



‘Like father, like son’ - Parental education and Augmented Reality to prevent bullying among children

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Introduction

During the course of the Like Father Like Son project, we will develop an educational framework for parents, as well as an educational Augmented Reality Game that parents and children can play together, for the purpose of preventing and combating bullying and discrimination. Previous research in the above countries has showed that parents of children between the ages of 10 and 15, need to acquire more information and skills to deal with violence among children, bullying and all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, research has also revealed that empowering parents in digitally and providing them with tools to talk to their children about the aforementioned issues could prove very beneficial for the strengthening of the parent-child bond.

The aims of the field research on parents was to identify the gaps in knowledge about bullying, technologies, and consequences to their children.

Methodology

All participants were involved in the research on a volunteer basis, and written consent forms were received individually from all parents. This was done in paper format.

We followed a semi-structured interview model, based on the themes and questions provided to all partners.

The recruitment of participants took place through the existing network of KMOP in Greece, as an organization well established in the field of bullying prevention through its previous initiatives in Greece.

We conducted 15 interviews with parents of children from 9 to 15 years old.

Results from Interview

The main themes discussed can be divided into the following categories:

- Knowledge regarding Bullying
- Personal Experience of Bullying
- Ability to deal with bullying incidents
- Needs about training and skills development
- Tools and Resources

Knowledge regarding Bullying

We asked participants to identify according to their knowledge the reasons and effects of bullying as well as possible prevention actions:

Reasons

Nationality, religion, sexuality, economic status of the victim, abuser's family, appearance, way of speaking, the abuser wanting to attract the attention of others, display of knowledge and material possessions, feeling of inferiority, lack of knowledge, feeling of threat, socialization – victims are more withdrawn children, LGBT children, style– especially in girls, on the internet they bully depending on the content of the posts, they swear during online gaming

Prevention actions

Awareness raising, teacher training, education staff training in general, empowering and informing children, Parents and Guardian association information, parent awareness, parent information, school collaboration, family and community information about the phenomenon, education of frontline professionals and professionals working with youth workers, more educational programs and information events from government and non-government agencies, cultivation of empathy by the family

Effects of bullying

Kid doesn't want to go to school, does not want to do activities, is afraid to express their opinion, trauma, depression, suicidal tendencies, introversion, change in behavior, aggression, in some cases violence, problems with sleep

Personal Experience of Bullying

All parents were aware of bullying incidents either on their children's school or in general through the news and other parents.

All parents stated that their children were either the ones being bullied or did not participate in the bullying. One parent stated that their child has witnessed bullying and did not intervene, which they considered as taking part in bullying.

All parents stated that if their children were doing bullying they would talk to them and explain them that this is wrong. Two parents said they would refer their child to a mental health expert.

If their child was the one being bullied (some participants' children have been bullied in the past) parents stated that they would talk with the child, inform the teachers and the school board, discuss it in the guardians' association of the school. One parent stated that they would let their child find a solution on its own at first.

Three parents stated that they enrolled their children to martial arts/kickboxing and/or that they have advised them to fight back.

If their child had witnessed bullying they stated that they would inform the school and the teachers. Four parents stated that they have advised their child to protect and take action against bullying.

Needs about training and skills development

12 out of the 15 participants stated that they have followed some type of training/information session about bullying either online or in the school.

Participants were aware of some anti-bullying actions in Greece, including the Live Without Bullying initiative of KMOP.

The following needs were the ones mostly stated

Ways of reporting, ways of handling such incidents, common bullying behaviors on the part of the bully and the victim, what are the common reasons bullies bully (historically, statistics) and for the victim (possibly showing some weakness in socialization , not being able to claim things and the abuser finding this situation an occasion)

All parents showed particular worry for the online bullying and ways they could handle it.

Tools and Resources

Some parents stated they have used resources found on the internet to talk to their children about bullying.

When asked what they would expect from a game around bullying they stated the following:

- Definitely a childlike and playful environment, more specifically:
- character selection would also help,
- vivid graphics, colors to make it attractive.
- Weird funny sounds and music,
- Easy login and navigation without many codes and details
- At the end a very small evaluation if they liked the game (it can be with smileys and not difficult questions but multiple choice)
- Have achievements, some goal to reach, tracks or difficulty levels otherwise they will be very boring

Conclusions and recommendations

To sum up, the field research conducted as part of the project LFLS, provided useful information about the needs of parents and guardians of children in Greece that complement the desk research conducted.

Overall, parents appear to have a good understanding about the signs and the impact of bullying on their children. Additionally, all the respondents were aware of incidents of bullying either through personal experience or from someone else in their social circle. In regards to dealing with bullying incidents, respondents provided mix answers in the case their child was a victim of bullying, but they agreed on the fact that more training is required in relation to approach this topic with their child. Finally, a game would be a useful tool in the hands of parents, according to the respondents, and they provided us with some ideas on what they expect.

Annexes

Annex 1

Interview Questions

1. Assessment of knowledge regarding the phenomenon

- Are you aware of the most common reasons for bullying (concerning the perpetrator or the victim)?
- What are the most important factors in combating and preventing bullying?
- Are you aware of the impact of bullying on children and the signs of bullying?

2. Assessment of personal experience with the phenomenon

- Has your child ever been directly or indirectly involved in any bullying incident (as a victim/perpetrator /bystander)?
- Do you have knowledge of any bullying incident at your child's school?
- How was it handled?

3. Assessment of needs regarding the ability to deal with bullying

- What would you do if your child reported being bullied?
- What would you do if your child started bullying other children?
- How would you advise your child to act, in case they witnessed bullying behavior?

4. Assessment of needs regarding training participation

- Have you participated in any training for combating and preventing bullying?
- What would you expect to learn from a bullying combating and prevention training?

5. Assessment of tools and resources needed

- Are you aware of any tools that that you can use to educate your child about the phenomenon?
- What resources would help you and your child learn more about combating and preventing bullying incidents? (Specify some resources)
- What graphic environment would you like to see in an AR Game? Would you prefer a more serious or more childlike environment?
- What kind of games do you like play with your children?

