



# **BULLYING SITUATION IN NORWAY**

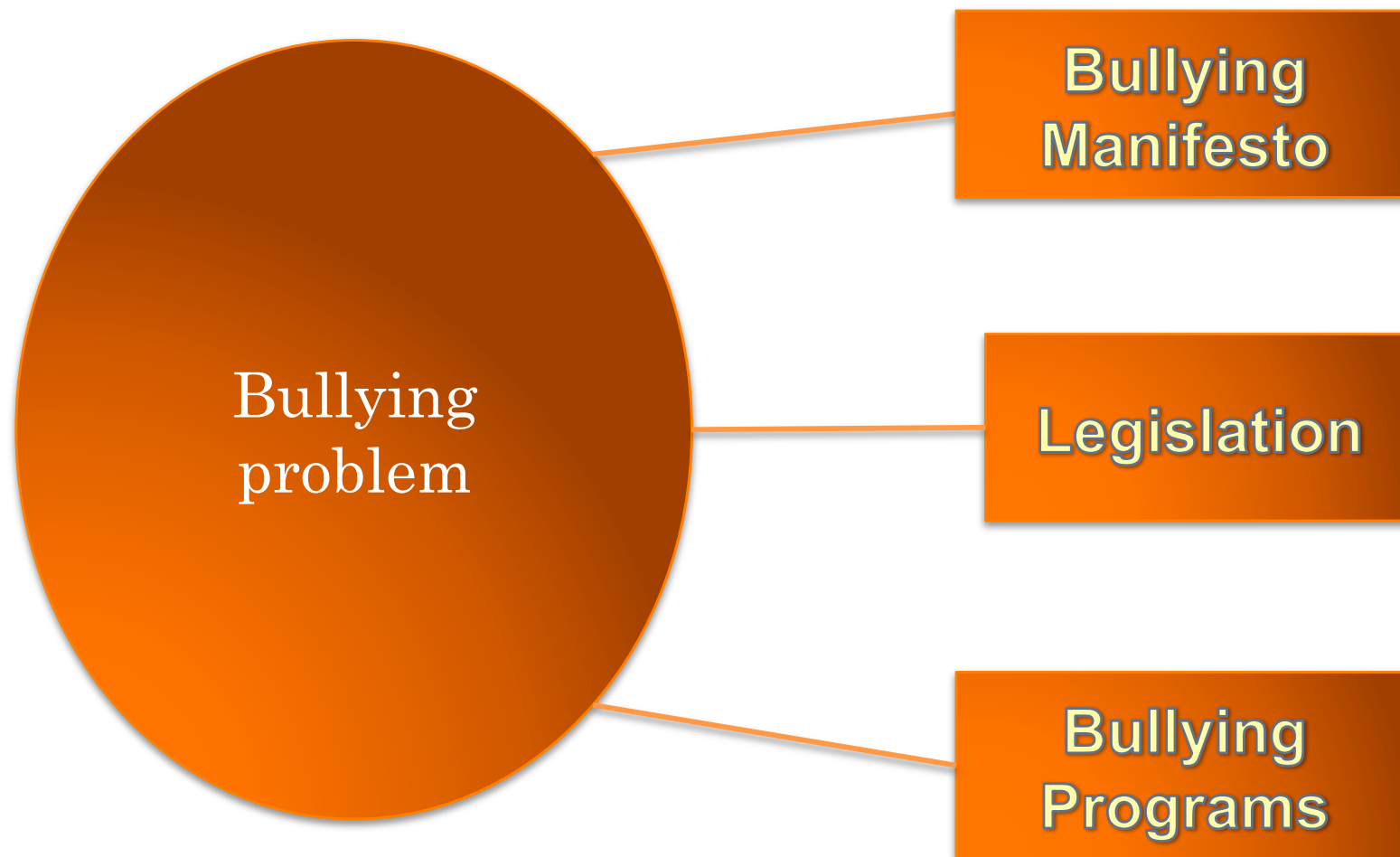
**3rd Annual Bullying Research Network Think  
Tank meeting**

**University of California, Santa Barbara**

**Presented by Ida F. Strom, M.A., PhD Student**

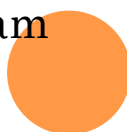
**June 19th, 2013**

# NATIONAL EFFORTS AGAINST BULLYING




# BULLYING MANIFESTO

## “THE MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING”

- First bullying manifesto was launched by the government in 2002
  - Background: School bullying had increased with over 60% since 1995
  - Goal: To prevent and combat bullying
    - Increase focus on good, inclusive learning environments and improve anti-bullying measures
    - National and regional partners commit to engage in the anti-bullying campaign
    - All schools are responsible to work out a written plan describing the anti-bullying campaign , which will be supervised by the local school authorities
    - All schools can decide their own strategy or adopt an antibullying program
  - The manifesto has been renewed and resigned in 2006, 2009 and 2011
- 

# LEGISLATION

- Introduced in 2003
  - **The Education Act's § 9a:**
    - All pupils in primary, lower, upper secondary schools and after school clubs are entitled to good physical and psychosocial environments that promote health, well-being and learning.
  - **The Education Act's § 9a-3:**
    - Everyone who works in schools and in after school clubs strives to ensure that pupils are not subjected to harassment through abusive words and acts such as bullying, violence, racism and discrimination. If a school or after school club staff member becomes aware of or suspects that a pupil is being subjected to such abusive words or acts, the person concerned must investigate the matter immediately and notify the school's administration and, if necessary and possible, take direct action themselves.
- 

# BULLYING PREVENTION EFFORTS IN SCHOOLS

- Two “pure” evidence based bullying programs; Olweus program and the Zero program
- High interest for the two programs when the bullying manifesto first was introduced :
  - Bullying prevalence decreased between 2002-2004
- Less political interest *after* the first bullying manifesto period (2002-2004):
  - Fewer schools implementing the anti-bullying programs
  - Increase in bullying after the first manifesto period
  - The prevalence of bullying have since then remained stable for the past 5 years



# PREVELANCE RATES OF BULLYING

Have you been bullied in school the past months (5-13th grade)?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Many times a week	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.9
About one time a week	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.7
2-3 times a month	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.2
Rarely	15.2	15.3	15.1	15.1	14.9	14.2
Not at all	77.9	77.3	77.5	77.4	77.6	79.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training student survey 2007-2012



# WHAT ARE WE DOING WRONG?

- Mixed results regarding the effect of the bullying programs:
- **Positive response:**
  - The programs own evaluations, the evaluation conducted by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and international evaluations have showed significant positive effects of the programs
- **Negative response:**
  - An evaluation conducted on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training by the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation , Research and Education (NIFU) showed no effect of the programs (2010)
  - NIFU concluded that the overall learning environment is what matters in influencing levels of bullying
  - They also emphasized the importance of including the broader context, such as parents and the community
  - Other critiques:
    - Programs based on criticized bullying definition
    - Programs are too generic: e.g. do not specify types of bullying, such as bullying against gay or disable individuals



# WHAT ARE WE DOING WRONG (CONT.)?

- **Consequences of negative response towards bullying programs:**
  - The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training stopped recommending the bullying programs to the Ministry of Education and Research and recommended to shift focus towards improving school climate
  - However, the government decided to continue to financially support the bullying programs with the condition that the programs document the effects of each program implemented
- **Bullying program developers response to the critique :**
  - Not all schools are 100% committed to implementing the programs: only use some parts of the evidence based programs
  - Programs may seem overwhelming for schools
  - Skepticisms in school administrations toward evidence based methods
  - Less political focus on bullying
  - More focus on national tests and academics in schools; no time to focus on bullying
- **Dangerous development as schools are receiving contradictory messages; may result in less school initiatives to fight bullying**





# WHAT ARE WE DOING WRONG (CONT.)?

- Bullying as a symptom of other problems:
  - Bullying related to external issues (e.g. violence at home)
  - Bullying as a group phenomenon, affecting all students
  - Results from my PhD study: In schools with higher levels of bullying , the students individual grades were reduced by almost a whole grade, indicating that bullying affects all students and the learning environment
- Legislation;
  - New laws suggested to secure previous bully victims rights: hold the schools legally responsible if not handling bullying cases
  - First bullying conviction in 2012 in which a municipality was held responsible: Had to pay a fine of \$156 000 to the previous bully victim
  - Most cases before this has not succeeded because of lack of legal evidence



## WHAT ABOUT THE LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING?

- My research interests: How does bullying affect other aspects of life, other than mental health?
- Recent PhD study: Bullying at 15 years of age predicted negative work participation outcomes eight years later, independent of high school completion and other relevant factors
- Current PhD study: To investigate protective factors in high school that may promote later work integration in young adults who were exposed to bullying, violence and/or sexual abuse in high school



# FUTURE DIRECTIONS;

- ❑ Further evaluations of how schools implement the bullying programs
- ❑ Emphasize the importance of school climate and social ecological approaches
- ❑ More studies are needed to study the longitudinal effects (into adulthood) of bullying victimization
- ❑ Bridge the gap between research and practice
- ❑ Cross cultural comparisons; Why did the Olweus program show effects in Scandinavian countries but not in USA?





# Thank you!

Ida Frugård Strøm, PhD student  
Norwegian Centre for Violence and  
Traumatic Stress Studies  
Oslo, Norway  
E-mail: [i.f.strom@nkvts.unirand.no](mailto:i.f.strom@nkvts.unirand.no)