

School violence in Serbia: findings, policy and interventions

Dragan Popadić

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

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The cases of school violence in media:

- Children recorded the fight by phone !!!
- The girl forced to eat grass !!!
- The teacher slapped by the pupil !!!
- Beaten up first brother then sister !!!
- The girl was bullied eight hours by her schoolmates !!!
- The pupil stabbed in the schoolyard !!!



1. PROGRAM

- **“School Without Violence -
Towards a Safe and Enabling Environment for Children”**
- Launched in 2005.
- Partners: UNICEF,
Ministry of education of Republic of Serbia
Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy



School Without Violence



Objective:

- to prevent and reduce violence against and among children in schools and to create safer environment for learning and development.
- addresses all forms of violence — verbal, physical, psychological and social.

Target audience: „Whole school“ approach: Children, school staff, parents, local community.

Methods:

- provides adults and children with practical knowledge on how to prevent and solve conflicts
- problems of violence and how to use restitution in solving conflicts that arise.

UNICEF role: to provide technical support, management and co-ordination and to secure funds for the implementation through in-country private sector fundraising activities.

- The strong communication campaigns

Program components

1. Research - researching violence in particular school and presentation of research results to children, teachers and parents.

Aim: to increase awareness and motivation for action by helping first school staff to measure and recognize that violence exists in schools

2. Education - education for adults working in schools.

Aim: to provide adults with practical knowledge on constructive communication and conflict management.

3. Peer participation - working with children on recognizing and discovering violence, peer protection, development of mutual trust and decreasing violent behaving between peers, organizing local actions for promotion of non-violence.

Activities:

- forum theater plays ;
- sport events such as fair-play tournaments;
- networking with other schools and peers in the programme;
- peer teams and their activities.

4. Work with parents

Activities:

- education sessions
- provision of education materials,
- their engagement in violence prevention activities

5. Media/local community - promotion of mutual cooperation and mobilization of public to build partnerships and active approach in decreasing violence in the community.

Aim: to establish protection networks and to reinforce social norms and cultural practices to create an environment that supports long-term sustainable change creating a safe and enabling environment for school children.

5. Institutional mechanisms - through documentation, procedures, school rules, prevention teams and programmes, internal and external protection networks, peer teams, etc.

Aim: Creation of sustained institutional mechanisms within school and with other relevant institutions and actors that would support prevention of violence, promotion of non-violent behaviour and adequate interventions to violence.

2. POLICY – INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS:

The components of the program are incorporated in:

- *General Protocol for the protection of children from abuse and neglect (2005)*
- *Special Protocol for protection of children from abuse and neglect in educational institutions (2007)*
- *Ministry of Education Action Plan for prevention of violence in educational institutions (2008)*
- *Manual for applying Special Protocol (2009)*
- *Rule Book for procedures in cases of child abusing and neglecting in educational institutions (2010)*
- *Law on education, draft education standards and indicators (2009/2010)*

As a result:

- Every school is obliged to form Prevention teams.
- Every school is obliged to write individual protective plans for work with the children involved in violence.
- The Intervention Unit established at the MoE level
- A pool of professionals as “school mentors” for prevention of violence against children in the education system has been established.

3. THE RESEARCH

- Research component (2005-2013)
- Certification of schools (2013-2016)
- Evaluation study (2009)

Research: Violence in Serbian Schools 2005 - 2013

Sample: **237** elementary schools.

109,151 students (3rd to 8th grade)

15,507 school staff (11,182 teachers)

Period: **2005-2013**. (12 phases).

The method: Survey.



Best of UNICEF Research

unicef 
Office of Research-Innocenti

2015

Results

Peer violence

- 44% victimised
- 21% bullies
- 14% bully/victims
- Bullying and victimization positively correlated ($r = 0,33$)
- For 17%, exposure to violence was stressfull event

Violence of school staff towards students

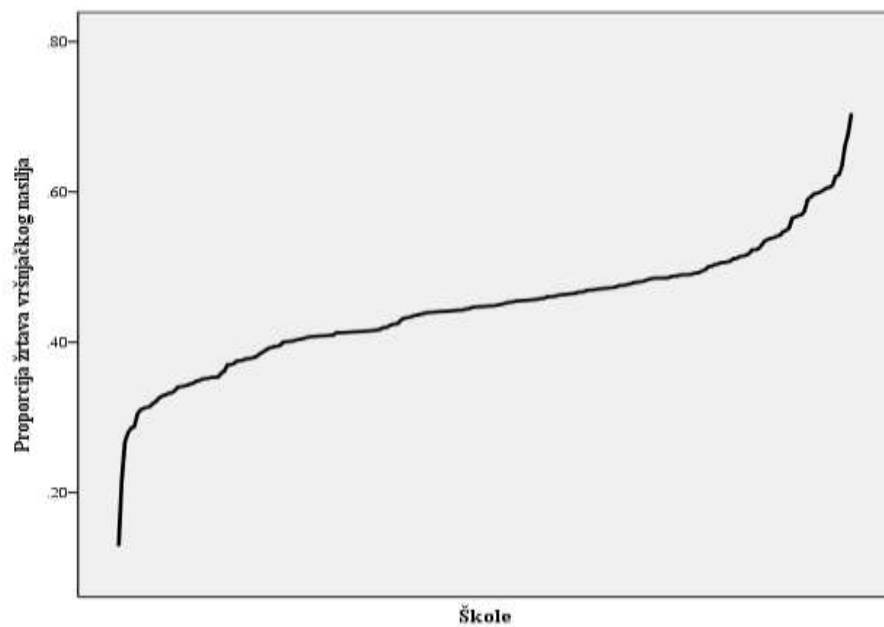
- 33% reported som form of violence
- 14% reported physical violence

Violence of students towards adults

- 18% at least once felt engandered
- 28% says that verbal violence towards teachers is serious problem in school
- 13% says that physical violence is serious problem.



Percentage of victimized students – by schools



Great differences between schools in percentage of victimized students (from 13% to 70%) and bullies (from 7% to 44%).

Teachers...

- tend to underestimate prevalence of violence;
- ignore low-intensity violence and focus only on more serious forms;
- tend to not notice cases of indirect violence;
- see the sources of violence outside of school;
- don't see connection between school violence and quality of teaching.

Relatively good news:

- According to comparative studies (WHO, 2008 and 2012), we are not the worst – on the contrary.
- Although 70% teachers believe the situation is worsening, we didn't notice the worsening since 2005.
- Trend of decreasing of violence of staff towards students (from 36% who complains to 23%).
- A lot of experts involved, connections with NGOs and GOs, good cooperation with police.

But...

- School staff overtired, overwhelmed with other tasks.
- Poor repertoire of teachers' intervention strategies.
- Surprisingly high level of tolerated violence between pupils and adults.
- School ethos not recognized as a factor of prevention of violence.

Research: Assesment of Safety of School Environment

Self-evaluation as a part of the program.

The schools in the program are certified as „School without violence“ after the assesment of school safety.

Five groups of indicators:

- A. Protection of school surrounding
- B. Preventive activities
- C. Situation estimated by students, teachers and parents
- D. School documentation of serious offenses
- E. Intervention measures

Data about the indicators are integrated in **SSE form** – Form for the assesment of Safety of School Enviroment.



Assessment of Safety of School Environment

Sources of data for certifications of schools






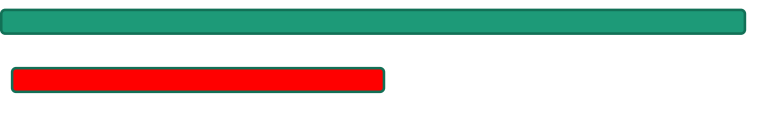


- ▶ SSE form filled by members of the school teams for prevention of violence
- ▶ questionnaires answered by teachers
- ▶ questionnaires answered by students
- ▶ questionnaires answered by parents
- ▶ mentor's report on the situation in school

Certification of schools – An example of comparisons of schools

Škola 1	Škola 2	Škola 3	Škola 4	Škola 5	Škola 6	Škola 7	Škola 8	Škola 9	Škola 10	Škola 11	Škola 12	Škola 13	Škola 14	Škola 15
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	14	14	4	16	14	1	1	9	17	3	7
4	7	3	9	1	1	7	17	1	7	4	16	3	7	14
7	9	4	17	4	9	10	1	16	9	7	1	4	10	4
10	10	5	6	6	16	14	4	6	10	8	4	6	14	6
13	4	6	7	7	17	16	6	7	3	10	7	7	16	9
14	6	7	10	9	6	17	7	9	6	12	10	9	17	10
5	8	8	13	10	7	18	9	10	8	5	13	10	4	12
6	11	10	14	12	10	1	10	12	12	6	17	12	5	13
8	13	11	15	13	13	5	12	13	13	9	3	13	6	16
9	14	12	16	15	18	6	11	15	14	13	5	1	8	18
11	15	13	11	3	5	12	13	18	15	14	6	5	12	1
15	16	14	12	5	3	13	14	3	17	16	8	8	13	3
16	17	15	3	8	4	15	15	4	11	3	11	11	15	8
18	12	16	4	11	8	3	18	5	4	11	12	15	18	11
3	3	17	5	16	11	8	5	8	5	15	14	18	1	15
12	5	18	8	17	12	9	8	11	16	17	15	14	9	17
17	18	9	18	18	15	11	3	17	18	18	18	16	11	5

	Excellent
	Very good
	Good
	Bellow standards

Indicators from the school documentation

Number of fights injuries among students (from 15 schools)		122 56
Number of incidents with students from other schools (17)		6 2
Damages of school property or documentation (17)		33 9
Cases of theft and robbery committed by students (17)		43 13
Aggression towards teacher (17)		22 5
Mean number of unjustified absences (14)		1918 1052
Number of cases of violence on 2nd level (15)		127 46
Number of cases of violence on 3rd level (14)		12 12

Almost all evidenced forms of violence are reduced to a third or half.

The Evaluation study

- Conducted in 2009.
- Sample: 40 out of 100 schools
- 4,922 children, 1635 teachers
- Quantitative and qualitative components

Conclusions

- The greatest achievements in the realms of information and learning.
- Greater awareness what violence is.
- Greater readiness to speak openly about violence and to report the violence.
- More successful among younger children.

Challenges:

- Program is complex and demands the active engagement.
- School staff is overburdened with other obligations – lack of time and resources.
- Major role of initial motivation to enter in program.