

21 August 2012

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIFTH MONITORING AND EVALUATION COLLOQUIUM OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Working together to end  
bullying - the prevention of  
bullying in Gauteng schools



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# Table of Contents

Page

Executive summary	2
Participants	2
Opening Remarks	3
Keynote Address	5
Ms. Barbara Creecy	5
MEC for Education – Gauteng	5
Bullying	9
Gita Dennen	9
Childline	9
Understanding and addressing bullying in schools	15
Salim Vally	15
Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, University of Johannesburg	15
Nature, extent and impact of bullying among secondary school learners in Gauteng	18
Professor Deon Tustin and Mrs. Goodness Zulu	18
The prevention and management of school violence as a result of peer victimization	22
<i>John Buswell</i>	
<i>Rape Wise</i>	
Discussion in Session	25
The child-teacher technology gap	27
Arthur Goldstuck	27
World Wide Worx	27
Policies and practices for managing cyber-bullying in the classroom	33
<i>Patrick Burton</i>	
<i>Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention</i>	
Discussion in Session	37
Summation and issues for consideration	38
Conclusion and way forward	40

## Executive summary

In August this year, the Gauteng Department of Education held a colloquium on Working Together to Prevent and End Bullying in Gauteng Schools. The colloquium was addressed by Barbara Creecy, Member of the Executive Council responsible for Education in Gauteng. Participants included members of the Education Portfolio Committee, researchers, senior departmental officials and external stakeholders.

### Speakers

The colloquium focused on the occurrence, nature and extent of bullying, including cyber-bullying, as well as interventions which can be put in place to prevent this problem. The speakers were:

- Gita Dennen, from Childline managing the Community Awareness and Prevention Programme (CAPP) and Training since 2007.
- Salim Vally, the director of the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg and the coordinator of the Education Rights Project.
- Goodness Zulu, researcher at the Youth Research Unit (BMR) and Prof. Deon Tustin, Executive Research Director of the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at the University of South Africa.
- John Buswell, CEO of Rape Wise, and responsible for the development of the school and ParenTeen foundations, Rapkids and Rapteens, and through these reaching and educating thousands of learners and parents every year.
- Patrick Burton, Executive Director Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP). He is leading the team reviewing the Toolkit, and is responsible for the development of additional modules on bullying (including cyber-bullying), classroom management and positive discipline for the Department of Basic Education.
- Arthur Goldstuck, the Head of World Wide Worx, a research organization, and an award-winning writer, analyst and commentator on Internet, mobile and business and consumer technologies.

### Key insights from speakers

- We must have a collaborative commitment to act and work together to end bullying.
- Every school should have a “no-bullying” policy which is actively implemented, and is included cyber-bullying. Children and parents should be made aware of the policy, and of the consequences of bullying.
- Bullying is extremely pervasive. Exposure to violence and the culture of violence make bullying more likely to be a problem.
- We should all be creating a Pedagogy of Joy and Rigour. It is important to not only emphasize the cognitive element of education, but the Affective element also has to take up its rightful place. The notion of “kragdadigheid” (“acting with force”) is not the vision we want to build in our country.
- Traditional forms of bullying are still prevalent and popular with the youngsters. However, the presence of cyber-bullying and sexting is increasing strongly. Younger people recognise that

technology is creating a form of bullying and that it is contributing to the ongoing forms of bullying. Bullying displaces younger learners and this trend is not declining but it is a consistent form of victimisation that children are exposed to.

- Parents need to be workshopped about parenting skills. It has emerged that most of the parents are raising their children in an educationally inappropriate way and it is such children who tend to be bullies. Some of the parents are even scared of their children; such children have a tendency to make unreasonable demands and they hold everyone at ransom. Hence children growing up in such circumstances become bullies. It is crucial that we should focus on the very important idea of restorative discipline.
- Teachers need to be upskilled in four areas, viz. Internet tools for subject teaching and research; social media (blogs, etc.) tools for teaching, research and sharing; social networking (Facebook, IM, etc.) tools for communicating with each other and students, and understanding the context of their students; and cell phone knowledge, to understand how students are communicating on campus.
- It is important that awareness of cyber-bullying (and bullying in general) should be created and then a change of behaviour has to take place.
- Policy to deal with these phenomena should be put in place. The implementation of the policy is to be monitored and the school management should take accountability in this whole process.

## Participants

1. Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD)
2. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
3. Federation of Association of Governing Bodies (FEDSAS)
4. Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)
5. Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)
6. Gauteng Education Development Trust (GEDT)
7. Governors Alliance (GA)
8. Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership (MGSL)
9. National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB)
10. Office of the Premier
11. Rape Wise S.A
12. South African Principals' Association (SAPA)
13. South African Teachers' Union (SAOU)
14. University of Johannesburg (UJ)
15. University of Pretoria (Deans Forum)
16. University of the Witwatersrand (WITS)
17. University of South Africa: Bureau for Market Research
18. University of South Africa (Deans forum)
19. University of South Africa (Youth Research Unit)
20. World Wide Worx

## Opening Remarks



**MR. BOY NGOBENI**  
Head of Department,  
Gauteng Department of Education

It is quite clear that bullying as a phenomenon seems to be like a virus that is attacking our society and it comes in many forms. More often I like to believe that the perpetrators of bullying suffer from, what I would like to call, a Goliath mentality. This refers to a phenomenon that speaks about survival of the fittest; a phenomenon that sees victims being branded cowards; a phenomenon where a child who reports any act of bullying, is likely to be bullied even more. Instead of getting support and help, you are likely to be further punished and told to fight back in the same way or if not worse than the bully. So begins the cycle of the bullied becoming the bully.

With the advent of technology we see, once again, that bullying is now evolving and is now mostly used in the cyber space what we call cyber-bullying. This type of bullying occurs through the use of cellphones and the internet.

While bullying can take place anywhere, even at home or in the work place, I think it is the worst in a school environment because when the child goes to school, he or she is surrounded by adults, fellow pupils. It should be an environment where you will expect protection. The child spends many hours of their lives at school and develops social skills to deal with life here. That is why it is very important for us to confront this issue and to break the vicious cycle of bullying.

We need to confront what I call the Goliath phenomenon: where victims are being branded cowards, so that people are not afraid to report instances of bullying, and that those who are in authority will be able to view all reporting of bullying in a serious light and ensure that young people are assisted.

Whilst the Department invests substantial resources to improve the quality of learning and teaching, bullying in schools remain one of the possible threats towards the delivery of quality education. Bullying, if not addressed, can have serious consequences for both the victim and the perpetrator. Victims often refuse to go to school or even drop out of school. They struggle with poor self-esteem and can become depressed and withdrawn. In serious cases of bullying, victims have committed suicide or have even murdered their victims. Some studies have shown that bullying also has harmful long-term effects on the bully. Bullies often become involved in criminal activities later in life and struggle to form positive relationships with others.

It is in this regard that we have gathered here to discuss and share ideas in developing a simple strategy which can be provided to all schools to effectively curb this phenomenon.

### **The main objectives of this colloquium are as follows:**

- To establish the current trends regarding bullying;
- To assess the impact of bullying on the school life of children, on learning and teaching, and

- the overall functionality of schools; and
- To explore solutions to minimise the incidence and consequences of bullying and the impact on the environment of the school, and improve learner conduct to embrace issues of human dignity and tolerance

This is a phenomenon that our MEC is very passionate about ending. We have a number of programmes that assist us in doing this, for example the school safety programme. We realize that it is something that we cannot do alone. That is why we have organized this colloquium to bring together all the voices that will help us find ways of dealing with bullying. With this I would like to hand over to our MEC, Ms Barbara Creecy, who will now give her keynote address.

*Thank you!*

## Keynote Address



**MS. BARBARA CREECY**  
MEC for Education - Gauteng

*“Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”*

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition

This requires all of us with the position and capacity to influence decisions to side with the weak against the strong.

On behalf of the Gauteng Department of Education, I would like to welcome each one of you to this Colloquium on Bullying, as well thanking you for making the time to join us as part of your commitment to find solutions to the problem of bullying in Gauteng.

The Colloquium theme, Working Together to End Bullying, speaks directly to our hope and outcome for our colloquium. We gather to be strengthened with new knowledge, research and practices which will inspire, invigorate, challenge and renew our collective courage to act collaboratively to stop bullying. We will hear from outstanding experts who will provide research, strategies and solutions for schools and communities in bullying prevention and intervention.

### 1. Context of the discussion

The issue of bullying is not a new phenomenon in Gauteng schools. It includes antisocial behaviours that we deal with on a daily basis in society which manifest itself in the form of disciplinary problems in our schools. These behaviours include harassment, assault, physical harm, racial abuse, homophobic actions, repeatedly demeaning speech and efforts to ostracise or belittle another person. What is new is the use of cellphone and internet technology in bullying, a phenomenon known as cyber-bullying.

## 2. Forms of Bullying

During 2011/12 financial year, a number of incidences related to both traditional bullying and cyber bullying has been reported in Gauteng Province involving learners in schools. Therefore the development of these recent incidences requires a comprehensive analysis of traditional bullying as well as new trends of cyber bullying. One such case that caught the media's attention reported recently by the Pretoria News (2012/02/09) is that of a teenage girl who was named and intimidated via Facebook and Blackberry's BBM chat with a series of threats, name-calling and making nasty comments.

### ***Other incidents range from:***

- Teasing and threats, making fun and belittling
- Physical assault and grievous bodily harm
- Sexual assault
- Initiation practices resulting in humiliation and physical harm
- Cyber-bullying, or bullying through technology such as social networking sites, instant messages, or text messaging, presents a new challenge for broader bullying prevention considerations. Unlike traditional forms, cyber-bullying can occur 24/7 to a wide audience and gives those who engage in the behaviour a false sense of anonymity. Because cyber-bullying can happen anywhere, at anytime, this breakout will focus on the additional challenges to addressing this behaviour.

### ***A poll conducted in 24 countries by the global research company Ipsos for Reuters News, the results of which were published in January 2012 found the following:***

- One in ten parents online (12%) around the world say their child has experienced cyber bullying
- One in four (24%) of those parents say they know a child in their community who has experienced cyber-bullying and of those, 60% say the children experienced the harassing behaviour on social networking sites like Facebook.

These findings are backed up by similar studies into cyber-bullying by well-known research agencies.

## 3. Impact of bullying on learning

For the victim, the consequences of bullying can be long lasting and severe. Often these are linked to serious psychological trauma, from low self-esteem and depression to the inability to concentrate at school due to the stress of worrying about one's next 'assault'. The most worrying consequence of bullying is the perpetuation of the bullying cycle. Some learners withdraw to the point of committing suicide, change in sleeping patterns, suffer from night terrors; often comes home with bruises, reluctance to go to school which result in dropout. At least two learners in Gauteng have committed suicide and others are afraid.

### ***The consequences of bullying directly affect the victim and often extend to the family that find themselves powerless to deal with the issues. These manifest in:***

- Anxiety

- Inability to concentrate on schoolwork
- Absenteeism
- Physical injuries
- Long-term psychological damage including low self-esteem, depression and anti-social behaviour;
- Disability; and
- Suicide.

Research also shows that a tolerance or lack of response to incidents of bullying not only reinforces bullying but that a tolerant environment creates even more bullies.

#### **4. What the GDE is already doing to improve learning**

##### ***School Safety Policies and Plans***

The department has formulated a Schools Safety Strategy that guides schools to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with all forms of safety issues facing the school and more importantly the learners. In support of this strategy, high-risk schools have benefitted from training on the formulation of a school safety plan. The department is in the process of providing all schools with a pro-forma School Policy to guide their planning.

The policy will help school management, educators, parents, and even learners on what to do with regards to bullying. It will cover code of conduct for parents, learners, educators and role of other significant stakeholders. Copies of this policy will be given to school managers, educators, parents, and learners. Schools will be encouraged to periodically review policy to ensure appropriateness, effectiveness, and completeness in order to maintain its usefulness over time. In this way, we hope the policy will be respected and enforced as the department has adopted a collaborative approach.

The incorporation of violence prevention in the curriculum has been identified as a key element in empowering learners to deal with peer pressure and bullying. Learners are imparted with skills particularly related to non-violent living skills, conflict resolution and anger management.

##### ***Psycho-Social Support***

The department has also developed a multi-disciplinary team to provide psycho-social support in the event of an incident involving bullying and violence amongst learners. Lay counsellors have been appointed to provide support to schools. Some counsellors hold violence prevention classes or workshops for learners, and some schools provide special programmes on preventing violence and gang activity for high-risk learners.

##### ***School Patrollers***

The department has introduced school patrollers to provide 24-hour security in schools and to assist with learner supervision in and around schools, before and after schools and during breaks. In some schools, we are implementing security cameras, metal detectors at the school's entrance, security guards, and uniforms for the learners. These strategies are in place to catch learners with weapons and to prevent unauthorised persons from entering the school.

## **Main duties/ responsibilities of School Patrollers**

- To control access to the premises and safeguard GDE premises;
- To monitor the scholar transport facilities – arrival time, departure time and state of cleanliness of the buses;
- Write and report all incidents that are threatening safety of learners and employees
- Patrol the premises; and
- Conduct escort duties.

## **5. Key Challenges that need to be addressed by the Colloquium**

There is a high rate of under-reporting of incidents of bullying. While the true extent of bullying is not known and will not be known because in most instances we find that learners or their parents do not report the incidents of bullying out of fear of unknown consequences and/or further victimisation; or the way in which schools manage these incidents to contain the problem or conceal to maintain the “perfect” record of schools. There are questions that we need to pose and deliberate on during this colloquium:

- How widespread is this challenge in schools?
- What form does it take?
- Is there a particular risk profile for victims or perpetrators; and
- How does an understanding of this help us tackle the problem?

As a department and the broader community, we need to focus on a number of levers:

### ***In-School Policies***

Establishing clear and consistent policies in schools is key to establishing a climate in which it is clear that no bullying, regardless of form, type or severity, will be tolerated in school. Effective policies rely not only on carefully crafted policies but also on consistent implementation and messaging about the policies. This breakout will focus on the need for policies, their key components, and the tools for implementation.

### ***In-School Programmes***

Preventive education and supportive school structures are important elements in reducing bullying in schools. Yet, few evidence-based programmes have proven effective at reducing bullying in some schools and those that have are cost-prohibitive for many schools. This breakout will focus on how schools can achieve the support necessary to implement effective bullying prevention strategies.

### ***Community-Based Programmes***

Bullying does not just occur at schools and its effects can be felt throughout a community. Schools and communities must work together to help identify bullying, implement prevention strategies, and communicate a consistent message that bullying is not okay. This breakout will focus on how all stakeholders in a community can work together to prevent bullying.

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

An African Proverb says “If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

May we heed these words and collaboratively have the commitment to act and Work Together to End Bullying.

I would like to wish the speakers and all the participants well in their deliberation.

*Thank you!*

## Bullying



GITA DENNEN  
Childline

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated, systematic hurtful words or other behaviour by one person to another.

### ***Bullying can be***

- Direct, for example, physical assault, verbal or written harassment, or
- Indirect, for example, exclusion from social groups, intimidation, manipulation, etc.

### **Bullying in South Africa**

A study conducted in Gauteng found that almost 61% of the 207 study participants reported that they were victimized during the 2002 school year.

In 2011 Childline Gauteng conducted their Schools Programme in 76 schools. Of the 1 261 children who came to disclose that they were being abused, 12.1% were victims of bullying. In two of the schools visited, this figure rose to 42% of all disclosures.

A study was conducted by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention in 2009, surveying young South Africans from four provinces. In the survey, a quarter of the youngsters experienced bullying via cellphone and text messages, and one in five admitted to having bullied someone via text messaging. Seventy percent of those who bullied other children had themselves been victims of bullying.

Bullying is frequently overlooked or ignored because teachers and parents are often unaware that it is happening. Or, if they are aware of it, they do not know how to deal with it. The situation is worsened by the fact that many victims of bullying are often afraid to report it for fear that things will get worse for them.

In South Africa there is a culture of violence, including the widespread continued use of corporal punishment in homes and schools. This leads to the normalization and acceptance of violent behaviour. This, in turn, leads to low levels of reporting – the perception is that this is normal, and nothing can/will

be done about it.

## **Myths about bullying**

The following are some of the myths about bullying; they are wide-spread beliefs that stop us from acting on bullying:

- Bullying is just part of growing up.
- Only boys get bullied. (The fact is that there is a lot of indirect bullying by girls taking place - it is, however, in many instances more psychological.)
- Bullying does not happen in our school.
- Bullying is a rite of passage.
- Bullying strengthens a child's character. (Some adults believe that it can be building a person's character – "Sticks and stones can't break my bones".)
- If bullying is ignored it will eventually stop.
- Children grow out of it.
- Children who are subject to being bullied ask for it.
- Bullying is an overstated problem.

## **What constitutes bullying?**

### ***Physical bullying***

Physical bullying can take on different forms. Forcing children to do things they do not want to do is a form of physical bullying, as well as taking other children's belongings; kicking, hitting, punching, pushing, choking, tripping children up. Other forms of physical bullying may consist of demanding money; pulling down the victim's pants or snapping bras; and even damaging property.

### ***Verbal bullying***

Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying. This type of bullying can consist of verbal threats that are being made to the victim; teasing, mocking or taunting of another person; to make threatening and embarrassing gestures; the writing of nasty letters about someone; insulting a person's family members; calling people names and swearing.

### ***Psychological bullying***

Psychological bullying can consist of spreading rumours (that are not factual) about someone; excluding someone from activities or groups; telling others to stop liking a specific person; trying to dominate a person; intimidating someone by staring at him or her; humiliating or making a fool out of someone; making a person feel scared because of your conduct and attitude; using intimidation to extort goods from the victim.

### ***Cyber-bullying***

Cyber-bullying is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. This can occur by means of word, sound or picture messaging. If an adult is involved it is called cyber-harassment.

The methods that are used in cyber-bullying are limited only by the child's imagination and access to technology. Children often change roles, going from victim to bully and back again. There were instances where children have killed each other and others have committed suicide after having been involved in a cyber-bullying incident. It must be noted that cyber-bullying is usually not a one-time communication act but extends over a period of time.

### **Signs of bullying**

There are a range of different signs that a child is the victim of a bully. These signs may be the following: unexplained bruises, scratches, and cuts on the victim's body; the child may seem sad, moody, or depressed; the child can show signs of withdrawal; loss of appetite; trouble sleeping; may demonstrate a poor self-esteem; may have suicidal thoughts or attempts to commit suicide may even occur; thoughts or acts of revenge, including murder. There can further be a loss of interest in or refusal to go to school and extramural activities; there could be frequent complaints of illness to avoid attending school; a sudden decrease in academic performance; the child may have only a few or no friends whom he or she spends time with; may seem afraid of going to school, riding the bus/taxi, walking to school, or taking part in organized activities with peers; and takes a long or illogical route to school in order to avoid the bully or bullies.

### **Signs of cyber-bullying**

Many children and teenagers who are cyber-bullied are reluctant to tell a teacher or parent, often because they feel ashamed of the social stigma, or because they fear their computer privileges will be taken away at home. The signs that a child is being cyber-bullied vary, but a few things to look for are: emotional distress during or after using the internet or the phone; being very protective or secretive of their digital life; withdrawal from friends and activities; avoidance of school or group gatherings; "acting out" in anger at home; and changes in mood, behaviour, sleep, or appetite.

### **Impact on the bully**

Studies have shown that bullying also has harmful long-term effects on the bully. This is so because the line between bullying someone and being bullied is very blurred. Bullies have a higher risk of developing substance abuse problems; developing anxiety or depression; dropping out of school before their peers. Bullies often become involved in criminal activities later in life. Furthermore, bullies may later in life struggle to form positive relationships with others – they may become abusive towards their partners and/or children.

### **Reasons for bullying**

There are many reasons why some children may become bullies and others become the victims of bullying. It also relates, for example, to the ways in which children internalize or externalize their anger. Fried and Fried (1996) identified the following factors that influence bullying behaviour: individual traits; family circumstances; the school environment; the community; and culture.

#### ***Individual traits***

A child's personality has a lot to do with how she or he experiences bullying. Children who are inclined to be aggressive, anti-social and defiant are often identified as bullies. Children sometimes become bullies when they have learning problems and are not succeeding at school. Part of our prevention strategies should be looking at poor performance of learners. On the other hand, they may often be victimized

because they are teased and picked on for being 'different'. Bullies can also be bright, successful and popular children who use popularity to control others and become more popular. Bullies can have very good leadership skills.

### ***Family circumstances***

Bullies are often children who come from a dysfunctional home environment, but this is not always the case. Children are more likely to become bullies if they come from families where there are high levels of violence, a lack of clear rules, little discipline or inconsistent discipline, poor supervision and little interest in the child from the side of the parents. In many families there is very little supervision from the parents, and in many instances parents see their children only very early in the morning and very late at night during the week because of the working circumstances of the parents. Children who grow up in a family where there is little love, respect and support often lack empathy, tolerance and respect for others.

### ***The school environment***

Schools that ignore bullying and even condone bullying in the form of initiation, whereby children are forced to perform acts that are inhumane and degrading, actually contribute to bullying behaviour. When schools adopt a no-bullying policy and help educators to identify and deal with it, they are more likely to reduce the incidence of bullying by creating a safe environment.

### ***The community***

Children who grow up in a community where violence is common and where children are exposed to and witness aggressive behaviour, are subjected to the abuse of power and learn to settle differences by violent and aggressive means. These children are then more likely to develop patterns of bullying behaviour which are carried into the school and onto the playground.

### ***Culture***

Cultural practices that are indifferent to (that is, don't care about) violence, sexism and racism also influence a child's behaviour and attitude towards others. For example, some people have the attitude that "only sissies run away from bullies" and that the only way to solve conflict is by means of violence - "If he hits you, hit him back".

As referred to earlier, South Africa has a culture of violence. This culture is prevalent in many communities. In our schools it is demonstrated regularly in the form of corporal punishment and in our homes by domestic violence. Crime rates are very high, and crime is frequently accompanied by violence. This results in the normalization of and continued perpetuation of violence by children.

## **What can you do?**

### ***Tips for parents***

Parents should develop an open, communicative relationship with their children. The child's self-esteem must be build. Children should be encouraged to engage in hobbies/activities which build esteem. Parents and their children should talk about school on a daily basis. They must also talk about bullying and its consequences. Parents have to talk to the educator about how the child is doing socially at school.

In addition, parents should educate their children and teach them empathy. Children are to be taught to care for others. Parents should have a non-violence policy at home which prohibits physical, verbal and written violence. Parents should treat their children with respect and request respect in return.

Children should not be allowed to hang around empty playgrounds or stay late at school alone. Parents must teach their children to always use the buddy system. Furthermore, parents should not allow a child to carry large sums of money or valuable possessions.

### ***Tips regarding cyber-bullying***

Parents should never give their children access to electronic media without a clear understanding of what it may and may not be used for. Parents must establish rules. These rules should be preferably in writing. Parents and children can enter into a contract and both parents and children should sign.

### **If your child has been bullied**

Parents should never tell a child just to ignore the bullying. The victim should not be blamed. Parents must ask their child for details about who was involved, what happened, when, where, how often or whether any other children or adults witnessed the incidents. Parents should not encourage physical retaliation. It is important that parents should work with their child's school. In the case where parents' emotions are bound to run high, they have to try to keep them under control. Parents must stay rational and stick to the facts when working with school officials to remedy the situation. Parents should make contact with the alleged bully's parents, and arrange to work with a school counsellor or a social worker as a mediator. Parents must also get help from an organization like Childline.

### **What if my child is the bully?**

In the case where your own child is the bully, a parent should act in the following way:

- Help the child to acknowledge the behaviour.
- Do not deny that the bullying has taken place and do not over-protect your child when he or she is the bully.
- Encourage logical and child-appropriate consequences.
- Ensure that your child knows that the behaviour is unacceptable but that you still love him/her.
- Get help from an organization like Childline – your child may experience hurt and be angry about a very real problem.

### **Tips for children regarding cyber-bullying**

Children should limit their cell phone use, and be very cautious about any pictures they share with others. The cell phone should be kept locked if possible. Children must also be very selective about who they give their number to and should keep a list. When a child receives a call from an anonymous number, you should not say anything when you pick up – a genuine caller will usually speak up, a bully will usually hang up.

When children receive threatening or offensive sms's they should not reply. The sms's should, however, not be erased as it might be needed as evidence. In cases where children get threatening or offensive

calls, they should not show any emotions to the bully but hang up. Children should speak to an adult that they trust and who can help. The cell phone service provider should be contacted to block the bully's number if it is available.

### **What should the school do?**

The United Nations Study on Violence against Children recognizes that successful initiatives have key elements in common: "they are based on the recognition that all children have equal rights to education in settings that are free from violence, and that one of the functions of education is to produce adults imbued with non-violent values and practices".

UNICEF identifies a number of key elements that can contribute to reducing and even ending violence in all school settings. These elements are:

- Developing holistic, whole school strategies;
- Partnering with children;
- Providing support for teachers and other staff;
- Changing attitudes and working with social norms;
- Securing children's legal protection; and
- Consolidating data and research.

Every school should have a "anti-bullying" policy which is actively implemented, and includes cyber-bullying. Children and parents should be made aware of the policy, and of the consequences of bullying.

Both victims and bullies should be assisted. Schools should teach and implement (model) non-violent values. Schools can be very effective in working with the parents to stop and remedy bullying situations. They can educate the educators, students and parents on cyber ethics.

Schools should also teach non-violent conflict resolution in life skills education – bullying and its consequences should be discussed.

Schools can develop a lesson plan using the "Traffic Light" model.

#### ***The Traffic Light Model***

This model teaches a number of skills:

- **"STOP"** teaches self control, perceptual and communication skills.
- **"THINK"** teaches cognitive problem solving skills.
- **"DO"** teaches behavioural skills.

The Traffic Light Model can be used from Grade R upwards: the teacher should make a poster; get children to colour in; and do role plays. On a daily basis children can be reminded and the Model be reinforced.

## Conclusion

Bullying is extremely pervasive. Exposure to violence and the culture of violence make bullying more likely to be a problem. Bullying has negative consequences for both the victim and the bully. Cyber-bullying is on the increase and needs to be dealt with. Both parents and educators need to work together to prevent bullying, and deal with it when it happens.

## Understanding and addressing bullying in schools



**SALIM VALLY**  
Centre for Education Rights &  
Transformation, University of  
Johannesburg

### Introduction

Our nation is in mourning; violence still permeates our country and is affecting our life in this country. Survey after survey shows that what happens in the community, what happens at home spills over into the playground, into the school's corridors and into the classroom. In that context where poverty, inequality and unemployment are so extreme, it is very clear that this challenges educators and challenges their vocation. It is not the legacy of the previous regime, it is happening today.

I think that it is vital to understand that these relations of power have been built into the way that we relate to each other for decades and for centuries in our country. The relationship between male and female, the relationship between the boss and the worker, the relation between the learner and the teacher in our country is something that is perpetuated. We might have many techniques and great ideas of how to change this, but it is the background we need to get to grips with as well. The idea of power is perpetuated through-out our society.

Often bullying is the symptom of many other under-lying problems. When children are punished at home in a particular way, and when they are bullied by their peers in different communities, when classrooms are large, when there are no basic facilities available, when educators are few and they are overworked and stressed in huge classrooms, where the things that make us human like literature, the joy of reading and learning drama are absent, then we have a problem. We see education in our country in a very narrow way as just skills for the market place and this is a very problematic view. We can have the best curriculum in the world, we can have great technology that does not fall short, but if the kids come to the classroom physically damaged and there is nothing that we do about it but to perpetuate the damage, it is going to affect the curriculum, and it is going to affect the quality of education.

I am very glad that the GDE has decided to embark on this particular campaign because it is vital; it is absolutely important to make progress in our country and what happens outside of the classroom. It is a vicious circle and must be broken at some point. Bullying is often seen as a disciplinary problem, but

this really hides the heart of the problems; quite often these are symptoms of deeper problems.

One of the greatest educators who lived in our world, Paulo Freire, had a very important view on these issues. He railed against bleak and gloomy schools. Most of our schools are very fearful places, and I don't mean a litre of bright paint will make a difference. The relationships in our schools are very important. Paulo Freire wrote a book about the joy of education, the joy of learning; he talked about the rigorous country of study. Not once he said that we should not have discipline; he talked about self-discipline. Freire emphasized not only the cognitive but also the affective. In this corporatized world we put profit before people, as we have seen at the Marikana mine. That is to see education in a way that is one-dimensional, crude and uncomplicated. We are to behave like robots instead of humans. However, it is important for educators to have a humanizing mission.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is a deliberate act of aggression or manipulation. It is an abuse of power which can manifest itself either in physical or non-physical form. Bullying can be either verbal or non-verbal. Vulnerable children can easily become the targets of bullies.

### **Difference between teasing and bullying**

Teasing is when a person is being made fun of in a good-humoured way, but teasing can get worse and become bullying.

Teasing is usually done by someone who cares. Everyone has a turn to tease (the self or others). On the other hand, bullying is one-sided (the same person is always being made fun of). Bullies want to show how powerful they are by hurting others, by taking their things or making them do things they don't want to do.

In the case of teasing, if the 'victim' is upset or hurt, the feelings don't last and the teasers will stop, as they did not mean to hurt the other. Bullies, however, do not stop their act.

### **Consider these two different case studies**

Case study number 1: Here there was bullying because of difference – people who are different are easy targets. What is important in this case is the complicity of the school, because the school had no policy on bullying.

Case study number 2: In this case study there was non-physical bullying through manipulation and harassment. These phenomena create an oppressive climate, which also has adverse effects on learning and teaching.

### **Model Questionnaire about School bullying**

A Model Questionnaire on School Bullying, with its target group school children, was presented as an example of a research instrument on this topic. (Annexure 1)

## Guidelines on how to deal with bullying

- Staff should treat any report of bullying seriously.
- Staff should first listen to the student or students, and make such enquiries that may be necessary to clarify exactly what has been happening.
- The student(s) should be assured that they have acted correctly in reporting the bullying.
- The staff member should make a written summary of the information and pass it on to the grade teacher, deputy principal or principal as appropriate.
- The staff should attempt to give advice on how to deal with any repeated incidents that may happen before the intimidation can be dealt with.
- Follow-up should be discussed with the student.
- It is important that the staff member checks a week or so later with both the student and the person to whom the information was sent.
- In cases of serious intimidation, parents/guardian of both (all) students are to be contacted.
- An anti-bullying programme should be run with each class.

## Steps to stop bullying

Whether you are a parent, an educator, or a concerned friend of the family, here are a few steps you can take to stop and prevent bullying:

- Pay attention. There are many warning signs that may point to a bullying problem, such as unexplained injuries, lost or destroyed personal items, changes in eating habits, and avoidance of school or other social situations.
- Don't ignore it. Never assume that a situation is harmless teasing. Different students have different levels of coping; what may be considered teasing to one may be humiliating and devastating to another.
- When you see something, do something. Intervene as soon as you even think there may be a problem between students.
- Remain calm. When you intervene, refuse to argue with either of the students. Model the respectful behaviour you expect from the students.

## Useful Resources

- <http://lilysblackboard.org/2010/12/bullying-are-you-the-one/>
- <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- <http://www.bitstripsforschools.com/stopbullying>
- [http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/school\\_stuff/bullies.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/school_stuff/bullies.html)
- <http://www.thebridgemaker.com/how-to-stop-a-bully/>

# Nature, extent and impact of bullying among secondary school learners in Gauteng



PROFESSOR DEON TUSTIN AND MRS. GOODNESS ZULU  
Youth Research Unit, Bureau of Market Research, University of South Africa

To the Programme Director and the MEC, thank you very much for giving us this opportunity. I will confine my presentation in response to the MEC's concern challenging the academics to address the plight of bullying facing our learners in schools. The study that was conducted used a sample of Grade 8 – 12 secondary school learners. These learners were coming from varying socio-economic backgrounds. The data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire which focused on what learners understand about the phenomenon of bullying. They had to explain the extent of the occurrence of bullying and also had to explain whether they were bullied or not. The research instrument focused on what bullying is and what happens if bullying is reported, and whether learners were personally involved in bullying (perpetrators and victims). This information would then be utilised to see whether bullying was on the rise or not.

## Areas of Focus

### ***This study covered the following areas of focus:***

- The nature and extent of bullying
- Manifestation of bullying in the cyber-world
- Consequences or impact of bullying
- Reporting the incidences of bullying

When we asked learners what they understood about bullying, they actually demonstrated a clear understanding of what bullying is all about. The results were correlated to scholastic understanding of what bullying is. Out of a total of 3371 who participated, 1 158 of these learners were aware of other incidences of bullying around them and they also confirmed they were the victims of bullying. A third of

the respondents confirmed they were bullied, and 42% of the Grade 8 learners experienced bullying. A third of secondary school learners had an experience of being bullied by both young and old persons whom they did not know. Seven percent of respondents reported that they were bullied by their own parents and teachers outside the school premises. Some of the learners face multiple phases of being bullied: both inside and outside the school. Hence, this phenomenon has to be addressed in a serious way. In addition, the learners also reported that sometimes they did not know who the person (adult) was who was bullying them. The element of this unknown bullying adult made it difficult to approach this phenomenon. The study also revealed that about 7.3% of the respondents were bullied either by teachers or parents and we had to clarify the process of bullying and abuse. The study also intended to track the location of bullying and more than one third indicated bullying takes place outside the school premises. This poses a challenge to all community members, hence this phenomenon should not be trivialised but has to be tackled by the entire community; especially parents must see to it that it is totally eradicated. A total of two thirds stated that they experienced bullying inside the classroom and others experienced it outside the classroom; outside the classroom means during break time. Furthermore, those who were emotionally affected were those who experience bullying both inside and outside classroom, and what was worse is that they stated that they were not experiencing buying only from one source but from more than one.

The question to be asked is what is the gravity or impact of being constantly bullied, e.g. daily, weekly and monthly? The learners who had constant exposures to bullying were those who were subjected to it daily, weekly and even monthly.

### **Why do the bully fall prey to being bullied?**

A total of 39.2% of learners were asked why they think they were bullied and they responded as follows: Most often the bully is jealous of his or her looks, intimidated by high academic achievement of others, social background, hopelessness, selflessness, etc. Out of all of these, 40.35% did not know what to say when they were asked how bullying affects their personal lives. However, 60.4% of victims did not see themselves as the victims but instead described the bullies as having the traits of people with a problem relating to their ego; wanting to be seen or noticed; wanting to dominate others and wanting to gain materially from others. A total of 38.1% knew that their friends were bullied, and 61.9% of respondents did not know anybody who was being bullied.

In terms of different types of bullying, it was revealed that children who were most affected were those exposed to both physical and cyber-bullying and as a result, those are the children who suffered more emotional torture. The emergence of cyber-bullying is on the rise, which comes in the form of SMS, MIXIT and other social networks and e-mails. In this regard, they bully others through name calling, by spreading false statements and rumours, and writing anything that will emotionally intimidate others. When asking the victims how they were affected, 21% indicated that they felt sad, hopeless and angry. Some children feel so helpless that they eventually resort to committing suicide. Therefore, as a community we should realise that one child resorting to suicide is one child too many and that it cannot be left to chance.

## **Why is the “bully bullying others?”**

There are many different reasons why some children bully others. Some of these reasons may be to be seen by others, to gain materially, to boost their ego, vent out anger, to retaliate because they were once bullied themselves. However, 33.3% of respondents could not explain why they bully others: they simply did that out of selfishness and because they have a domineering attitude.

## **Who do they choose to bully?**

The targets are often those who are quiet, shy and weak; even those that are famous are bullied as well.

## **What is the nature of cyber-bullying?**

Cyber-bullying takes on a wide variety of forms: spreading false rumours and gossip about other people, name calling, formulating false statements, passing nasty sexual statements or remarks, posting unflattering sexual pictures to other learners (sexting), and smsing nasty and upsetting messages. The use of MXIT was found to be rife among secondary school learners. Access to the internet further prompts learners to send derogatory e-mails to one another.

These children were asked if they knew how much bullying is costing others and some said they were aware and some did not know. They were further asked if they wish to stop and the response was that they did not know whether they wanted to stop and others said they did not know how to stop bullying others.

## **Reporting**

Children were asked if they ever report the incidents of bullying. About one half of the respondents said they do not report when bullied and some of their typical reasons were:

“I am scared to tell my mother because she always yells at me.”

“I was warned that if I report that I was bullied, they were going to beat me up.”

The children were also asked if they were ever taken serious when reporting bullying and most of them said no action was ever taken against the perpetrators and this is regarded as a serious concern. They were asked whom they report to when bullied and they indicated to higher levels such as parents as they were seen as the first level of defence, teachers and peers. Most of them reported to friends because they spend more time with their friends at school.

It is important that we must have a strategy that deals with the ways of dealing with bullying when a learner has reported bullying. We must know what to do to assist the bullied learners. Amongst other things, our strategy must also empower and equip the learners in knowing how to handle the situation once they find themselves subjected to bullying. The bystanders also need to be equipped in knowing what to do when they see someone being bullied.

## **What policies do we have in schools to curb cyber-bullying?**

Cyber-safety programmes are to be established and implemented. On-line campaigns are to be used as a means to report and end bullying.

### **Conclusion**

We see that traditional forms of bullying are still prevalent and popular with the youngsters. However, the presence of cyber-bullying and sexting is increasing strongly. Younger people recognise that technology is creating a form of bullying and that is contribution to the ongoing forms of bullying.

Primarily, bullying displaces younger learners especially those in Grade 8 and this trend is not declining but it is a consistent form of victimisation that children are exposed to.

We do not at this stage have, as a Bureau, a picture reflecting the nature, extent and impact of bullying nationally. So this is exactly what Professor Tustin was referring to in terms of the support we might require in future.

### **Recommendations**

- We need to develop cyber safety education programmes to deal with the cyber phenomenon
- As the previous speakers have already contributed, strategies should be adopted to assist young children to cope emotionally to enable them to deal with the impact of bullying as we have seen that it affects the day-to-day functioning level of the learners contributing to their poor performance at school.
- Online awareness campaigns and other services are recommended, especially from Childline, so that children can acquire counselling and be taught as how to respond and report incidents of bullying should they be subjected to that.
- Our strategies must be informed by the environment in which we live because children are operating on line most of the time.
- Formulate binding guidelines to report and end bullying actions. See how parents respond to this phenomenon

### **Future Research**

- Future research should be expanded to other provinces and rural areas must be included.
- The psycho-social impact of cyber-bullying should be investigated.
- Insightful research should be conducted on the youth's comprehension levels of cyber-bullying.

### **Intervention strategies**

- Age-appropriate intervention programmes need to be developed to curb bullying e.g. in crèches and pre-primary schools.
- Appropriate reporting structures are to be put in place, including online communication structures.

- Empowerment and proactive intervention strategies of child care practitioners are to be established.

## The prevention and management of school violence as a result of peer victimization



JOHN BUSWELL  
CEO: Rape Wise

### Introduction

I am not going to share with you any statistics or graphs because you have already heard enough of that from the previous presenters. In our organisation, my team and I have reached out to about 8 000 schools with more than 200 000 learners from Grade R – 12 and have given support to close to 30 000 educators country-wide. Our major findings are that the issue of school violence is not only a township school, or ex-model C school, or an independent school issue but it is a problem that affects all schools across the whole country. If there is any school manager who can try to defend and claim that his/her school is violence free, that would be a lie and that manager should be fired.

### *I will share a few case studies from my experience:*

- Case study in a Tsakane School. There were specific boys who would wait for Simphiwe after school and take her food. Simphiwe will then subsequently suffer a drop of her sugar level.
- Another scenario was in a high school where a girl had an interest in Shotput. The requirement of this sporting activity was that she had to loose weight, so she had to take a strict, regular diet to meet this requirement. This girl was bullied because she was eating a healthy diet and because she was loosing weight.
- In a third case study, Mary was coming from a township to an ex-model C school and, because of that, she was sidelined, ignored and ostracised and she could not build a good relationship with her peers.
- Gift who was the smallest amongst his classmates, was ordered to pay R50 every Friday as a “protection fee”. When Gift did not have the money he was then bullied.

How long does bullying take place? - The victim can be bullied over a long period of time.

To what extent can bullying go? - It can even go to an extent of a learner being stabbed.

How long can the victim of the bullying remember the records of being bullied? – It can last for many years; some case studies indicate even a period of eight years after it was experienced.

## **Programmes to curb bullying**

Firstly, it is important to understand that it is a Constitutional principle that emphasises that it is the right of every learner to learn in a safe environment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure there is a clear programme in place to curb bullying.

Secondly, the fundamental job of the teachers at school is to educate and to play the role of being a parent, grandparent or care-giver. But sadly, teachers are turned into being the psychologists, occupational therapists social workers, police, etc. and even required to look after pregnant learners. This situation is affecting the teaching time of the teachers as they have to solve, amongst other things, the issues of bullying, and what is bad is that they are not even trained to handle such cases. There is most often no programmes in place that address bullying. Educators need to be empowered because schools are the major agents of socialisation and learning so they are supposed to know how to shape and groom the behaviour of the learners. As a result of all of this, we at Rape Wise have now employed a new approach where we are involving the SMT, parents and learners themselves to educate them on how to handle the problem of bullying as and when it arises and when there are reports pertaining to bullying.

Thirdly, introduction of awareness of bullying must be introduced in learning guidelines as early as in Grade R. In Krugersdorp High school there was a high incidence of cyber-bullying taking place and it was widely reported in the newspapers. We were called to intervene but it was already too late because when we arrived there, a learner had already been stabbed. Our major intervention was to teach the learners about anti-bullying and the programme included the element of respect. We taught the learners that when they practice respect, they will start by having self-respect, and they will respect their teachers and also their fellow classmates and by so doing they will be able to obtain sustainable matric results.

Fourthly, children must be encouraged to participate in extramural activities at an early age. This will teach better social-interacting skills. In one of the schools, in Brixton, children are encouraged to make posters plucked inside classrooms and outside the school wall fence that read "this is a bully free zone". This happened when a Grade 7 boy beat a Grade 3 girl. With these posters, learners would sing a slogan at the assembly that this is a bully free zone school. This method helped to end bullying in that particular school.

Lastly, schools do not need a big file of legislation to know how to handle bullying but a few practical guidelines that will equip the teachers to know how to help the victim and help out the perpetrator and also what to do when the incident of bullying has been reported.

Motivational sessions are equally important to discourage learners from getting involved in bullying. Such talks should also empower the learners to be assertive when they sense they are being bullied. A good way to respond to a bully is to immediately shout at him or her and stop the act of being bullied right away. A good example of this is that of a girl who was teased by some of the other learners for "being fat" and this girl refused to be ridiculed as she would answer back and told the bullies, "I am a Xhosa girl and being fat simply means that at my home we are rich, so being fat means that I am being well-fed by my family" and with this response, her bullies stopped bullying her. School children

should also be taught to create posters and drawings against bullying. Children also need to be taught to report bullying.

### **Extent to which bullying can go**

A very serious feature of bullying that is becoming more frequent these days is that some children (bullies) are sent by traditional healers to harass (bully) other school children and lure them to an isolated area where the victims will be killed by the traditional healers who will then take the body parts.

Bullying may also come in the form of gangsterism. Some children, particularly girls, end up being rape victims after being bullied.

### **Methods to end bullying**

Parents need to be workshopped about parenting skills. It has emerged that most of the parents are raising their children in an educationally inappropriate way and it is such children who tend to be bullies. Some of the parents are even scared of their children; such children have a tendency to make unreasonable demands and they hold everyone at ransom. Hence children growing up in such circumstances become bullies. It is crucial that we should focus on the very important idea of restorative discipline.

The community should also be empowered to report the cases of bullying to the police. Therefore, it means open and direct lines of communication should exist between the public and the police.

In conclusion I would like to commend the Gauteng MEC for Education who has created a platform such as this colloquium to debate the issue of bullying as this will lead the province in finding a common solution that is aimed at ending the phenomenon of bullying.

*Thank you!*

## Discussion in Session



FACILITATOR: BOY NGOBENI  
Head of Department, Gauteng Department of Education

### **Questions/Comments directed at Goodness Zulu**

Q1: What could be the early intervention mechanisms applicable to ECD Level children to end bullying? At which age can intervention be applied?

Q2: Zanele Mthembu, Chief Director of Districts asked what the actual profile is that is emerging in schools about bullying. What programmes can be put in place to curb bullying?

Q3: Mr Thomas Hlongwane from Pretoria raised the question whether bullying is real or if it is a myth associated with the spirit of Nyaupe (some kind of substance/drug).

The other question was: can school principals work together to fight bullying that is widely used through e.g. facebook where learners use a lot of derogatory remarks? Principals together with the help of the RCLs can spy on those abusing facebook and they can bring them to book. The RCLs can be good at knowing who says what and to whom?

Q4: How many learners were expelled in public schools because of bullying behaviour?

Q5: Can the Department consider the provision of Psychologists and Social Workers stationed in school full time?

Q6: How can the bystanders witnessing bullying be empowered not only to watch and be quiet but to report the action of bullying?

### **Responses from Goodness Zulu**

The Psycho-social support is not funded by the Treasury. As a community, we need a multi-pronged approach to solve the problem of bullying in our schools. Since the Department of Social Development is supporting Childline, it should begin to work hand in hand with the Department of Education to end bullying and have an integrated approach and avoid working in silos. This is especially important

because bullying does not occur only inside the school premises but even outside the school premises; hence a multi-pronged approach is key in this regard.

With regards to the issue of expelling learners, most often than usual, the perpetrators are not aware of the consequences or impact of what they are putting their victims through and as a result of that, at this stage, it would suffice to apply a restorative approach and the aim is to make the bully aware of what they are putting others through. Hence, a restorative approach is still sufficient at this stage so that it could dawn to them first.

Governance Alliance: there are teachers ready to take action and help the bullied learners; schools need to be encouraged to address the problem of bullying in a more serious light than ever before. Boys, particularly, need to be discouraged from participating in gang bullying.

### ***Questions/Comments and clarity seeking questions directed at John Buswell***

Question 1: Gita Denner (one of the presenters at the Colloquium) would like to know who pays for the workshops of the 750 schools that were receiving a workshop from Rape Wise.

Answer: The presenter responded by saying that schools do have to pay for the workshops. He explained that it was actually more than 750 schools that they were helping. The focus was more on dysfunctional schools, most of which were no-fee paying schools.

Q 2: A lecturer from the University of the Witwatersrand in the area of Life Orientation (LO) raised a concern that LO as a learning area addresses aspects such as values, morals, conflict resolution skills in a dynamic way, and therefore her suggestion was: why could learners not be taught by means of computer games such as those for playstations. The idea was that school children are fond of those games and they spend so much time playing it, so it might be very effective in changing the mind set of school children.

A: Most often LO as a learning area does not receive much attention or preference. Also, the availability of Life Orientation educators is worrying.

Q 3: A representative from the SAOU, Wilma, commented that she had not heard of any sufficient kind of support given to the "School of Industry" (Heidelberg) as most of the children there were very inclined to act violent as they came from dysfunctional homes.

A: Raj Misser from Quality Assurance explained that the Department was fully aware of the challenges facing that school and adequate effort had been made in terms of providing a lot of support to the learners from that school. Learners from LSEN schools in general need special care. LO needs much attention all over the country.

In an additional response a representative of Prinshof School in Pretoria emphasized that all learners with disabilities should be included when bullying is addressed.

Q 4: The Deputy Head Mistress of Parktown Girls High commented by saying that the school had a programme of John Buswell at their school, and she emphasized the idea that restorative discipline should be addressed.

A: John Buswell responded that the blame game frequently surfaces: parents blame teachers and teachers blame the parents.

# The child-teacher technology gap



**ARTHUR GOLDSTUCK**  
World Wide Worx

## The research

The self-funded empirical study was conducted with the assistance of private schools and the Tomorrow Trust for learners from disadvantaged communities and targeted two groups. The first group in the research consisted of eight private schools. A total of 1400 learners in Grade 3 to 12 from eight private schools in Johannesburg participated by completing online questionnaires at the different schools.

The second group in the research consisted of a total of 300 learners from Grades 10 to 12 in township schools in the Johannesburg and Pretoria area who completed printed questionnaires at a holiday school.

## The private schools findings

The core question to be answered through this research is whether 21st century children different to those of the previous generation? Are these 21st century children ‘digital natives’?

**Figure 1**

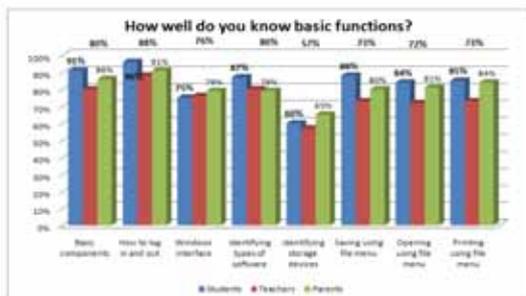


Figure 1 does not yet reflect a sharp discrepancy in basic computer knowledge between students/learners and their parents and teachers.

**Figure 2**

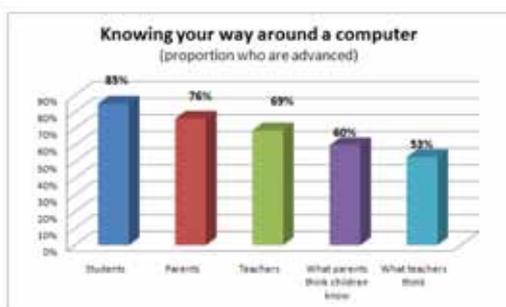
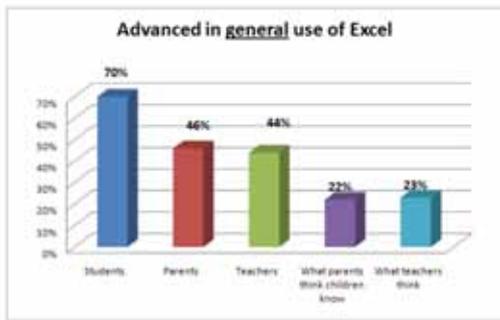


Figure 2 already shows that students are far ahead in their knowledge of computers and they are even more advanced than they thought and definitely far more advanced than what teachers and parents thought.

**Figure 3**



This figure indicates that 70% of learners are advanced in their general use of Excel, while only 46% of parents are and even fewer teachers (44%) are advanced in a general use of Excel. This table also clearly illustrates that a relatively small percentage of parents and even less teachers perceive that learners have the amount of knowledge they actually have. It is interesting to note that teachers have less knowledge than parents in this case.

**Figure 4**

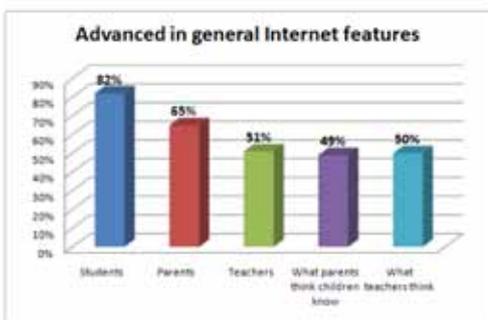


Figure 4 clearly demonstrates that there is a gap between the internet knowledge of learners at private schools and that of teachers. There is also a gap between the knowledge of learners and parents, but the knowledge gap between learners and teachers are more prominent. Again, there is also a discrepancy between what parents and teachers think learners know about the internet and what learners actually know.

**Figure 5**

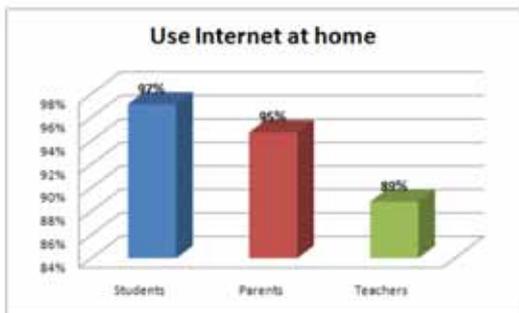


Figure 5 shows that more learners and parents from private schools have access to the internet than teachers have.

**Figure 6**

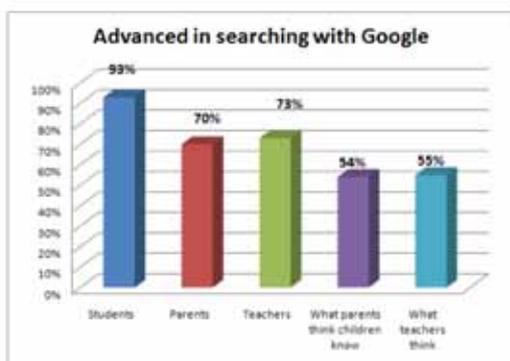


Figure 6 clearly demonstrates the gap between learners and teachers in using Google: It only grows wider as technology advances. However, both parents and teachers from private schools are ignorant regarding the learners' advancement.

**Figure 7**

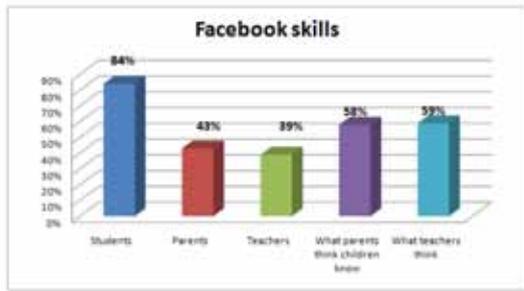


Figure 7 indicates that the gap between teachers and learners grows bigger with more advanced knowledge. There also exists a big gap between what parents and teacher's perception is about learners' knowledge and their actual knowledge.

**Figure 8**

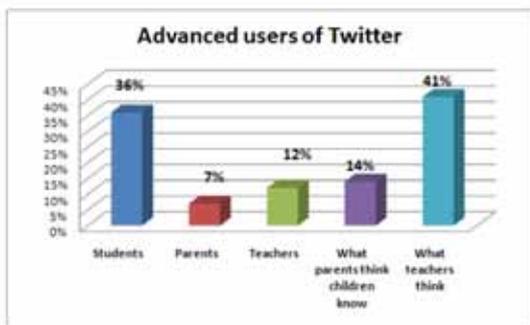
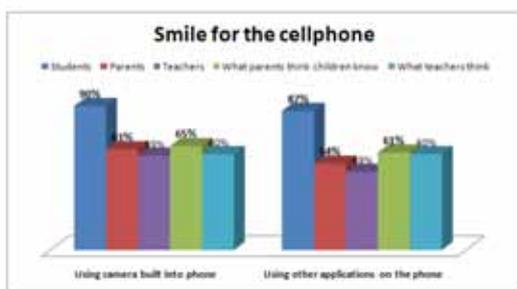
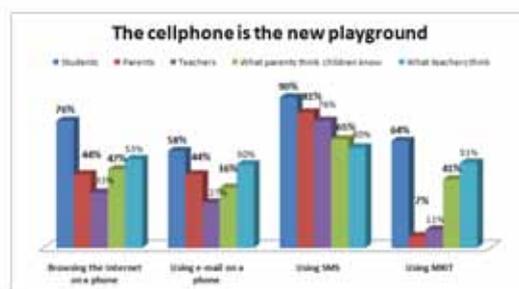


Figure 8 clearly indicates that learners are much more advanced users of new ways of communication, for example twitter, than both parents and teachers. Children are actually also more advanced with regard to this than their parents think they are.

**Figure 9**



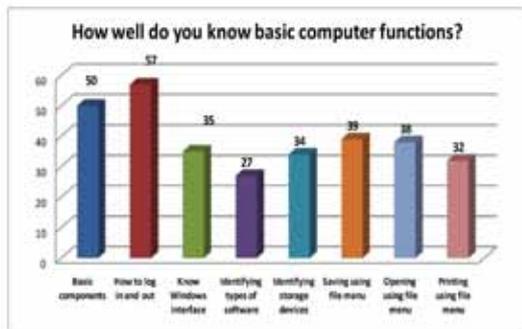
**Figure 10**



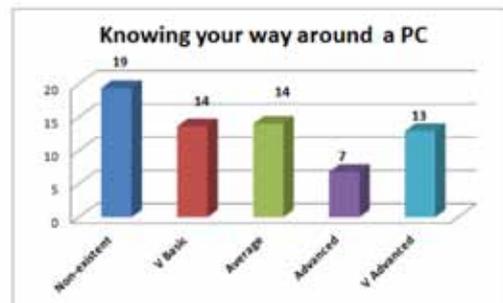
Figures 9 and 10 reflect that learners from private schools have a very good command of the cell phone, and using different applications on it. A total of 90% of learners know how to use the built-in camera, 76% can surf the internet on a cell phone, 58% know how to use e-mail on a cell phone, and 64% have knowledge of MMS. Both parents and teachers of private schools are by far not as advanced as the learners are. Coupled with this, is that both parents and teachers also have perceptions that learners' knowledge and skills in all these regard are far below their actual knowledge.

## The findings from township schools

**Figure 11**

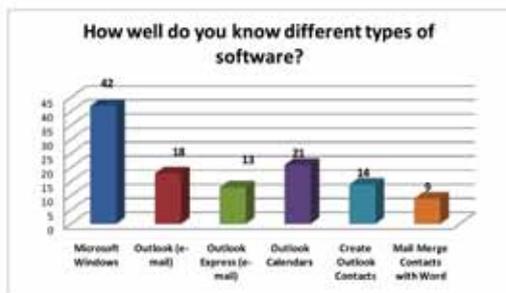


**Figure 12**



Figures 11 and 12 illustrate that in township schools only one out of every five learners has good general computer skills, whereas 85% of the learners at private schools have advanced skills in this regard.

**Figure 13**



From figure 13 it is clear that the vast majority of township learners are not ready for world of work, as their knowledge and skills of the different types of software are not good, while 85% of private school learners have attained advanced skills in this regard.

**Figure 14**

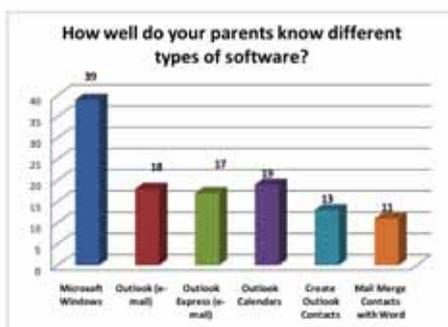
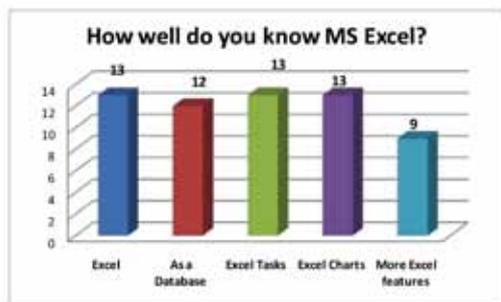


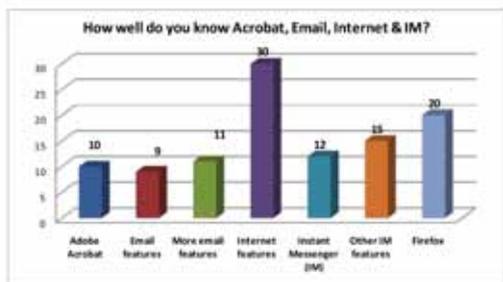
Figure 14 clearly illustrates that learners from township schools also have no support structure at home as their parents also do not have sufficient knowledge of different types of software.

**Figure 15**



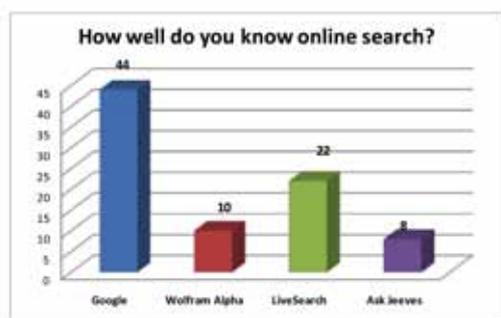
While the learners from township schools have very little knowledge and skills regarding MS Excel, 70% of learners from private schools have an advanced knowledge of Excel use.

**Figure 16**



Although it could be argued that the Internet holds the future, and 82% of private school learners have advanced Internet skills, figure 16 indicates that only 30% of township learners have knowledge of Internet features.

**Figure 17**



While Google is the best-known search engine and has been described as the doorway to the Internet, and 93% of private school learners have advanced knowledge of it, figure 17 indicates that only 44% of learners from township schools have knowledge of Google.

**Figure 18**

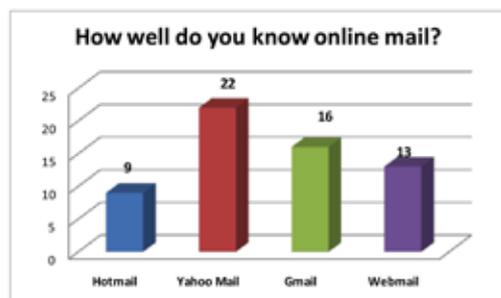
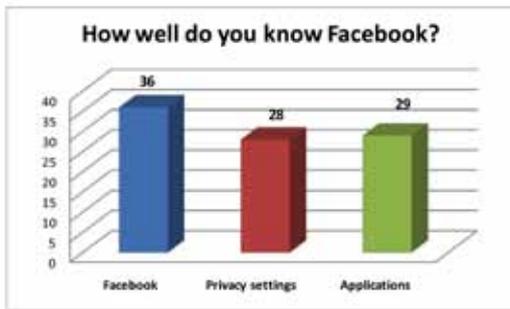


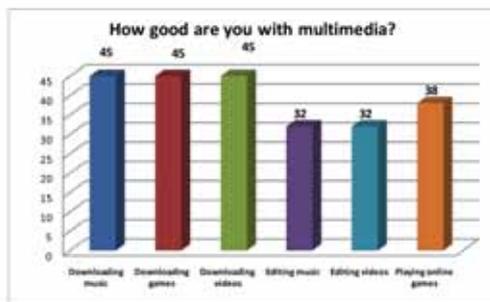
Figure 18 shows that the knowledge of online mail of township learners is quite limited, although 70% of learners from private schools have advanced knowledge and skills of online mail.

**Figure 19**



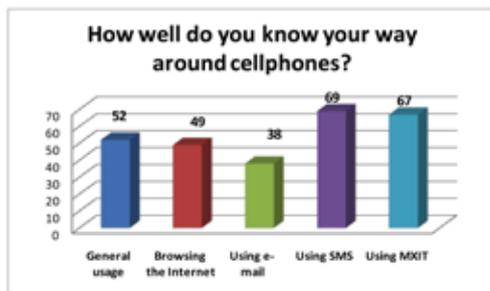
Facebook is regarded as the new doorway in communication. A total of 84% of learners from private schools are advanced in the use of Facebook. In comparison, figure 19 indicates that the knowledge and skills regarding Facebook is limited amongst learners from township schools,

**Figure 20**



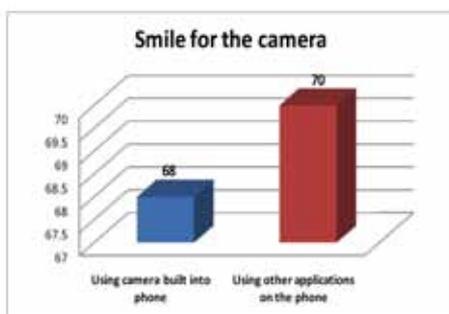
From the research it can be stated that learners from private schools are twice as advanced with regard to their knowledge of multimedia as compared to learners from township schools.

**Figure 21**



From figure 21 it is clear that learners from township schools lag behind learners from private schools with regard to their knowledge and skills of cell phone usage.

**Figure 22**



A total of 90% of learners from private schools have advanced skills to use a cell phone's built-in camera and 87% of those learners can use other applications on their phone, as compared to only 68% and 70% for learners in township schools in these two different usages respectively.

From the survey it was clear that learners from private schools were technologically more advanced than their parents and teachers, and by far more advanced than learners from township schools. Furthermore, both parents and teachers were of the opinion that learners from schools know much less about the latest technology than the learners actually do.

### **The big secret**

Most digital learning takes place as peer-group learning.

### **The teacher imperative**

From the research it can be concluded that teachers need to be upskilled in four areas:

- Internet tools, for subject teaching and research;
- Social media (blogs, etc.) tools for teaching, research and sharing;
- Social networking (Facebook, IM, etc.) tools for communicating with each other and students, and understanding the context of their students; and
- Cell phone knowledge, to understand how students are communicating on campus

### **The next step**

There are four possible approaches to each of these:

- Subject- and topic-specific training on how to leverage information technology (IT) in class;
- Workshops to talk through issues teachers have with IT, and how to resolve them;
- “Tips and tricks” talks to provide quick wins; and
- Peer group learning interventions/sessions.

## **Policies and practices for managing cyber-bullying in the classroom**



**PATRICK BURTON**  
Centre for Justice and  
Crime Prevention

### **Introduction**

“Violence is a multi-faceted problem with physical, social, psychological and environmental roots. To put an end to violence we must look at it from multiple levels and from different sectors of society” (Hammed 2007).

Public perceptions are fuelled by media reports of stabbings, shootings and murders. These are isolated, high profile and sensationalized incidents, and are not where the problem lies. The real problem lies in the apparently minor, but repetitive acts of violence. It is these acts which lead to the most frequent consequences of violence in schools: drop-out, truancy, school phobia, depression and lack of self-confidence amongst students (Debarbieaux).

Bullying can be defined as: "Repeated negative, ill-intentioned behavior by one or more students directed against a student who has difficulty defending him or her. Most bullying occurs without any apparent provocation on the part of the student who is exposed." (Olweus)

Bullying generally refers to repeated acts of violence (physical, emotional, psychological) and to an unequal power or social status relationship – the bullied party is unable to, or finds it difficult to, defend him or herself.

## **From offline to online violence**

### ***Cyber-bullying***

What is cyber-bullying? Is it aggression? Harassment? sexting? happy slapping?

Bullying occurs where there is any discomfort or harm intentionally and repeatedly inflicted on a specific person or group (i.e. a pattern of behaviour). Cyber-bullying, specifically, is any type of harassment or bullying, including teasing, slandering, making fun of, making rude or mean comments, spreading rumours, or making threatening or aggressive comments via any of the following:

- Text messages (SMS);
- Pictures or video clips via mobile phone cameras;
- Phone calls;
- E-mails;
- Chat rooms;
- Instant messages (IM's) (e.g. MSN, Yahoo)
- Websites and blogs;
- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, Google+, Twitter)
- Internet gaming.

Cyber-bullying is generally taken to include, amongst others, the following:

- Flaming
- Denigration
- Harassment
- Impersonation
- Outing
- Stalking
- Happy slapping

The key differences between bullying and cyber-bullying is that the latter manifests itself as adaptable and persistent of content; it is editable and alterable; the content is distributable; it is characteristic for its speed and breadth (of dissemination); there exists some dis-inhibition over computer-mediated communication; it is invasive; it occurs invisibly and there is therefore disassociation with its consequences. (cf. Pew Internet and American Life Project)

## ***The Impact of Cyber-bullying***

While cyber-bullying is not yet fully understood, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that its impact is similar to offline bullying. The victim of cyber-bullying has been found to be more likely than other children to use alcohol and other drugs; to have problems at school; to skip school; to experience in-person victimization; and to report weaker emotional bonds with his or her caregivers. (Centre for Disease Control)

Research also indicates that cyber-bullying may result in the following for the victim: impaired concentration; truancy; anxiety and fear; loneliness and isolation; substance abuse; and the carrying of weapons. (Kowalski, Limber & Agatson)

## ***Observations and Myths***

Boyd, Ryan & Leavitt 2011 states:

“... the internet is often criticized as a sinister world where naïve teens fall prey to various assorted malevolent forces, or teens are vilified for using the internet to indulge their darkest and widest impulses below the radar of parental authority.”

Some important observations pertaining to cyber-bullying are the following:

- There is a high correlation between in-school bullying and cyber-bullying. (Willard 2006)
- Bullies in school are more often cyber-bullies, and victims in schools are more often also victims in chat rooms. (Ybarra, Diener-West, Leaf, 2007)
- According to some research no evidence could be found that cyber-bullying is more pervasive than ‘conventional’ bullying. (Lenhart, 2007)
- Research indicates that cyber-bullying can be controlled and restricted.

## **Extent of the occurrence of cyber-bullying**

Thirty-seven percent of young people experienced some form of cyber aggression at home or school in a 12 month period. Furthermore, young people are more susceptible to cyber aggression outside of school (42.9%), than at school, unlike “school-yard” bullying. Cyber-bullying most commonly occurs through sms (25.6%), Instant Messaging (IM) (12.2%) and chat rooms (11.7%). (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention 2010)

## **Reporting of cyber-bullying**

Reporting levels for cyber-bullying are very low due to fear that hardware will be taken away or that access to hardware may be restricted (Ybarra 2007). Cyber-bullying is also seen as irrelevant, or what Boyd (2011) calls “just a drama”, rather than anything serious that needs to be dealt with. When cyber-bullying is reported, it is most commonly to friends (50%), then to parents (40%), and in a limited number of cases to educators (2%).

## **Key issues in responding to cyber-bullying**

The following are key issues of how one may respond to the occurrence of cyber-bullying: One should

move towards a balanced approach. The focus is to be shifted from technology to behaviour. The phenomenon of cyber-bullying can be problematized. Evidence-based approaches to cyber-bullying can be developed.

### **Towards an evidence-based approach**

Responses to cyber-bullying may be largely instinctual and intuitive, and are often based on moral panic. Comparisons are drawn to the many well-intentioned but ineffective crime and violence prevention responses, for example Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), Scared Straight, etc.

Some lessons can be drawn from the evidence-based approach. One should beware of a rush to develop or fund intuitively appealing programmes out of panic to get into the field. Curricula for internet safety should be developed around strategies that we know work. Further, we should consider creative, multi-faceted approaches to Internet safety education. Rigorous evaluation is to be applied to all promising programmes.

At present the CJCP is conducting a study for the Department of Basic Education with 12 000 learners on violence and cyber-bullying would form part of this research.

### **Characteristics of successful prevention campaigns**

The following are the characteristics of successful intervention campaigns. Such campaigns are grounded in a theoretical framework. They focus on concrete skills development. These campaigns consist of different components for different audiences. Interactive strategies are used. The programmes are comprehensive and coherent in nature and exceed 20 hours with the target audience.

### **Characteristics of unsuccessful campaigns**

Unsuccessful campaigns usually exclude early age groups (9-12 years); they are not gender-specific in their approach; they induce fear; they are limited to the changing of attitudes, and are too general in nature. (Lunar and Finkelhor, School-based prevention programmes: Lessons for Child Victimization)

### **School pointers**

Important aspects that schools should consider when considering the problem of cyber-bullying are the following:

- A school policy should be developed on acceptable and appropriate use of ICT;
- All staff at a school should be trained in the recognition of symptoms and signs of cyber-bullying (and bullying), and the management thereof;
- Strategies against cyber-bullying are to be integrated into anti-bullying strategies; and
- Support should be provided to both victims and bullies.

It is important that awareness of cyber-bullying (and bullying in general) should be created and then a change of behaviour has to take place. Policy to deal with these phenomena should be put in place. The

implementation of the policy is to be monitored and the school management should take accountability in this whole process.

## Discussion in Session



FACILITATOR: BOY NGOBENI  
Head of Department, Gauteng Department of Education

### ***Questions and observations/comments directed at Patrick Burton***

Question 1: Joyce from Parktown Girls commented by saying that: Educators are given the responsibility to deal with all these problems. Parents do not play a role – for example, they do not attend meetings. Regarding restorative approaches it can be said that the parents of victims do not feel that adequate interventions are being done. The question is: what can be done to bring parents on board?

Answer: Patrick Burton holds a similar view, namely that parents are too distant in these issues.

- Media can be used to draw parents' attention. Billboards can be used, for example, but it can also be harmful if there is not carefully dealt with words.
- NGOs can also be used and be empowered with school safety approaches.
- Publicise the approaches that are working effectively.

# Summation and issues for consideration



Facilitator: Albert Chane  
DDG for Policy and Planning,  
Gauteng Department of Education

## Summation

The research work presented by our speakers today confirms the following:

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated, systematic hurtful words or other behaviour by one person to another – it can be either direct or indirect.

The phenomenon of bullying is highly prevalent and it is not gender-specific.

- Acknowledging that bullying exists, varies from widespread denial to an understatement of the occurrence of bullying.
  - Bullying can happen where a perpetrator perceives the victim to be different.
  - It can be said that, to an extent, there is complicity from the school due to a lack of policy to either prevent bullying from occurring or to deal with it appropriately once it is revealed.
- 
- Another contributing factor is the culture and environment of the school that is in some senses dehumanising.
  - Bullying occurs inside and outside schools.
  - The research on this topic concurs that the nature and extent of bullying is observable and “measurable”.
  - The cycle of violence is perpetuated and tolerated in our communities, in schools and even in our homes.
  - Most bullies tend to alternate between being victims of bullying and being bullies themselves.
  - Cyber-bullying is an extension of traditional bullying by using the latest technology like cellphones and computers that may end in causing physical and emotional harm to the victim.
  - For different reasons the occurrence of bullying is underreported in schools by both learners and parents.

## Key issues emerging from the inputs and discussions

- The response to bullying is not integrated. However, a holistic response is the ideal as we have to deal with victims and bullies, as well as parents of these learners.
- A policy addressing the phenomenon of bullying in schools is either absent or not being applied in an appropriate way. Furthermore, there is a high tolerance of bullying and it is conveniently miss-classified as normal behaviour, or regarded as not serious.
- Dealing with bullying should also be a curriculum issue, especially in a holistic life skills programme where attention could be given to conflict resolution.

- The school environment is very important. Schools must be proactive in the prevention of bullying and the reporting of the incidence of bullying should be promoted. Schools must eliminate a hostile culture wherever there may be such signs.
- Learners are to have a common understanding of what bullying really is, so that they can be alert in this regard. Peer support is necessary and everyone should be assertive not to allow any form of bullying.
- Materials and programmes provided to make learners aware of bullying should be age-appropriate. Materials should also be accessible for all stakeholders.
- Cultural practices that are indifferent to violence, sexism and racism also influence a child's behaviour and attitude to other. Such a culture can also perpetuate the culture of violence.
- Although there is a high correlation of cyber-bullying with incidents of traditional bullying, cyber-bullying is at present not more common.

## Summation and issues for consideration



Facilitator: Albert Chane  
DDG for Policy and Planning,  
Gauteng Department of Education

### Moving ahead

- A comprehensive policy on bullying should be developed and anti-bullying programmes should be implemented in schools. The policy should form part of the whole-school approach, and well-designed interactive interventions must form part of this. Provision should be made for, for example, a bullying report form, boxes on the school premises where notes on occurrences of bullying can be posted.
- A proactive campaign to prevent and end bullying should be launched in schools and communities. A holistic response must be employed to deal with both victims and bullies, as well as to assist parents and teachers. A culture of reporting is to be established (not snitching). The campaign to prevent and end bullying must also include an improvement of the personal understanding of learners, parents and educators of the phenomenon of bullying
- With cyber-bullying note should be taken of the invisibility of the actual acts of bullying. Rules for the access and use of electronic media must be put in place. Parents have an important role in managing access to electronic media.

- Learner Empowerment should take place so that they can be educated to cope and deal effectively with all forms of bullying. This empowerment should, primarily, take place in Life Orientation where Conflict Resolution should form part of the curriculum, and learners must gain a certain assertiveness with regard to the phenomenon of bullying. Parents and learners must also have an understanding of recourse to psychosocial support and other services.
- Parents need to be empowered to “diagnose” incidences of bullying and be educated on how to intervene in order to assist their children. Accessible material should be provided for the parents to further assist them in their task.
- It is important that partnerships be formed between schools and communities. There should be a coordinated response from the Department and institutions together with NGOs, faith-based organisations and CBOs.
- A monitoring and evaluation system for school-based bullying and violence should be developed.



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