# ABC Project summary for schools

The ABC (Anti-Bullying Certification) project was granted by the Dutch Erasmus+ authority to a partnership of GALE (Global Alliance for LGBT Education, Netherlands), Villa Montesca (Italy), CESIE (Italy), Merseyside Expanding Horizons (UK), ACCESO (Asociación Cívica de Comunicación y Educación “Sophia”, Spain, Smile of the Child (Greece) and EAN (European Anti-Bulling Network). GALE is the lead organization. The aim of the project is to develop a certification process to support schools in developing an effective anti-bullying policy, which includes sensitive attention to more general social inclusion and to 21th Century conflict solving skills among both students and school staff.

Why a certification process
We have noticed that many schools have some form of anti-pest policy, but often do not know properly which methods are most effective in counteracting bullying and creating a good atmosphere at school. In addition, the school leadership, the teachers and the students often have different experiences and opinions about how it is going to school. In this project we do not want to introduce a new anti-bullying program, but help the school to self-analyze, reflect and make customized measures. This reflection and rejuvenation process we call a certification process.

The certification procedure we intend to develop is not just a “check” of written anti-bullying procedures but also contains:

1. a social analysis and needs assessment
2. help for the school to integrate ongoing goal setting and planning
3. staff and student training
4. the development of a guide pointing to effective measures to structurally enhance the school learning and working climate

A key aspect of all this is how students and teachers deal with conflicts and whether the school functions as a model of non-violent problem solving skills and methods which are lodged in role-modelling democracy. The main aim of the certification process is not to prescribe best practices to the school but to enhance ownership and making own choices in an appropriate school policy.

## Planning

The project has 5 national partners, each working with one or two schools in their own country. The project partners start the project in January 2018 by elaborating a draft certification procedure and five mentioned products into testable toolkits. They also undertake a national review of anti-bullying and social inclusion policies.

Just before the summer vacation of 2018 of soon after it, a survey research is done in the schools as a needs assessment. The schools also do some interactive research in the form of "school visitation" days by students and staff.

In the schools, this is the first step of the certification process. The second step is to analyse the assessment results and decide about necessary measures. Then the implementation follows during one (or the rest of the) school year.

A staff training is a key element in any strategy. Another key element of successful anti-bullying strategies is organizing “golden weeks” at the start of the school year, during which student get to know each other, built social group process and agree about rules for pro-social behaviour. At the end of the school year, the impact of the pro-social/anti-bullying strategies is evaluated.

The project ends in December 2019. This gives the schools the opportunity to organize the “golden weeks” in an improved way in September 2019. It gives the other partners the opportunity to review the certification procedure, the training and the manual on effective measures, and to translate, publish and disseminate them. The products are presented during small conferences in the participating countries and on the European level in Brussels.

After the project period, the European Anti-Bullying Network (EAN) will sustain the certification strategy by stimulating her members to implement the procedure (at a cost-covering rate) in their own countries. EAN will also periodically update the procedure, the toolkit and the EAN certification training.

## International exchanges

An important aspect of the project is exchange of experiences and feedback on what we develop and experience. Exchange is part of school activities, but we also do three international exchanges.
Each international exchange takes 5 days. In addition to two employees of each project partner, two teachers, a school manager and six students per country participate (i.e. 1 teacher and 3 pupils per school, if we work with two schools). These exchanges are designed to explore the safety of the school, for advice on how to learn the development of useful tools for this and of course for intercultural differences, to speak English and to make friends.

1. The first exchange is scheduled in Palermo[[1]](#footnote-1) (April / May 2018). Here are the concept products discussed.
2. The two exchanges are in Liverpool (January / February 2019). This is halfway through the work in schools and we look at how the research, the training and the visitation have worked and discuss the most effective measures.
3. The third exchange is in Brussels (November / December 2019). This is at the end of the project. There is a presentation of the products to European institutions, because we hope that anti-pest policy will also get higher on the European agenda. As an international team we also look back on the project and what it has accomplished.

## Information for schools

We are looking for one or two schools to participate in this project.

What does this project offer and require of schools?

We offer:

* a free survey research report on bullying and social exclusion in your school
* a free training for teachers (one day)
* free facilitation of a students and teachers "visitation" or their own school (one day)
* coaching to make a school analysis of bullying and social exclusion
* assistance with implementing your own recommendations in the school, for example by organizing "golden weeks" at the start of the school year
* travel and accommodation for the participants in international exchange meetings

We require:

* that participating schools are committed to combat bullying and exclusion and support the idea to develop a way for schools to assess and enhance their strategy
* to take care of the logistic planning of the training, visitation and participation in exchanges
* that in between the exchanges, some staff and students offer feedback on the products we develop in the project: a certification procedure, a survey, a teacher training and a student/teacher school visitation day program

Note:

The project does not have staff costs/salaries for schools.

We would like to formalize the school commitment by writing down our cooperation in a cooperation agreement.

To be able to get the funding for the travel and accommodation of the school staff and students, we need to make volunteer contracts between the school staff and students and the project partner.

## Questions?

We are happy to visit you and discuss the project with you in detail.

1. This may be changed to Athens [↑](#footnote-ref-1)