FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN DE PALENCIA

UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID

OPTIMISING LIVING TOGETHER IN SCHOOLS FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: LOPIVI ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS FOR A SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

OPTIMIZANDO LA CONVIVENCIA ESCOLAR DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA GLOBAL: ANÁLISIS DE LA LOPIVI Y PROPUESTAS PARA UNA MEJORA SOSTENIBLE EN EL AULA

TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

EN EDUCACIÓN SOCIAL/ INFANTIL/PRIMARIA

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RESUMEN

En el presente Trabajo de Fin de Grado se centra en la importancia de la aplicación de la nueva Ley de Protección Integral a la Infancia y la Adolescencia frente a la Violencia (LOPIVI) y otras estrategias que ayuden a la prevención o detección temprana de la violencia en menores. Especialmente bajo el contexto globalista actual, en el cual se ha apreciado un incremento en la diversidad y riqueza lingüística y cultural de España. Se hizo una encuesta a 65 individuos para ver el grado de preparación y hacer frente a este reto, dicha encuesta abordó preguntas relacionadas con el conocimiento de los derechos de la infancia, las medidas de protección y la eficacia percibida de la ley. Los resultados indicaron un bajo nivel general de conocimiento sobre la LOPIVI y la violencia infantil en la muestra seleccionada. Se reconoce la necesidad de realizar estudios más amplios y representativos para obtener resultados generalizables y concluyentes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación Infantil, LOPIVI, violencia infantil, acoso escolar, encuesta.

ABSTRACT

This Final Degree Project focuses on the importance of the application of the new Law for the Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence (LOPIVI) and other strategies that help in the prevention or early detection of violence young children. Especially under the current globalist context, in which an increase in the linguistic and cultural diversity and richness of Spain has been appreciated. A survey was made to 65 individuals to see the degree of preparedness to face this challenge. The survey addressed questions related to the knowledge of children's rights, protection measures and the perceived effectiveness of the law. The results indicated a low general level of knowledge about LOPIVI and child violence in the selected sample. The need for larger and more representative studies to obtain generalisable and conclusive results is recognised.

KEY WORDS: Infant Education, LOPIVI, child violence, bullying, survey.

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1. INTRODUCTION

While we envision Early Childhood Education as an inherently secure stage, in which there is almost no room to think in different situations, this idealisation of the stage may be distant from the truth, especially taking into account research associated with the status of child violence. Globally speaking, it is estimated that one out of two children aged between 2 to 17 years old experience some form of violence each year (WHO, 2020). In addition, research has found out that the COVID-19 pandemic and its response had an impact on the prevalence of violence against children, and it is likely that such a situation provokes long-lasting negative consequences.

As teachers, we tend to envision the learning possibilities of different situations in the classroom, even those who appear to be mainly negative. However, this philosophy can be applied as well in other aspects of our lives and outside classrooms, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of the negative scenarios that came up with the pandemic, we have to admit that this situation also favoured giving more visibility to some concerns that people had prior to that situation, or to break up with the idealisation of some aspects of our lives. In other words, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed us to be more aware and learn that we should not take everything for granted. A recent study lead by UNICEF (2021) revealed that the situation for children under six years old is more concerning, with rates of them living in poverty being worse in 2020 than in the 2008 economic and financial crisis.

As it was said before, the pandemic nudged society as a whole to a different direction. This is why, in January 2023, a new law came into force in Spain named LOPIVI (Ley Orgánica de Protección Integral a la Infancia y a la Adolescencia frente a la Violencia) a law to redefine and enhance our roles and obligations as educators. This was not the first step made in order to protect underage people from different violent situations, and it will not be the last either. However, we should not envision this situation as an endless and hopeless battle against violence inflicted against children, in which practitioners will think of the recently passed law as a tool rather than a burden.

The importance of this profession transcends the duty of teaching a series of previously settled objectives or facts to students, after all, we are also working with human beings. Along with other members in our society, teachers are also referents for younger people, and that requires that we know how to address different situations, such as child violence. Even if laws and regulations are useful tools for our profession, we cannot exclusively rely on them. Laws, inevitably, will have a lack of the humane factor that teachers need to add in their practice.

The reasons to select this theme as the axis of my study come from an experience during my internship period, in which I was under the tuition of a class tutor, who was also an English teacher who, as an EFL specialist in a Bilingual school, assumes this responsibility with different groups. In one of these classrooms, one pupil was living a reality quite different from the rest. This pupil had suffered violence inside his family and had been moved into an Institutional Home and changed school as s/he was under court guardianship. This fact led my interest towards this theme, first to find out the way to integrate the pupil in the classroom, but also to study the implications of violence in child development. This selection opened a completely new world in front of me, questioning myself about how I could be more competent identifying violence in the school walls or even beyond, how does violence affect children development? or how can a teacher coordinate his or her work with the responsibility of an Institution in order to get the best out of the child.

So, the first step was learning to identify and to act against school peer violence training myself with tools to use in classroom and school playtime, but also handling new techniques to deal with families and adults and getting a closer knowledge of the effects of violence in children's development. I ended up enrolling in a series of seminars conducted by the REA association. This institution is a member of FAPMI[1] (Federación de Asociaciones para la Prevención del Maltrato Infantil).

The seminars offered different information about the most popular actions and beliefs related to this topic, it was also an experience that broke some beliefs that practitioners

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[1] FAMPI was founded in 1990, whereas REA was founded 6 years later, in 1996. Both associations focus on preventing child violence in its different forms. These were some of the previously mentioned steps that other practitioners did before in order to prevent and fight against child violence. These activities are offered in Palencia's Education Faculty as extracurricular studies.

and students thought were appropriate, and, the most important aspect, the introduction of the recently passed law: LOPIVI.

After such an informative experience, and noticing the lack of information about this law (along with other ideas that were exposed in the seminars), I decided to conduct a survey in order to find out whether it stemmed from my personal lack of knowledge as a student, or a collective lack of awareness on the part of educators and professionals, there seemed to be a deficiency in understanding both the law and the subject matter. Therefore, the first task assumed was designing the survey which also forced me to go through a deeper knowledge of the law, as well as the mechanism to create and conduct a survey thanks to the help of an expert: Associate professor Azucena Estéban Alonso.

Along with this initial survey, and related to the specific situation in my school, I was invited to visit one Institutional Home, where I could arrange an interview with the person in charge of that Institutional Home, who is also one of the experts responsible for the training of Teachers in the new law.

To conduct this research and work out this investigation, I require and demonstrate the achievement of a range of general competences as an Infant Education Degree student. Firstly, be able to identify an urgent need in the educative level I am becoming an expert, document myself with the foundations of theories, laws and resources available -get deep inside the resources provided in different subjects during the degree, create a survey (tools) to contrast opinions and procedures, select a sample, rise data and be able to interpret and evaluate it, using effective procedures such as using computer resources for online searches. Moreover, staying updated in the socio-educational context is crucial. Additionally, it is important to have a solid understanding of methodologies and self-learning strategies, enabling them to navigate the educational landscape effectively. As well as, initiate investigation activities, fostering a spirit of inquiry and exploration. Developing an awareness of the intercultural reality and cultivating respect, tolerance, and solidarity towards diverse social and cultural groups are equally important.

Furthermore, it is also important to acquire knowledge of actions that ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities and critically analyse and reflect upon the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Valuing the social impact of their actions and considering environmental factors will ultimately contribute to their overall effectiveness in the educational sphere.

In addition, it is important to set some specific competences as well, such as the encouragement of the educational integration of students with difficulties. Additionally, to possess the ability to critically analyse and incorporate relevant questions that affect school and family education. Moreover, embrace changes in gender and intergenerational relations, multiculturality and interculturality, discrimination and social inclusion, and sustainable development. Promoting learning situations emphasising non-discrimination and equal opportunities, alongside analysing schools' accessibility, is essential.

Furthermore, it is important to ponder the need to eliminate sexist behaviours, contents, and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination. Encouraging peaceful conflict resolution and fostering harmonious coexistence within and beyond the classroom is vital. Understanding the complex interactions between education and its contexts, as well as its connections with other disciplines and professions, is important. Being familiar with the organisation and functioning of Infant Education schools, the ability to analyse data, comprehend reality, and draw conclusions, along with knowledge of international experiences and innovative models, complete the comprehensive skillset. Lastly, comprehending Mathematics as sociocultural knowledge and understanding the position of Infant Education schools within educational systems adds depth.

2. OBJECTIVES

Besides the previously mentioned general and specific competences that I pretend to achieve as an Infant Education Degree student, the general objective that this document pretends to accomplish is to analyse the current law in Spain (LOPIVI), which has appeared this year, and offer a point of view main pillars: globalisation and inclusion where the plurilingual and pluricultural perspective adopted in the educational policy of the Council of Europe is essential.

To accomplish this main objective, it is crucial to establish a series of specific objectives. This is why the specific objectives for this document will be:

- To get to know the incidence rate of violence in young children and its effect on children development. Identifying factors and situations as well as teaching takes that could be included in the law but are not evident at first sight.
- As a Foreign Language Teacher, to analyse the aspects of this Act that could be associated with the general features: plurilingual and pluricultural competence in the CEFR, and its importance in order to build more inclusive communities.
- To identify the main features that could be borrowed from good practices already implemented in other schools in order to prevent bullying and promote a positive and inclusive school climate.
- To foster community engagement and partnerships among educators, students and other people that contribute in the school community.
- To promote practices tested in other countries, such as the ones described in the Index for Inclusion, in order to enhance a better use of LOPIVI.
- To conduct and interview to collect experiences from experts and compare them to objective data.
- To design a survey and select a suitable sample, as a tool to identify the level of knowledge and involvement of professionals and University Student-Teachers on this theme.

3. THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION

The new addition of the Organic Law 8/2021 of June 4th, which focuses on the protection of children and adolescents from violence from the human rights perspective, attempts to set the responsibilities that practitioners who work with underage people need to be aware of and assume. However, I have noticed that there is a lack of knowledge about this law among practitioners.

The mention of inclusive practices is not a new topic, Organic Law 3/2020 of December 29th article 1 mentions the compliance of Children's Rights, established in the Convention of the Rights of the Child by the UN. This, among other rights, recognises the right to not being discriminated against and the obligation that the State has to ensure

their rights. The same article also establishes the education to live together, to respect, and prevent or solve conflicts in a pacific way. It also encourages non-violent attitudes in all aspects of the student's life: personal, familiar, and social life. Especially when it comes to bullying or cyberbullying. The objective is to recognise all forms of violence or discrimination to act against them.

The same law also recognises the importance of the different European objectives and, in addition, the approaches of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related to education. Especially, the compliance of objective number 16, which is also encouraged by Organic Law 8/2021 of June 4th, this objective establishes the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and the end of any type of violence towards underage people.

In addition, Royal Decree 95/2022 of February 1st, which establishes the three areas of experience and development in Infant Education, mentions in the "Growth in Harmony" area the importance of appreciating the sociocultural plurality, which should be encouraged with different games and activities. The objective is to make students understand that inclusion is enriching and reinforces the idea of living together with other people.

4. MAIN GROUNDS

4.1. WHY DO WE NEED LOPIVI?

As we formerly mentioned, the Organic Law 8/2021 from July 4th, of Childhood and Adolescence Integral Protection Towards Violence, also known in Spanish as Ley Orgánica de protección integral a la infancia y Adolescencia frente a la violencia (LOPIVI), is a law that was recently introduced in 2023 with the objectives of redefining the roles and obligations that practitioners have, and ensure the rights that children and adolescents have, protect them against all types of violence, and establishing different protocols in order to repair the damage or prevent it.

As a recently passed law, it is understandable that there can be some negative perceptions among practitioners, as it can be seen as more time-consuming work in their busy schedules instead of a tool that redefines their roles and establishes guidelines in order to act properly. In addition, there are some attitudes that both practitioners and families may

have that can affect this negative perception of having a law targeted on protecting the different aspects of children and adolescents.

Some of them are related to the previously mentioned idealisation of early childhood, such as the denial of some problems in childhood due to its negative and impactful nature or, quite the contrary, the overreaction and re-victimization of those who suffered from child violence, and the fear of addressing and talking about such topics with younger people to protect them. Other attitudes are related to the lack of awareness, the false beliefs that are socially accepted, or even denial of personal experiences, which can normalise the lack of attention to those problems. (Goicoechea, 2013)

This law aims to avoid such situations by encouraging comprehensive protection, which is the act of adopting all the measures to guarantee the right of children to be protected, such as ensuring the universality of human rights, promoting good treatment, being obligated to guarantee child protection as well as creating protective environments. This should be applied to all spheres, such as family, educational, social interventions, protection system, etc. (Losoviz, 2021)

It is important to mention that we should not envision people with the previously mentioned characteristics as an impediment to address the topic of child violence. We have to remember that some reactions are human and comprehensible, despite having objective facts that say otherwise, in order to cooperate and ensure the effective usage of different resources to face this challenge. (Goicoechea, 2013)

This recent addition had also set a precedent related to laws that aim to protect underage people from violence. In their guide, Martínez & Escorial (2021) state that the passing of this law has meant a step forward to protect children and adolescents in Spain. In addition, the said country becomes the first one in the world to have such a law and therefore the beginning to change society's view on child violence to eradicate it.

The passing of a law does not ensure its right usage and awareness since the first day, it is a set of guidelines that cannot work without the human factor that means working with people, regardless of their age, and dealing with a topic that can bring a variety of different feelings depending on who is living that situation. In order to use the full potential of this law, it is important that people who work with underage people, and especially practitioners, are aware of it, what it adds and what it lacks, not only for their performance

at work and their sake, but also for the sake of children and adolescents to ensure their rights.

Due to its recent creation, and as it is logical, there is a lack of awareness about this law and what it implies for practitioners, especially teachers. This is why I had an interview regarding this law with an expert in protective environments (2023), who is the director of Mensajeros De La Paz Institutional Homes in Palencia. The lack of development of the law by regional governments is delaying its implementation. The resources are available, but the barriers are higher (such as the lack of coordination between practitioners or the lack of people) is an important factor that prevents the said resources from following the line required.

Furthermore, another important barrier is the prejudices that some professionals have towards students who live in institutional homes and are under legal guardianship or court proceedings. This issue becomes more troubling when professionals lack context or knowledge about the situations that some students can present. This knowledge is even nonexistent regarding the curriculum of Education degrees, where it is requiring an urgent actualization related to informing or training students of the said degrees in order to improve this situation.

This can be related to the previously mentioned idealisation of childhood, which can also be an important factor that encourages this situation and makes the process harder to understand and act to the point it can also affect the early formation that students of Education degrees receive.

In addition, according to the interview, the figure of the coordinator is a crucial factor to encourage and have an adequate protocol to include students that present the previously mentioned characteristics and ensure the cooperation between different relevant figures in order to accomplish it.

This is why this law should not be seen as another barrier to develop our teaching task satisfactorily, it should be seen and perceived as a key that opens the door to the possibility of having more inclusive schools and the acquisition of the proper knowledge in order to face the different situations that englobe having tools to handle Infant Violence.

4.2. VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

4.2.1. What do we call violence?

According to Losoviz (2021), violence is any action, omission, or negligent treatment that has the potential of depriving children of their rights and well-being, which means this threatens and may interfere with their physical, mental, or social development. Violent acts can also happen through ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies), which is defined as digital violence.

There is a plethora of evidence that certain forms of violence towards children is associated with certain long-term consequences (Angelakis et al., 2019, 2020). Some of those consequences are psychiatric diagnoses in adulthood, negative psychological consequences, such as depression, anxiety, suicide attempts (Hailes et al., 2019).

One of the most common forms of violence in schools that even nowadays supposes a challenge for practitioners is bullying, which can also appear as a consequence when children experience violent situations in their lives.

4.2.2. Bullying definition

The development of inclusion aims to reduce all forms of exclusion, but Booth and Ainscow (2002) assert that it is an ongoing process of learning and participation for everyone, and that a completely ideal scenario is never fully achieved. Despite efforts to reduce exclusion cases, there is no fully inclusive setting, and situations like bullying can still occur even in schools that strive to be more inclusive. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to be prepared to address the challenges that bullying presents.

There is some debate about the definition of bullying (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017), and a universal agreement has not been reached. However, most researchers have established bullying as a form of intentional aggressive behaviour directed towards peers, characterised by two elements. Firstly, it is repetitive in nature, and secondly, there is a power imbalance between the aggressor and the target of bullying. Bullying has become pervasive in society and is now recognized as a public health emergency (Waseem & Nickerson, 2017).

The terms "bullying" and "peer victimisation" may be used interchangeably, but the latter is not synonymous with the former (Arseneault, 2018). Peer victimisation refers to a situation such as a fight between individuals of equal strength. This situation alone does not meet the criteria for bullying, as it lacks other characteristics such as a power imbalance or repetition, but peer victimisation can occur within bullying situations.

According to Hymel & Swearer (2015), bullying can take various forms, including verbal (such as taunting or threatening), physical (direct physical harm to the targeted person), social (exclusion, humiliation, spreading rumours), and cyberbullying (harassment that occurs online, such as through social media).

Among these forms, physical bullying and cyberbullying are the most concerning. However, they are not the most common types, despite being the most overt. In fact, students are more likely to experience verbal and social bullying, as they are aware that schools have rules prohibiting physical harm, whereas verbal and social bullying can be more difficult to identify.

Moreover, Smith (2016) highlights that the prevalence rates of bullying vary greatly due to measurement issues. In the context of infant education and nursery, this role is more subject to change, and researchers tend to classify it as "unjustified aggression."

4.2.3. What does bullying imply for the involved parts

Bautista (2020) emphasises that bullying is harmful to everyone involved: the aggressor, the person who suffers from it, and the bystanders who observe it silently. In particular, the bystanders are affected as it impacts their self-esteem, school performance, and increases the likelihood of developing emotion-related disorders.

Relationships and experiences with peers or children are crucial for proper development (Garaigordobil & Oñederra, 2008). Through these interactions, children and adolescents acquire different skills, attitudes, and habits that promote adaptation and social interactions. Such relationships, whether with family members, schoolmates, or neighbours, have an impact on their sense of security and their social, cognitive, and emotional adjustment.

It is important to note that the person who experiences bullying will be victimised by their peers, leading them to be perceived as a victim (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). The prevalence of victimisation tends to be relatively stable, and the major negative effect on the victim is depression (Smith, 2016).

Regarding the aggressor, there may be some short-term benefits for them (Smith, 2016). Bullies can gain popularity among their peers without necessarily having low self-esteem. In the past, bullies were often portrayed as socially incompetent individuals who solved conflicts through violence (Waseem & Nickerson, 2022). However, this is not always the case, as bullies can be socially skilled and use their abilities to manipulate others or inflict more harm. Different studies also indicate that bullies may lack affective empathy (the ability to share the feelings of others), while still retaining cognitive empathy (the ability to recognize the feelings of others).

It is worth mentioning that bullies themselves can also become victims. They may exhibit impulsive and hyperactive behaviours, struggle academically, and experience peer rejection (Waseem & Nickerson, 2022).

Despite any short-term benefits that aggressors may experience, Bautista (2020) states that certain behaviours can be reinforced. These behaviours can include a lack of self-control, intolerance, irritability, disinterest in studying, and problematic family relationships.

Individuals who witness bullying situations and adopt a passive or silent attitude are also affected by the situation. The effects on bystanders may not be as visible, but they contribute to a situation in which students accept such scenarios, and values like fellowship are disregarded (Bautista, 2020).

Even if most students claim that they dislike bullying, a significant number of them admit that they might join or support such situations (Smith, 2016). This reflects power dynamics and social status within the group, making it challenging to encourage students to abandon such behaviour (Waseem & Nickerson, 2022).

Lastly, bullying affects the institutional context as well (Díaz-Aguado, 2005). It leads to a decrease in the quality of life, difficulties in achieving certain objectives, and can generate a chain of major consequences.

4.2.4. Risk factors for violence and bullying

It is important to emphasise that while there may be factors that can make a child or adolescent more susceptible to violence or bullying, it does not guarantee that they will always be a victim. Research indicates that there is no clear pattern to define who becomes an aggressor or a victim. However, there are certain elements that can contribute to both, making it a multifactorial situation (Muñoz, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, one of the main characteristics of bullying is the presence of an imbalance of power. This power imbalance can be subjective, but there are factors that can contribute to it, such as popularity, intelligence, disabilities, or identity. Additionally, the environment, including belonging to a minority group, can also play a role in this power imbalance.

For example, children with disabilities have higher rates of being victims and, according to UNICEF (2021) they are also prone to be vulnerable and to face social exclusion, in this group it is also included the group of children who suffer from mental health problems. In addition, there is a shortage of specialised teachers to support them. However, sometimes they can also turn into bullies during their early schooling years. Factors that may contribute to this include having fewer friendships or lower quality friendships, negative perceptions by their peers, and social rejection (Smith, 2016). Certain traits associated with their disability, such as clumsiness, speech impediments, or poor hearing, can also make them easier targets for bullying.

Empirical studies suggest that personal matters, family dynamics, and the school environment also influence bullying. Within the family, certain risk factors can contribute to the development of bullying behaviour. Variables such as the absence of a parental figure or the presence of a violent parental figure increase the likelihood of children developing aggressive behaviour may reinforce it, which also corresponds to other forms of child violence.

Other factors related to this are the negative socioeconomic situations or disorganisation at home, which also contribute to these factors (Muñoz, 2016). This is in line with the six groups that are more vulnerable according to UNICEF (2021), being one of them children in precarious family situations and are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Children exposed to violence may develop a worldview where there are only two roles: being an aggressor or being a victim. This view can lead them to justify violence to avoid becoming a victim (Díaz-Aguado, 2005). Permissive parenting methods can also be a risk factor, as children are not accustomed to clear rules or consequences for negative behaviour. This lack of structure negatively impacts their social skills and increases their likelihood of becoming aggressors. On the other hand, children with strict parents and strict procedures may act rebelliously and become more susceptible to violence or bullying.

Another significant risk factor within the family and its environment is related to the adults. Studies have found that adults who live in families where violence occurs often come from violent families themselves. This suggests that previous experiences of violence in childhood increase the likelihood of problems in future relationships, including relationships with their own children. However, this does not mean that violence in families will always be transmitted or that people who did not experience violence in their childhood cannot be violent towards their children (Díaz-Aguado, 2005).

Family income can also be considered a risk factor. Income inequality and the proportion of poor individuals in a school are related to bullying within that environment. However, poverty itself is not directly related to bullying (Azeredo et al., 2015).

The imposition of gender stereotypes is also a considerable risk factor, that was identified since the 90's, when schools are analysed from a co-education perspective. In Infant Education, using female students to calm the violent impulses from their male peers contributed to create victims. (Subirats & Tomé, 2010)

In the school setting, Muñoz (2016) identifies three main risk factors that contribute to the increase or acceptance of bullying: the justification or allowance of violence as a means to resolve conflicts among peers, treating diversity as if it does not exist on a regular basis, and the lack of response from teachers. The latter one is interpreted by aggressors as support, leaving the affected individuals feeling helpless.

Other factors related to the sense of connectedness within the school environment also play a role. Studies have shown that students with lower levels of connectedness are more susceptible to bullying, victimisation, and peer aggression (Hong & Espelage, 2012).

Moreover, students who are more gender non-conforming may face elevated risks of violence within school contexts (Roberts et al., 2013).

Additionally, negative environmental factors within schools, such as lower levels of adult supervision, can increase the frequency of bullying incidents and reduce the overall sense of safety among students

4.3. NEW CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

4.3.1. What globalisation implies for education

Nowadays, practitioners in Spain (and other European countries) face the reality of living under a globalised context nowadays. This means that there are different cultures and realities existing in the same place. Due to this reason, there are schools that present a richer diversity in cultures as a result and need to face new challenges in a proper way to ensure a plurilingual and pluricultural education.

As mentioned before, the COVID-19 pandemic provoked a rise of awareness regarding how much people idealise early childhood in general. For example, UNICEF (2021) revealed that almost 50% of children who came from a migrant background had experienced a situation of poverty or social exclusion. There are also some struggles that are related to socioeconomic school segregation, which makes students with those characteristics group in schools that often lack resources.

As a result of the pandemic, there were adaptations to the European Pillar of Social Rights as well. This plan consists of setting 20 key principles to promote a more inclusive Europe. Their first principle sets and tries to ensure that everyone has the right to a quality, inclusive education and a learning that lasts life-long to learn skills that would help people to participate in society.

There were previous attempts in order to have a more inclusive education in order to avoid situations as the one mentioned by UNICEF, but it has become a concern for Europe after the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted some of the challenges students faced between the years 2020 and 2021 in Spain (Sáez et al., 2020). Teachers began to worry about the consequences of not attending necessities that were more visible than ever during that time.

They also talk about an economic and cultural gap between students, which was their main concern, even more than the digital gap despite being very evident as well. This seems to be in line with UNICEF (2021) reports, in which they say that the lower rates of participation from 0 to 3 years old can be a result of differences between cultures. In addition, Sáez et al., (2020) report that having a computer or other technological resources does not ensure a quality education. In other words, material resources cannot attend to all necessities that students have, especially when talking about cultural gaps.

4.3.2. Education in a pluricultural and plurilingual environment

Before the devastating pandemic shed light on the urgent necessity of preparing students to thrive in our increasingly diverse and multicultural world, there were already some invaluable resources available to foster these vital values in bilingual schools. We will focus on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as evidence to the ongoing efforts of the Council of Europe in the realm of language since the 1970s and 1980s, with initial recommendations and applications emerging in the early 90s.

This remarkable contribution not only aimed to equip students with the skills to navigate diverse contexts beyond their borders but also served as a means to expose and embrace the myriad cultures present within schools, particularly in bilingual institutions, where students and curricula often hail from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. This pursuit holds great significance in fostering understanding between different cultures and bridging the gaps mentioned earlier.

In the quest to achieve these goals and minimise the likelihood of social exclusion, two essential competences emerge as paramount when considering learners as active participants in society: plurilingual and pluricultural competences. These concepts were first introduced in 2001, with a former publication in 2020, a Companion volume.

4.3.3. Plurilingual and Pluricultural competence

Plurilingual competence, derived from the term "plurilingualism," goes beyond the confines of traditional bilingualism. While bilingualism typically implies fluency in two languages or the utilisation of both languages in daily life, plurilingualism is more fluid in nature and defies rigid definitions (Coste et al., 2009).

In Spain, this competence is addressed in Royal Decree 95/2022 of February 1st. In early childhood education, it pertains to the appreciation and exploration of different languages and cultures, fostering respect and dialogue to promote democratic living.

The rationale is that individuals develop these competences in different languages out of a desire or necessity to communicate with others. This competence evolves throughout an individual's life, reflecting their unique social experiences.

The focus has shifted from solely achieving native-like proficiency in one language to developing and expanding a diverse range of language abilities. As a result, foreign languages have been incorporated into the Infant Education Curriculum since 2000, with Spain being the first country to introduce the European Language Portfolio, a crucial tool derived from the CEFR, to children aged 3-7. One of the aims of this curriculum is to foster a sense of European cultural identity and promote mutual understanding among different cultures within Europe (Alario et al., 2004).

In our current society, it is becoming increasingly common to encounter children who speak languages other than the dominant language in their environment. This situation, which used to be viewed as a problem, is now seen as an opportunity for learning. The CEFR encourages us to embrace this shift and transform classrooms with such linguistic diversity into inclusive and multilingual environments.

Consequently, language learning becomes a multicultural experience that involves the entire community, with the primary objective of cultivating respect for different ways of perceiving the world. By associating plurilingualism with richness and diversity, we can create an atmosphere that celebrates and values the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of all individuals.

The second crucial competence, "Pluricultural Competence," is a neologism stemming from the concept of plurilingualism, itself derived from the concept of bilingualism (Coste et al., 2009).

As previously discussed, the integration of plurilingualism in educational institutions and leveraging multilingual and diverse environments can effectively promote the acquisition of multiple languages (Alario et al., 2004). While the idea of pluriculturalism has not received specific theoretical visibility, it has indirectly influenced bilingual studies. It is important to distinguish between "pluriculturalism" and "multiculturalism," with the

latter primarily debated in the USA regarding linguistic and identity aspects concerning ethnic minorities. Although there are similarities in the European context, the goals differ. Pluricultural competence acknowledges the need for cultural diversity, necessitating adaptive responses, comprehension of different cultures, recognition of similarities, and fostering sensitivity.

Instead of merely developing a pluricultural repertoire, it is recommended to create a pluricultural space, a shared environment where individuals from different languages and cultures can engage, embracing the concept of "otherness" and addressing the aforementioned needs. This approach seeks to deepen intercultural understanding among participants and mitigate communication barriers.

These two competences are not rigidly defined or confined to a standardised framework. The social agent, or the student, has the capacity to acquire new knowledge and components. Some elements may undergo transformation, while others may become less relevant, given the fluid and adaptable nature of these competences in particular (Coste et al., 2009).

4.4. LIVING COHERENCE IN SCHOOLS

4.4.1. Living Together Plan in Spain

The concept of living harmoniously based on certain rules and social connections is inevitably accompanied by the emergence of conflicts, which should not be viewed solely as negative occurrences. Instead, they can serve as valuable opportunities for personal growth and acquiring skills to navigate diverse circumstances. The inclusion of multiple languages and cultural backgrounds within a school setting undoubtedly necessitates the coordination, supervision, and collaborative efforts of various practitioners and community members. This collective endeavour aims to pre-emptively address potential conflicts and tackle the diverse challenges that may arise. It is crucial, therefore, that such endeavours do not deter professionals from embracing more inclusive practices within educational institutions.

In the specific case of Castile and León, an autonomous community in Spain, prior to the implementation of LOPIVI, several guidelines and tools were developed to confront this very challenge. These resources were instrumental in providing the much-needed training that teachers require to effectively tackle these issues. In accordance with the Royal Decree 3/2018, dated January 12th, Spanish schools are mandated to create a comprehensive plan for fostering harmonious coexistence. This plan must be integrated into their annual curriculum and encompass various activities designed to promote positive interactions among students, safeguard their rights and responsibilities, and outline appropriate courses of action in the event of misconduct. Moreover, these initiatives must be tailored to accommodate individual students' unique circumstances and emphasize the prevention and resolution of conflicts through nonviolent means. Special attention must be given to addressing instances involving gender violence, promoting equality, and eradicating discrimination.

Castile and León takes this commitment a step further by providing additional resources for the formulation and implementation of such plans. According to Convivencia, an initiative by the Junta de Castilla y León, an effective living together plan should be useful for enhancing relationships within the education community. It is practical for improving communication and realistic by adapting to the specific needs and characteristics of the school, with clear and coherent objectives. It is dynamic, as it requires ongoing planning, execution, revision, and incorporation of new elements. Moreover, it should be made publicly known to all the education stakeholders involved.

The school context is taken into consideration when developing this plan. It includes planned objectives and activities aimed at achieving those objectives. Procedures are established to address conflicts and manage coexistence within the school community. Additionally, protocols are put in place to disseminate, implement, and evaluate the plan effectively.

The plan itself should be embraced as a unique opportunity to leverage the communicative resources at the school's disposal to proactively prevent and resolve conflicts, both at an individual and group level. It is imperative to emphasise that the implementation of this plan cannot and should not be haphazard; instead, it requires a continuous and integrated approach within the teacher's responsibilities (Rodríguez, 2007).

With the aforementioned characteristics and content requirements, the plan should not falter. On the contrary, it should provide a robust response to the formidable challenge of averting conflicts and combating bullying. However, as previously highlighted, teachers have become more cognizant of the stark reality following the aftermath of COVID-19, which has prompted a transformation in their idealised perception of early childhood. Merma-Molina et al. (2019) have expounded on the potential causes for this shift, such as schools failing to accurately reflect the students' lived experiences, the absence of specific and effective conflict resolution objectives, or the inadequacy and lack of relevance of proposed activities vis-à-vis the school's actual context.

This aligns with the insights obtained from interviews, as I have documented similar testimonies attesting to the inadequate reflection of reality within schools. Mayte Gómez (2023) passionately argued that there were instances where teachers were not aware of the authentic life situations faced by children residing in institutional homes, thereby highlighting the discrepancy between perception and reality.

Furthermore, this underscores the crucial role of a qualified coordinator, as previously emphasised during the interview.

The disconnection from reality may stem from various factors, but it is evident that the absence of necessary resources impedes the effective implementation of protocols and plans mandated for practitioners. Nevertheless, despite this glaring reality, the endeavour to develop new methodologies and protocols aimed at safeguarding the rights of children and adolescents is by no means an easy task. It necessitates an astute recognition of the deficiencies present within existing resources to compensate for them and foster improved practices that will better equip us to confront this challenge.

4.4.2. Tools to improve good and respectful schools: the Index for Inclusion

As it was formerly mentioned, significant strides have been taken to promote the active involvement of all individuals within the educational community and prevent situations that may compromise the rights of children and adolescents.

In the United Kingdom, the Index for Inclusion, a tool developed by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow in 2000 was published by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), and tested the following serves as a valuable resource. This resource is designed to

facilitate the transition towards inclusiveness in different types of schools, wherein children, practitioners, and community members all play a vital role. Moreover, it aims to guide caregivers in fostering increased participation, which has been a challenge for students from migrant backgrounds in Spain. With his aim in mind, the Index provides diverse materials and resources to promote inclusivity in different settings.

Initially implemented in England in 2000, the Index has since expanded to Wales in 2003 and has been embraced by numerous schools across the United Kingdom and several other countries, such as Germany, Finland, Norway, and Portugal. Currently, the document is available in over 30 languages, making it more accessible to teachers. Additionally, there are versions of the Index tailored for economically disadvantaged areas. In theory, these versions could also be applied to the aforementioned schools in Spain that lack resources, as they predominantly serve students from migrant backgrounds.

The strategies outlined in the Index can be instrumental in fostering inclusive environments and preventing situations where practitioners fail to fully recognize the unique differences and similarities among students. However, it is essential not to idealise the purpose of this guide. Booth et al. (2002) explain that achieving complete inclusivity is an "elusive goal". Rather than being disheartening or demotivating, this reality should serve as motivation to continually improve the application of these strategies for the greater good.

Furthermore, there is no one "correct" way to use the Index for Inclusion. While there are suggestions for enhancing inclusion in different settings, individuals interested in applying this resource are not obliged to adopt all the resources and techniques described within it. Instead, they can selectively introduce elements after carefully considering the specific context.

Sandoval et al. (2002) emphasise that this document prompts critical reflection on the terminologies employed in institutions and theories, which themselves can be discriminatory due to their approach to individual differences.

Despite its challenges, the Index for Inclusion is a practical resource that offers sequenced steps for innovation and improvement in education with a focus on inclusivity. According to various authors, using this resource does not save from difficulties, but the positive

aspects are ultimately rewarding and well worth the effort invested (Gutiérrez et al., 2014).

One of its most distinctive features is its integration of three dimensions that encompass the perspectives of all community members. This assists practitioners in understanding the context and reflecting reality more accurately in their reports, thereby facilitating improvements in the Living Together plan.

The structure of the Index centres around three key aspects: culture, policies, and practices. Alongside the introduction of these three dimensions, two sections draw attention to the actions necessary for increasing participation in the aforementioned activities.

**Figure 1:** The three dimensions described in the Index for Inclusion and its two sections.
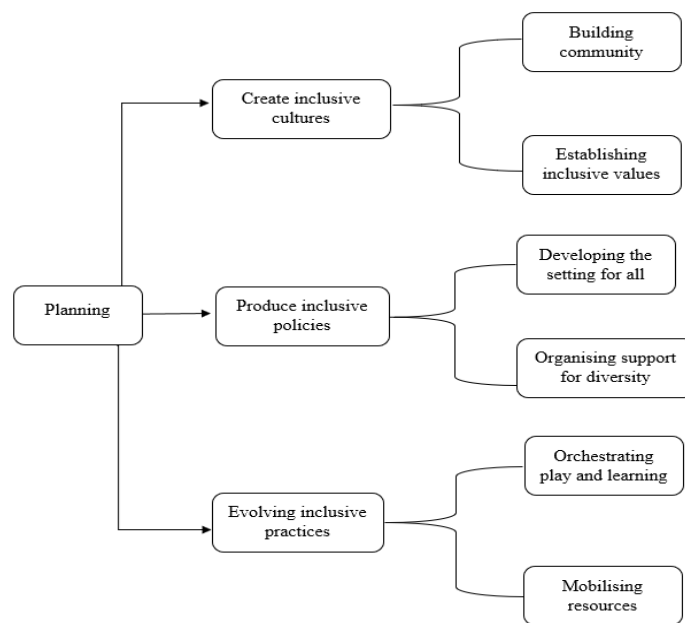
Adapted from Booth et al., (2002)

Implementing the Index requires a comprehensive assessment provided by schools regarding their current situation and how to enhance inclusion in the future. The review process should involve all stakeholders connected to the setting and, if possible, garner support from individuals beyond colleagues. However, this review should not be seen as an assessment of the competencies acquired by practitioners and other involved parties

during the application process. Instead, its primary purpose is to identify ways to support the development of the setting and its practitioners.

Figure 2: The different phases in the process of planning.
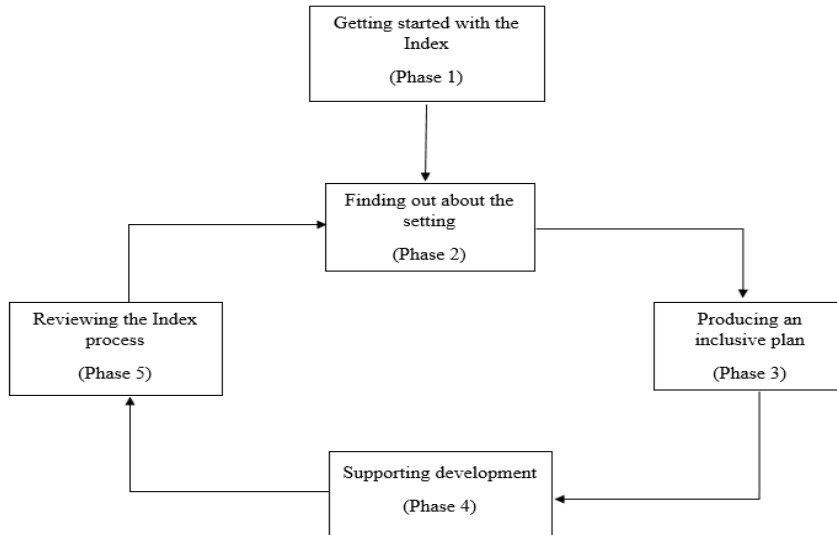
Adapted from Booth et al., (2002)

The initial phase of this process involves a designated group of individuals responsible for leading the self-review process. They must raise awareness about the Index and educate themselves to thoroughly review the setting in collaboration with practitioners, parents or carers, and children, among others.

During the second phase, the planning group must use their knowledge to collaborate with others in the setting, including relevant community members such as parents or carers. They must assess development priorities, initiate further investigations, and collectively determine which aspects should be prioritised.

The third phase may require focused meetings aimed at formulating a development plan. The Index provides a framework for assessing the necessary actions within the three identified dimensions. Following this phase, the fourth phase concentrates on implementing the established priorities and sustaining development. There may be moments that require additional investigation.

The fifth and final phase of the process entails reviewing progress, engaging in discussions to modify certain aspects, and utilising the Index's indicators and questions to assess the changes that have occurred during the school year. This reflection informs the formulation of new priorities for the subsequent year, effectively initiating the process anew during the second phase.

It is crucial to recognize that reviewing development for inclusion should not be viewed as a mechanical process. The steps outlined in the application of the Index are cyclical, but the process must encompass the connections between values, emotions, knowledge, actions, careful reflection, analysis, and planning. In essence, it should strike a balance between empirical and objective knowledge, subjective perception, and emotions.

4.4.3. LGBT+ representation in schools and nearby environment

The resources provided by the Index for Inclusion are invaluable, but as societal perspectives evolve, certain aspects of identity within the educational community become more visible. One area that remains uncertain for many is how to address gender identity in the classroom, given the idyllic view often associated with early childhood.

In terms of visibility, Kaufmann (2022) suggests a significant increase in the number of individuals in the United States identifying as part of the LGBT+ community since 2012, particularly since 2017. A survey of 12,000 Americans found an increase from 5.6% in 2020 to 7.1% in 2021. This data indicates a rapid growth of the LGBT+ population, with the figures being twice as high as those from 2012. Another representative survey conducted by Gates (2011) showed a prevalence of non-heterosexuality at 3.5% and transgender identity at 0.3%.

A survey by Ipsos (Boyon, 2021) reported a prevalence of non-heterosexuality at 9%. Furthermore, a representative survey across 28 nations conducted by Rahman et al. (2020), after controlling for gender equality and religion at the national level, revealed a 10% prevalence of non-heterosexuality among individuals identifying as men or women. In the UK, a representative survey estimated that 3.1% of the population identified as non-straight (ONS, 2021). Looking at Spain, Boyon's (2021) questionnaire found that 12% of the population identified as non-straight.

With the increasing rates of the LGBT+ population worldwide, it becomes crucial for schools to prioritise building inclusive spaces for this specific group, starting from early ages. Many individuals involved in education, including parents/carers, students, and practitioners, may themselves identify as part of the LGBT+ community. Students, for instance, are more likely to encounter diverse family models beyond the traditional one within their communities, whether in themselves or their peers.

Bailey et al. (2016) argue that there is stronger evidence supporting non-social causes of sexual orientation, suggesting that biological factors can influence one's orientation from birth. In contrast, theories suggesting that social factors can "turn" a person's sexual orientation to non-heterosexual are of lesser magnitude and can be influenced by other factors. This also applies to social theories proposing that non-heterosexual orientation is caused by negative environmental factors, such as the absence of a parental figure or childhood trauma. Recent prospective longitudinal cohort studies have not supported these theories (Xu et al., 2019, 2020).

4.4.4. Legitimising students' gut feelings in school

Barnes & Carlile (2018) assert that schools can be unwelcoming and hostile environments for many LGBT+ individuals, including teachers, which can have significant impacts on their health and well-being. Goicoechea (2013) echoes this sentiment and adds that barriers, such as the denial and overprotection of children, can prevent discussions on certain topics. It is important to address reality without instilling fear in children.

Goicoechea (2013) also emphasises the importance of legitimising children's somatic sensory intelligence, commonly known as gut feeling, to ensure their rights. Disregarding something so crucial in their lives because children aged 3 to 6 are unable to analyse and think about what is happening is a mistake. They may not be aware if they are experiencing aggression, but they can feel the aggression. They can feel pain, fear, or disgust in certain situations, and as expected, it also affects their development. Thus, somatic sensory intelligence should be considered within educational contexts.

Barnes & Carlile (2018) have outlined a series of steps to make schools more inclusive and welcoming to discussions on LGBT+ topics, which also validate the aforementioned

gut feeling and aim to prevent children from experiencing aggression. One of these steps involves reviewing and changing school policies, which aligns with the suggestions put forth by the Index for Inclusion. Additionally, cultivating a positive attitude toward such topics is recommended, working in conjunction with the use of the Index for Inclusion to enhance strategies and promote community participation.

Following policy review, the next step is to address heteronormativity, which assumes that everyone is heterosexual. This process can begin at an early age by creating gender-neutral spaces instead of segregating elements based on gender. This approach can also help validate children's gut feelings.

Another step, also in line with the actions suggested by the Index for Inclusion, involves transforming the physical environment of the school to be more inclusive and friendly. This step can also foster the involvement of parents, visitors, carers, and others, ultimately building a community around the school. It is important to acknowledge that there may be prejudices that act as barriers to achieving this objective, such as the notion that faith schools are inherently homophobic. However, research conducted by Barnes & Carlile (2018) reveals a different scenario, demonstrating that addressing LGBT+ topics can be successful in such schools.

4.4.5. Inclusion and ICTs

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a significant shift in practitioners' mindset regarding student well-being. Sáez et al. (2020) emphasised that having access to good technological resources does not guarantee the quality of student learning. However, it is undeniable that the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) have contributed to globalisation. Nowadays, it is easier than ever to communicate with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, highlighting that we live in a pluricultural and plurilingual society. Alongside the previously mentioned practices, it is crucial not to neglect the use of ICTs when implementing them, as they are not mutually exclusive, and their effective use can help teachers better connect with the reality students face.

According to the Royal Decree 95/2022 of February 1st, Infant Education in Spain should encourage the acquisition of eight key competences outlined in the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. In this context, Digital

Competence should be developed from the early stages of education, involving access to information, communication, and creation, promoting healthy and responsible usage, and utilising digital tools in the classroom to facilitate competence acquisition.

One resource that enables teachers and students to explore different cultures within Europe is eTwinning. This project, launched in 2005, promotes collaboration between teachers and students from different countries through technology. This practice has shown benefits, including the debunking of stereotypes and the cultivation of empathy among students. Additionally, students are more likely to enhance their communication skills through real-life situations when interacting with their partners (Camilleri, 2016).

The perspectives on how ICTs are employed in schools should also be taken into account to promote diversity and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the available resources. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of students and their needs, avoiding the disconnection from reality that teachers may have previously experienced when discussing inclusive strategies in Spanish schools, as mentioned earlier.

The use of SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational Technologies) could enhance inclusion in schools. Muñoz et al. (2021) highlight that the initial steps of digitization in Spain have already been completed, and future actions should focus on leveraging the usage of ICTs. SELFIE offers a global and precise overview of the perspectives of school leaders, teachers, and students regarding digital capabilities.

4.5. ACTIONS TO PROTECT

4.5.1. Protective factors against violence

Just as the risk factors, there are some that can make children less prone to endure bullying or violence, but that is not destined to escape it. This does not mean that teachers or practitioners should be disheartened while employing methods to diminish or shield students from bullying. One of the most prominent factors, which was already mentioned before, that can safeguard children from bullying is the school's policy. This is because

they foster certain types of behaviour amongst students, teachers, practitioners, etc., such as reporting potential bullying cases or discouraging actions like threatening or harassing.

As previously stated, the design of policies in favour of inclusion and protecting students is vital because it influences various actions within the school. Policies have some degree of effectiveness themselves, but some argue that they do not have a profound impact as a protective factor. (Hall, 2017) Those interventions that were directly aimed at halting bullying had an efficacy of 15% when they were applied according to a meta-analysis of 69 randomised clinical trials, including 111,659 participants. (Fraguas et al., 2021) Other factors, such as a positive school climate or school safety, can also have a positive impact on students, which means that there is a lower risk for students to be exposed to bullying and even cyberbullying (Zych et al., 2019). And, despite having less influence than the aforementioned factors, family factors, such as having a nurturing environment, enhanced communication, or interactions, can also serve as protective factors.

Another crucial factor that can prevent it is having friends and being accepted by peers (Díaz-Aguado, 2005). Possessing high social skills and emotional competences are factors that can shield against bullying as well (Zych et al., 2019). In fact, possessing self-oriented personal competencies is considered highly effective as a protective factor. Regarding personal factors, there are some that, even if their impact is not significant, can be considered protective. For example, academic achievements, despite not having a high impact, reduce victimisation among peers.

4.5.2. Laws to protect from bullying

Anti-bullying laws are also a vital component for schools and society in general to ensure and establish protocols in case of a confirmed case. These laws also define the responsibilities that practitioners and individuals who collaborate with schools, in any capacity, should have and acknowledge. A study conducted by Hatzenbuehler et al. (2015) in 25 states in the US revealed that states with laws against bullying were 24% less likely to report bullying and 20% less likely to report cases of cyberbullying. Sabia & Bass (2017) found that the impact of state anti-bullying laws on schools to reduce violence and bullying is not highly significant. However, there were results indicating that districts that implemented strong and comprehensive policies against bullying experienced 7% to 13% less violence and 8% to 12% fewer cases of bullying.

Regarding LGBT+ students, a study conducted in 22 states in the US over a period of 10 years (from 2005 to 2015) revealed similar results. Laws implemented to encourage robust policies in schools resulted in a 6.4% reduction in the risk of being victimized by peers. (Seelman & Walker, 2018) Another study conducted in all 50 states of the US by Rees et al. (2022) showed that the enactment of anti-bullying laws reduced the risk of suffering from cyberbullying by 4%. Female students defined themselves as having 6.5% less chances of experiencing bullying, while male students defined themselves as having 16% less chances.

4.6.   TEACHERS' FORMATION

An essential factor that determines the success of building inclusive communities in schools and preventing bullying cases is the training that teachers receive. The resources themselves will not be as effective if they are not provided by professional and well-trained practitioners.

4.6.1.   Teachers' formation related to bullying

In relation to the issue of bullying, Gorsek & Cunningham (2014) report that even though teachers would benefit from preventing bullying and receiving training on how to intervene in such situations, only teachers working with older students receive any training, disregarding those teachers who work with younger children. A survey conducted with 153 teachers by Shamsi et al. (2019) revealed that almost half of them (n = 82, 56.6%) lacked knowledge about bullying in schools.

In the same vein, Rigby (2011) demonstrates that there is a scarcity of resources or very few resources dedicated to training teachers and counsellors on how to deal with potential bullying cases, provide assistance, or apply appropriate and effective methods to stop it. Furthermore, 12.2% of students affirmed they were bullied; within this group, only 35% of them reported the situation to a teacher, and 49.7% of teachers were unaware of the bullying situation.

Moreover, 9.1% of teachers admitted to not taking any action to stop it. According to students, bullying ceased in 26.6% of cases, decreased in 28.7% of cases, remained the same for 28.3% of bullied students, and worsened in 16.4% of cases. Similar tendencies can be observed among preservice teachers, as Dawes et al. (2023) report in their review of 42 studies.

A small portion of this group is aware of the characteristics present in bullying, and a larger portion expresses concern about it. However, some perceive this situation as normal and not uncommon during childhood. To tackle this challenge, Somech & Oplatka (2009) add that schools can effectively address violent situations by encouraging staff members to see themselves as integral parts of the picture, involving them in all aspects of school functioning and including them in decision-making processes.

4.6.2. Teachers' formation related to inclusion

Regarding inclusion, teachers have a similar experience with their training on this specific topic. Triviño-Amigo et al. (2022) report that a significant percentage of teachers in their study revealed that their initial training was inadequate to deal with and address the diversity presented by students in schools. However, training is not the only important factor when it comes to formation. The willingness of teachers to receive training related to inclusion topics is also crucial. In the same study, it was revealed that a large portion of teachers (87.9%) is willing to attend courses on inclusion.

Furthermore, another significant percentage (78.6%) claimed that continuous training helped them improve inclusiveness in their interventions. In terms of teachers' experience, De Boer et al. (2011) show that teachers with more experience in inclusive education and more training have a better and more positive attitude toward inclusive education, whereas those with less experience and training hold a more negative perspective. The same study, which reviewed 26 studies, revealed that the majority of teachers had neutral or negative attitudes toward the idea of including students with different needs.

Additionally, these attitudes seemed to be biased by the type of disability, as teachers displayed more negative attitudes toward students with learning disabilities or behavioural problems, while showing more positive attitudes toward students with physical disabilities or sensory impairments.

Regarding other aspects, such as the inclusion of diverse sexualities, Hall & Rodgers (2019) report that attitudes among teachers toward homosexuality have become more favourable over time. Despite the growing number of teachers with positive attitudes, many teachers still hold negative views.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. STUDY DESIGN AND PARTICIPANTS

The study design employed is observational and retrospective, and the participants consist of students from the Education and Social Education degrees, individuals working as teachers, and individuals studying or working in related fields.

The targeted age group for this study is between 18 and 60 years old, as individuals typically begin their university studies at 18 years old or older, and it concludes at 60 years old, which is the retirement age for teachers. To achieve this, I distributed an anonymous questionnaire using snowball sampling among various individuals, such as colleagues, friends, and individuals involved in or working in the field of Education or Social Education.

The questionnaire included various inquiries, some of which pertained to knowledge of the law in Spain (LOPIVI), participants' perspectives on different bullying-related situations, their personal experiences in facing this challenge, and the effectiveness of protocols in schools.

Overall, the majority of those who answered the questionnaire were between the ages of 18 and 25 years old, 32 (49.2%), the ages in which people start studying in university, vocational training, or are starting with their first experiences in work (see appendix II). The great majority of people identified themselves as females (see appendix III), 46 (70.7%), with the majority of them working or studying in other areas (see appendix IV), 16 (24,6%), being Primary Education teachers, 12 (18.5%), studying for the Social

Education degree, 7 (10.8%), Primary and Infant education teachers, 7 (10.8%), and Primary and Infant education degree students in university, 9 (13.8%).

Figure 1: General knowledge of LOPIVI among the people that took the questionnaire
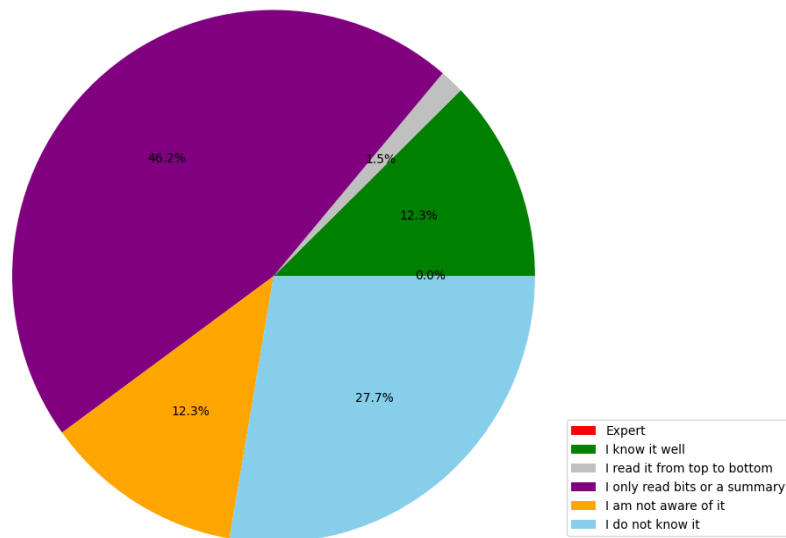

Knowledge of LOPIVI

Figure 2: Opinions about bullying detection

In which stage should possible cases of bullying be detected or ways to detect possible cases of bullying be implemented?
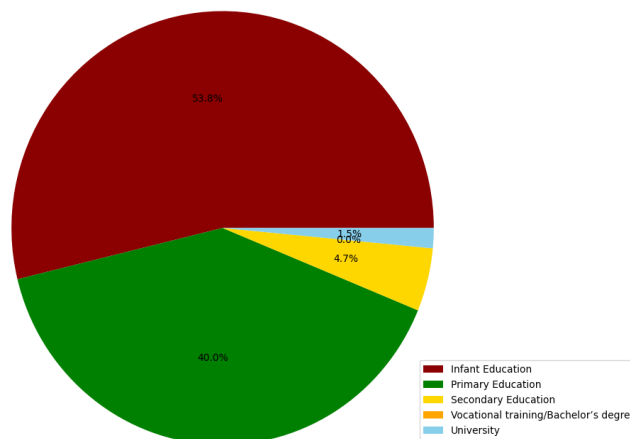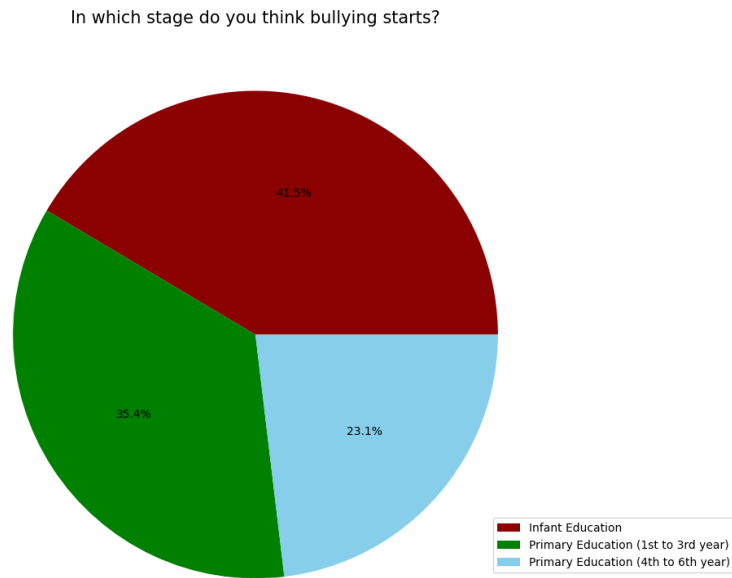
Figure 3: Opinions about in which stage bullying starts

In which stage do you think bullying starts?

In general, the knowledge of the people that took the questionnaire regarding LOPIVI was that they only read bits or a summary, 30 (46.2%), or that they do now know the law, 18 (27.7%). None of the people who answered it were experts. About their opinion of detecting possible cases of bullying, more than half of the people in the questionnaire answered that it should start in Infant Education, 35 (53.8%), the second most popular opinion was that it should start in Primary Education, 26 (40%). Related to their view about the stage in which bullying starts, people do not determine that it can start in Secondary Education and upper. In fact, their view is that it mostly starts in Infant Education, 27 (41.5%).

Figure 4: Comparison of the general perception of conflicts and bullying
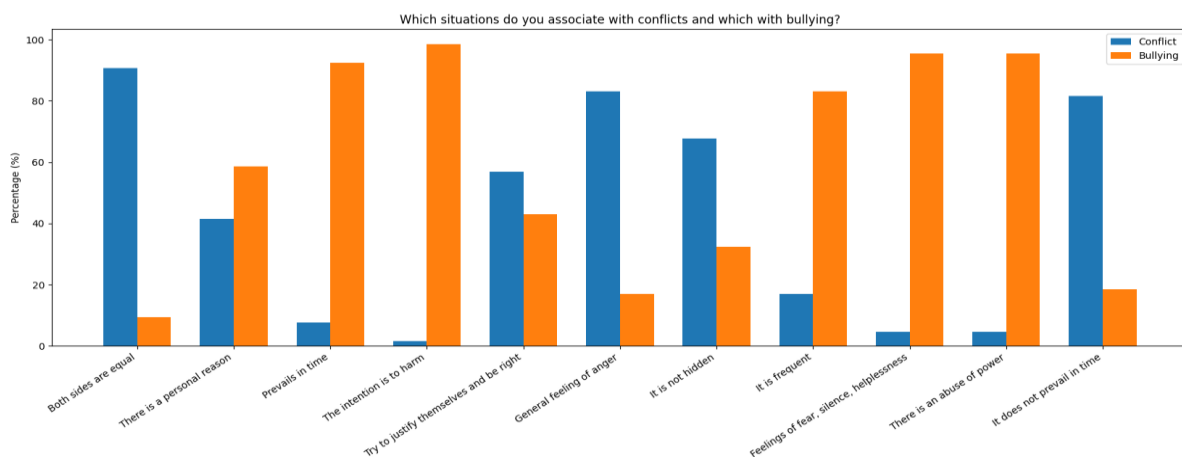
Overall, the people that answered the questionnaire seemed to have a clearer idea of the most obvious forms of bullying, such as the intention to harm, 64 (98.5%), that there is an abuse of power, 62 (95.39%), or the feelings of fear, silence, and helplessness, 62 (95.39%). However, there are mixed opinions in those aspects that might be more subtle. For example, the justification of both parts and the desire to be right, 37 (56.92%) determined it can happen in situations in which there is a conflict, and 28 (43.08%) said it happens when there is a bullying situation. The same happens when it comes to the option "there is a personal reason", in which the opinions are also more ambiguous, 27 (41.5%) think that it is a characteristic that happens in conflicts, and 38 (58.5%) say that this happens in bullying situations.

The experiences regarding how schools are aware of a possible case of bullying are various (see appendix V), but the most persistent one was that parents or guardians of the affected student say it, 32 (47%). However, observations in class or break time, 17 (25%), and that the affected person says it, 10 (14.7%), are also among the most popular choices. The surveyed people had the option to write down other factors that they considered important as well. Some said that schools become aware of a possible case of bullying when something really bad happens or that there might be more factors.

The experiences related to how long bullying was happening before its detection are also various (see appendix VI), the option that it persists more, and determines half of the answers, is that bullying has been happening between 1 to 6 months, 33 (50.8%). The other options have similar results between them: less than 1 month, 2 years, and 3 years or more share the same one, 5 (7.7%). There is not a significant difference between 1 month, 8 (12.3%), and 1 year, which is 9 (13.8%).

Figure 6: Knowledge about ICTs

How do you qualify your knowledge related to ICTs?
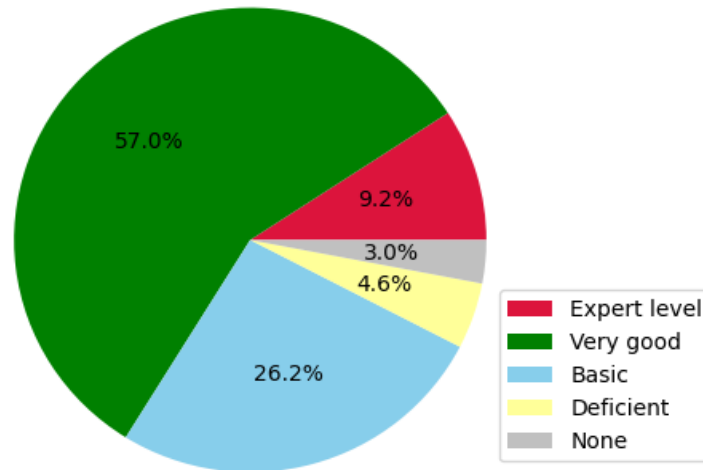
In general, the surveyed people qualify their knowledge regarding ICTs between very good, 37 (56.9%), or basic, 17 (26.2%). However, they determined that the most adequate options to act under a cyberbullying situation, in which they could select more than one option, were: reporting the material and accounts, 57 (87.7%), telling an adult, 51 (78.5%), and keeping the evidence, 51 (78.5%).

It is important to highlight that the least popular choice was not making assumptions, 6 (9.2%), despite the fact that people can fake an identity in the Internet or it is easier to manipulate evidence for both in favour or against someone (see appendix VII).

**Figure 7:** Teacher and school's formation graphic
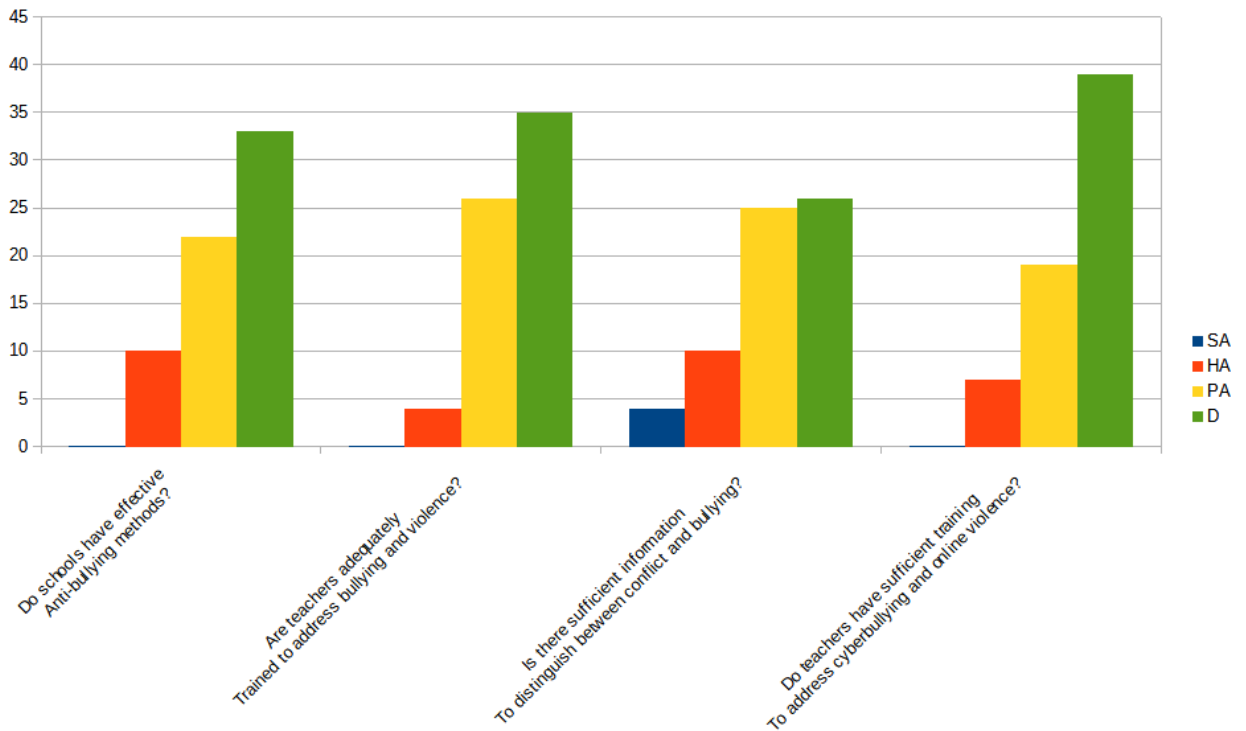
In general, the vast majority of respondents answered that schools and teachers are not prepared enough to address different situations against bullying. None of the surveyed people seem to strongly agree with the idea that schools have effective methods against bullying. The same is true for the teacher's training to face the challenge and address bullying situations, and if teachers are trained enough to address cyberbullying. However, there are some people that strongly agree that there is enough information to distinguish between conflicts and bullying, 4 (6.2%).

Despite this, most of the people that took the questionnaire expressed their disagreement related to the proposals, especially with the proposal related to teacher's training to address cyberbullying and online violence, 39 (60%). This might explain why the option of not making assumptions in the previous table was the least popular.

Although, it is important to mention that, even if most people disagreed with the different proposals, there was a considerable number of people that also partially agree, especially related to teacher's training to address bullying and violence, 26 (40%), and the available information to distinguish conflicts and bullying, 25 (38.4%).

Figure 8: Addressing bullying graphic
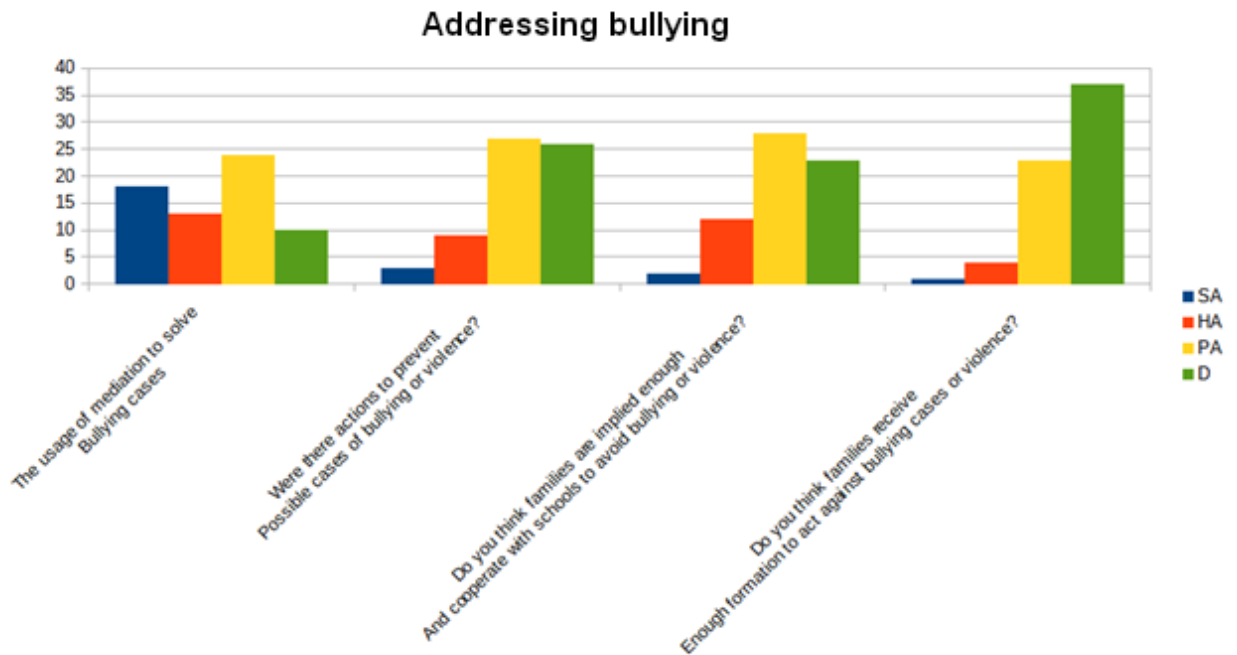
Overall, people tend to agree with the idea of using mediation to solve bullying cases, with the most popular result being a partial agreement. 24. (36.9%). In fact, people tended to not disagree, 10 (15.4%). This option was the most accepted among the people who answered the questionnaire.

However, the results related to prevention of potential cases of bullying and the implication of families and their cooperation to avoid bullying or violence are more mixed. Most people partially agree with these two proposals, 27 (41.6%) and 28 (41.1%) respectively. But the disagreement is also notorious in both options 26 (40%) and 23 (35.4%).

In addition, the majority of people think that families do not receive enough training to act against cases of bullying or violence, 37 (56.9%), making this proposal the most rejected one among the surveyed people.

Figure 9: Quality of cooperation graphic

How would you define the actions to cooperate between the school, families, and other institutions to prevent or act against cases of infant and adolescent violence?
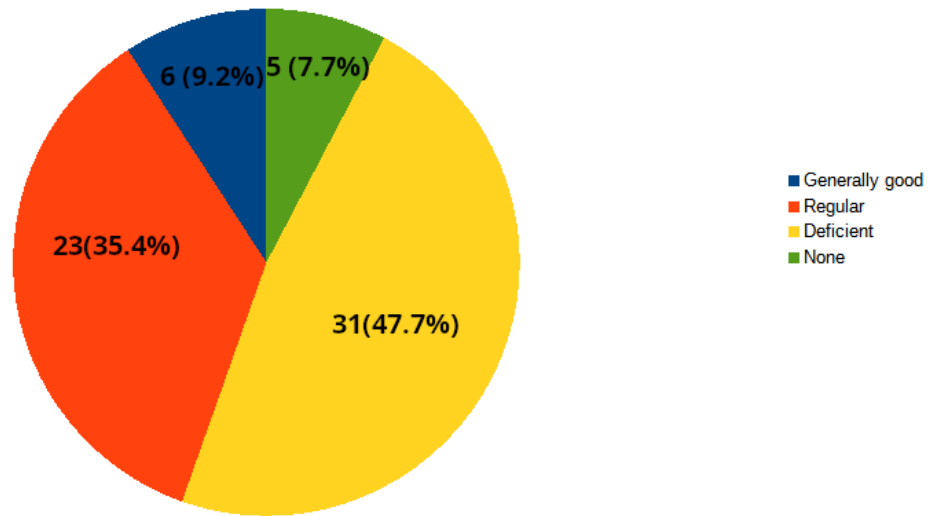
Overall, the vast majority of people say that the actions to cooperate were deficient, 31 (47.7%) or regular, 23 (35.4%). There is a small part who claimed that there were no actions to cooperate, 5 (7.7%). Some also answered that the actions were generally good, 6 (9.2%). However, there was also a fifth option to define the actions as "excellent", which does not appear in the graphic because none of the surveyed people used it. This is in line with the general disagreement in the majority of the previous options.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS WITH EXPECTATIONS OF FURTHER STUDIES

The general findings indicate that there is a lack of awareness and limited knowledge related to LOPIVI, which emphasises the need for further studies. To address this, interventions should focus on specific areas that align with the goal of building inclusive communities from an early age, as highlighted by the Index for Inclusion. These interventions can serve as a starting point for enhancing educational practices.

Firstly, incorporating current regulations, successful tools, and techniques utilised in other countries into the curriculum of Early Childhood Education and Primary Education degrees can significantly contribute to addressing the knowledge gap. By integrating such elements into the curriculum, educators will be better equipped to detect and prevent bullying situations right from the start. This aligns with the idea that detecting and implementing ways to detect bullying should begin in Infant Education.

Secondly, providing specialised training in interculturality, following the perspective proposed in the CEFR, can further promote inclusive practices. This training will enable educators to foster intercultural understanding and respect among students from diverse backgrounds. It also aligns with the need to build inclusive communities and create harmonious relationships among culturally diverse students. These efforts can be supported by the development of School Coexistence Plans, which will provide educators with the necessary tools to create positive and inclusive environments within educational institutions.

By incorporating these interventions, future studies can examine their effectiveness in improving awareness of LOPIVI and enhancing educational practices. The integration of regulations, tools, and techniques from other countries will contribute to building a stronger foundation of knowledge. Additionally, specialised training in interculturality and the implementation of School Coexistence Plans will ensure a holistic approach to promoting inclusivity and addressing issues like bullying. Together, these interventions can pave the way for a more inclusive educational system that fosters the development of inclusive communities from the early stages, as envisioned by the Index for Inclusion.

Schools that address and provide training for teachers to enhance their skills may have students who exhibit greater awareness of appropriate ICT usage. By utilising the SELFIE tool, schools can gauge the effectiveness of programmed activities and identify areas for improvement. Implementation of these actions could potentially alter the perception that teachers lack sufficient training in these areas. According to Castaño (2022), the use of SELFIE can have an equalising effect, with schools possessing lower levels of digital capacity utilising it more frequently. This finding underscores the significance of digital improvement in relation to other factors associated with these lower levels.

In terms of addressing bullying, it is essential to highlight the concept of mediation, which involves resolving conflicts peacefully between students in a school setting, with a neutral third party acting as the mediator (Karakiozis & Papakitsos, 2018). The definition clarifies that mediation applies to conflicts rather than bullying situations. The distinction between these two scenarios may explain why the responses regarding school and teacher training tended to be more negative, as there might be a lack of awareness regarding appropriate techniques for addressing bullying versus resolving conflicts. This could also be a consequence of insufficient training, as mentioned earlier.

Concerning collaboration with families, their training, and overall cooperation, the results predominantly indicate negative perceptions, indicating a dearth of protocols to foster community-building and engage families or external entities. For instance, some schools have made adjustments to their cafeteria's food and organisation to accommodate students' needs, while also collaborating with families to respect and acknowledge their cultural holidays. Schachner et al., (2016) arrived at a similar conclusion, affirming that reducing discrimination and promoting equality and inclusion are effective approaches when working with a diverse student population. While promoting mainstream culture is an important educational goal, allowing students to draw upon their own cultural heritage and identity serves as a valuable resource for their psychological adjustment.

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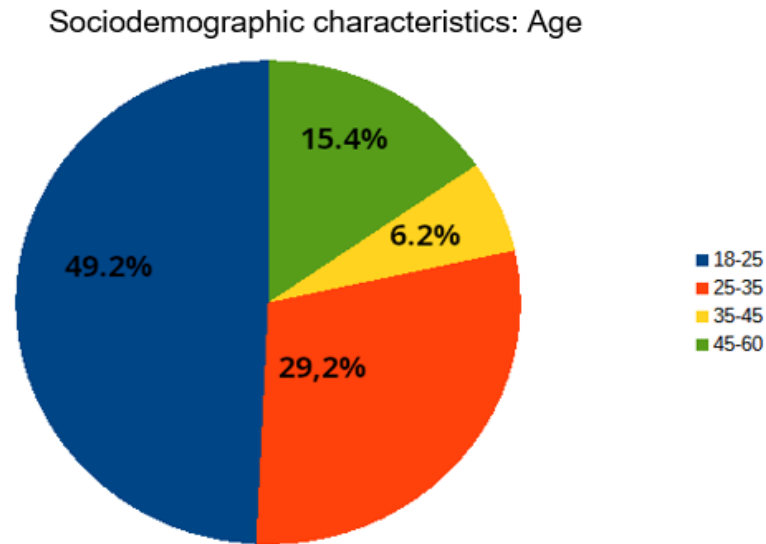
7. APPENDIX

APPENDIX I:

The survey questions that were included in the questionnaire.

- Question 1: Knowledge of LOPIVI

- Question 2: In which stage should possible cases of bullying be detected or ways to detect possible cases of bullying be implemented?

- Question 3: In which stage do you think bullying starts?

- Question 4: Which situations do you associate with conflicts and which with bullying?

- Question 5: From your experience, how do schools know that there might be a possible case of bullying

- Question 6: In case of detection, for how long was it happening?

- Question 7: Which options are the most adequate to act in a cyberbullying situation? (Multiple choice)

- Question 8: How do you qualify your knowledge related to ICTs?

- Question 9: School and Teacher's formation.

- Question 10: Who can communicate a bullying situation?

- Question 11: When a bullying case is confirmed, which actions should schools adopt after knowing who is the bully?

- Question 12: Which actions should schools do when it is determined who the bullied person is?

- Question 13: Does the bullied person receive any type of formation regarding these personal resources?

- Question 14: After the School's Living Together Commission creates a plan, to which people are the actions focused on?

- Question 15: Addressing Bullying.

- Question 16: How would you define the actions to cooperate between the school, families, and other institutions to prevent or act against cases of infant and adolescent violence?

- Question 17: In the section named "Convivencia" from Castile and Leon, which is the section that was more interesting for your formation or work?

APPENDIX II

Age of the people in the questionnaire graph

Sociodemographic characteristics: Age

Legend:
- 18-25
- 25-35
- 35-45
- 45-60

49.2%
29,2%
6.2%
15.4%

APPENDIX III

Gender of the people in the questionnaire graph

Sociodemographic characteristics: Gender

Male — 23.1%
Non-Binary — 6.2%
Woman — 70.7%
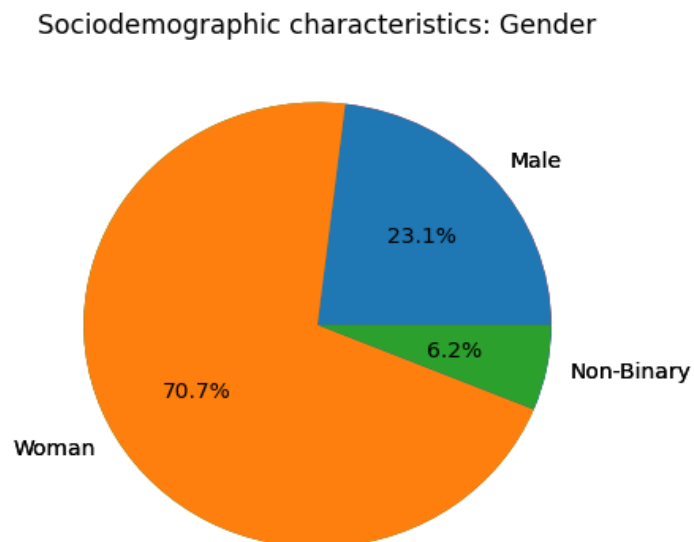
APPENDIX IV

Personal situation graph

Sociodemographic characteristics: Personal Situation
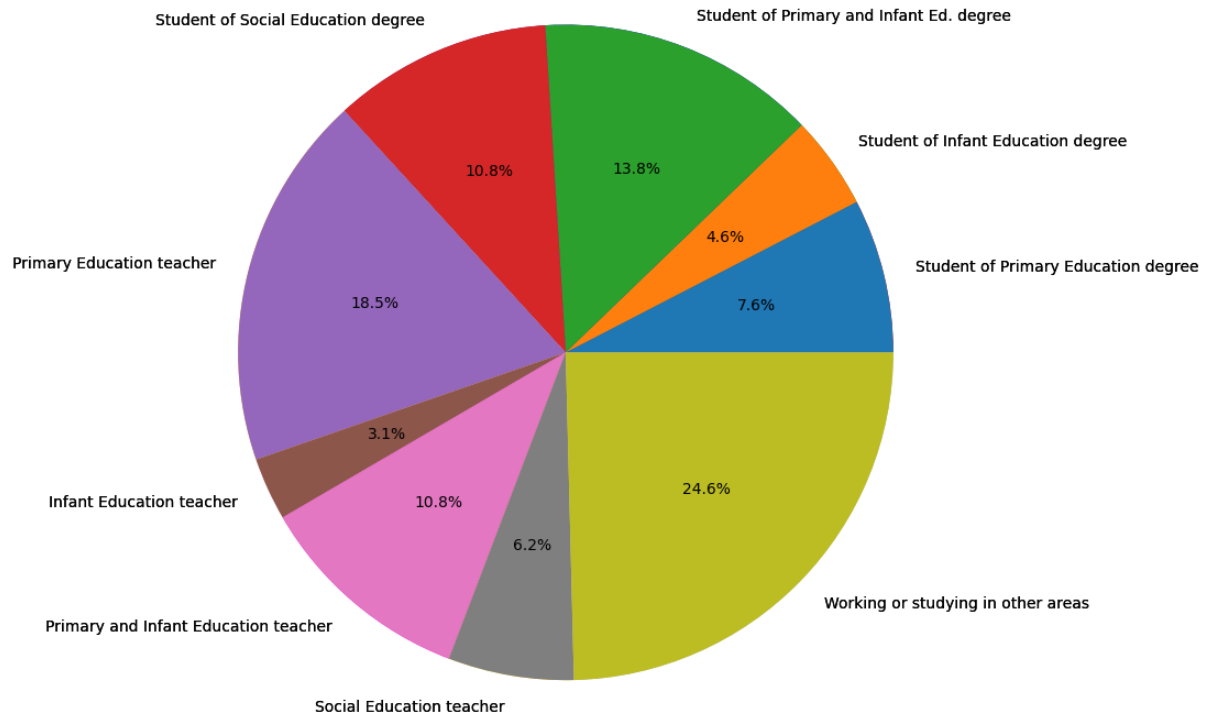
APPENDIX V

Experiences detecting possible bullying cases

From your experience, how do schools know that there might be a possible case of bullying
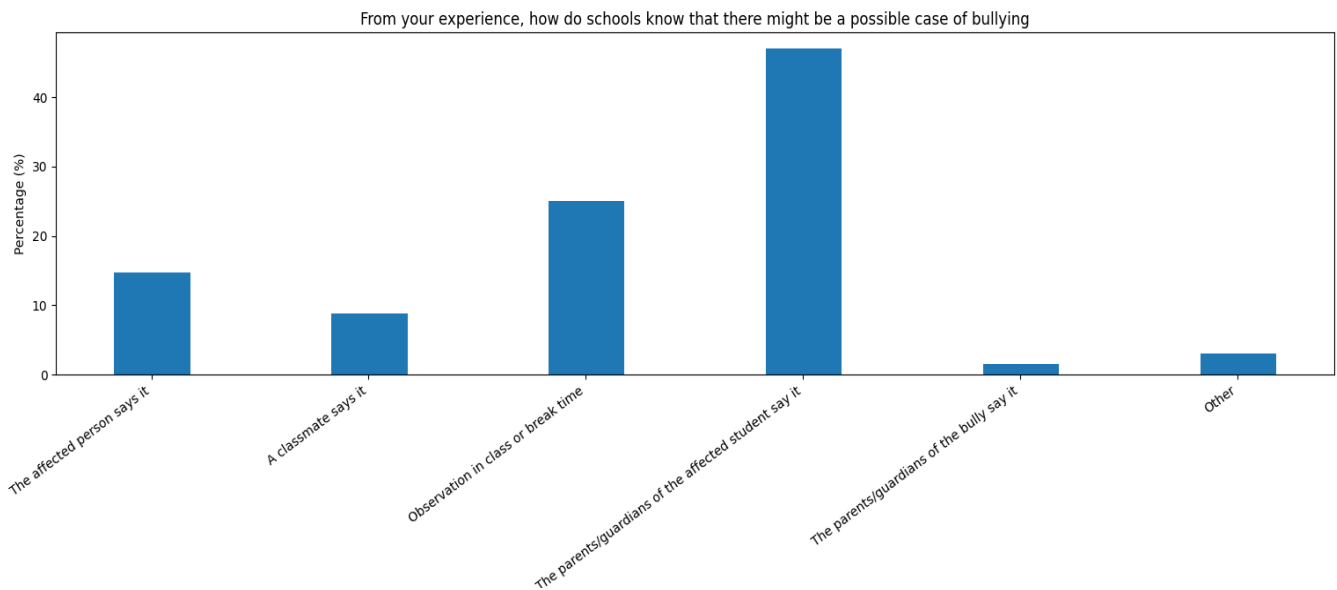
APPENDIX VI

Experiences of bullying confirmation

In case of detection, for how long was it happening?
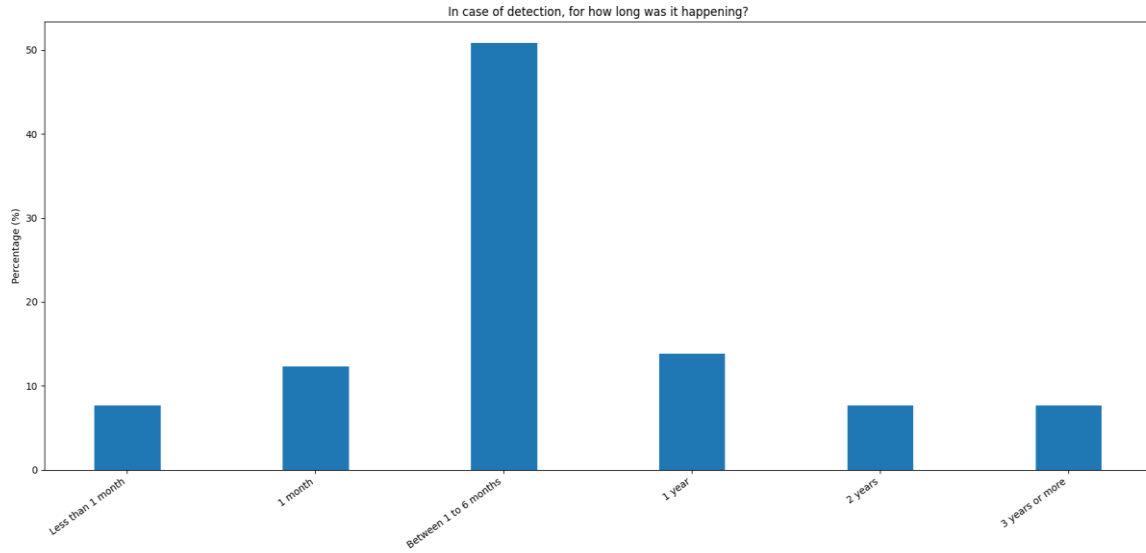
APPENDIX VII

Options to stop cyberbullying

Which options are the most adequate to act in a cyberbullying situation? (Multiple Choice)
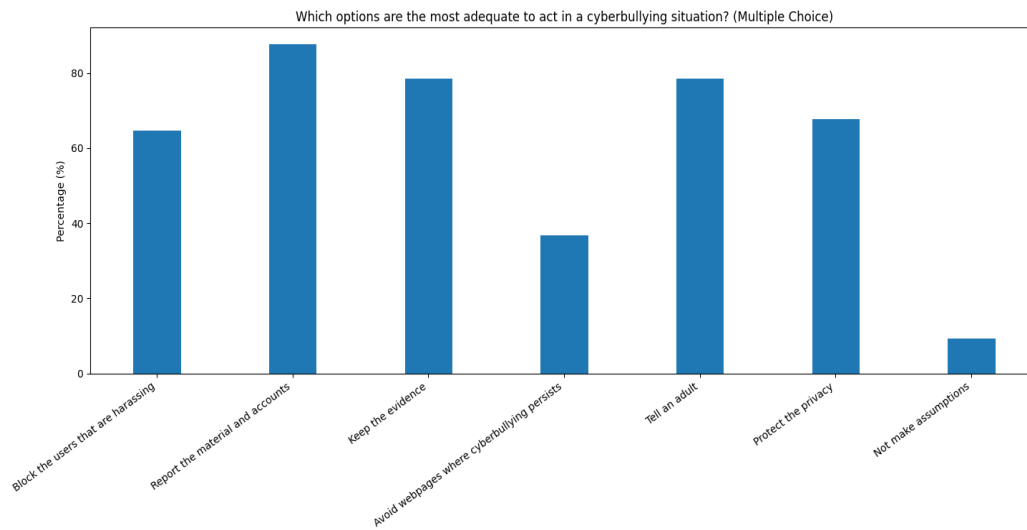
APPENDIX VIII

Sociodemographic characteristics

Characteristics	Sample (n = 65)
Age	
18-25 years old	32 (49.2%)
25-35 years old	19 (29.2%)
35-45 years old	4 (6.2%)
45-60 years old	10 (15.4%)
Gender	
Female	46 (70.7%)
Male	15 (23.1.%)
Non binary	4 (6.2%)
Personal situation	
Student of Primary Education degree	5 (7.6%)
Student of Infant Education degree	3 (4.6%)
Student of Primary and Infant Ed. degree	9 (13.8%)
Student of Social Education degree	7 (10.8%)
Primary Education teacher	12 (18.5%)
Infant Education teacher	2 (3.1%)
Primary and Infant Education teacher	7 (10.8%)
Social Education teacher	4 (6.2%)
Working or studying in other areas	16 (24.6%)

APPENDIX IX

General knowledge about bullying

Results (of each question)	Sample (n = 65)
Knowledge of LOPIVI	
Expert	0 (0%)
I know it well	8 (12.3%)
I read it from top to bottom	1 (1.5%)
I only read bits or a summary	30 (46.2%)
I am not aware of it	8 (12.3%)
I do not know it	18 (27.7%)
In which stage should possible cases of bullying be detected?	
Infant Education	35 (53.8%)
Primary Education	26 (40%)
Secondary Education	3 (4.7%)
Vocational training/Bachelor's degree	0 (0%)
University	1 (1.5%)
In which stage do you think bullying starts?	
Infant Education	27 (41.5%)
Primary Education (1st to 3rd year)	23 (35.4%)
Primary Education (4th to 6th year)	15 (23.1%)
Secondary Education (1st to 2nd year)	0 (0%)
Secondary Education (3rd to 4th year)	0 (0%)
Vocational training/Bachelor's degree	0 (0%)
University	0 (0%)

APPENDIX X

Bullying and its detection

Results (of each question)	Sample (n = 65)	
Which situations do you associate with conflicts and which with bullying?		
	Conflict	**Bullying**
Both sides are equal	59 (90.7%)	6 (9.3%)
There is a personal reason	27 (41.5%)	38 (58.5%)
Prevails in time	5 (7.69%)	60 (92.31%)
The intention is to harm	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)
Try to justify themselves and be right	37 (56.92%)	28 (43.08%)
General feeling of anger	54 (83.07%)	11 (16.93%)
It is not hidden	44 (67.69%)	21 (32.31%)
It is frequent	11 (16.93%)	54 (83.07%)
Feelings of fear, silence, helplessness	3 (4.61%)	62 (95.39%)
There is an abuse of power	3 (4.61%)	62 (95.39%)
It does not prevail in time	53 (81.53%)	12 (18.47%)
From your experience, how do schools know that there might be a possible case of bullying		
The affected person says it	10 (14.7%)	
A classmate says it	6 (8.8%)	
Observation in class or break time	17 (25%)	
The parents/guardians of the affected student say it	32 (47%)	
The parents/guardians of the bully say it	1 (1.5%)	
Other	2 (3%)	

In case of detection, for how long was it happening?	
Less than 1 month	5 (7.7%)
1 month	8 (12.3%)
Between 1 to 6 months	33 (50.8%)
1 year	9 (13.8%)
2 years	5 (7.7%)
3 years or more	5 (7.7%)

APPENDIX XI

Questions related to cyberbullying

Results (of each question)	Sample (n = 65)
Which options are the most adequate to act in a cyberbullying situation?	
Block the users that are harassing	42 (64.6%)
Report the material and accounts	57 (87.7%)
Keep the evidence	51 (78.5%)
Avoid webpages where cyberbullying persists	22 (33.8%)
Tell an adult	51 (78.5%)
Protect the privacy	44 (67.7%)
Not make assumptions	6 (9.2%)
How do you qualify your knowledge related to ICTs?	
Expert level	6 (9.2%)
Very good	37 (56.9%)
Basic	17 (26.2%)
Deficient	3 (4.6%)
None	2 (3%)

APPENDIX XII

Teacher and school's formation results

Questions (n = 65)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Highly Agree (HA)	Partially Agree (A)	Disagree (D)
Do schools have effective anti-bullying methods?	0 (0%)	10 (15.4%)	22 (33.8%)	33 (50.8%)
Are teachers adequately trained to address bullying and violence?	0 (0%)	4 (6.2%)	26 (40%)	35 (53.8%)
Is there sufficient information to distinguish between conflict and bullying?	4 (6.2%)	10 (15.4%)	25 (38.4%)	26 (40%)
Do teachers have sufficient training to address cyberbullying and online violence?	0 (0%)	7 (10.8%)	19 (29.2%)	39 (60%)

APPENDIX XIII

Bullying actuation results

Questions (n = 65)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Highly Agree (HA)	Partially Agree (A)	Disagree (D)
The usage of mediation to solve bullying cases.	18 (27.7%)	13 (20%)	24 (36.9%)	10 (15.4%)
Were there actions to prevent possible cases of bullying or violence?	3 (4.6%)	9 (13.8%)	27 (41.6%)	26 (40%)
Do you think families are implied enough and cooperate with schools to avoid bullying or violence?	2 (3%)	12 (18.5%)	28 (43.1%)	23 (35.4%)
Do you think families receive enough formation to act against bullying cases or violence?	1 (1.5%)	4 (6.2%)	23 (35.4%)	37 (56.9%)

APPENDIX XIV

Approaches to turn classes into a more LGBT+ inclusive place