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EVALUATION REPORT
ON ZIPPY'S FRIENDS PROGRAM
IN BULGARIA

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Summary

An evaluation of the Zippy's friends programme has recently been carried out in Bulgaria by the Institute for Population and Human Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The piloting of Zippy's friends programme was accompanied by a study which aimed to describe its effectiveness. The effects of the programme were monitored among children from preschool and 1st grade from 3 schools in the country. The study is based on: 1) Research of the emotional and behavioural reactions of the children involved in the programme; 2) Research of the expert opinion of the school representatives (teachers, psychologists, and principals); 3) Research of the opinion of the parents of the children participating in the programme.

The results from the research evidenced the effectiveness of the Zippy's friends programme on the promotion of the emotional intelligence of children (recognition and management of emotional states, attitudes to positive interactions with others, tolerance to settlement of conflicts, active communication, etc.) and the transition of gained knowledge in the real behavior. This gives the reason for the research team to recommend without any hesitation the overall implementation of Zippy's friends programme throughout the country.

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1. Social challenges, theoretical and empirical preconditions for experimental piloting the Zippy's friends programme

One of the most actual problems of schools today is the behaviour of children and adolescents – their relations in school context and out of the territory of the school. The attention of the community in Bulgaria and worldwide is provoked often by the cases of school bullying and aggression. During the recent decades this problem results in a large body of research. In Bulgaria a series of projects are also devoted to this issue (ref. to Annex 1).

Direct and indirect forms of aggression are wide spread. Some forms of aggressive or extreme self-assertive and/or defensive behaviour are completely age normative and are mitigated in the course of socialization. Compared to other countries, Bulgaria is about the middle point of aggression scales. Monitoring reports outline that the only sustainable way aggression to be decreased and reduced is its prevention. Emotional intelligence – recognition of personal emotions and the emotions of others is the way for realizing and acting-out in appropriate manner.

In psychological perspective negative trends in the behaviour of school-age children were established which seriously pose the question concerning the level of their emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is considered as a set of emotional and social competences:

- 1) Skills for *recognition of the own emotional states* and realizing the fact that they are related to our thoughts and actions;
- 2) Ability *emotional states to be managed, regulated*, and expressed in an adequate manner;
- 3) Ability emotional states to be *targeted to attainment of definite objectives and performance*;
- 4) Ability *the emotions of others* to be identified, evaluated, and influenced;
- 5) Ability worthy and full value *interpersonal relations* to be established and maintained (Golman, 2015).

These abilities are considered hierarchical – basic is the ability emotions to be recognized and on the top is the ability for establishment of interpersonal relations of full value (Fig. 1).

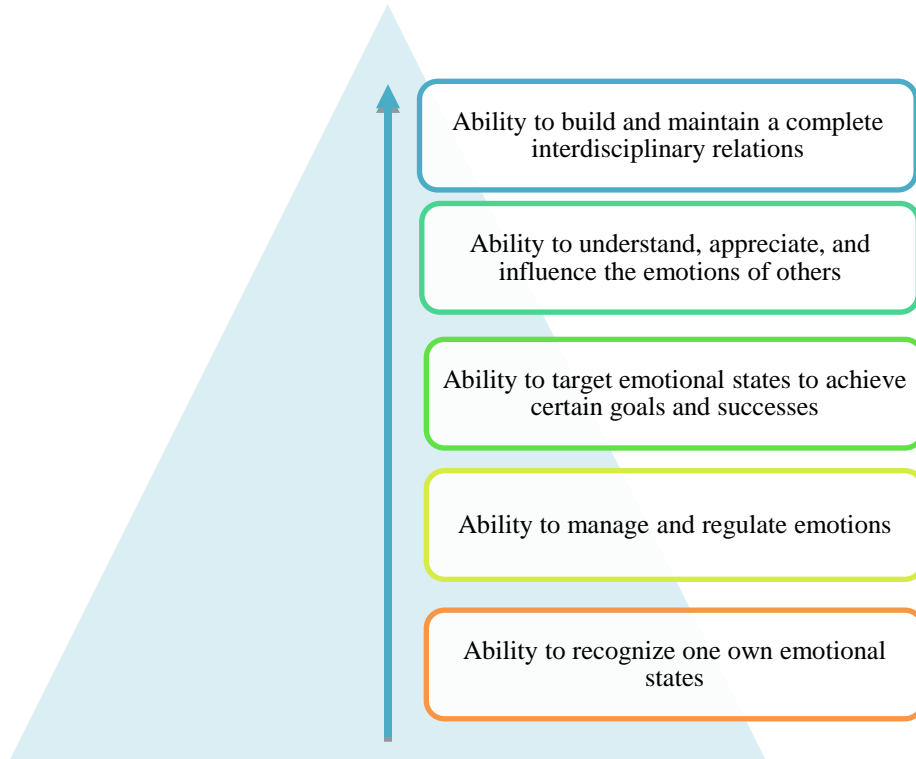


Figure 1: Components of the emotional intelligence (after Golman, 2015)

A rather important concept is that emotional intelligence is an ability that can be learnt and developed during the overall conscious life (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Mayer et al., 2004). It relates to a constant and dynamic process in the course of which the person learns how to control his emotional states and find the right way for their expression (Golman, 2000, 2011). This means that each person learns how to perceive, express, and control his emotions in different situations during different stages of his life in compliance with the level of his development and accumulated experience. Thus for instance, children and adolescents have lower emotional control and hardly differentiate their individual emotional states, what makes the difference to the mature person who is significantly more advanced in the processes of self-awareness and knowledge of others. For this reason Golman recommends children and adolescents to be trained at school as to learn and master instrumental skills which to contribute to their better self-knowledge and full value participation in communication with their coevals (Golman, 2000).

Researchers place special accent on the emotional intelligence focused on the skills of the person to interact with the others in a social situation, to differentiate the changes in mood, motivation and intentions of others. Knowing the objectives and motivation of others and being aware of their emotional states, the person is able to establish stronger and long-term social relations with them at the same time avoiding relations that to a great extent are related to tension and conflict (Gardner, 2014).

The development of the emotional intelligence is treated as serious prevention of violence. It is accented that the awareness of what person experiences or her skill to suppress its impulsiveness and the sadness are equally important as preventive measure against the violence, as well as a means for coping with the anger (Golman, 2000).

It is established that emotionally intelligent adolescents maintain positive social relations with their school-mates and are less inclined to engage in anti-social behaviour. Another conclusion is that youths with higher score of emotional intelligence will more probably be perceived by their classmates as supportive and having leader skills and as less aggressive and dependent on others (Petrides et al., 2006).

The training programme Zippy's friends through its contents and dynamics (development in the course of one school year) in its essence is aimed at development of the emotional intelligence of children from its basic aspects what is the identification and awareness of the emotions – the own and those of the others – to the highest from the viewpoint of complexity and hierarchy – relations with the others.

This research is aimed at monitoring of the effects of the programme in respect to each of the intentionally scheduled influences.

2. Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology have been developed in compliance with Zippy's friends programme. They are conformed to the scheduled guides of targeted influence aimed at promotion of the emotional intelligence, underlying the programme. The design is specially conformed to the age specificities of the children and their opportunities for observation of their behaviour in real or close to real conditions.

2.1. Objective, tasks, hypothesis

The objective of the study is to investigate the effects of implementation of Zippy's friends programme in Bulgaria – changes in the emotional intelligence levels of 6-7 aged children provoked by the training.

The **tasks** of the study are to investigate the influence of the program on:

- the differentiation and recognition of the children`s emotions
- the children`s communication with others
- the interactions among children
- the conflict management skills of the children
- the management of changes and losses

We suggested that Zippy's friends programme will have a positive effect on the development of the ability for recognition of own emotions and the emotions of others and the skills for their management, communication skills, interactions among children, conflict management and experience of loss because of the promotion of emotional intelligence. This process builds upon the age normative development and socialization of the children.

2.2. Methodology

The research took place prior commencement and after completion of the programme with the main purpose to trace: 1) The influences on the children who were involved in the training; 2) The opinion of the teachers who have administered the training; 3) The opinion of the psychologists and principals of the schools where the training took place; 4) The opinion of the parents of children involved in the training.

The research on the children involved in the piloting of Zippy's friends programme is a longitude study, which is designated to monitor the changes in the emotional intelligence of the children, including their emotions, interactions, communication, conflict management, etc.

Children from three schools in the country, recruited for the programme, were included in the study. The study was 60 minutes and comprised three modules:

- ✓ An experiment which observed the interactions among children in real environment (ball game team contest);
- ✓ Discussion on a cartoon watched by children aimed to determine the degree, to which children are able to recognize and understand the emotions of others, friendship, conflicts and behaviour in different situations;
- ✓ Focus groups prior to the training on topic „relations between the children in our class” and after the training on topic „what we have learned from Zippy’s friends and had my classmates changed”.

Module 1

The first research module included playing a competitive ball game in the beginning and in the end of the school year. The degree of complexity of the game was determined on the basis of previously conducted pilot study with a control group of children. The games in the beginning and in the end of the school year were competitive performance and instructions conformed to the degree of development of motor functions and the teamwork abilities. The games were subject to certain rules that suggest speed and accuracy of ball throwing, as the objective of each team was to win all the three rounds. The children were from different classes and had been randomly divided into teams. Each game was played three times as the reactions and behaviour of the children, as well as the emotional responses dynamics depending on win or loss to be monitored. Additional indicator was the effect of the extrinsic motivation, suggesting increase of the competitive attitudes of children – a precondition for spontaneous aggressive reaction and/or tolerance in interactions. Children’s motivation had been stimulated through an instruction, directing them to: 1) self-performance and performance of the team as a whole, which suggests intrinsic motivation; 2) prize for the winners, which promotes the extrinsic motivation of the children.

The experiment Team ball game includes four stages: *Stage 1* comprises adaptation of the children to the game situation. The children and the experimenter and experts form a circle, take

their hands and each one introduces, saying her/his name and hobby. The experimenter with her behaviour tries to form positive atmosphere.

Stage 2 suggests training of skills children need for the ball game. The children, led by the experimenter make several general physical exercises and afterwards make a training of the game.

Stage 3 is the actual experiment. Children are divided into two teams and according to the instructions given to them compete in three consecutive rounds. Winning is the team that has won more rounds. Children know that the winners will be given a prize. The last part of the instruction aims at promoting the extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is suggested to stimulate the strive after achievement and competitive attitude in the two teams and consecutively, more expressed emotional and behavioural reactions. Follows the game situation observed by three experts.

During *stage 4* the winning team is given prizes (funny stickers, colour pens). The children of the team are asked to share how they feel and do they wish to play again. The emotional and behavioural reactions of the winners and losers have been accounted.

The reactions of the children from the winning and losing teams to the prize had been observed. The evaluation card prepared comprised the monitored indicators: emotional reactions of children, interactions among the children, behavioural reactions of the individual child and the group as a whole depending on the situation. The evaluation was based on the correspondence of the qualitative and quantitative assessment of the experts.

Module 2

The second research module included watching of a cartoon on topics, describing various conflict situations among classmates and the dynamics of friendship relations. The characters were animals with specific features. In the beginning and in the end of the school year two different cartoons with similar general plot had been used. The cartoons had been selected with expert evaluation and in compliance with the normative development of the children, as the children had not been familiar with the cartoons (had not watched them previously) in view to experiment preciseness. A part of the experiment was stopping the cartoon prior to the end, enabling the children to finish the story themselves after a discussion how they described the

way in which each of the characters used to feel and what experiences had, who was guilty of the conflict occurred and free generation of example for analogous situation from their daily life. In this way were traced recognition of emotions of the others and the extent of personal identification, various interactions among children and the opportunities different types of conflicts overcoming, the position of children to settlement of the contradictions and attitudes towards friendship.

Module 3

The third research module comprised focus groups on topics the relations of the classmates at school, conflict situations and how children react to them, recognition of behaviour and reactions of others and self-reflection. The focus group at the end of the school year included also the topic “What have we learnt from Zippy?”, “What had Zippy changed in others and in me?”.

The research on the school representatives concerned study of their opinion and observations. Three questionnaires designed especially for the purposes of the study were administered to the teachers, the psychologists (school counsellors) and the principals. The questionnaire for the teachers aimed to investigate their impression of the students during the year, the classroom atmosphere and the most common problem situations that occur. The questionnaire for the psychologists aimed to investigate their observations over the student’s behaviour throughout the year, the parents and teacher requests for assistance and the most common reasons for these requests. The questionnaire for the principals aimed to investigate their opinion on the school environment and students and parent’s requests throughout the year. All of the representatives were asked about their observations and opinions on the Zippy’s friend program. Furthermore, interviews had been made with the directors and psychologists from the schools and focus groups with the teachers implementing the programme Zippy’s friend were organized. All modules and studies took place twice - in the beginning and in the end of the school year.

The research on the parents of the children participating in the programme was administered including separate questionnaire in the beginning and in the end of the school year.

The questionnaire was designed according to the objectives of the research and the items concern the way the child adapts to the school environment, its relations and interactions with classmates, experiences of the child, its coping skills in conflict situations and problems of different nature. The observations of parents on the atmosphere in the classroom and the school as a whole have been included.

2.3. Research sample

The research took place in the period 2016-2017 in three Bulgarian cities – Sofia, Vratza, and Aytos. The research comprised 70 children from pre-school group and first class involved in the piloting of Zippy’s friends and a control group comprising 20 students. The teachers were 115, 20 of these teachers were involved in the Zippy’s friends program education. In addition, 3 directors and 3 psychologists, 276 parents have been administered the respective questionnaires. The participants in study 1 and study 2 from three cities (Sofia, Vratza and Aytos) are presented on table 1.

Table 1: Participants

	Sofia	Vratza	Aytos	Total
Pilot study	20			20
Students	24	12	14	50
Teachers				
1st study	25	15	39	79
2nd study	2	8	26	36
Principals	1	1	1	3
Psychologists	1	1	1	3
Parents				
1st study	43	80	101	224
2nd study	18	5	29	52

3. Results and discussion

The effects of the Zippy's friends programme on children of pre-school age and in first class is traced by the means of three groups of studies. The first group is focused on children themselves, the second on school representatives of the schools piloting the programme and the third on the parents of the children involved. The results are detailed and discussed in the next paragraphs of the report.

3.1. Research of the children, participating in Zippy's friends programme

The effects of the Zippy's friends programme on children of pre-school age and in first class is traced by the means of three groups of studies. The first two are experimental – game ball and interpretation of thematic cartoons and the third is focus groups

3.1.1. Emotional and behavioural reactions of children in competitive situation.

The emotional intelligence of the children related to Zippy's friends as specified herein above is studied first by the means of the experiment **Game ball** (Annex 2). This experiment suggests observation of the real behaviour of the children in real competitive situation. The introduction of extrinsic motivation (prize for the winning team) stimulates children to personal performance (coping with the individual part of the game) and on the other hand to successful interaction with the rest members of the team who have a common goal. At the same time, children are able to demonstrate their spontaneous attitude to the remaining team members in relation to their partial performance / failure and to the competing team - winners or losers.

Table 2 summarizes the results from the two time periods in respect to the emotional and behavioural reactions of the children observed during the ball game in the beginning of the school year (prior to Zippy and in the end of the year (after completion of Zippy’s friends programme).

Table 2: Summarized results from the ball game concerning the experimental indicators among children

Research stage	1st study	2nd study
<i>Experimental indicators</i>	<i>During the game</i>	<i>During the game</i>
Emotions	Children are disappointed, sad, disturbed and quiet when they have made mistakes. They do not comment their experiences. They do not share anything even when they are asked. This is more expressed among the 6 y. o. children. Children are happy when they succeeded in the individual rounds.	All children are very enthusiastic (including the 6 years old ones). The experience of loss makes them sad. They comment the success and failure rather emotionally.
Interactions	A part of the children are directed mainly to their personal performance and much less to the performance of the others (mainly the 6 years old) and the interactions. Another part of the children interact in a much better way and support each other and collaborate for the success – especially the girls.	All children are inclined to react positively to the successful interaction and won of the team. They make their best for this. They try to prompt and support each other in their acts as to be faster. The girls are more attentive and purposeful. The boys often fail in their joint activities. If it is possible the game to proceed (hinted by the experimenter), the children from the winning teams quickly decide not to play afterwards but the children from the losing teams are willing to repeat the game more times.
	During the game the children relatively rarely demonstrate definite <i>relations</i> among them. Individual children incidentally accuse their	The children have clear tendency to assess the performance of the members of their team and of the other team. The relations among the team members in

<p>Relations</p>	<p>mates for the mistakes during the game. In most cases the children are tolerant also to the success / failure of the <i>competitive team</i>. They seem to take the assessment of the experimenter without commenting it. Seldom children dispute the won of the other team.</p>	<p>case of loss vary from lack of indicative disappointment with the mates to accusations (expressed more among the boys). The children comment the game, their abilities and the performance of the other team and in some cases have claims – they consider the won is not fair. In no team serious conflict had been provoked by this.</p>
<p>Behaviour and reaction after the end of the team game and giving the prize to the winning team</p>	<p>The winning teams are proud of the prizes and show the prize to the children from the losing team. The losers do not seem to be much disappointed. The both types of teams (winners and losers) when asked express their willingness the game (the contest) to continue. Some of the children that had made mistakes are declining to proceed to play. One child suggested another game to be tried. The children are not able to analyse the game, to share their experiences and wills, notwithstanding the stimulation by the part of the experimenter.</p>	<p>The children disclose their experiences. Some children from the losing teams cried. The boys share their disappointment from the loss and try to explain it with the performance of their mates. The children are very active in discussion of the situation, try to calm each other and share similar experiences. The children from the winning teams are not willing to play again but the children from the losing teams want to play again.</p>

The control group differs from the experimental (in the second study) in several aspects:

- 1) Demonstration of anger and aggression after loss of a round;
- 2) Demonstration of conflict behaviour to the other team, including after the end of the game (attempts for starting a fight);
- 3) Lack of compassion to the losers and no attempts they to be emotionally supported.

The experiment Ball game (with the experimental and control group) reveals that Zippy’s friends programme promotes development of the emotional intelligence of children in several directions:

- According to the results from the second study the children have advanced in the identification and assessment of the emotions experienced by them and by the others. They reveal skills to share them. They clearly demonstrate their disappointment with

failure what makes the difference compared to their initial behaviour, demonstrating suppression of the experience and denial it to be designated. These trends suggest skills not only for a deeper awareness of the experiences, but also for coping with them, whereas communication has a significant role for this.

- The children demonstrate advance in their skills to interact with the rest children. This is evidenced by the purposefulness, team skills and enthusiasm in the team game (different from the first study). They demonstrate including ability to establish a common strategy for action, most visible in the agreement attained quickly in the winning team and in particular to decline the proposal of the experimenter game to be proceeded at the background of the willingness of the losers the game to proceed. The girls' behaviour demonstrates much more advance in respect to interactions.
- It is observed advance in the abilities for maintenance of relations with the others. During the second study the children demonstrate much clearer tendency to assert the rules and observe the criteria for assessment of the game. However, this is not a reason for serious conflict among them. They are tolerant to the opinion of the others, including are willing to search for adequate settlement of the conflict situations. The children show empathy and actively overcome their negative experiences from loss and the prizes.
- Most obvious advance children have in respect to communication. They are willing to communicate in open manner, share their feelings, and discuss their emotions and the behaviours of the others. This obviously has a positive effect on coping with own emotions, support of the other is coping with their emotions and more effective interaction with others and establishing positive relations with them.

It can be summarized that the children have a clear serious advance in the development of their emotional intelligence. They have understood the importance of recognizing the feelings, sharing and directing them to a positive direction in the process of communication with others.

3.1.2. Children's interpretation of cartoons characters emotions and behaviour

During the second module of the study children watch cartoons and based on their interpretation are studied their skills to identify, recognize and evaluate 1) the emotions of the

others; 2) the relations, reasons for conflicts and options for their overcoming. The real interpretation by children is described in Annex 3.

Table 3 summarizes children’s interpretations of the experiences and behaviour of the Bear, Franklin and the Goose in the cartoon “Franklin and the broken globe” (from the first study prior to implementation of Zippy’s friends and of the Bear and Franklin in the cartoon “Franklin’s favourite card” (after implementation of Zippy’s friends. The two movies are different in contents, but close in essence.

Table 3: Children’s interpretation of the cartoons

Research stage	1st study	2nd study
<i>Experimental indicators</i>	<i>During the game</i>	<i>During the game</i>
Emotions	The children identify and denominate the basic emotions the cartoon characters experience as: feeling sad, feeling down, feeling good. However, they are not able to identify more complex emotions as: feeling guilty and shame-faced.	The children identify and denominate a wide range of emotions e.g. sad, insulted, grumpy, irritated, and angry.
Relations and conflicts	The children realize that the dishonest act and lie can insult the other and make him/her get angry at you and decline to play with you. It can be a reason also you to be punished and reprimanded. The children are not able to understand the behaviour of some of the characters (the Bear and Franklin in respect to the Goose) as they do not understand the underlying emotions (the sense of guilt). The children suggest that confessing the lie can lead to settlement of the conflict between the characters.	Children demonstrate understanding that the dishonest act is a reason the other to feel insulted, irritated, angry, wrathful. Some of the children recognized the different ways, in which dissatisfaction and disappointment can be expressed – «they can be expressed in calm manner», «calmly, without shouting». The children focus mainly on friendship which in their opinion is what makes you forgive the other and maintain friendship. They share a lot of cases when friends get to piece. One child summarized the opinion of most of the children as follows «Nevertheless how much quarrel,

		friends reach piece in the end. The card (reason for the quarrel) is not important, friendship is what is important».
Activity of the children in interpretation	About one third of the children participated	Almost all children try to involve in interpretation of the cartoon and share their opinion.

According to the above referred results, children during the both points of the study (in the beginning of the school year – prior to Zippy and in the end of the year – after completion of Zippy’s friends programme) demonstrate correct recognition of the main relations among the characters and the reason for the conflict situation. They correctly interpret the basic emotions characters experience in cases of lies and dishonest acts. It is obvious also that in both cases children identify with the cartoon characters and transfer their experiences to their interpretations.

It shall be noted, however, that in the first case children recognize the relations among characters to some extent. They are not able to interpret the more complex relations (the attitudes of the Bear and Franklin to the Goose). They are also not fully aware of settlement of the conflict through admission of guilt and confessing the truth by the part of those who are guilty. The abilities of children seem restricted also by the fact that in the discussion of the first cartoon about one third of the children took part. The remaining children either keep silence or repeat of the words of the previous child when asked by the experimenter.

The interpretations of the children of the second cartoon demonstrate significant advance in their position to the conflict and its overcoming. The observation reveals that the children not only recognize to significant extend the emotions and relations among the characters but are aware also of the sense and meaning of friendship and the manner, in which conflict among friends can be resolved. The focus of children is on the friendship of the characters that in their opinion will lead to overcoming the quarrel. The children associate the story with their experience in similar situations. They retell one after the other their conflicts with friends and how they had have reconciled after an apology. All their considerations reveal their conviction that “friendship is most important” and reason insults to be forgiven and forgotten. One child

shared: “Nevertheless how much quarrel, friends reach piece in the end. The card (reason for the quarrel) is not important, friendship is what is important”.

What is impressive in the second interpreted cartoon (after the end of Zippy) is the active involvement of the children. Almost all children are willing to share their opinion. This supposes that the silent and reserved children when discussed the first cartoon have transformed into children having attitude to what the cartoon tells, and in particular the experiences, relations and conflicts among the characters.

There are grounds to be assumed that during the training period, the children have learnt important things about relationships among people, conflicts and their resolving, the special place of friendship and are able to translate their knowledge into a real situation. Their personal stories prove that they actually do make such a transfer.

3.1.3. Zippy’s friends according to children – focus groups

The focus groups during the third research module enable tracing of the effects of Zippy’s friends programme through comparison of the children’s reports in the two points of the research (prior to Zippy and post Zippy) in respect to: 1) The ability of the children to comment and evaluate the relations in their class, the conflict situations and how children use to react to them; 2) The ability of the children to identify and evaluate the behaviours of others and their own; 3) The evaluation children give to Zippy’s friends – what they have learnt and how they have changed.

The four focus groups revealed indicative results in each of the research directions:

1) Children’s ability to comment and evaluate the relations in their class

Prior to the training:

- The children have hardships to comment and formulate the relations in the classroom and are sparing of words in the general description of these relations.

Post the training:

- All children are willing to discuss the relations in the class. They try to characterize the relations, describing recent events, their friends and children that are rude in their behaviour.

2) Children's ability to identify and evaluate the behaviours of others and their own

Prior to the training:

- Children identify and express attitude mainly in respect to the aggressive behaviour of the others;
- Their comments about themselves are mainly as suffering from the bad behaviour of the others.

Post the training:

- Children have clear differentiation of good and bad behaviour and evaluate the degree of changes of the behaviours in their class.
- The children are able to describe themselves, including to describe how they have changed after the training.

3) Children's evaluation about Zippy's friends - what they have learnt and what how had they changed

- All children share that they like Zippy's friends and report that the programme had been very interesting and pleasant for them.
- The children share they have learnt a lot of things – how to help each other, how to listen each other, how to start friendships, how to be good and kind to the others, how to react in disturbing events
- According to the estimate of the children some of them had changed, however others have not (sometimes children push each other and quarrel)
- Some children consider they have become better

In general the focus groups evidence the positive effect of Zippy's friends. First of all, the children have developed their skills to evaluate and analyse the behaviour of others and their own behaviour, as well as the willingness to discuss their impressions. This proves

they have formed criteria for such evaluations, as well as that they have a significant advance in communication.

The children furthermore demonstrate good knowledge of all topics discussed during the programme. Children's evaluation of changes which have occurred in them and their classmates leads us to the conclusion that a serious process of knowledge transfer has commenced and it has a real reflection on children's behaviour.

3.2. Opinion of school representatives

3.2.1. Opinion of teachers about Zippy's friends

Focus groups and inquiry

Teachers are namely those who implement Zippy's friends programme. This made us include in the research their opinion concerning: 1) The qualities of the programme, its potential effect; 2) Expedience of implementation of such programme; 3) Effectiveness of the training in the different parts of the programme.

The results in each of the above directions can be grouped as follows:

1) Qualities of the programme and its potential effect;

According to the teachers the programme is impressive both for its contents and direction and with its form of delivery. It ensures much flexibility and creativity of performance, which contributes to the desired effect. In the course of training children's interest is stimulated, their willingness to involve actively, which reflects on the end output.

The teachers in general had not go deep into detailed description of their impressions. They reported they had already the opportunity to discuss in details its aspects during the training they have completed (with their trainers).

2) Expedience of implementation of such programme;

The teachers accented that implementation of such programme is in conformity to a number of the problems, to which solutions are looked for in the schools today. These issues include the difficult children, integration of children with special education needs, children of different ethnical and national origin, maintenance of positive relations among the children in the classroom, etc.

In this line interesting are the *results from the inquiry*, aimed to describe teachers' evaluation of the school atmosphere, the typical emotional and behaviour reactions of the children. The results outline a "picture", which to a great extent evidences the positive effects from implementation of Zippy's friends in the studied schools.

The **item** related to *school atmosphere* reveals that almost half of the teachers (45.2%) evaluate it as more tense compared to preceding years and almost one third (31.3%) evaluate it as more problematic. Furthermore, one third of the teachers (32.1%) consider pupils are more strained and 20% note they are more nervous compared to the pupils during the preceding years.

The responses to the **item concerning the number of difficult children during the completed year** more than half of the inquired teachers (54.8%) evaluate the difficult children as more in number compared to preceding years and 10.4% consider difficult children have been much more compared to preceding years.

Teachers respond to the **question what kind of problems and situations make you ask the psychologist or principal for assistance** that most usually these are insults, bullying, as well as fights.

On the other hand the teachers reveal that victims of bullying in the class are usually 1-2 girls (according to 46.0% of the teachers) and 1-2 boys (replies of 51.3% of the teachers). Analogous are the evaluations about the number of the children in the class that behave aggressively - 1-2 girls (responses of 48.1% of the teachers) and 1-2 boys (responses of 51.4% of the teachers). According to 57.4% of the teachers the victims used to be rarely bullied but according to 34.8% of the teachers – incidentally. The pupils demonstrate aggressive behaviour rarely according to 36.5% of the teachers and 50.4% of them respond that these acts are incidental. Daily bullying occurs according to 7.8% of the teachers and some children behave aggressively daily according to 13.0%.

3) Effectiveness of the training in the different aspects of the programme

The teachers respond that the programme in general is very effective. All its modules have significant effect, however the most serious is the influence on the communication skills of the children. Teachers consider children learn to share everything which excites them, discuss their experiences and the problems of the others. Such a result reveals that first, the children have advanced ability to recognize, describe, and evaluate better their emotions, experiences and behaviour, as well as those of the others and second, to wish to understand more about the interrelations and how to maintain them.

Some of the teachers have reservations concerning the topic of loss and death, presented in Zippy's friends, especially in respect to the experience „visit of cemetery“, a part of the programme. The concerns of the teachers relate most to the differences in beliefs, experiences, practices, and traditions related to the death in Bulgarian and western European cultures, where is the origin of Zippy's friends and consider there is a need this topic to be adapted in a manner, suggesting socialization of the children in the Bulgarian cultural practices. However, at the same time the children had not demonstrated disturbs in this line and freely discussed the topic of death of the pet Zippy.

The inquiry administered to the teachers aimed to reveal most of all the *dynamics in the adaptation* of children to the school environment in the course of the programme and how they cope with problem situations.

The comparative study prior to and right after completion of the Zippy's friends programme in most of the cases had not revealed significant differences in respect to the studied indicators. Nevertheless, the results could be interpreted as outlining some trends.

There are minimum fluctuations in description of the pupils as calms, tensed or disturbed prior and after completion of Zippy's friends programme, however there is a clear trend the pupils to be characterized as more enthusiastic after the end of the programme (table 4).

Table 4: Children’s emotional state (prior and after Zippy’s friends programme)

In general, during this year the pupils you work with are MORE? (scale „agree “ and „strongly agree “, in % and mean rank)		
	<i>prior to Zippy’s friends</i>	<i>post Zippy’s friends</i>
calm	62.0% (57.83)	63.9% (58.38)
tense	32.9% (59.56)	30.6% (54.57)
disturbed	19.0% (57.95)	22.2% (58.11)
enthusiastic	60.8% (55.08)	80.6% (64.40)

Statistically significant differences have been established in respect to the interaction of teachers and parents in the course of resolving specific problems related to children prior to Zippy’s friends programme and after its completion. Search for assistance by the part of parents for solving specific problems had been more often prior to the programme compared to its end (U standardized = - 3.669; p=0.000. mean rank 65.34 vs. 41.90). The results are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Teachers’ specific problem solving (prior and after Zippy’s friends programme)

Parents are looking for your assistance for solving specific problems?		
	<i>prior to Zippy’s friends</i>	<i>post Zippy’s friends</i>
very rare	8.9%	41.7%
rare	35.4%	30.6%
often	41.8%	22.2%
very often	13.9%	5.6%
mean rank	65.34	41.90

These quantitative results are in conformity with the above referred positive evaluation of the teachers on the effectiveness of the Zippy’s friends programme. They reveal to some extent a

positive trend in respect to change of the moods of the children /the enthusiasm demonstrated at school/, as well as decrease of the problems that suggest intervention of parents and teachers.

3.2.2. Opinion of psychologists and principals about Zippy's friends programme

The research module comprised psychologists and principals of the schools where Zippy's friends programme is piloted and similar to the module comprising the teachers, aimed to evaluate: 1) the expedience of implementation of such programme; 2) the effectiveness of the training in the different aspects of the programme;

Expedience of implementation of the programme is assessed by the opinion of psychologists and principals also in respect to the successful integration of children with special education needs, children of different ethnic and national origin in relation to maintenance of positive relations among the classmates and children in the school, adaptation of the children to the new environment, etc.

The psychologist from the school in Vratza accented the need first class pupils to be supported in the course of adaptation to the new environment as to master social skills and communication skills, behavioural models and conflict resolution style. The principal also noted the special contribution to development of communication without any conflicts, tolerant attitude and respect to the teacher.

The psychologist from the school in Sofia, oriented to admission of children with special education needs and children from different nationalities gave special accent on the possibilities of the children to communicate, solve different kind of problems, develop their assertiveness and in some cases their national dignity.

The psychologists and principals were interviewed (contents similar to the focus groups with teachers) and administered an inquiry aimed at outlining their evaluation on the atmosphere in the school in the beginning of the year and changes right after completion of the piloted programme. The principals in all the three cities evaluate the atmosphere in their schools positively, as calm, serene and pleasant and almost opposite to tense and problematic. At the same time, this trend corresponds to the fact that the principal has rarely been approached by parents and teachers for solution of serious problems with first class pupils and by teachers in

respect to adaptation of the pupils to school environment. The children, according to the inquiry, have been mainly calm and enthusiastic. Comparison of the responses in the beginning and in the end of the school year reveal that there is a stable positive picture in all the three schools for the reported period.

The relation between the problems in individual schools and *effectiveness of Zippy's friends programme* had been described best by the school psychologists / school advisors. The key position of the psychologist for solution of the problems at school (notwithstanding who has signalled – children themselves, teachers or parents) enables the psychologist to systematize the problems. According to the data declared, the psychologist from the Sofia school included in the piloting, responded she had most often been approached in line with problems related to *non-coping with the school material, difficulties with adaptation and insults*, the psychologist from the school in Vratza – for solution of problems related to *insults, difficulties in adaptation and non-coping with the school material* and the psychologist from the school in Aytos - for problems related *fight and bullying*.

Psychologists note that more serious problems related to aggressive behaviour and bullying have been observed in mid-school classes, but incidental events have been observed also in primary classes. They accent on the expedience of the early implementation of Zippy's friends programme.

According to the psychologists Zippy's friends is effective for the smallest children at school. It has serious effect on their development in fields of exclusive significance for the successful functioning in the direct social environment. Most visible according to the psychologists is the development is the communication skills. All children, including the most close and shy learn to speak free about what excites them free and easily. At the same time they learn how to cope in conflict situations, are able to implement strategies in this line, to defend themselves when they feel insulted (often for younger pupils), to cope with isolation from others, to be empathetic and help others.

The effectiveness of the programme depends to some extent on the preparation and motivation of the teachers that deliver it. It shall be noted that in the course of implementation their attitude becomes more positive and they realize the programme enthusiastically.

Some of the psychologists mentioned that implementation of the programme in Bulgarian schools will contribute to education of a generation sharing more positive relations, more tolerant and understanding to the others and less hostile and aggressive.

It can be summarized based on the monitored opinions and quantitative results obtained from school experts that Zippy's friends programme contributes to maintenance of a positive atmosphere in the school for the period of its implementation, overcoming the negative trends and individual manifestations during this period and third, for serious advance in the communication skills of the children, settlement of conflicts, adaptation to the school environment, especially noted by the psychologist.

3.3. Research of parents

We have studied the **evaluation of parents of children involved in the programme for experiences of children at school the child shares, the communication style of the child in conflict situations with coevals, about child's mood when it is back from school and the impressions of the parents for the atmosphere in the class and school in general.** 224 parents of children in pre-school group and first class have responded to the questionnaire administered in the beginning of the school year (one month after commencement).

According to the responses, 94.2% of the parents report their children come back from school in good mood often and very often and 74.1% report that their child is enthusiastic often and very often. Often and very often disturbed or upset from school are 5% of the children.

Children share joyful events or amusing games in approximately 80% of the cases. Most often positive experiences related to pleasant communication (often and very often in 80.3% of the cases), interesting games (about 73.4%), new friendships (68.2%), win in competitive games (58.4%) and praise of classmates (56.2%).

Children rarely share negative experiences: controversies (39.4%) and fights (18.6%). Most often the negative experiences concern quarrels and insults (49.3%), physical fights (40.5%), violation of rules (23.0%), loss of competitive game (19.0%), isolation of the child by the classmates (16.8% - refusal of classmates to play with the child and 15.7% refusal to communicate with the child).

In case of conflict with other children parents consider children most often approach the teacher for help (73.4%), avoid contact with these children (69.3%), withdraw (66.8%), approach parent for assistance (66.1%) or solve the problem in conversation (64.2%). The physical conflicts are rare (10.6%).

Approximately 90% of the parents describe the atmosphere in the class and the school as calm and positive. The atmosphere in the class and the school is described as tense by about 20% of the parents and as problem by 12-14% of them.

The parents declare also that the boys compared to girls more often report fights and are more inclined to start fight, more often share cases of fight with their parents and that other children avoid them (table 6). The results for each of the three schools in the country can be also seen in Annex 4.

Table 6: Children’s emotional state shared with parents after school (prior and after Zippy’s friends programme)

Your child comes back from school: (responses „often“ and „very often“, in % and mean rank)		
	<i>prior to Zippy’s friends</i>	<i>post Zippy’s friends</i>
in good mood	93.3% (135.31)	98.0% (147.29)
disturbed	4.9% (136.01)	2.0% (134.18)

The **comparative study** of the evaluation of parents of experiences of their child at school the child shares and the child’s mood when it is back from school *prior to commencement of the Zippy’s friends programme and after its completion*. In most cases the outlined differences in the indicators are not statistically significant. Nevertheless, the results can be interpreted as outlining some trends of change.

In respect to the *mood of children when they are back from school* is outlined the trend of increase of the percent of children who come back in good mood after completion of Zippy’s friends programme. Another observed trend is decrease of the percent of children hat often or very often come back from school disturbed or upset, also after completion of Zippy’s friends programme.

According to the replies of the parents what their children share as experiences at school there is a clear trend controversies and fights to decrease after completion of Zippy’s friends programme. In respect to the positive experiences – joyful events – and pleasant games – some minimum changes have been observed (table 7).

Table 7: Children’s events shared with parents after school (prior and after Zippy’s friends programme)

What events does you child share about school? (responses „often“ and „very often“, in % and mean rank)		
	<i>prior to Zippy’s friends</i>	<i>post Zippy’s friends</i>
joyful events	78.1% (135.16)	82.0% (147.97)
controversies	40.6% (139.57)	34.0% (128.21)
amusing games	81.2% (137.29)	80.0% (138.44)
fights	20.1% (138.79)	12.0% (131.73)

Although the information provided by the parents is markedly subjective, it generally provides some evidence of positive changes in the school environment during the school year of Zippy’s Friends programme implementation. Of particular importance is the tendency to reduce conflicting behaviours among children.

4. General conclusions

The above referred research results can be considered and summarized in a broader perspective, and in particular, from the viewpoint of development of the individual components of the emotional intelligence – the formed emotional and social competences of the children – in 1st class and pre-school group as a result from implementation of Zippy’s friends programme. The observations of children, the evaluations of the school representatives (teachers, psychologists, and principals) and the impressions of the parents reveal significant positive effect on these components.

It is noted the advance of the children’s ability to *identify their emotions and the emotions of the others and* relate these emotions to specific thoughts and acts. Furthermore, the children to

a great extent have developed skills to recognize, share and comment their experiences, analyze the underlying reasons that have provoked them, which undoubtedly supports the process of *control* and overcoming the negative emotional states. At the same time the children demonstrate ability to *direct* their emotions to attainment of the objectives set. In this line motivation has special place. The effect is important in combination of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It was established a significant advance in recognition and maintenance of positive *interactions* with the others. The children are aware of their role, recognize the importance of friendship. They deny lies, rudeness as a way for overcoming problems, occurred in the course of communication. At the same time the children have developed skills to interact and strive after a common goal, to develop strategy for combination of the individual and team success.

Furthermore, it is established advance of children's ability to recognize and manage conflicts. The children are aware of the emotions and relations of the participants in the conflict and have formed concept for the positive ways a conflict can be overcome. There are evidences for transfer of these knowledge to real situations, which is demonstrated by the children in their stories describing conflict situations and how they have coped with them.

According to all results, the children demonstrate impressive advance in communications. They have learnt to share their experiences and behavior in open manner, to listen to the comments and advises of the others. They have also learnt to be empathetic, to try to understand the others and help them. This distinctively speaks about formed criteria for evaluation of the behavior and following models for maintaining positive relations.

There are evidences that the knowledge and skills gained during the Zippy's friends programme is translated in the real behavior of the children. In addition to the above referred, during the experiments this is proven by the cases shared by the children that describe tolerant settlement of conflict situations, the evaluation of the children about the changes in them and their classmates in result from the programme, as well as the opinion of the psychologists and the comments of the parents.

The school representatives – teachers, psychologists, and principals, have exclusively positive evaluation for Zippy's friends programme. They consider it expedient for the Bulgarian school from the viewpoint of the school and education objectives and the main problems the programme tries to solve. They find its piloting evidence for its effectiveness in all aspects.

The importance of the effects of Zippy's friends programme can be extended in long-term as well. The progress of the children in result from the Zippy's friends programme in the course of its implementation, the promotion of the emotional intelligence of the children are a precognition for the future behavior of the children in long run. The skills of the child to interact with the others in social situations, differentiate emotional states and behavioral intentions will ensure it in future establishment of stable social relations and avoiding relations provoking tension and conflicts at the same time. Child's skill to manage personal emotional states, restrict impulsiveness and negative experiences are a specific "barrier" to manifestations of aggression, violence, antisocial behavior not only for the moment, but a lifelong benefit.

Conclusion

The results from the research on pilot implementation of Zippy's friends programme in preschool group and in 1st class in three Bulgarian schools have undoubtedly evidenced its effectiveness on the promotion of the emotional intelligence of children (recognition and management of emotional states, attitudes to positive interactions with others, tolerance to settlement of conflicts, active communication, etc.). At the same time it shall be noted that the effect on the emotional reactions on individual level (for the individual child) suggests multiplication of this effect on the direct and extended school environment that has significant influence on reduction of the school aggression, violence, and bullying, for promotion of the emotional climate in each class and the school as a whole, and better adaptation of children to the school environment.

The above referred leads the research team, prepared this report, to recommend without any hesitation the overall implementation of Zippy's friends programme throughout the country (in all schools).

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

**DESK RESEARCH
ON THE ISSUE OF BULLYING**

Animus Association Foundation

September 2016

Introduction

For the last 25 years, there has been an ongoing transition period from authoritative communist regime towards liberal and democratic society. The fragile political stability has resulted in a lack of continuity in the process of restructuring of institutions, practices and beliefs of the society. The reforms in sectors such as health care and education have been partial, rather than comprehensive, and have not resulted in advance and restructuring of the national educational system and the status quo has been maintained¹. As a result, **the education system remains heavily-centralized and state-run, deficient in liability and revisions**. The result from the education system is a rigid education, not sensitive and flexible to respond to the needs of a liberal democratic society and a globalising world. Quoted by Dainov, Dr Haralan Alexandrov comments the consequences of unreformed Bulgarian newspaper “Vseki Den”: “...the education system is structured, so as to produce disorientated and dependent individuals, who lose out in a globalising world... The great drama of this society is that the key normative systems have been created to produce obedient subjects for a totalitarian system, while in the globalised world such people are doomed to failure.”

Such a rigid and centralised system can hardly meet the needs of a diverse student society, reflecting the diversity of socioeconomic, ethnic, family backgrounds of the students and their families. This provides for an insensitive environment at school, unsuited to respond to all nuances of bullying and to create a safe setting for the students.

Teachers and pedagogical experts are not prepared to deal with the phenomenon of bullying. Practice shows that repressive measures still dominate preventive and most of the schools don't have the capacity to create and implement preventive school programs.

Apart from the approved Mechanism for combating school bullying between students, (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012), which is the only instrument on a national level for developing of anti-bullying policies and programs, there are no other standard anti-bullying intervention programs applied on a national level in Bulgaria. Furthermore, the mechanism was

¹ Dainov, Evgenii, Education Reform in Bulgaria: a Study in Failure?, <http://bjsep.org/getfile.php?id=39>

created in cooperation between the Ministry and NGOs (see below 2.1.), but the views of the children were not actively taken on board in the design of this policy document.

Certain schools provide a platform for the student councils or student representatives to partake in solving cases of bullying.

Notwithstanding, there are certain research reports that study the views of the children, such as European Bullying Research – Final Report, Violence among children – what we have to know about it – leaflet for parents, The rights of children through their eyes. These documents and reports form the basis for policy making measures implemented by school administration and state institutions.

For most of the research reports and anti-bullying materials cited below, the characteristics of *effective* and *efficient* are not applicable due to the fact that these are research reports and prevention materials, rather than programs and anti-bullying interventions.

1. Programs and anti-bullying interventions, and research reports

1.1. European Bullying Research – Final Report, Bulgarian Section Europe’s Antibullying Campaign Project

http://www.e-abc.eu/files/1/PDF/Research/School_Bullying_Bulgarian.pdf

An integrated research providing a conceptual approach towards bullying as a phenomenon in EU member states. The methodology includes a questionnaire providing for a multilevel analysis regarding the specific characteristics of the bully, the victim, the witness(es), the phenomenology of the problem, raising awareness of the problem, child-centered approach to reflect on student’s suggestions. The main goal of the research is to study the factors that provoke a child to develop bullying tendency at school. The study is conducted in 6 EU member states (Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Latvia).

1.2. Violence among Children – what to know about it – a leaflet for parents, UNICEF, Sofia, 2007

<http://www.unicef.bg/public/files/press/13.pdf>

A pamphlet prepared by psychologists, elaborating on the nature of aggressive behaviour, the core momentum for the phenomenon of school bullying, providing detailed description of the types of bullying, aggressive behaviour, specific characteristics and differences based on

gender, age, individual and group dynamics, consequences for the witness, perpetrator, long-term consequences, signs that parents could look for, suggesting that the child might be a victim of bullying, basic steps to guide parents how to help and understand better what the child feels. There is a specific suggestion to seek the help of the school (class adviser and psychologist), try to explain the situation, taking into consideration the wellbeing of the child. Special attention is drawn to the process of developing a trust-relationship between parent-child and developing a strategy to counteract, to seek help from adults, to defend his/her position.

1.3. Children's Rights through Their Point of View, European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/rights-of-the-child_bg.pdf

A qualitative-based research conducted in 2010 by TNS Qual+ for General Directorate "Justice" of the European Commission. Participants (age 15-17, from all 27 member-states of the EU, coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds) discussed issues, that according to them, are crucial with regards to their rights and children's rights in general, as well as the obstacles that children face in the process of exercising their rights as children. The document provides schematic analysis of the qualitative data and a variety of quotes and examples illustrating the findings.

1.4. ДОКЛАД Чувствителност на системата за установяване, регистриране и съобщаване за случаи на насилие над деца в България – Институт по социални дейности и практики/Social Activities and Practices Institute / REPORT Sensitivity of the system for identifying and registering of cases of violence against children in Bulgaria – Social Activities and Practices Institute

www.sapibg.org/attachments/article/493/Report_VAC.doc

A report studying the issues of violence against children, aiming to assess the performance of service providers in identifying, recording, reporting and referring cases of violence against children (VAC). The specific objectives are to describe the legislation and official definitions, describe formal mechanisms used to identify, report or refer cases of VAC, to examine the practical application of the formal mechanisms, to assess the actual functioning of the child protection system, strengths and weaknesses. The report's goals are more ambitious than the final copy and concrete policy recommendations. The document presents a strictly normative take on the issue – including interviews with service providers, desk review, and practical selected examples. Even though the report is directed to general cases of violence against children and the normative framework regarding VAC, the section regarding monitoring of cases indicates that the multidisciplinary meetings consist of various service providers (lawyers, social workers, health workers, psychologist, police representative, labour experts, experts from State agency for child protection). **Additionally, these multidisciplinary groups include coevals of the victim, in order to reflect the children's point of view (reflecting**

child-point-of-view)

1.5. Charter for Child Participation

Mechanism of children participation: Child school council, Municipal council of children, Regional council of children, Council to the State agency for child protection
<http://sacp.government.bg/detsko-uchastie/mehanizm-na-detskoto-uchastie/>
<http://sacp.government.bg/detsko-uchastie/harta-za-detsko-uchastie/>

A mechanism that provides for participation of child representatives (minors) in School Councils, Municipality Councils, Regional Councils, Council at State Agency for Child Protection. These organs aim to serve as organs for child-representation in schools and municipal administrations, on the local, regional and national level. In theory, this mechanism for child representation aims to provide for child-participation in the administrative sector, through a democratic selection process. In practice, however, children rarely know that they have such representation and do not know the mechanism to make their voices heard through the child representatives in these corresponding councils. The goal for child empowering and self-governing is not put into practice.

1.6. Pro SAVE - Prosociality Against Violence and Exclusion – Bulgarian national survey – Violence among children and adolescents in Bulgaria

1.7. Study and identification of problem regions in Bulgaria in respect to violence among children and youths, Finland European Institute, 2009

1.8. Models for prevention of school violence, Harieta Manolova, project: „Prevention of sexual exploitation and violence, referred text of the State agency for child protection and UNICEF – Sofia, September 2007

1.9. TABBY project (Threat Assessment of Bullying Behavior in Youth on line – Evaluation of the risk of online aggressive behaviour of the children)

1.10. Sensitivity of the system for identification, registration and notification cases of violence against children in Bulgaria - report, ИСДП and UNICEF, Sofia, 2007

1.11. Perception of violence among coevals in Europe - research of Pro-SAVE, in some European countries (Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Spain, France, Malta, Romania, and Bulgaria)

2. What is the role of the anti-bullying legislation/law in the response to school bullying?

The project “School without Violence” was carried out as the Bulgarian answer to the “anti-bullying” program, introduced in more than fifty countries around the world. In Bulgaria, the program was launched in the summer of 2007 initiated by and with the financial support of UNICEF and continued for two years. So far, this has been the largest initiative to counteract aggression and bullying in the school environment. Unfortunately, the program was not continued due to lack of resources and financial support from the state.

There are no ongoing programs implemented sustainably at school, due to the campaign- and project-based nature of the initiatives addressing prevention and intervention of bullying that are implemented mainly by NGOs. The state institutions support these initiatives, develop policies and strategies to empower schools to apply independently to the Ministry of Education for partial funding, but in most of the cases these funding opportunities are scarce and insufficient. The difficulties that teachers face are that they are overwhelmed by numerous responsibilities and requirements and there is a crucial need for external resource specialists who would be in charge of prevention activities and rely mainly on programs and experts provided by NGOs.

Violence among Children – what to know about it – a leaflet for parents, provided by UNICEF/ 2007. A leaflet prepared by psychologists, elaborating on the nature of aggressive behaviour, the core momentum for the phenomenon of school bullying, providing detailed description of the types of bullying, aggressive behaviour, specific characteristics and differences based on gender, age, individual and group dynamics, consequences for the witness, perpetrator, long-term consequences, signs that parents could look for, suggesting that the child might be a victim of bullying, basic steps to guide parents how to help and understand better what the child feels. Charter for Child Participation <http://sacp.government.bg/detsko-uchastie/mehanizm-na-detskoto-uchastie/> <http://sacp.government.bg/detsko-uchastie/harta-za-detsko-uchastie/>

A mechanism that provides for participation of child representatives (minors) in School Councils, Municipality Councils, Regional Councils, and Council at State Agency for Child

Protection. These organs aim to serve as organs for child-representation in schools and municipal administrations, on the local, regional and national level. In theory, this mechanism for child representation aims to provide for child-participation in the administrative sector, through a democratic selection process. In practice, however, children rarely know that they have such representation and do not know the mechanism to make their voices heard through the child representatives in these corresponding councils. The goal for child empowering and self-governing is not put into practice.

Practical manuals available in Bulgarian language are:

- **Program for prevention of bullying and violence in school** – two publications – methodology guide and manual for conducting section meetings. The program was developed by Foundation “Gender, education, research and technologies” 2011. (*out of stock*)
- **Manual for prevention of violence in the school network, within the project** „Combating sexual exploitation and violence against children”, implemented in cooperation between State Agency for Child Protection and UNICEF, 2006. (*out of stock*)
- **Training for pedagogical specialists for prevention of school bullying, aggression and other negative behaviours** – manual for specialists, published by Ministry of Education, 2013. (*out of stock*)
- **Postive communication manual – under project Pro SAVE - Prosociality Against Violence and Exclusion**
- **School bullying** – Evaluation methods, 2015, Plamen Kalchev
- **Manuals Schools without discrimination**, compiled by the Commission for protection against discrimination, www.discriminationfreeschools.com, www.drop-diskrimination.dk, <http://proektuchilista.kzd.bg>
- **Participation in projects of Comenius programme. A step to school environment without aggression.** Human resource development centre, 2012 Sofia
- **Manual for teachers The young people between the virtual and real**, Design and implementation of cases in school environment, Children online, BLOB

- **Training of school specialists on prevention of school violence, aggression and other negative trends – manual for teachers**, association Training cooperation Zero violence, National institute for training and qualification in the field of education
- **Ideas For A Bullying-Free Classroom – Manual For Teachers And School Staff**, 2016 Animus Association Foundation

3. **Anti-bullying policies (including those defined in the legislation) and practices in Bulgaria**

Mechanism for combating school bullying between students, (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012)

<http://www.rio-sofia-grad.com/>

A policy document developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and in cooperation with state institutions (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Agency for Social Support, State Agency for Child Protection, Ministry of the Interior, Central Commission for Combating Events of Minors to the Council of Ministers) and NGOS working with issues of youth and education (National Network for Children, Steps for the Invisible Children of Bulgaria Foundation, Animus Association Foundation, Association of Psychologists in Bulgaria, UNICEF). All these mentioned stakeholders developed an integral national mechanism to combat bullying and help school and provide for a safer school environment on a national level. The mechanism is a document that consists of a normative description of the phenomenon of bullying, an approach for child-centered sensitivity and preventive pack. Despite the fact that the mechanism is adopted on a national level, it is hardly put into practice in all schools across the country.

The mechanism provides for creating a school coordination council responsible for counteracting bullying. The preventive pack aims to address various aspects and forms of bullying and targets the class, the school and the community levels. The mechanism involves a prevention complex of class activities such as group works, discussions, case work exercises that aim to provide for a platform to share opinions and experiences of bullying, to raise the awareness. The main topics that are to be discussed are:

- ✓ What is bullying itself, how to identify it and how to report it?
- ✓ What are the experiences of the bully and the victim?
- ✓ How do we feel when we witness a situation of bullying and what to do?

- ✓ What can we do and what do we want to do?
- ✓ What are the principal values, rules of behaviour, that we have to follow?
- ✓ How can we apply them?

The mechanism provides for a commitment from the school administrations. Each school is responsible for the involvement of experts, parents and students themselves in the process of case work, referral and intervention. The mechanism envisions a peer education approach regarding the victim as well as the bully.

3.1.National Strategy for the Child 2008-2018

Издадено от Народното събрание, Обн. ДВ. бр.14 от 12 Февруари 2008г.

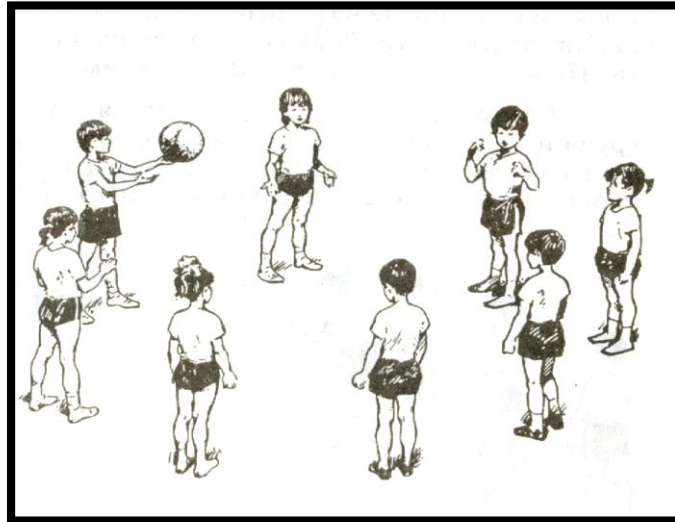
www.stopech.sacp.government.bg/file.php?fid=281

The document presents the integrated strategy of all policies that concern issues regarding children, childhood and family and aims to improve the policy framework and measures in the field of child rights and child quality of life.

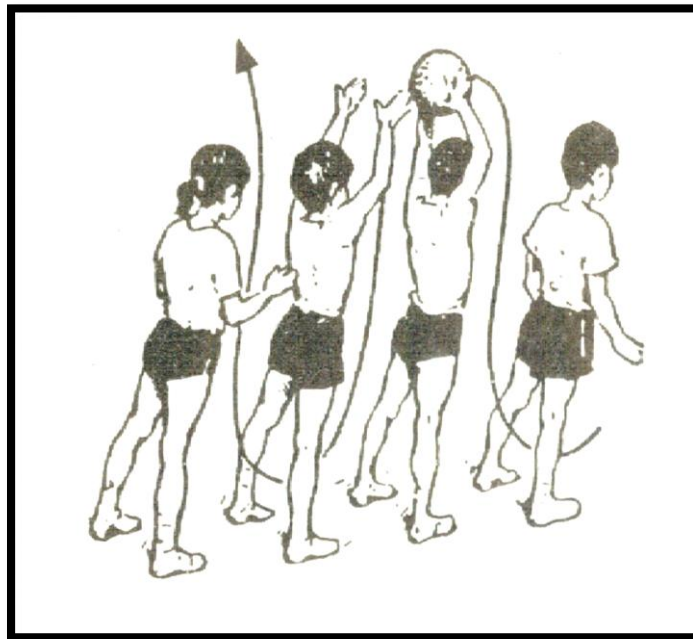
Annex 2

Illustration of the competitive games in the experiment „Ball game“

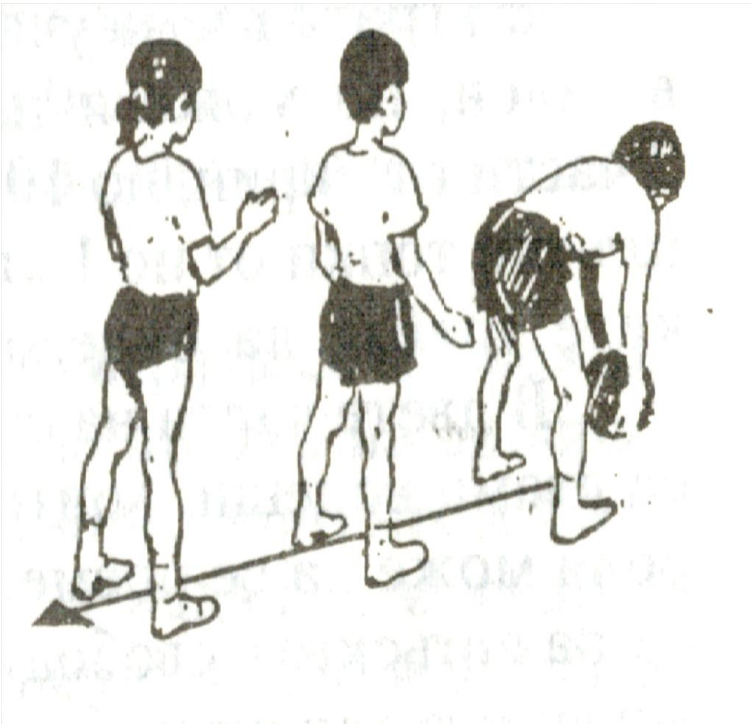
Game „The ball of the neighbour“



Game „Handling the ball above the head and in tunnel“



Game „Handling the ball in a tunnel “



Annex 3:

Interpretation of the children on the watched cartoons

	In the beginning of school year 2016/2017, before „Zippy’s friends“	In the end of school year 2016/2017, after „Zippy’s friends“
Animation	<p>„<i>Franklin and the broken globe</i>“</p> <p><i>Part of the animation presented to the children:</i> Franklin and Bear are playing in the classroom and accidentally break the globe. As long as they wonder whether to confess, the teacher and the other children return. Goose accidentally pushes the globe, it falls and everyone thinks she broke it. She is depressed, she thinks she's clumsy and does not want to play with other kids. Franklin constantly goes to play with her, Bear constantly avoids her.</p>	<p>„<i>Franklin’s favorite card</i>“</p> <p><i>Part of the animation presented to the children:</i> Franklin took his cards to Bear’s place and they play with them. When the next day Bear returns the cards, Franklin does not find his favorite card and accuses Bear that he has lost it. They rummage in Bear's room but they do not find it. Franklin constantly accuses Bear that he loses things. They quarrel and everyone leaves, telling the other that he no longer wants to be friends.</p>
Sofia – 1 st grade	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i> Children perceive correctly the content of the animation, they describe the main points</p> <p><i>How did Goose feel?</i> Bad. <i>After an additional question:</i> sad.</p> <p><i>Why did Bear and Franklin not confess?</i> Because they did not want to be punished.</p> <p><i>Do you think they will confess?</i> No.</p> <p><i>What would you do in their place?</i> In their place the children would confess.</p> <p><i>What if Goose finds the truth?</i> She'll be angry with them.</p> <p><i>Why didn't Bear want to play with Goose?</i> Because she's clumsy. Because she can understand that he broke the globe, and</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i> They quarreled. Because Bear lost the card. Bear lost it, but I think he stole it. <i>How did Franklin and Bear feel?</i></p> <p>Bad.</p> <p><i>After an additional question:</i> Angry, they both were angry. Franklin – because Bear lost his card. Bear – because they quarreled.</p> <p><i>Did Bear really lost the card?</i> Yes.</p> <p><i>Will Franklin and Bear reconcile later?</i> Yes. Because at the end there is always a happy ending.</p> <p><i>Is it possible that there is another</i></p>

	<p>tell it to everyone. <i>Why was Franklin constantly playing with Goose?</i> Because she likes her. Because she was sad, and it made him sad for her. <i>And how did Bear feel like not playing with Goose?</i> He felt good. He felt bad because Franklin was only playing with her. <i>What if Goose finds the truth?</i> She won't go to Franklin and Bear, she will be silent.</p>	<p><i>reason?</i> <i>In response to this question, children start to share different experiences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yesterday I accidentally kicked a boy and he called me „badass“, then we reconciled – because he forgave me. - I was with a girlfriend for a walk, we quarreled, she slapped me and called me “bitch“, then we reconciled – she apologized to me. - A girl every day beats me and then does not apologize. (Others add: she beats us, she spat at me yesterday.) <p><i>What will happen in the end?</i> Bear will confess that he stole the card.</p>
<p>Sofia – preschool</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i> Children perceive correctly the content of the animation, they describe the main points</p> <p><i>How did Goose feel?</i> Sad.</p> <p><i>Why didn't she want to play with the kids?</i> She worries that she might break something again.</p> <p><i>Why did Bear and Franklin not confess?</i> Because they did not want to be punished. <i>What would you do in their place?</i> In their place, the children would tell the truth; when you confess, nothing happens. They will confess because</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i> Bear lost one of the cards. He and Franklin are no longer friends.</p> <p><i>Did Bear really lost the card?</i> No, no (individual voices – Yes).</p> <p><i>It turns out that most children are already familiar with the animation, only those children who haven't watched it continue to answer.</i></p> <p><i>What happened to the card?</i> It got lost. Bear lost it. They quarreled, they got angry at one another and they are no longer friends because of the card.</p> <p><i>How does Franklin feel?</i> Sad.</p>

	<p>they do not want to lie.</p> <p><i>What if Goose finds the truth?</i></p> <p>She will feel good (she will understand she has not broken the globe).</p> <p><i>Will she be angry with them?</i></p> <p>Yes. No, because they confessed to her.</p> <p><i>Why didn't Bear want to play with Goose?</i></p> <p>So she did not understand and divulge him.</p> <p><i>Why was Franklin constantly playing with Goose?</i></p> <p>To calm her down. In order for Bear to reconcile with her.</p> <p><i>Children share stories about how they did some mischief (they broke something) and confessed.</i></p>	<p><i>How does Bear feel?</i></p> <p>Angry.</p> <p><i>Was Franklin angry as well?</i></p> <p>Yes. No. He was sad. He was angry.</p> <p><i>Should Franklin forgive Bear?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p> <p><i>Will they reconcile?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p> <p><i>Why?</i></p> <p>Because they are best friends.</p> <p><i>Children give examples of experiences with their friends. Have they quarreled with their friends?</i></p> <p>Yes. No. We quarrel and we reconcile.</p>
<p>Vratsa – 1st grade</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i></p> <p>Children perceive correctly the content of the animation, they describe the main points</p> <p><i>How did Goose feel?</i></p> <p>Sad.</p> <p><i>Why did Bear and Franklin not confess?</i></p> <p>Because Franklin didn't want to be scolded. Because they didn't want to be punished.</p> <p><i>What were they supposed to do?</i></p> <p>To confess to their teacher.</p> <p><i>Did they have to confess to Goose?</i></p> <p>Yes. She would understand them, forgive them.</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i></p> <p>Bear lost the card and the got angry at one another.</p> <p><i>What will happen next?</i></p> <p>Then they will reconcile because they were good friends. Bear will find the card and give it to Franklin.</p> <p><i>Who was to blame for the quarrel?</i></p> <p>Bear. He is guilty because he lost Franklin's card.</p> <p>But Franklin didn't have to give him the cards. But Franklin should not yell, he has to tell him normally.</p> <p><i>Could Franklin have lost the card?</i></p> <p>Yes. Bear tells the truth. Since they are best friends, it is the truth.</p>

	<p><i>Why didn't Bear want to play with Goose?</i></p> <p>Because he does not like her. Because he wanted to play with Franklin. Because Goose can get angry with him.</p> <p><i>Why was Franklin constantly playing with Goose?</i></p> <p>She taught him to swim. Because she was sad. In the place of Franklin and Bear the kids would act like Franklin - play with Goose.</p> <p><i>How's the animation going to end?</i></p> <p>They will confess. Bear will reconcile with Goose, they will become friends again.</p> <p><i>What will happen if they confess?</i></p> <p>The teacher will punish them. He will tell their parents.</p>	<p><i>How does Bear feel?</i></p> <p>Bad. Sad. Insulted. Huffish.</p> <p><i>How does Franklin feel?</i></p> <p>Wrathful. Huffish. Angry. Most angry.</p> <p><i>What could they do?</i></p> <p>Franklin could say it calmly.</p>
<p>Aytos – 1st grade</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i></p> <p>Children perceive correctly the content of the animation, they describe the main points</p> <p><i>How did Goose feel?</i></p> <p>Sad.</p> <p><i>Why was Franklin constantly playing with Goose?</i></p> <p>Franklin was constantly trying to cheer her up. For her not to think she was clumsy and make her cheerful.</p> <p><i>Why didn't Bear want to play with Goose?</i></p> <p>Every time Bear saw Goose, he felt sad, so he avoided her. Because Franklin spends more time with her. Bear thinks Franklin is not his friend.</p>	<p><i>What happened in the animation?</i></p> <p>He stole it (the card). He took it, he took it somewhere. And he stowed it. And he doesn't remember where.</p> <p><i>On purpose?</i></p> <p>Only one child says "Yes".</p> <p><i>Who was to blame for the quarrel?</i></p> <p>Bear.</p> <p><i>What should Bear do?</i></p> <p>To apologize.</p> <p><i>What would you do in Bear's place?</i></p> <p>I'll buy him a new card and I'll apologize.</p> <p><i>Is it possible that the card got lost just like that?</i></p> <p>No, Bear has lost it.</p>

	<p><i>Did Bear and Franklin do the right thing? No. When they were wrong?</i></p> <p>When they broke the globe. When they did not confess. If they had confessed, it would have been better, and Goose would not think of such things, and she would not be sad.</p> <p><i>Why did Bear and Franklin not confess?</i></p> <p>They thought they would be punished. And that they would be scolded. That the teacher would drive them out.</p> <p><i>What if Goose finds the truth?</i></p> <p>She will feel bad that they lied to her. She will not want to play with them.</p> <p><i>Will they confess in the end?</i></p> <p>Yes. No, because they will be punished. Yes, because they do not want to lie anymore.</p> <p><i>Have the teacher punished them?</i></p> <p>No. Because they confessed.</p>	<p><i>If it just got lost, who is to blame?</i></p> <p>No one.</p> <p><i>What will happen next?</i></p> <p>They will reconcile. Friends do not quarrel. No matter how much they quarrel, they still reconcile. The card is not important, friendship is important.</p> <p><i>A child gives an example of how she lost a girlfriend's drawing, the next day she drew the same and "returned" it to her.</i></p> <p><i>Could Franklin has lost his card himself?</i></p> <p>No. He first pulled out all cards, he lost nothing. We didn't see him hiding it.</p>
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Annex 4

1. Parents about what they children share with them (sex differences)

Analysis of the responses of 224 parents, inquiry administered prior to commencement of Zippy's friends programme (non-parametric Mann-Whitney test for comparison of 2 independent samples)

	Mean Rank		U	P
	<i>boys</i>	<i>girls</i>		
the child shares fights	120.92	103.93	5 320.5	0.034
in case of communication problems – physical aggression	126.26	98.49	4 716.5	0.000
the child shares physical aggression	120.65	104.20	5 350.5	0.049
the child shares that other children do not communicate with it	120.55	104.30	5 361.5	0.040

2. Parents about what they children share with them (city differences)

The city where the child studies: The analysis of the responses of 224 parents from the first study (prior to commencement of Zippy's friends programme) revealed that the children studying in Aytos often share with their parents joyful events, wins in contest games, praise from classmates and interesting games. The most rarely shared joyful events, in contest games, praises from classmates and interesting games report the children from Sofia. The parents from Aytos most often consider the atmosphere at school calm and pleasant; most rare it is described in this way by the parents in Vratza.

The children, studying in Vratza most often report fights and in case of communication problems most often approach parents. This is less preferred by the children from Sofia. The parents from Vratza most often describe the atmosphere at school as as tense or problem and most rarely is evaluate as such by the parents in Aytos (table).

Analysis of the responses of 224 parents from the inquiry performed in the beginning of the Zippy's friends programme (nonparametric test Kruskal–Wallis for comparison of κ independent samples. Adjusted significance* pair comparison).

	Mean Rank			χ^2	p	Post hoc (differences)
	<i>Sofia</i>	<i>Vratza</i>	<i>Aytos</i>			
the child shares joyful events	97.13	107.72	122.83	6.297	0.043	Sofia-Aytos (p=0.057)
the child reports fights	92.16	125.24	111.86	8.613	0.013	Sofia-Vratza (p=0.011)
the child shares won in contest games	88.79	104.69	128.78	15.029	0.001	Sofia-Aytos (p=0.001) Vratza-Aytos (p=0.025)
the child shares praise by classmates	100.36	100.68	127.03	10.305	0.006	Vratza-Aytos (p=0.012) Sofia-Aytos (p=0.051)
the child shares interesting games	91.00	108.00	125.22	10.396	0.006	Sofia-Aytos (p=0.006)
communication problems – help from parent	95.55	123.90	110.69	6.044	0.049	Sofia-Vratza (p=0.046)
atmosphere at school - tense	109.55	126.48	102.68	7.021	0.030	Aytos-Vratza (p=0.026)
atmosphere at school – calm and pleasant	103.99	100.88	125.33	9.051	0.011	Vratza-Aytos (p=0.015)
atmosphere at school - problem	109.00	129.38	100.62	10.604	0.005	Aytos-Vratza (p=0.004)
atmosphere at school - calm	109.86	96.70	126.14	11.391	0.003	Vratza-Aytos (p=0.002)

* $p > 0.05$, due to the correction for avoidance of errors resulting from the multiple comparison of pairs. Prior to this correction the p values used to be < 0.05 .