

6.3: An experiment to position school mediators as a resource for non-violent conflict resolution in schools

In 2000, the Spanish Red Cross' Catalonia chapter (Creu Roja), which has long experience working with school mediators, piloted a new methodology that would position the mediator as a resource for non-violent resolution of conflicts in schools, and to mobilize young people aged 12 to 16 to support this idea. Partners in Germany, Belgium, Italy, the UK and France brought to the project the opportunity for comparative research on this concept and the possibility to take the pilot further.

Materials produced

The Creu Roja produced two different sets of materials – one for the use of the school-based mediators (who were also trained in non-violent conflict resolution), and one for the young people participating in the pilot project. For both of these, a uniform graphic identity was produced, based on the two words SENSE (without) and CON (with) in Catalan. From these two words, the project slogan 'Sin violencia; convivencia' ('coming together without violence') was made.

- The project slogan was developed into a very colourful, youth-oriented graphic design that was used on all the materials. The striking design has stylized faces – all colours; some happy, some sad, some talking – that send the message of the need to talk through problems to solve them. The design was also made into stickers that were distributed in 1,000 packs for young people aged 12 to 16 years in schools in Catalonia, and 200 in Spanish.
- To support the schools-based activity, a research report on school violence in Europe, bringing together research done by the project partners, was used as a lobbying platform and to support the concept of school mediation.
- The young people's pack contained an activity book using cartoon characters to send some very memorable messages, such as 'non-violence is a form of action, not a passive thing'.

How the materials were put together

- The **target groups** were twofold: the main target was school students aged between 12 and 16. This group, research had shown, most needed support in finding non-violent ways to resolve conflict at school. A parallel target group was educators who would be trained as school mediators and their colleagues.
- The **message** was not as important as the process of training and piloting the methodology, however the slogan and graphic elements gave the pilot an 'identity' around which educators and students could rally.
- **Quantities produced:** 40 sets of educator's materials were produced, in a briefcase-style packaging that allowed this 'module' to be seen as 'school/training' materials. Ten of the packs were produced in Spanish and 30 in Catalan. 1,000 students' packs were produced

in Catalan and an extra 200 in Spanish. The project materials were based on Creu Roja's experience with school mediation, and the graphic elements were developed with a commercial design company. The project partners also consulted with educationalists and with their steering group.

- The research was undertaken in each of the partner countries: Spain, Germany, Belgium, Italy, France and the UK. The aim was both to learn about the different challenges faced across Europe in bringing about non-violent resolution of conflict in schools, and also to share ideas of good practice. The fact that the research covered six European Member States also meant that the results were a suitably valid platform for information and lobbying at European level.

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A few comments:

- Another way to develop good designs that are eye-catching for young people is to involve children or adolescents themselves in designing the materials. On the basis of their designs, you can ask a professional graphic design company to develop the idea further. Make sure you give credit to the young people whose ideas have been used. Maybe you could organize a prize-giving ceremony and include an exhibition of the children's designs at the same time – this is also a good way of broadening discussion of the issues and of raising more support.

Graphics reference

6.3 NO violence but CONsensus logo.jpg