

European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

Annex I

Approved by the EUCPN Management Board in 2018

General information

1. Please specify your country.

Sweden

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

Yes, this is Sweden's ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

The Gävle Anti-Bullying Model

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

Gävle Municipality, Municipal Crime Prevention Unit & University of Gävle. Project Co-ordination Group (3 Municipal members, 3 from University), Prof. Peter Gill
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Silvia.Edling@hig.se Telephone: 0046 (0)26 648260 (acting as contact person)

5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

6.

15/07/2012, with rolling implementation. Project is still running.

7. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

<https://www.gavle.se/kommunens-service/kommun-och-politik/kommunens-organisation/radgivande-organ-i-gavle-kommun/brottsforebyggarna-i-gavle-big/> (in Swedish)

<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1056738>

Gill, P. E., Larsson, P., Matton, P., Simonsson, B. E., & Levin, E. (2016). Research to Practice: Rolling Implementation of Evidence-Based Anti-Bullying Strategies in a Swedish Municipality. In *ECER 2016, Leading Education: The Distinct Contributions of Educational Research and Researchers, 22-26 August 2016, Dublin, Ireland*.

<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1152581>

Gill, P. E., Simonsson, B. E., & Matton, P. (2017). Consequences for prevention strategies of reduced prevalence of bullying at school-class and school level in a Swedish Municipality. In *ECER2017, Network 5: Children and Youth at Risk and Urban Education, 22-25 August 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark*.

<https://forskningogforandring.dk/index.php/fof/article/view/1217>

Larsson, P. (2018). Bullying prevention in a Swedish municipality: Supported decentralised reasoning. *Forskning og forandring, 1(2)*, 69-90.

8. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

Starting requirements: Every school must have a *Safe School Plan*. All staff must actively embrace fundamental values. A positive school environment is not just a goal in itself but a prerequisite for learning. All staff must be well acquainted with how their Safe School Plan is designed and know what is expected of everyone in its implementation. It is essential that all staff have a *common approach* to issues that are important to the school and have a readiness to react immediately to various forms of negative behaviour. Structured, goal-orientated and long-term interventions guarantee best results. An *ongoing dialogue* is vital to the process. School leaders have a crucial role in creating a systemic, whole school approach, and in setting long and short term goals. Since each school is unique, schools must analyse their specific needs and choose appropriate initiatives based on these. Patterns of harassment and bullying can vary between age cohorts and may take different forms depending on group structures and gender. Certain initiatives will be common to all schools, while other initiatives target the unique circumstances of each school. Effective intervention against bullying will include: **Active participation of all pupils**; **Follow-up evaluation** with the biannual survey as a starting point for decisions on tweaking components based on school circumstance; **School Safety Teams** consist of adults with the task of investigating and remedying more serious bullying cases; **Specific remedies for identified bullies and victims**; **General staff training** to increase understanding of bullying, harassment and abuse; **Scheduled school break supervision** including mapping of "dangerous places" and activities arranged for pupils; **Pupil-pupil relationship initiatives** involving a conscious strategy to create closeness and sense of community; **Documentation of cases**, initiating intervention measures and strict follow-up; **School rules** developed in collaboration between staff and pupils; **Disciplinary strategies**, known to everyone, with penalties/consequences for unacceptable behaviour; **School climate** and a school culture characterized by active cooperation and commitment. Stages in the implementation of the Gävle model: **The Gävle Anti-Bullying Model is presented to all staff** at participating schools. **Strategy meeting 1:** The school leader and the "key persons" who will be involved in running the model participate. Research results and the Swedish School Laws governing this work are presented and discussed. With the help of a components folder, each school begins to structure its work. **Training for School Safety Teams**, those who have the task of investigating more difficult cases of bullying at school, participate. **Training for Designated Personnel Assistants**, who have the task of raising the competence of all staff regarding the implementation of the Gävle model. **Strategy meeting 2:** Those who took part in the previous initiatives, during the autumn, participate and are supported in creating a systematic, whole-school approach. Based on the autumn survey results and their own data-gathering, each school plans its efforts for the remainder of the school year. The year-long implementation concludes with a joint evaluation and **planning day in June**. That year's initiative are evaluated and, based on evaluation data from the week 17 survey, **new initiatives are planned for the following school term**. The ambition of the steering group is for the Gävle model to be constantly developed. New research findings are shared in order to be able to fine-tune ongoing efforts. The Safe School Plans contain the following elements: **Mandatory guidelines**; **Promotional material**; **Active initiatives**; **Specific goals**; **Survey**; **Risk and obstacle analysis**; **Causes and conclusions**; **Implementation of promotion or prevention measures**; **Follow-up and evaluation**;

I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.

8. Which **crime prevention/ reduction mechanisms** were used in this project to contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Multiple answers are possible.

Establishing and maintaining normative barriers to committing criminal acts

e.g. 'Offenders, we are watching you' campaigns

Reducing recruitment to criminal social environments and activities by eliminating or reducing the social and individual causes and processes that lead to criminality

e.g. social and financial support for disadvantaged families

Deterring potential perpetrators from committing crimes through the threat of punishment

e.g. decreasing the time between arrest and punishment

Disrupting criminal acts by stopping them before they are carried out

e.g. increasing police patrols in vulnerable areas

Protecting vulnerable targets by reducing opportunities and make it more demanding to carry out criminal acts

e.g. placing locks and cameras

Reducing the harmful consequences of criminal acts

e.g. initiatives to recover stolen goods

Reducing the rewards from criminal acts

e.g. restorative justice programmes

Incapacitating (or neutralising) perpetrators by denying them the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts

e.g. imprisonment of key gang members

Encouraging desistance from crime and rehabilitating former offenders so they are able to settle back into a normal life

e.g. prison rehabilitation programs

Explain how this/these crime prevention mechanisms were used ((**Max. 300 words**) Note: mechanisms above are "ticked" solely regarding prevention of bullying

The Gävle Anti-Bullying Model (GABM) targets the uncovering, prevention and ameliorating of acts of bullying and harassment committed by school children. The municipal *school safety questionnaire* is administered Online biannually. This allows for detailed surveying of incidents, children at risk and types of bullying at school- and classroom-level. *Collated data is given to all school principals*. Participating schools create *anti-bullying teams* which receive constant updating from the project-coordinators. Researchers at the University of Gävle keep up to date with ongoing bullying research and

bring relevant findings to the attention of the project co-ordinating group. New research deemed relevant for ongoing day-to-day activities of the anti-bullying teams is promulgated to them.

For the purposes of this document it is important to point out that the target behaviours do not normally constitute crimes. Acts of bullying, however severe and traumatic, when carried out by children rarely meet criteria for classification as crimes.

However, the Municipal Crime Prevention Unit has within its brief general crime prevention. The primary role of the Municipal Crime Prevention Unit is to support adults who meet and deal with children and young people in various contexts, helping adults to develop and strengthen their skills and to create arenas for collaboration.

The Crime Prevention Unit works with parents, staff at preschool and school, leisure centres, police, social services, sports clubs and leaders, and neighbourhood watch and community alert groups among others.

Long-term support within the framework of the Gävle model targets School leaders, School Safety Teams and Schools' Key-Persons, who are invited to network meetings twice per academic year. These meetings partly supplement the knowledge base but also provide opportunities to exchange experiences and provide mutual support. In addition, school leaders are offered individual support, including results of the biannual school climate questionnaire.

II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives. For more information on evaluation, click [here](#)

9. What were the reasons for setting up the project? Was this context analysed before the project was initiated and in what way (How, and by whom? Which data were used?)? In what way did this analysis inform the set-up of the project? (**Max. 150 words**)

All Swedish schools, by law, must implement anti-bullying and anti-harassment initiatives. The Gävle Anti-Bullying Model grew out of “normal” anti-bullying work within municipal schools. A key driver of the project was the publication in 2011 by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) of a report on an evaluation of methods against bullying (see “Evaluation of anti-bullying methods”, Report 353, Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). This report concluded that existing “programs” against bullying rarely followed program guidelines. An evaluation of the effectiveness of eight programs distributed among 41 schools, using individual longitudinal data from over 10,000 participating pupils, with one-year follow-up, was based on “program components” rather than on the programs themselves. Some components were effective in reducing bullying. Some were not, while some elements of programs proved to be iatrogenic. This national evaluation led to Gävle Municipality reviewing its own “methods” and development of the new Gävle “Model”.

10. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

Four critical goals are: (i) *A systematic approach*: Components are well thought out and used in combination with a clear division of roles and responsibilities. Chosen combinations are developed in relation to a specific school's own conditions and parameters; (ii) *A whole school approach*: including a consensus among staff on how the model should be implemented; and, a conscious strategy to anchor the implementation among all pupils; (iii) *A positive school climate*: where school climate may be affected by several factors such as organizational conditions, social relations, commitment, attitudes, norms and values; and, (iv) *Pupils' participation*: Having well-developed relationship-promoting initiatives in which the pupils are involved and are able to influence their own room for manoeuvre.

Stemming from these goals are specific targets of reducing rates of bullying, participating in bullying as bullies, bully/victims, bystanders and facilitators. Uncovering gender patterns, distribution anomalies, and locating the small group of persistent victims.

11. Has there been a process evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the process? Did you make changes accordingly? (**max. 300 words**)

From the outset the project incorporated a number of evaluation strategies. A critical step was building a questionnaire on the same principles as used in the National Agency for Education's evaluation project. A member of the project group was one of the researchers employed in the design and implementation the national evaluation. This evaluation relied on a specially designed questionnaire to measure pupils' exposure to bullying. A two-step method of post-hoc categorisation of bullied status built on a series of questions where pupils were NOT asked if they had been bullied. They answered a series of questions about things that may have happened to them the previous "couple of months", with a certain frequency. Bullied status was determined by the response to a question asking them about their perception of why the event(s) had happened to them. Things that "happened for fun" or were part of a conflict were not categorised as bullying. If they perceived an intention "to hurt/harm" the action was classified as "bullying". By using the exact same measurement tool, data from Gävle Municipality could be compared with the national sample (n= 10,000). This questionnaire is administered Online in October and April of the school year.

It is important to point out that at no stage is any pupil asked if he or she has been bullied. Participants in the recurring strategy meetings fill in a short questionnaire on their degree of satisfaction with the conduct/content of each meeting.

Project outcomes are collated from the biannual questionnaire results. Because of the voluntary, rolling implementation strategy, time-series of outcome have been calculated.

The researcher members have access to the ever increasing data-base. This allows for detailed analysis of outcomes at group, school and classroom level. A number of empirically important research findings have been uncovered from this work.

12. Has there been an outcome or impact evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method were used and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the impact? (**Max. 300 words**)

The biannual questionnaire administered to all pupils (total population: n= ca. 11,500 pupils), using the bullying index outlined above, also allows for a description of “noise” in each school and school classroom. Respondents range from Infants class to Final Year High School. Three versions of the questionnaire are used (infants to year 3, year 4 to year 9, and High School 1-3) The “noise” includes play-fighting, jocular teasing, corridor pushing and shoving and odd acts of harassment (not reaching the defined category of bullying). Since pupils are also asked about their observations of any acts that might constitute bullying (cut-off of “intention to hurt/cause harm), good data is available. This data now constitutes a longitudinal data base which allows for cross-sectional comparison of outcomes. The program meetings with schools’ anti-bullying teams, facilitators and school leaders are all evaluated at end of session, using the same short questionnaire. This data, degree of satisfaction with various aspects of the implementation of the model, also allows for longitudinal comparisons.

The Swedish national prevalence of bullying, using the exact same measurement tool, has been estimated at 8,1% (similar results from national sample, n= ca. 10,000 and a municipal population survey, n= ca.4000). Result for Gävle = 5,7% (this over a number of years and with reducing prevalence) Rates as low as 3,5% for grades 7-9. Consistent with international data, there is variation between age-cohorts. There are clear gender differences (lower school climate index, higher bullying prevalence for girls). Response rates (as an indication of trust in project) considerably high (between 80% and 90%; e.g., 6149 completed questionnaires, October, 2020). Teasing rates higher for girls, physical bullying higher for boys. No difference in cyberbullying. Rates of Civil Courage (willingness to intervene), reducing with increasing age, vary from 50% to 90%, consistently higher for girls.

III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.

13. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

The Gävle Model is a structured approach to bullying, where a knowledge-based intervention process has been incorporated into regular school activities. Frequent surveys of pupils' sense of security, jointly analysed by a broad spectrum of school staff and in collaboration with the pupils, form the basis for implementing targeted, research-based anti-bullying components. The work is followed up through ongoing consultations and through the recurring student surveys, which reveal outcomes over time. The Gävle Model is well evaluated, showing that it is possible to build a long-term, sustainable, and effective anti-bullying model, without large additional costs. Deep analysis of the data, at school- and school-class level, has revealed some research discoveries. For instance, gender differences, at school level, show a pattern where considerably more girls (proportionately) are bullied in schools with low incidences of bullying (i.e., "successful" schools). The unique aspect of the Gävle "Program" is that it is not a program.

IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.

14. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

Since all Swedish schools are bound by law to have anti-bullying programs, any proposal to use (purchase) a specific program, would be in addition to schools' formal obligations. The Gävle Modell did not replace existing initiatives. Initially it was offered as a possible "new approach", or "development" of existing strategies. In 2012, six schools, of 29 municipal and 7 independent compulsory schools, agreed to participate. As the project developed more and more schools sought voluntarily to be included. Since 2019, Upper Secondary/High Schools have been included in the model (voluntarily). This has meant that the project Strategy Meetings target over 500 school staff (School Leaders, School Safety Teams & Personnel Assistants/Aides). Three research staff from the University participate in the regular meetings, along with the municipal Head of Compulsory School Division, the Project Co-ordinator and the municipal Quality Control Officer. Since the participation of schools is voluntary, a decision of any school to align with the Anti-Bullying Model would have been taken collectively by school staff. In this sense all municipal school staff are participant stakeholders. The participation of Independent Schools (grant-aided Academy Schools) has also been voluntary. We refer to participation of schools as *a rolling implementation*.

V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.

15. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)

No specific funding is earmarked for the Gävle Model. All costs are subsumed under the municipality's compulsory education budget. Two municipal employees work with the project. Participation by university staff takes place as part of their normal duties, being

motivated by being given access to the schools' database. A small stipend is paid to the Senior Researcher (in an emeritus role) from the university. School Principals bear meeting costs within the normal school budget.

This funding dimension of the Anti-Bully Model is an important element in its gaining acceptance among staff in the participating schools. Staff are aware of their legal obligations to counteract harassment and bullying. By their voluntary participation in the project staff maintain a high level of commitment. Project funding can be described as a rearranging of normal funding commitments to a specifically earmarked project. Staff motivation is indirectly witnessed to the continued high response rate to the biannual questionnaire.

16. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

The main costs for implementing the Gävle Anti-Bullying Model are the salaries (and ancillary costs) of the Project Co-ordinator (80%) and the Quality Control Officer (30%). Additional costs, at school level, include staff attendance at meetings. Printing costs for materials would also be involved. The National Agency for Education's *Report 353*, included a chapter on the cost of implementing each of the eight programs that were evaluated. In a fictive school, with 300 pupils, costs varied from about €9 euro to €136, per pupil, per annum for each of the eight programs. Cost for Gävle Municipality estimated at €6 per pupil.

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

In 2016, a research report, commissioned by Friends <<https://friends.se/en/what-friends-does/>>, calculated the cost, over 30 years, for a single bullied child at €275,000, based on a prevalence rate of 9% grades 3 to 7. This cost was based on an assumption the 10% of children bullied throughout 1 school year, would experience lifelong negative effects. The latest national survey (Friends, 2021), based on a sample of 21,000 respondents (Infants to 9th grade), who answered "yes" to a question "have you been bullied by other pupils during the last year", yielded a prevalence rates of 10% (3rd to 6th grade) and 5% (7th to 9th grade). Prevalence in Gävle (population survey), October, 2020 was 6.2% (4th to 6th grade) and 3.6% (7th to 9th grade), corresponding to 38% and 28% lower prevalence than the national average. This means that in the fictive school (300 pupils) Friends would expect a 30 year cost to the exchequer of about €800,000. The Gävle Anti-Bullying Model would save at least 1 lifetime victim, a saving of €275,000. The "cheapest program", of the 8 included in the national evaluation would have an annual cost, in a school of 300 pupils, of €2700, whereas the cost in Gävle would be €1800.

18. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

The cost-benefit analysis is dimensioned for Gävle Municipality. The target population is about 11,000 pupils in 30/35 schools. An education budget of this scale can support a replication project with similar manpower requirements (80% co-ordinator, 30% quality controller, ancillary costs (printing etc.) and steering committee meeting about 6 times per annum with similar duties). Co-operation with university researchers is seen as essential to the success of the Gävle model. In addition, the all-important municipal support would have to be replicated. It is also important to point out that Municipal Education Board does not regard the Gävle Anti-Bullying Model as an “intervention program”. The whole genesis of the initiative is based on a rearranging and consolidation of resources already available within the Municipality. In addition, school principals, as the legally responsible parties, have shown a deep willingness to participate and co-operate in the implementation of the various strands of the model. This has meant the school principals can claim “ownership” of their own anti-bullying strategies. Thus, when each school principal is provided with detailed status data, from the biannual surveys, tweaking, correcting and redesigning of various components can be matched to the individual circumstances of each school.

19. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

In many European countries anti-bullying interventions have become commercialised. This was, and is the case in Sweden. Where there is a “market” for anti-bullying interventions it is tempting for School Districts, Municipal School Boards and even National Departments of Education to seek out “silver-bullet programs”. The evaluation by the Swedish National Agency for Education has proved, beyond all reasonable doubt, that such programs do not exist, or, at least in their “normal” (on the ground) implementation, do not exist.

The Gävle Anti-Bullying Model has clearly shown how a municipality-wide anti-bullying model can be implemented, surveyed, evaluated and assessed with successful outcomes at school, classroom and individual level.

While prevalence, patterns and consequences of bullying may vary between European countries, the target behaviour is universally accepted, its causes are agreed, and the trauma (including suicidal ideation, and suicide) caused by bullying does not represent any national anomaly. Every aspect of the Gävle Anti-Bullying Model can be replicated throughout Europe.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

The Gävle Anti-Bullying model is an evidence-based template for combating bullying. The active components have been chosen on the basis of a Swedish national evaluation of commercial anti-bullying programs. The “component model” was offered to schools for voluntary participation. A rolling implementation (2012) has resulted in all municipal schools requesting to be involved (35 schools, with about 11,500). The model is based on agreed School Safety Plans, designated Safety Teams in each school, assisted by a designated Program Aide in each participating school. School principals are involved at all stages. A municipal project co-ordinator and a quality assurance officer guide the model and provide feedback through the bi-annual school safety questionnaire. Detailed data is given to school principals. Data is also analysed by University Researchers who are members of a steering committee. Using the exact same measurement tool, rates of bullying in the municipality are 20% to 40% lower than the Swedish national average (8,2%).