowerment and Action

Perhaps most crucially, the approach positions students not merely as passive recipients of protection but as active agents of change. Data from the questionnaires imply that while most students refrain from aggressive behaviours, a significant minority engages in them, often influenced by peer dynamics. This reinforces the importance of peer-led initiatives, such as digital citizenship clubs, student ambassadors, and collaborative media projects that foster empathy,

responsibility, and leadership. Integrating youth voices into anti-cyberbullying campaigns increases legitimacy and resonance among the student body.

In conclusion, the cbPROact approach reimagines cyberbullying prevention as a dynamic and participatory endeavour. It calls for localized, data-informed interventions and emphasizes student protagonism. By aligning strategic action with the lived digital realities of youth—as reflected in the questionnaire responses—schools can build inclusive ecosystems that not only prevent harm but cultivate digital resilience and ethical online engagement.

Bibliography

1. Álvarez-García, D., Barreiro-Collazo, A., Núñez, J. C., & Dobarro, A. (2016). Cybervictimization questionnaire for adolescents: Psychometric properties and relationships with social and emotional adjustment. Psicothema, 28(1), 104–110. https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2015.199
2. Álvarez-García, D., Núñez, J. C., Pérez, J. C., & Dobarro, A. (2016). Validity and reliability of the Cyber-Aggression Questionnaire for Adolescents (CYBA). The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context, 8(2), 69–77. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpal.2016.03.003
3. Assembleia da República. (2015). Lei n.º 83/2015, de 5 de agosto. Diário da República, 1.ª série — N.º 151
4. Ateş, T. (2018). National efforts in cybersecurity and technological advancements.
5. Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Prentice-Hall.
6. Beck, A. T. (1967). Depression: Clinical, experimental, and theoretical aspects. Harper & Row.
7. Bıçakçı, F., et al. (2015). Cybersecurity governance and the role of institutions. Turkish Journal of Security Studies, 4(2), 1-20.
8. BTK. (2018a). Definitions and scope of cybersecurity. Information and Communication Technologies Authority.
9. BTK. (2018b). Cybersecurity directives for critical infrastructure protection. Information and Communication Technologies Authority.
10. Children's Line, Youth Line, & Window to the Future. (n.d.). *Initiatives and emotional support for cyberbullying victim*
11. Comissão Nacional de Proteção de Dados. (2019). Lei n.º 58/2019, de 8 de agosto. Diário da República, 1.ª série — N.º 152
12. Council of Europe. (2021). Convention on Cybercrime: Budapest Convention. Recuperado de https://www.coe.int/cybercrime
13. Crick, N. R., & Dodge, K. A. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in children's social adjustment. Psychological Bulletin, 115(1), 74–101. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.115.1.74
14. Darıcılı, A. B. (2017). An analysis of Turkey's cybersecurity policies: Recommendations for a national model. TESAM Journal, 8(3), 240-250.
15. Del Rey, R., Casas, J. A., Ortega, R., & Elipe, P. (2019). Asegúrate: An intervention program against cyberbullying based on teachers' commitment and on design of its instructional materials. Comunicar, 26(56), 29–38. https://doi.org/10.3916/C56-2018-04
16. Direção-Geral da Educação. (2021). Programa SeguraNet. Recuperado de https://www.seguranet.pt
17. Direção-Geral da Educação. (2022). Relatório sobre Cyberbullying nas Escolas Portuguesas. Lisboa: DGE.
18. European Commission. (2019). General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection_en
19. European Commission. (2020). Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027. Recuperado de https://ec.europa.eu
20. European Safer Internet Project. (2018). *Safer Internet: Promoting safer use of the Internet and online technologies among children and young people*.
21. Ellis, A. (1962). Reason and emotion in psychotherapy. Lyle Stuart

22. Evaluation of the ViSC Program's Effectiveness in Preventing Cyberbullying. Available at: ViSC Program Official Website

23. Flores Builds, R., Caballer Miedes, A., & Romero Oliver, M. (2020). Effect of a cyberbullying prevention program integrated in the primary education curriculum. Revista de Psicodidáctica (English Edition), 25(1), 23-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psicoe.2019.08.004

24. Flores Builds, R., Caballer Miedes, A., & Romero Oliver, M. (2020). Effect of a cyberbullying prevention program integrated in the primary education curriculum. Revista de Psicodidáctica (English Edition), 25(1), 23-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psicoe.2019.08.004

25. Fredrick, S. S., Coyle, S., & King, J. (2023). Middle and high school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying prevention and digital citizenship. Psychology in the Schools, 60(6), 1958–1978. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22844

26. Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia. (2023). Linha Internet Segura. Recuperado de https://www.internetsegura.pt

27. Garaigordobil, M. (2011). Prevalence and consequences of cyberbullying: A review. International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy, 11(2), 233-254.

28. Garaigordobil, M., & Martínez-Valderrey, V. (2014). Effect of Cyberprogram 2.0 on reducing victimization and improving social competence in adolescence. Revista de Psicodidáctica, 19(2), 289-305.

29. Garaigordobil, M., & Martínez-Valderrey, V. (2015). Cyberprogram 2.0: Effects on aggressive behaviour and empathy. Computers in Human Behavior, 48, 548-553.

30. Gradinger, P., Strohmeier, D., & Spiel, C. (2009). Definition and measurement of cyberbullying. In S. Bauman, D. Cross, & J. Walker (Eds.), Principles of cyberbullying research: Definitions, measures, and methodology (pp. 9–28). Routledge

31. Hellenic Ministry of Education. (2021). No to school bullying campaign. Retrieved from https://www.minedu.gov.gr

32. Hellenic Ministry of Justice. (2018). Law 4577/2018 on Digital Safety. Government Gazette.

33. Integration of Intervention Research into Public Policy. Available at: German National Library

34. Kokkinos, C. M., & Antoniadou, N. (2019). Cyberbullying and adolescent mental health. Journal of Adolescence, 73, 87-95.

35. Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2014). Cyberbullying among college students: Evidence from multiple domains of college life. Psychological Bulletin, 140(4), 11311159.

36. Kwan, G., & Skoric, M. (2022). Digital activism and youth participation: Examining the role of social media in anti-cyberbullying campaigns. New Media & Society, 24(5), 987-1002. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211037542

37. Lithuanian Agency for Non-Formal Education. (2025). *National initiatives for safe internet and bullying prevention in Lithuania*

38. Livingstone, S., Stoilova, M., & Kelly, A. (2021). Cyberbullying and online risks: Comparing European policies. New Media & Society, 23(2), 333

39. Long, J., & Alexander, K. (2021). Teachers' self-efficacy in preventing and intervening in school bullying: A systematic review. International Journal of Bullying Prevention, 3(4), 243–258. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-020-00079-y

40. Macaulay, P. (2024). Cyberbullying and online safety: Student-led intervention is a winner. TeachingTimes. Retrieved from

41. Matos, M., Pereira, F., & Simões, C. (2021). Apoio Psicológico nas Escolas Portuguesas: Desafios e Oportunidades. Braga: Universidade do Minho.

42. Ministério da Educação. (2017). Referencial de Educação para a Cidadania. Lisboa: DGE.

43. Ministry of National Education. (2013). Family education series: Cyberbullying prevention. Ankara: Ministry of National Education Publications.

44. Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. (2016). National Cybersecurity Strategy and 2016-2019 Action Plan. Ankara: Ministry Publications.

45. Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications. (2013). National Cybersecurity Strategy and 2013-2014 Action Plan. Ankara: Ministry Publications.

46. MIT. (2018). National Intelligence Organization's role in signal intelligence.

47. Modecki, K. L., Minchin, J., Harbaugh, A. G., Guerra, N. G., & Runions, K. C. (2014). Bullying prevalence across contexts: A meta-analysis measuring cyber and traditional bullying. Journal of Adolescent Health, 55(5)

48. NSA. (2018). Responsibilities of the National Security Agency in cybersecurity.

49. Official Gazette No. 27261. (2009). Disaster and Emergency Management Law.

50. Official Gazette No. 28447. (2012). Establishment of the Cybersecurity Council.

51. Paluck, E. L., Shepherd, H., & Aronow, P. M. (2016). Changing climates of conflict: A social network experiment in 56 schools. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 113(3), 566-571. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1514483113

52. Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2021). Standing up, back, or aside: Cyberbullying bystanders and their motives for helping or not helping others. Youth & Society, 53(8), 1479-1503. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X20976299

53. Pereira, F., Matos, M., & Simões, C. (2020). Cyberbullying em Portugal: Prevalência e Impacto. Braga: Universidade do Minho.

54. REBE-ViSC Program Theoretical Model. Available at: ResearchGate

55. Sabah Newspaper. (2012). Transfer of GES Command to MIT.

56. Salmivalli, C. (2021). Bullying and peer dynamics: Understanding the power of the peer group. Annual Review of Psychology, 72(1), 591-614. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010419-050944

57. Salmivalli, C., KÃ¤rnÃ¤, A., & Poskiparta, E. (2013). Counteracting bullying in Finland: The KiVa program and its effects on different forms of bullying. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 35(5), 405411.

58. Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Hess, M., Pfetsch, J. S., & Scheithauer, H. (2018). Medienhelden: An intervention against cyberbullying. Computers in Human Behavior, 78, 224-232.

59. Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., & Livingstone, S. (2020). EU Kids Online 2020: Survey results from 19 countries. Londres: LSE.

60. Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., & Tippett, N. (2019). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 49(4), 376-385.

61. Strohmeier, D., & Spiel, C. (2012). ViSC Social Competence Program: Program manual. University of Vienna.

62. Strohmeier, D., Hoffmann, C., Schiller, E.-M., Stefanek, E., & Spiel, C. (2012). ViSC Social Competence Program. New Directions for Youth Development, 2012(133), 71–84. Available at: Wiley Online Library

63. Tozzo, P., Cuman, O., Moratto, E., & Caenazzo, L. (2022). Family and educational strategies for cyberbullying prevention: A systematic review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(16), 10452. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610452

64. Tozzo, P., Cuman, O., Moratto, E., & Caenazzo, L. (2022). Family and educational strategies for cyberbullying prevention: A systematic review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(16), 10452. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610452

65. Tsitsika, A., Janikian, M., Schoenmakers, T. M., & Tzavela, E. (2014). Cyberbullying and its impact on adolescent mental health. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 17(8), 554-559.

66. Ttofi, M. M., & Farrington, D. P. (2011). Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: A systematic and meta-analytic review. Journal of Experimental Criminology, 7(1), 27-56.

67. USOM. (2018). National Cyber Incident Response Center activities.

68. Van der Hof, S. (2018). The impact of the GDPR on children´s online privacy. Computer Law & Security Review, 34(2), 252272.

69. ViSC Social Competence Program in Turkey. Available at: SAGE Journals

70. Wang, X., Smith, P. K., & Hogan, J. (2023). Technology against cyberbullying: Student-developed apps for safer online interactions. Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 26(1), 45-59. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12345-023-98765-4

71. Willard, N. (2007). Cyberbullying and cyberthreats. Research Press.

72. Williford, A., Boulton, M. J., & Cross, D. (2022). Peer-led interventions: Examining their effectiveness in reducing school bullying. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 46(2), 105-118. https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254211036289

Authors' Biographies

Luís Coutinho is an elementary school teacher with over two decades of teaching experience, having started his career in 2001. He holds a Master's degree in School Management and is currently a PhD student in Educational Technology at the University of Minho, where he is also a researcher at the Research Centre on Education (CIEd). Certified as a teacher trainer, he has authored and co-authored several scientific publications in the areas of gamification in education, systematic literature reviews, and cyberbullying prevention. His research focuses on the integration of digital technologies to promote safer and more inclusive learning environments.

José Alberto Lencastre is an Associate Professor of Educational Technology in the Institute of Education at University of Minho, Portugal. His academic qualifications include a graduation in Visual Literacy (1991), a Master in Educational Technology (2002), a PhD in Educational Technology (2009),and a Postdoc in Educational Technology (2019). Teaching expertise relates to exploring innovative pedagogical practices focusing on active methodologies, blended learning models and digital technologies. Research interests involve the design of innovative pedagogy with new technologies to enhance teaching and learning processes. Website: jlencastre.com

Marco Bento has a degree in Basic Education (2003) and a Master's degree in ICT (2013). Marco is a recognised instructor in the use of mobile devices in education and training, currently acting as a lecturer in the School of Education at Polytechnic of Coimbra, Portugal. He is also a researcher in the doctoral programme Technology Enhanced Learning and Societal Challenges (TEL-SC) at the Institute of Education, University of Minho, Portugal. His research interests are in Mobile-Learning, Game-Based Learning, Gamification and Flipped Learning.

George Nastos is a teacher who has been serving as the Principal of the 25th Primary School of Larissa since June 21, 2023. He is a graduate of the Larissa Pedagogical Academy (1989) and of the Department of Primary Education at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (2000). In addition to his undergraduate studies, George Nastos pursued postgraduate studies in Sustainable Development at Harokopio University of Athens, specializing in Environmental Management. His master's thesis, titled "Environmental and Economic Factors as Determinants of the Sustainable Development of Primary Education School Units in the Municipality of Larissa", was successfully completed in 2012. George Nastos is also a PhD candidate, having completed and presented his dissertation at Harokopio University of Athens. His research focuses on Environmental Education in Primary Education in relation to Sustainable Development: "Policies and the Recording of Attitudes in the Past, Present, and Future." He has received certifications in the field of Information Technology, including levels A and B of the Information Society program.

Jolanta Šiurnienė is a deputy of the headmaster in progymnasium and an English teacher. She graduated Šiauliai university and obtained bachelor's degree in social sciences in 2000. Jolanta Šiurnienė graduated Vytautas Magnus University in 2005 and obtained the qualifications as an English teacher. She fulfilled the requirements for the programme of Educational Leadership and graduated with a Master of Business Management at ISM university of management and economics in 2020. Her final work was "Losses at school" based on Lean methodology.

Kristina Jačunskienė is a mathematics teacher and methodologist. In 2007, she graduated from Vytautas Magnus University and obtained a bachelor's degree in mathematics. In 2009, she graduated from Kaunas University of Technology and obtained a master's degree in management and business administration. She began her career at the school in 2009. In 2010, she graduated from Šiauliai University and obtained a specialty in subject pedagogy. In 2016, she graduated from Šiauliai University and obtained a specialty in information technologies. In 2024, she completed additional studies: "Strengthening the competences of teachers in national qualification improvement programs and master's studies". Since 2024, she has been the Cultural Coordinator for Millennium Schools.

Hülya Çam has taught English since receiving her B.A. in English Language Teaching from Anadolu University in 2002. She works with secondary classes, building fluency through projects and clear communication tasks. She completed the Intel Teach Program, the Teacher Practicum Mentorship Training Course, and Mentor Teacher Training for the Induction Program. Hülya now guides trainee teachers, leads short workshops on low-cost digital tools, and helps schools match lessons to national standards. Her current interests focus on preventing peer bullying, promoting media literacy, and using storytelling to encourage intercultural awareness.