

Formative Evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Programme in Schools in the United Arab Emirates

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
ABC	Anti-bullying committees / school discipline committee
ADEK	Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
CRC	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ERB	Ethics Review Board
ESE	Emirates School Establishment
FDF	Family Development Foundation
GWU	General Women's Union
HDI	The Human Development Index
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
KHDA	The Knowledge and Human Development Authority
MOCD	Ministry of Community Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHAP	Ministry of Health and Prevention
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PANEL	Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and Legality
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SCMC	Supreme Council for Motherhood & Childhood
SEC	Sharjah Education Council
SEHA	Ambulatory Healthcare Services
SPEA	Sharjah Private Education Authority
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF GAO	UNICEF Gulf Area Office
VAC	Violence against Children

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Executive Summary

This evaluation assessed a pilot programme for the prevention of bullying in a school setting, launched in 2014 under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Chairwoman of The General Women's Union The Supreme Chairperson of the family Development Foundation, and President of The Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and as a collaboration between the UNICEF Gulf Area Office (GAO) and the Supreme Council for Motherhood & Childhood (SCMC). The evaluation was conducted to support SCMC and UNICEF work on child protection in the UAE, specifically case management in schools and the establishment of links to systems outside schools. The programme was implemented in two phases. In the first phase, which started in 2014, the programme was rolled out in 14 schools in Abu Dhabi. The second phase was implemented in 64 schools from 2016 to 2017. The programme was expanded to 64 schools, extending from Abu Dhabi to the Northern Emirates. In 2018, the program was handed over to the Ministry of Education, which in turn, mainstreamed in all schools. The evaluation assessed the pilot programme using the criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability. The evaluation identified critical lessons learnt, best practices, and key recommendations.

SCMC and UNICEF GAO initiated The UAE Programme for the Prevention of Bullying in Schools, by carrying out a preliminary analysis of the school environment in the UAE in order to establish a framework for protection and safety in schools and a learning environment. The results of the school analysis showed that bullying does occur in schools, especially among cycle II students. Hence, there was a need to develop a bullying prevention model suitable for implementation in the UAE.

Initially, more than 15 specialized programs for international best practices in Antibullying were reviewed and 3 programs were selected and presented in a 2-day seminar organized by UNICEF GAO and SCMC in Abu Dhabi from 21-22 May 2014. The seminar was attended by various education, health and protection authorities and resulted in forming a national committee to oversee the development of a bullying prevention model suitable for implementation in UAE schools. During this seminar, experiences from Australia, Finland (KiVa program) and the United States (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program) were presented, and experts shared their research/school-based models to combat bullying and the methodologies, approaches used, some of their educational material, lessons learnt and evidence of the effectiveness of these models in their respective countries.

Tailored and comprehensive intervention was programmed through the production of a bullying prevention training manual based on six methods of intervention: direct sanctions, restorative practice, mediation, support group, shared concern, and victim empowerment. The programme was implemented in 14 schools in Abu Dhabi in the first phase and expanded to 64 schools in the second phase – 28 Schools in Abu Dhabi and 36 schools in Dubai and the Northern Emirates.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the programme's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability in mitigating bullying in the target schools, and thereby advise how UNICEF can best support the UAE and balance the government's objectives and priorities with the UNICEF mandate. The evaluation aims to assess the pilot phase of the programme, gauge the programme's accessibility with a focus on equity and gender equality, support the overall work on child protection in the country, and identify key lessons and best practices to enrich evidence-based decision-making. The evaluation's intended primary audiences are UNICEF GAO, the SCMC, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) in the UAE.

A mixed participatory approach was used in the evaluation. Following a desk review, the evaluator selected a sample of 12 schools involved in the programme and 2 schools outside the programme. She conducted seven key informant interviews and ran surveys among nine school principals, 112 parents, 62 social workers and School Discipline Committee members, and 1,330 students. Additionally, risk mapping was conducted with 93 students. The evaluator presented her preliminary findings for validation.

The evaluation yielded following findings.

Relevance: The evaluation found the programme to be highly relevant to the United Arab Emirates Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood 2017–2021 Strategy and to the Ministry of Education Strategy. The evaluation concludes that the programme design was based on sound evidence and informed by global best practices. The programme design contributed to the achievement of the intended results and outcomes via relevant interventions, including staff training, training materials, and anti-bullying guides in Arabic and English. Nevertheless, the evaluator notes that the programme did not define the logical framework required for the programme, the programme’s theory of change, programme outcomes, an activities timeline, or monitoring plan. The programme was found to be relevant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More specifically, in terms of its non-discrimination principles, the programme effectively worked to eliminate all types of discriminations. Children’s views and opinions were prioritised at all stages of the programme. Finally, the evaluation found that the programme was consistent with a human-rights-based approach from the perspectives of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, universality, and indivisibility.

Coherence: The evaluation concludes that the programme is aligned with relevant school policies and the school code of conduct. The programme contributed to changes in social behaviour. It promoted the mobilisation of an anti-bullying and violence mechanism in the pilot schools. While the programme did not offer a case management structure similar to that of the school code of conduct, the schools used the programme manuals, training materials, and pre- and post-knowledge assessments. The evaluation found that the pilot programme and the MOE’s child protection and wellbeing programme complemented each other.

Efficiency: The programme was drawn up and implemented by UNICEF, the SCMC, and the MOE. The MOE devised a national anti-bullying policy that covered all aspects of the programme. However, this pursuit of this policy was limited by three factors that affected the programme. First, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, lessons were halted, and new bullying issues emerged. Secondly, the MOE was split into two entities: the MOE and the Emirates Schools Establishment. It took time for the programme to be embedded at the MOE after this structural reform.

UNICEF’s engagement with governments in the Gulf Region is different from the UNICEF work model deployed in many other UNICEF offices where it is fully dedicated not only to education, but also to management, reporting, and monitoring. Over time, this lack of involvement may limit UNICEF’s contribution to the programme. More needs to be done by the government to strengthen UNICEF’s engagement at local level and throughout the programme’s timeline in order to deepen the impact of the resulting achievements.

Effectiveness: The programme reached the target group at the pilot schools on several levels. Schools drew up their own annual programmes. Results from the school committee questionnaire showed that the programme raised awareness among at least 80% of school students each year; more than 90% of school staff and social workers raised students’ awareness of bullying; 96.4% of them documented incidents of bullying; and 90.5% planned and participated in the anti-bullying week organised by the MOE. The programme made progress towards its planned objectives of creating a safe school environment and preventing violence and bullying in school. One of the programme’s milestones was the production of evidence-based anti-bullying manuals that are based on global best practices. It was drawn up, distributed, and used for training purposes. Results from student questionnaires indicated consistently lower bullying rates in the pilot schools compared to the control group. For example, the likelihood of students becoming victims is significantly lower in the intervention group. Students in the intervention group are 27.3% less likely to be called names, 41.2% less likely to get picked on by other students, 35.4% less likely to be made fun of, 46.8% less likely get hit by others, and 73.6% less likely to receive unpleasant computer, phone, and/or online messages from other students.

Overall, the programme improved the school environment in each of the pilot schools to varying degrees and offered the whole school community a different level of understanding as regards the prevention of school violence and bullying. In terms of equity, the programme reached the most vulnerable children. The evaluation found that school staff and management systematically assess the students' situation and offer support. Schools have tailored the programme to students with disabilities. With regard to students facing neglect within the family, although the number is not high, schools mentioned that these cases were a challenge to manage. Some students from lone-parent families sometimes act aggressively and their peers are unable to challenge such behaviour. While aspects like these are not the focus of the programme, this needs to be looked at during the next phase.

The UAE government's commitment to recognising and responding to bullying issues, and to engaging in evidence-based interventions, is a critical factor in the effectiveness of the programme. The programme also benefited from extensive international experience in the design phase. Schools were willing and eager to benefit from the training provided. The school trainer provided training on an annual basis, ensuring that the quality of the trainer training was high and making sure that content was available in both Arabic and English.

Sustainability: The programme established strong buy-in via the training of trainers among national counterparts as a programme tool. The training of trainers allowed schools to lead the programme as most of the trainees were school principals and experienced social workers. The training of trainers was a key implementation mechanism. The evaluation concludes that the programme is legally and institutionally sustainable, with a component of financial sustainability depending on the situation playing out in the country.

The evaluation suggests the following set of recommendations.

1. **Strengthen the service response at national level, continue programme interventions.** The government is recommended to review and support the legal and policy framework for child protection systems. At national level, the Ministry of Education can partner with other ministries, civil society organisations, etc. Take evidence-based approaches drawing on comprehensive data and a systematic evaluation of the existing programmes and their impacts.
2. **Encourage pilot schools to continue adopting interventions under the programme.** UNICEF, the SCMC, and the MOE should draw up a plan to ensure continuity in the support of pilot schools in their efforts to implement the programme. It is recommended that pilot schools' efforts and contributions to the programme from 2014 to the present be acknowledged and rewarded.
3. **Strengthen the programme manuals.** UNICEF and the SCMC should have the programme manuals reviewed by an expert group to update the content. More examples of situations from school life can be added so that school staff can easily investigate and verify cases. They should adopt up-to-date and child-friendly training materials and mainstream gender equality at all programme levels.
4. **Update the anti-bullying materials.** The materials should be updated to ensure the diversity and localisation of content. This can be done by adding more modules to meet emerging needs defined by the students participating in this study and by their parents, and ensuring the localisation of content to reflect cultural differences and diversity across the Emirates.
5. **Develop a results framework for the programme.** UNICEF should provide more support to stakeholders from the SCMC and MOE in taking the lead with national stakeholders to develop a results agenda with clear, quantified targets. The programme needs to document a theory of change to identify assumptions, risks and bottlenecks, and develop a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework.

6. **Accelerate the implementation of the programme.** UNICEF should use a shorter sub-programme timeframe to regularly capture changes on the ground. A shorter sub-programme can be more easily financed than a very long programme. The programme should build a strong monitoring system and regularly collect data.
7. **Broaden the scope of the programme scope to address topics mentioned in the school code of conduct and integrate the beneficiaries' priorities.** It is recommended that the existing school code of conduct be used to scale up the programme, rather than creating a parallel dedicated school anti-bullying structure. The code of conduct needs to be audited from a child protection perspective, and given training and social change materials. The MOE needs to develop a way of detecting and dealing with cases where children's identities are kept anonymous.
8. **Offer non-school support to regularly bullied students and aggressive students.** The UAE already has three levels of service response: primary, secondary and tertiary. These need to be mainstreamed into the school system. Students who aggressively bully others may either be given a fail grade or prevented from advancing to the next year, and placed in another school if there is no sustainable change in his/her behavior. Additional advanced modules need to be created to support and enhance the life skills of regularly bullied students with a view to increasing their self-esteem.
9. **Develop a capacity-building programme for implementing partners.** One important method to keep all stakeholders on the same path is to engage in strong programme-based capacity building at the beginning in order to enhance implementers' skills and share programme experiences among them.
10. **Put the SCMC in the position of third-party monitor.** It is recommended that the programme build SCMC capacities to position itself as a third-party monitor conducting cross-cutting research and playing a monitoring role in multiple child-related areas, including bullying and child protection.
11. **Establish a programme dedicated to filling the gap in human resources among social protection specialists and social workers.** This includes gauging and addressing the shortage of human resources among school social workers and assessing current social workers' capabilities.
12. **Strengthen the UNICEF's role in the programme to maximise the impacts.** The current implementation model, where UNICEF is engaged in the design and the early stages, with programme implementation then managed by the national stakeholders, has shown limitations in two important components – systematic monitoring and learning. A study of the feasibility of various options on how the government and UNICEF can work together is recommended.
13. **Support the scale up.** The scale-up phase needs to be discussed with stakeholders to ensure that they are technically and financially willing and ready for the scale-up, and the programme materials need to be revised to factor in new developments and the views of schools, parents, students, and principals.

The following findings emerge from the evaluation:

- Better coordination between UNICEF, the SCMC, and national and local government stakeholders at all levels would have helped to better achieve the programme's goals.
- A clear and comprehensive programme document identifying and spelling out the results, programme components, activities, timeline, key roles and responsibilities, and a monitoring framework would have

facilitated performance tracking. A theory of programme change in response to identified assumptions, risks and bottlenecks could have helped to achieve the planned results. There is a lack of a programme monitoring and evaluation plan with tailored data collection benchmarks for learning and monitoring.

- Since the MOE took over the implementation of the programme, there is little evidence of data collection and programme performance monitoring, with the exception of schools' self-documentation of cases for internal use, which are not necessarily reported to the MOE.

The evaluation identified the following best practices:

- The programme draws on international best practices and successful models. Prior to its implementation, more than 15 international dedicated anti-bullying programmes were analysed, and the three best programmes – well-tested in Australia, Finland (the KiVa programme), and the United States (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program) – were presented to implementers prior to roll-out. Experts from those three programmes shared their school-based models, educational materials, lessons learnt and evidence of the effectiveness of these models in their respective countries.
- The programme achieved a high level of buy-in among schools by engaging, equipping and empowering schools so that they have all the support they need to take the lead in the programme. The training of trainers gave schools guidance on sustaining interventions under the programme. Most of the staff trained in the trainer training scheme were school principals and experienced social workers. The trained staff enabled schools to be the key actor in maintaining the programme. Each year, the trained staff provide refresher training and awareness sessions to other staff at their schools to raise students' and parents' awareness of anti-bullying.
- The SCMC Bullying Prevention in Schools Award is a very important tool in identifying and rewarding the best-performing staff, students, and parents. Schools should award it to students who make positive changes in their behaviour.

The evaluator noted three schools that had been exceptionally successful in implementing the programme:

- a) Hamdan Bin Zayed School: the school committee has been comprehensively organised. In addition to social workers, they have added music and drama teachers, PE teachers, and other staff. The school formed a student support group composed of senior students who observe and guide younger students' behaviour. The school invested heavily in delivering awareness sessions in a child-friendly manner with drawings and videos. The school has a strong, diversified team.
- b) Al Rawafed Private School: the school fully documented all programme activities. It applied all programme steps on annual basis. The school principal was very engaged in the process.
- c) Al Shawamekh School for Girls: the school carefully collected and analysed data on bullying incident

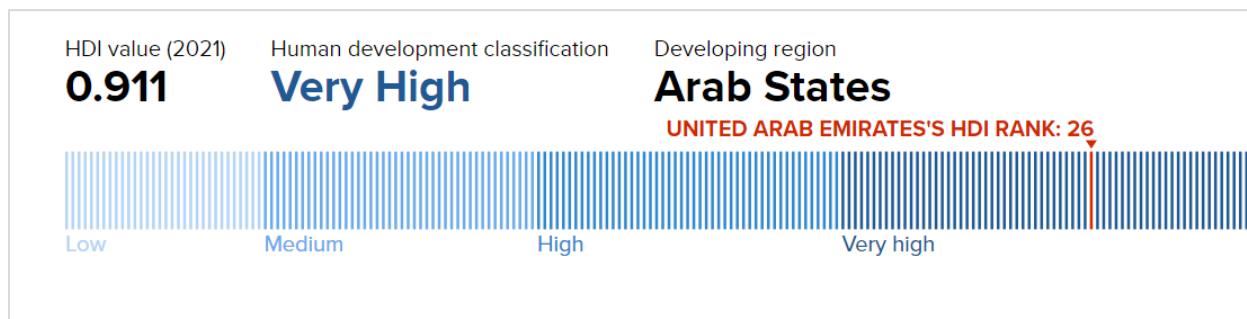
1. Introduction

1-1 Country context

The UAE consists of seven emirates; Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al-Khaimah, Ajman, Umm Al-Qaiwain, and Al- Fujairah, which were united as a federal state on 2 December 1971. The official language is Arabic. Among the immigrant population, English, Hindi, Farsi, and Filipino are spoken. English is the language of commerce and business. Islam dominates all aspects of life. Matters relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, economics, politics, and personal conduct are affected by Sharia (Islamic) law. The Emiratis are tolerant toward other religions, and immigrants of other faiths are allowed to have their own places of worship.

In 2021, the UAE's population was estimated at 9,365,145. The population growth (annual %) is 0.8%. The GDP per capita (current US\$) was equal to \$44,315.6 in 2021. The internet can be used by 100%¹ of the population; the country hosts migrants of multiple nationalities, including Arab nationalities, e.g. Egyptians, Lebanese, Syrians, Tunisians and Moroccans, Asian nationalities, e.g. Indians, Philippines and Pakistanis, and African migrants, in addition to western residents from the USA and Europe.² The 0-14 year age bracket represents 15% of the population³

The UAE ranked 26th globally and first in the Arab world in the 2021/2022 Human Development Report. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living.⁴



According to the SDGs dashboard, the UAE ranked 85th out of 163 among the index countries. The UAE has already achieved the targets related to goal 1 (no poverty) and goal 4 (quality of education).⁵

¹ The World Bank, United Arab Emirates data profile, retrieved on 20 March 2023, retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/AE>.

² UAE Ministry of Education and International Cooperation, Facts and figures, <https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/ar-ae/the-uae/facts-and-figures>

³ The World bank, United Arab Emirates data profile, <https://data.albankaldawli.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS>

⁴ UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2022. Human Development Report 2021-22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World. New York.

⁵ UN DESA. 2022. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 – July 2022. New York, USA: UN DESA. © UN DESA. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/>

SDG4 – Quality Education

Participation rate in pre-primary organized learning (% of children aged 4 to 6)	99.7	2020	●	↑
Net primary enrollment rate (%)	99.8	2020	●	↑
Lower secondary completion rate (%)	96.9	2020	●	↑
Literacy rate (% of population aged 15 to 24)	98.2	2019	●	●

The quality of education in the UAE performed well globally, being among the top 15 countries in the PIRLS score (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). PIRLS is an international assessment administered every five years to measure trends in reading comprehension at fourth grade. The assessment is conducted in the language of instruction in public and private schools and compares the results with the abilities of peers in participating countries.⁶

The UAE acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 3 January 1997 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 2 March 2016.⁷ Since then, the UAE has made significant progress in ensuring the compliance of its legal and policy frameworks to protect children from violence and abuse. Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 concerning children’s rights, also known as Wadeema’s Law, has been issued to ensure that all children are provided with appropriate living standards, access to health services, education, and equal opportunities in essential services and facilities without any kind of discrimination. The law protects children against all forms of negligence, exploitation, and physical and psychological abuses.

1-2 Education system in the UAE

The current education system in the UAE has been in effect since 1952. In the 1960s and 1970s, a school building programme expanded the education system. Currently, education at primary and secondary levels is universal. Public schools are funded by the UAE government, and the curriculum is created to mirror the UAE’s development goals. The language of instruction in public schools is Arabic, while a stress is placed on English as a second language. There are many internationally accredited private schools. Public schools in the country are free for citizens of the UAE; fees for private schools vary.

The UAE education reform policy focuses on better preparation, greater accountability, higher standards, and improved professionalism. In addition, rote instruction is being replaced with more interactive forms of learning. English-language education is being integrated into other subjects, such as mathematics and science. The Ministry of Education (MOE), the Emirates School Establishment (ESE), the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai, the Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA), and the Sharjah Education Council (SEC) are tasked with education reform that preserves local traditions, principles, and the cultural identity of the UAE.

Education from primary to secondary level is universal and compulsory up to the twelfth grade. This education is provided in a four-tier process over 14 years:

- 4- to 5-year-olds attend kindergarten (KG1, KG2)

⁶ PIRLS and ePIRLS Results, https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/pirls2016/tables/pirls2016_table11.asp

⁷ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – ohchr, Pledge by United Arab Emirates, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/30Anniversary/Pledges/UnitedArabEmirates.pdf>

- 6- to 11-year-olds attend primary schools (Grades 1-4)
- children aged 12 to 14 attend preparatory middle schools (Grades 5-8)
- 15- to 17-year-olds attend secondary schools (Grades 9-12)

More than a million students enrolled in pre-university education in the UAE in 2017/2018; an education service is offered by private and public schools. Public schools admitted 287,700 students in 2017/2018, private schools 793,300 students.⁸

In 2018/2019, 1,099,331 students enrolled in schools in the country. Private schools admitted 810,537 students, 48.2% female and 51.8% male. Public schools took in 288,794, 52.2% female and 47.8 male. Girls are more likely to be enrolled in public schools and boys are more likely to be enrolled in private schools.⁹

Table 1: Distribution of students by sex and school type 2018/2019

		Enrolment	Percentage
Public schools	F	150,790	13.7
	M	138,004	12.6
Private schools	F	390,764	35.5
	M	419,773	38.2
	Total	1,099,331	100.0

A 2001 cabinet decision excluding expatriate students from government schools was repealed in 2006. Since the 2006/07 academic year, admission for expatriate students has been conditional on approval, merit, and geographic location, and fees are levied.¹⁰

The UAE government allocates a significant share of its federal budget to education; the education budget has ranged from 13.44% of the UAE federal budget in 2016 to 20.23% in 2018.¹¹ In 2022 the government spent 16.3% of the country's \$16 billion federal budget on education.¹² The UAE has also drawn up a National Education Strategy to equip future generations of students with the technical and practical skills needed to strengthen the labour market. The strategy aims to reinforce accreditation standards, set a framework of qualifications, and further develop the curricula to match international standards and the UAE education tracks (a general, technical, advanced and elite stream).

1-3 Bullying in schools in the UAE

According to a programme's situation analysis, bullying in schools is a problem that affects students in many countries. It can have serious consequences on well-being and mental health.

⁸ Ministry of Education, school statistics 2017/2018.

⁹ UAE Ministry of Education, open data, <https://www.moe.gov.ae/Ar/OpenData/Pages/Home.aspx>

¹⁰ UAE Embassy in Washington, Education in the UAE, K-12 Education, <http://www.uaecd.org/k-12-education>

¹¹ Ministry of Education, Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021, <https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/AboutTheMinistry/Pages/MinistryStrategy.aspx>

¹² Maya Najm, United Arab Emirates Education, US Commercial Service, 2022

Bullying may be defined broadly as *“the systematic abuse of power in interpersonal relations. It involves individuals or groups deliberately seeking to dominate and upset those they target without having any reason to do so. Bullying may be physical, as in hitting or kicking someone, or verbal, as in using abusive language. It may also be indirect, as in deliberate and unfairly excluding people or spreading rumours about them that are known to be untrue. In recent years, it has involved the use of cyber technology to send hurtful messages.”*

In 2014, the UNICEF Gulf Area Office (GAO), in cooperation with the Supreme Council for Motherhood & Childhood (SCMC), carried out a preliminary situation analysis of the school environment in the UAE to develop a framework for protection and safety in the school and learning environment. The UNICEF GAO’s experts visited 11 schools (cycles 1 & 2) across different Emirates to assess the school environment by engaging in general group discussions with the students, school staff, parents, and school management. Results from the preliminary school assessment indicated that there is bullying behaviour in schools, especially among cycle 2 students (grades 6-9; aged 11-15 years).

Some of the key findings of the preliminary assessment include:

- students were subjected to bullying by other students;
- students were subjected to bullying by their teachers;
- younger students (11-12 years) were franker about the problems they faced;
- verbal bullying was the most common form of bullying;
- a few teachers reported being subjected to verbal and physical abuse by students;
- students were under constant surveillance by the school staff;
- school staff and parents did not acknowledge the negative impact of bullying on children;
- school staff are not able to identify signs of bullying;
- parents were not actively involved in their children’s school.

1-4 Child protection policy in schools in the UAE

There are several regulations that protect and organise child rights in UAE, including the compulsory education law, the people with disabilities law, the human resources law, the child crime law, and the child rights law – Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 (Wadeema). This child rights law was named after a girl who was tortured and killed by her father and his wife in 2012, an event which shook the country.

The law has created a comprehensive approach to child protection based on global best practices. The law stresses that all children must be provided with appropriate living standards, access to health services, education, equal opportunities in essential services and facilities without any kind of discrimination. The law protects children against all forms of negligence, exploitation, physical and psychological abuses. In addition, smoking in public and private vehicles and indoor facilities where children are present is also prohibited under the law. Violators are subject to penalties as imposed by the law.

The law allows childcare specialists to remove children from their home against the parents’ wishes and without judicial permission in cases of imminent danger. In less severe cases, specialists may intervene by visiting the child regularly, providing social services, and mediating a solution between the family and the child. Parents who put children in danger, abandon them, neglect them, leave them without supervision, do not enrol them in school or fail to register them

upon birth are subject to a prison sentence and/or a fine. The law applies to all children up to the age of 18.¹³

At a school level, internal discipline is defined by the school code of conduct issued by Ministerial Executive Order No. 851 of 2018. The school code of conduct as per the MOE refers to the regulation of students' day-to-day issues at schools, from the dress code to bullying. Under the code of conduct, students' conduct at school is graded as morals and behaviour and is subject to a pass/fail grade just like other subjects. Under the code of conduct, education officials are asked to protect children from neglect, exploitation, bullying and all forms of abuse, and to avoid disclosing confidential information about students and their families. The code of conduct includes the prohibition of spreading false news and rumours, and of committing any verbal or physical violence against students in any circumstances. Additionally, the MOE has joined with other entities to implement several national strategies and policies, such as the quality-of-life strategy and school health and safety, in addition to several programmes geared towards child well-being.

Child protection professionals and advisers work via a child protection unit; they are a bridge intervening between schools and families. Their numbers are relatively low, at one specialist for every 10 schools. Their capacities also need to be strengthened in order to meet children's needs as indicated by the MOE's representative.

1-5 UNICEF SCMC programme on the prevention of bullying in schools in the UAE

In 2014, the SCMC and UNICEF conducted an assessment with a view to developing a framework for protection and safety in schools. This initial assessment indicated that bullying behaviour was a key challenge.

In response to this assessment, UNICEF and the SCMC formed a national committee of stakeholders to address the bullying issue. Following discussions and meetings, the committee decided to draw up an anti-bullying programme in schools in the UAE.

The initial assessment in 2014 was conducted via focus group discussions with students at schools. Data issued later by the UAE Ministry of Health and MOE within the scope of the Global School-Based Student Health Survey 2016 showed that the percentage of students bullied on one or more days during the 30 days before the survey was 27.1% among students aged 13-15 years, 21.2% among students aged 16-17 years, and 24.8% among students aged 13-17 years. This also confirmed the SCMC and UNICEF assessment that priority should be given to cycle 2 students, i.e. those aged 13-15 years,¹⁴ as this is where bullying rates are highest.

The development of the programme started with a study of global experiences. In this respect, 15 global best practices were carefully reviewed, with three programmes being invited to provide more information. The three programmes selected were from Finland (KiVa), the United States (Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme), and Australia.

Afterwards, an international expert in psychology was commissioned to draw up a tailored and comprehensive intervention programme by producing a training manual based on six methods

¹³ The United Arab Emirates Government Portal, Children's Safety, <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/children-safety#:~:text=Federal%20Law%20No.,without%20any%20kind%20of%20discrimination>.

¹⁴ World Health Organisation, Global School-based Student Health Survey, <https://extranet.who.int/ncdsmicrodata/index.php/catalog/647>

of intervention: direct sanctions, restorative practice, mediation, support group, shared concern, and strengthening of the victim. The training manual was tested and translated and used as a tool to train trainers from schools so they could transfer this knowledge to school staff.

Prior to the training of trainers, a pre-assessment was conducted to measure the bullying rates at schools. The training was then provided and delivered from school staff to students via several delivery methods. The programme schools reported the following strategies to address bullying issues:

- production of a brochure and leaflets to raise awareness of bullying;
- awareness-raising among the student body at morning assemblies;
- organisation of a play on bullying in schools;
- collaboration with community police to hold a workshop on cyber-bullying;
- organisation of art activities to express students' ideas and perspectives on bullying;
- contest to come up with a creative design for the bullying prevention project;
- parent engagement in discussions on bullying and its consequences at morning assemblies and school celebrations.¹⁵

Another assessment was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the draft programme – a post assessment – which reported that:

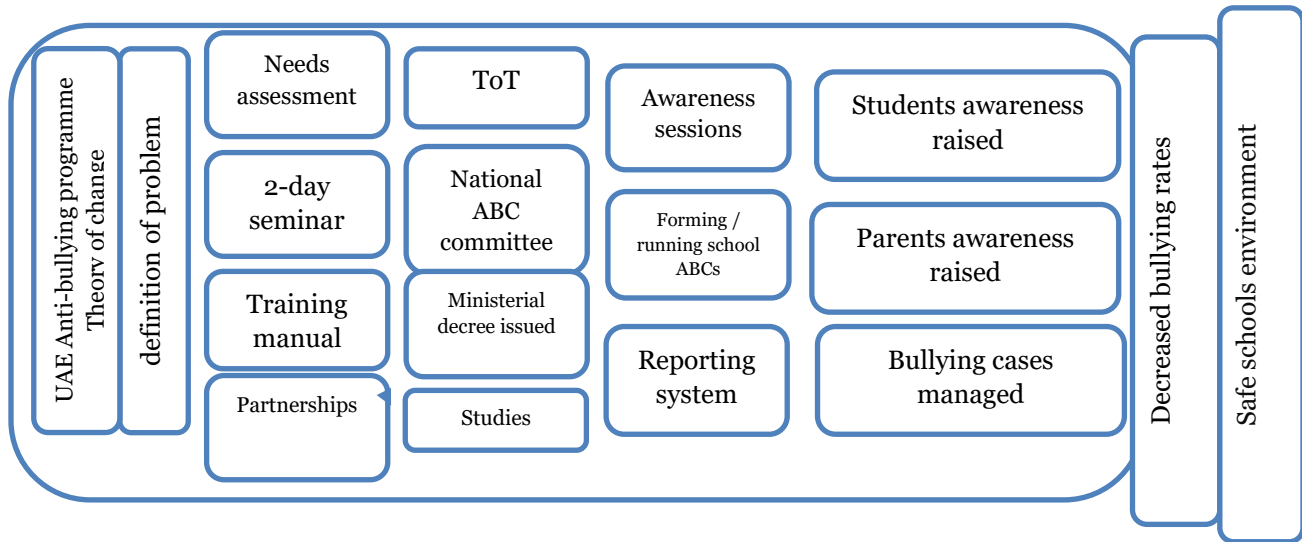
- there was a significant reduction in those being bullied;
- there was a significant reduction in those doing the bullying.

At this stage, the programme interventions were proved to be effective and phase 2 was rolled out with the expansion of the programme to 64 schools – 28 schools in Abu Dhabi and 36 schools in Dubai and the Northern Emirates.

In the absence of a programme theory of change, the evaluator drew up an ex-post illustrative theory of change (Shape 1).

¹⁵ Ken Rigby, *Bullying in schools in the United Arab Emirates and the effectiveness of an intervention programme: Report 2*, UNICEF GAO, 2017

Shape 1. Ex-Post UAE anti-bullying programme theory of change



2. Purpose and Objectives of Evaluation

The purpose is to conduct an independent formative evaluation of the pilot phase of the Anti-Bullying Programme in 64 schools using OECD DAC criteria to assess the programme relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability in mitigating the bullying problem in the schools targeted. It is equally important for the UNICEF GAO to make critical findings and define best practices for subsequent phases. The formative evaluation also covers relevant auxiliary services at schools, with a particular focus on school social support services.

The evaluation helps to shed light on how UNICEF can best support the UAE and strike a balance between government objectives and priorities and the UNICEF mandate. The knowledge gathered and the specific lessons learnt should inform evidence-based decision-making and advocacy, and contribute to learning within UNICEF on how to strengthen children’s well-being in the region and beyond. The evaluation’s recommendations will be reflected in the UNICEF GAO’s new Area Programme Document and will be of assistance to the UAE government in scaling up and replicating the programme in schools.

More specifically, the evaluation has the following objectives:

- assess the pilot phase of the programme from the perspective of its relevance, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability, and its impact on teachers, children, and parents, taking into account the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other critical human rights conventions;
- evaluate the programme’s accessibility with a view to preventing violence in schools and providing a safer educational environment, with a focus on equity and gender perspectives;
- support overall work on child protection in the UAE in terms of case management in schools, and links to systems outside schools;

- make critical findings, define best practices, draft key recommendations for the smooth process of formalising and scaling up the programme nationwide to ensure its inclusivity, sustainability, and efficiency.

The evaluation assessed pilot schools’ relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence. The formative evaluation also assessed related services, especially social workers and case management.

3. Evaluation Scope, Criteria, and Questions

The evaluation focuses on ongoing efforts at child protection in schools, especially with a focus on case management that goes beyond schools. It covers 64 pilot schools, where the programme is implemented with the support of the SCMC and Ministry of Education and will cover the period from 2014 to the present (March 2023).

The evaluation criteria and questions are listed in the table below.

Table 2. List of evaluation criteria and questions

Criteria	Key questions
Relevance	<p>To what extent do the programme objectives coincide with beneficiaries’ needs, priorities, and expectations at all levels? Assessment questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the programme’s objectives, strategies, activities, etc., realistic, feasible, and aligned with the relevant government policy’s priorities in terms of preventing violence in schools? • To what extent are the programme’s intervention approaches evidence-based, and to what extent do they address the actual needs of the broader school community (school staff, children, and parents)? • Are the programme and its activities fit to achieve the intended results and outcomes? • To what extent did the programme adapt to the new realities triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic? • Is the programme’s design and implementation aligned with CRC principles (non-discrimination, best interests of the child, the right to life, and participation), gender mainstreaming, and the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)?
Coherence	<p>To what extent do relevant interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the programme? Assessment questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the programme aligned with relevant school policies and anti-violence practices established in the pilot schools to encourage synergies and avoid overlap? • To what extent has the programme supported the operationalisation of the anti-bullying and anti-violence mechanism in pilot schools? • Is there any overlap of interventions, such as those adopted by the MOE to promote child well-being and by the UNICEF to build the capacity of child protection specialists? • How does the programme align with overall CP mechanisms within the school and outside the school system?
Effectiveness	<p>What critical positive and negative short- and long-term repercussions are spurred on by the programme, either directly or indirectly? Assessment questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the programme objectives realistic? • To what extent has the programme achieved its planned goals?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have the target groups been reached? Has the programme managed to reach out to the most vulnerable children? Has the programme been accessible to the broader school community in pilot schools? • What are the critical benefits for principals, psychologists/pedagogical counsellors, teachers, children, and parents who participated in the programme? Are there different beneficiary groups (based on ethnicity, socio-economic profile, urban-rural residence, disabilities, etc.)? • What are the critical determinants of the programme’s effectiveness and their impact on the beneficiary groups, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable? • How effective are the capacity-building activities supported by the programme? • What is the level of satisfaction of each beneficiary group within the broader school community? What are their recommendations to further improve the programme? • What happens to the cases reported and response mechanisms and their sustainability? How did the programme contribute to overall CP systems and mechanisms within schools?
Efficiency	<p>How are economic resources/materials (funds, expertise, time, etc.) mainstreamed into the results? Assessment questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have the programme funds and resources been utilised efficiently? • Is there a more cost-effective means of implementation to achieve the expected results? • How well were the establishment and implementation of the programme planned and managed? • How often was data collected and were monitoring activities carried out by the school administration, UNICEF, and the SCMC to improve the programme’s performance and its impact results?
Sustainability	<p>To what extent does the programme have the ability to maintain its positive impacts over time. Assessment questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have UNICEF, the SCMC, and the MOE promoted a spirit of joint ownership of the programme? • Did legal, institutional, and financial mechanisms encourage the programme’s sustainability? • What are the critical determinants of the programme’s long-term financial sustainability? • What is the way forward in further leveraging the programme’s sustainability? • How sustainable are the results achieved thus far for the broader school community in the 64 pilot schools? • What are the key steps to scaling up the programme nationwide?

4. Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation used a mixed-method participatory approach. It was guided by Terms of Reference (TOR), the Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF, Evaluation Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards and Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, and UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards. Primary data collection was conducted from 12 February 2023 to 2 March 2023.

Desk review

Prior to the primary data collection, the evaluator conducted a desk review of existing documents for purposes of initial analysis. The documents consulted are listed in the annex. The initial desk review served as a basis for the evaluator drawing up the inception report to detail the evaluation approach and plan.

The inception report and data collection tools were sent for an external ethical review to ensure that the processes were effective and that there was accountability for ethical oversight. This is to ensure that the protection of human subjects, including the protection of and respect for human and child rights, was incorporated into the evaluation methodology and data collection processes. The Ethical Review Board granted approval on 12 January 2023 (IRB #1211, IORG #850, FWA #1102).

Key informant interviews

The primary data collection conducted by the evaluator consists of key informant interviews, stakeholder surveys, general group discussions and risk map exercises. For key informant interviews, the evaluator took a purposeful sample of key stakeholders. The list was consulted and agreed during the inception phase (see Table 3).

Table 3. List of stakeholders interviewed

Entity	Name	Position
UNICEF GAO	Dr Jumana Haj-Ahmad	Deputy Regional Director for Gulf Cooperation Council Countries at UNICEF
UNICEF UAE Office	Mr Saji Thomas	Chief, Child Protection, Mr Moataz Azzam Programme Associate
	Mr Moataz Azzam	Programme Associate
Supreme Council for Motherhood & Childhood	Ms Meera AlMheiri	SCMC Board Member
	Dr Mohamed Ibrahiem Al Mansour	SCMC Lead Technical Adviser
Emirates Schools Establishment (ESE)	Ms Hasa ElKabey ¹⁶	Child Protection Unit Head – Emirates Schools Establishment
Ministry of the Interior	Ms Shama Al Balooshy	Child Protection Unit Representative

Sampling and sample characteristics for stakeholder surveys

The evaluator conducted surveys with various stakeholders. The evaluator applied a control-intervention method to measure the pilot schools' performance against other schools where the programme had not been implemented. Initially, eight and four schools were sampled as the intervention and control group, respectively. The number of schools in the control group was to be equivalent to a quarter of the intervention schools sampled. However, the MOE approved

¹⁶ Ms Hasa AlMheiri previously worked for the Ministry of Education and provided an insight from that perspective, as well as from the ESE vantage point.

only two schools for the control group. Regarding the intervention group, four private schools were additionally suggested during the field mission.

Therefore, visits were made to 12 intervention schools and two control (non-programme) from five Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras El-khiema, and Ajman. The Abu Dhabi sample includes both public and private schools; the other Emirates comprise public schools only. This evaluation follows a proportion-to-size sampling method, so the sample mirrors the programme concept. Public school students account for 78.2% of the interviewed sample, private school students 21.8%.

Table 4 shows the homogeneity between intervention and control schools by nationality. Additionally, the control schools were located very close to the intervention schools (i.e. they were in the same neighbourhood).

Table 4. Distribution of control and intervention schools' students by nationality¹⁷

Nationality	Control	Intervention
African nationalities	1.3%	0.3%
Arab: Egyptian, Sudanese, Syrian, Lebanese, Tunisian, Moroccan, Yemeni, or other Arabic nationality	21.1%	18.3%
Asian: Indian, Pakistani, or other Asian nationality	0.0%	0.4%
Emirati	77.6%	80.1%
European nationalities	0.0%	0.3%
Other	0.0%	0.6%
	100%	100%

The sample distribution among the Emirates is proportional to the number of pilot schools in each Emirate (see Table 5).

Table 5. Sampling using quasi-experimental control/intervention concept

Emirate	Number of intervention/pilot schools	Intervention schools visited	Control schools visited
Abu Dhabi	28	6	1
Dubai	6	2	
Sharjah	6	1	1
Ajman	5	1	
RAK	7	2	
UMQ / Fujairah	11		
Total	63	12	2

Different survey questionnaires were prepared depending on the type of stakeholders, i.e. whether they were school principals, school discipline committee members, parents, or students.

¹⁷ Arab nationalities include Arab countries in Africa, e.g. Egyptian, Sudanese, Tunisian, and Moroccan, whereas African nationalities exclude these.

In total, nine school principals, 64 school discipline committee members, 114 parents, and 1,330 students participated in the surveys (see Table 6).

Table 6. Survey participants

Target Group	Tool	Sample Size
▪ School (principal)	▪ Online questionnaire	▪ 9 school principals (6 females, 3 males)
▪ School Discipline Committee (including teachers, nurses, and social workers)	▪ Online questionnaire	▪ 64 School Discipline Committee members (46 females, 18 males)
▪ Students	▪ Paper/online questionnaire	▪ 1,330 students (803 females, 527 males)
▪ Parents	▪ Online questionnaire	▪ 114 (10-12 in each school; 81 females, 33 males)

For student sampling within schools, the evaluator used the probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) sampling. PPS is a method of sampling from a finite population, where a size measure is available for each population unit before sampling, and where the probability of selecting a unit is proportional to its size. This sample method best suits the programme evaluation. In each school, a sample of 75-100 students was chosen, with special attention given to male-to-female representation, disability, and nationality. In each school, four classes were selected, using a random approach. Each class represents one grade (five to eight).

The average class size within the sampled schools is 23.4 students. Among the 1,330 students sampled, 527 are males and 803 are females. 745 students are from Abu Dhabi, while 78, 169, 164, and 174 students are from Ajman, Dubai, RAK, and Sharjah, respectively. Only 1.7% of students reportedly have disabilities.

Table 7. Student distribution by nationality for the whole sample¹⁸

Nationality	Abu Dhabi	Ajman	Dubai	Ras Al Khaimah	Sharjah	Total
Emirati	74%	94%	84%	87%	88%	79.8%
African	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.4%
Arab	24%	6%	16%	12%	10%	18.7%
Asian	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0.4%
European	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0.2%
Other (American/Iranian)	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0.5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹⁸ The student questionnaire asked for the respondents' nationalities in this structure.

As for nationality, in the public schools sampled, 79.8% of students are Emiratis and 20.2% are non-Emiratis, whereas 58.2% are Emiratis and 41.8% are non-Emiratis in the private schools sampled.

Data collection at schools

Data collection at school level followed the procedures below:

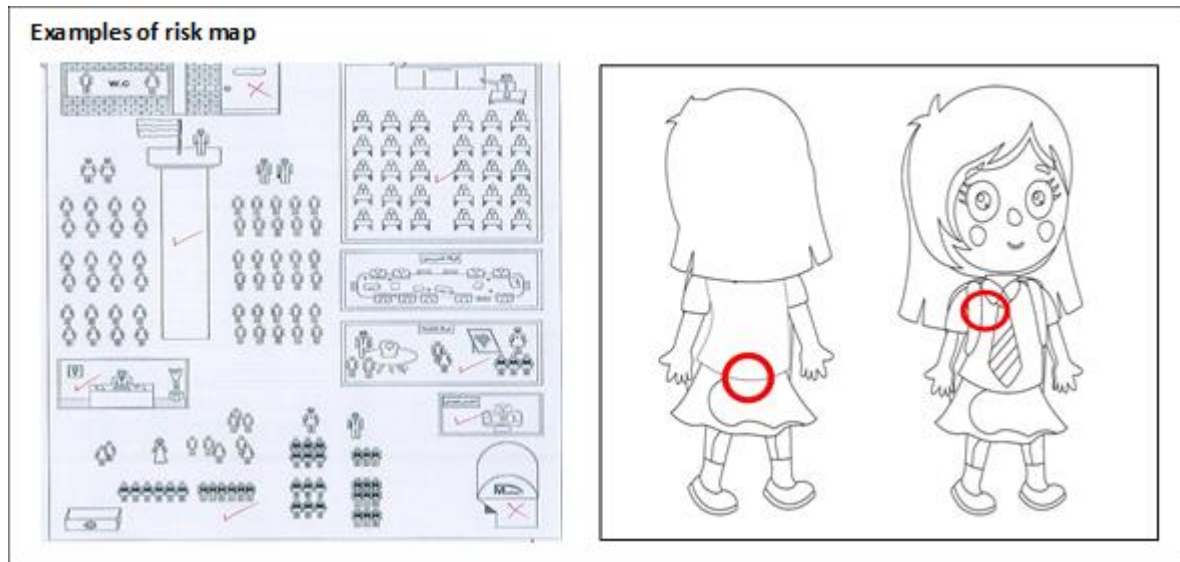
- 1- Passive informed consent was sent to the parents a week before the data collection started. The form was drawn up in Arabic and English. Parents could get in touch with the school if they had any questions or comments.
- 2- The school visits started with a meeting with the school management to introduce the evaluation objectives, procedures, tools, and data needed, and to make sure that the parent consent forms had been sent.
- 3- A general group discussion was conducted with the students' disciplinary committee about the use of the programme manuals, the quality of the training provided, current challenges, best practices, and findings emerging from their practices.
- 4- The student questionnaire was sent to students' laptops. Students opened it only during the evaluator's visit to the class. The class teachers were asked to leave the class during the collection of the data. The school's social workers gave an introductory presentation to the students on the evaluation and then left.
- 5- The evaluator explained the purpose of the evaluation, the privacy and protection policy, and the students' right to skip any question and even not to fill in the questionnaire at all. The evaluator asked students not to write their name or any personal data (the questionnaire had no place for any personal data).
- 6- The evaluator explained each question until the questionnaire was finished.
- 7- Risk maps were collected only from students whose parents had signed a written parent consent form. Several students obtained written consent. However, due to the limited time, only around 8-10 students from each school participated in the exercise. It was conducted individually rather than as a group as per the ethical review board's recommendation.
- 8- Surveys for principals, committee members and parents were explained to the school staff and collected online.

Risk map

A risk map is a child friendly tool that uses a simple technique to capture the risks children face in their surrounding environment.

For example, the moderator shows the student a chart of a school building depicting a classroom, the grounds, toilets, and labs, and asks them simple questions, such as if they feel comfortable in this place and, whether they like or don't like the place. Places that students feel uncomfortable in or don't like are usually places where risks are found or where abuses happen. So, the moderator asks why they don't feel comfortable in this place, and the students start to express the reasons that can lead to risk factors.

The tool can also capture sexual harassment by showing the student a figure of a person and asking if he/she was touched or beaten by another person. If so, the student can refer to the touched place so the moderator can register the case.



Usually, child victims attend the risk map exercise as a group so that they can support each other as they talk. It should be carried out by a trained person.

For this evaluation, the ethical board approved the implementation of the tool on an individual basis, subject to written parental consent. There were plans to meet around eight students in each school, but higher numbers of students brought the written consent and wanted to participate.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by not collecting names. Other information was replaced with encoded identifiers, while the encoding key was kept in a different secure location. Data stored on paper, such as surveys or notebooks, was kept together in a safe, secure location away from public access.

Stakeholder survey questionnaires

1 – Student questionnaire: the methodology used to calculate the school bullying rates in this report is the same methodology adopted by the programme in 2016. Findings regarding the prevalence of school bullying were derived from the responses of students (N = 1,330) in grades 5-8 at 14 schools in five Emirates. Students reported that they (i) bullied other students (ii) were

themselves victimised. The frequency at which each of these occurred depended on the nature of the bullying, gender, and the grade of the student.

In order to determine the impact of the intervention conducted in schools months later, comparisons were made between the responses to the questionnaires made by students (N = 1,162) in 12 schools who had experienced the intervention (the intervention/pilot group) and students (N = 151) in two schools who had not received the intervention (the control group). The intervention group scored lower on reliable measures of victimisation and bullying and reported feeling less unsafe. In addition, students in the intervention group scored higher when reported pro-social behaviour was measured.

Questions relating to behaviour comprised five questions about being bullied, four about bullying others, and four about acting pro-socially. An additional question asked how safe or unsafe students felt at school. The questions took the form of statements, in response to which students could indicate “never”, “once in a while”, “a few times a month”, or “a few times a week”. Examples:

- I get called names by others (victimisation)
- I like to make others scared of me (bullying)
- I enjoy helping others (pro-social)

The questionnaire given to the intervention group contained some additional questions asking students how helpful the programme activities had been. Prepared statements were provided for them to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

The statements were:

- The activities were helpful in reducing bullying among students in my school
- I learnt certain ways to handle bullying when it happened to me
- The activities gave me sufficient knowledge of bullying
- Relations with my peers improved after doing these activities

In order to gauge the measures of peer relations, the following multi-item scales were drawn up:

Pro-Social Scale: this consisted of four scores assessing how often a student engaged in pro-social behaviour, such as sharing things with others. High scores indicated that they were acting pro-socially relatively often.

Victimisation Scale: this consisted of four scores relating to student reports of being bullied at school, such as being picked on. These were scored as Never = 1; Once in a while = 2; A few times a month = 3; A few times a week = 4. High scores indicated that they were being bullied relatively often.

Bullying Others Scale: this consisted of four scores assessing how often a student engaged in bullying others, such as “upsetting weak people”. These were scored in the same way as the Victimisation Scale. High scores indicated they were bullying others relatively often.

2 – School Discipline Committee questionnaire: the School Discipline Committee questionnaire covered two main aspects.

The first aspect is the use of programme interventions and relevant activities, such as attending a training course, getting the manual and training materials, and participating in committee activities.

The second aspect is the effectiveness of programme interventions, including the training manual, based on the six methods for intervention with those involved in bullying: direct sanctions, restorative practice, mediation, support group, shared concern, and strengthening the victim.

3 – Parent questionnaire: this questionnaire mainly covers parents' attendance of awareness-raising sessions held by schools, receipt of the parent manual, and parents' views of the challenges that face their children in schools.

4 – School questionnaire: this questionnaire mainly covers schools' secondary data on the number of trained staff, the number of children whose awareness has been raised, and the given school's priorities in the next phase of the programme.

Data collection ethics

Informed consent was collected for all participants prior to their participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by replacing names and other information with encoded identifiers, with the encoding key kept in a different secure location. No personally identifiable information was collected from children. To maintain its integrity, whether in written or electronic form, the data was protected from tampering, loss, theft, or physical damage by limiting access to the data. Data stored on paper, such as surveys or notebooks, was kept together in a safe, secure location away from public access and will be disposed of safely after three years.

Rules and procedures were defined for the evaluator in situations where a participant disclosed information or was suspected to be at risk. The evaluator would report and respond to any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential abuse to a child or young person in accordance with the engaging office's applicable procedures. She would fully and confidentially cooperate in any UNICEF investigation into concerns or allegations of abuse to children and young people. All charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offence associated with exploitation and abuse of a child before/during the evaluation would be immediately disclosed.

For the risk map, only children who obtained parental consent for it participated in the exercise. It was initially planned to be a group exercise. However, in keeping with the guidance of the Ethics Review Board (ERB), the exercise was conducted on an individual basis at a location that could fully protect the participant's privacy in view of the potential risks.

The evaluation team completely abided by ERB regulations during the evaluation process.

Limitations

The evaluation had certain limitations. First, there was a high turnover of school social workers and School Discipline Committee members, as some of the staff trained in the period from 2014

to 2016 moved to other schools. To mitigate that, we asked the schools to define and invite staff, teachers and social workers who were still working at the school and had been involved in the programme at several stages. Secondly, the control group sample consisted of just two schools, as the third and fourth schools were not approved by the MOE, so the evaluator did her best to engage the two available schools' students, and called them back multiple times to ensure that the online questionnaires were filled in by the schools, committees, and staff. Thirdly, there were not enough documents to respond to certain questions related to efficiency in the spending of programme funds, and whether there was a more cost-effective means of implementation that would achieve the expected results. Finally, the programme had no programme documents or monitoring data to capture the progress of implementation or provide an overall programme description.

Evaluation findings

The findings are presented by evaluation criterion: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.¹⁹

5. Relevance

In evaluating relevance, the evaluator captured the extent to which the programme objectives coincided with beneficiaries' needs, priorities, and expectations at all levels.

5-1 Programme relevance to the SCMC 2017–2021 strategy

H.H. Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, the President of the SCMC, launched the National Strategy for Motherhood and Childhood in 2017 with the vision that “all children enjoy all their state-guaranteed rights, growing up in a healthy, safe and supportive environment that develops abilities and skills.” A meeting with SCMC representatives highlighted that the programme was relevant to the SCMC's 2017–2021 strategy in line with the UAE government's efforts to strengthen child protection policy and deliver high-quality education.

An interview with the SCMC's lead technical adviser showed the level of engagement between UNICEF and the SCMC under several programmes, including a 1000-day programme on parenthood skills, a programme on adulthood and adolescence, and the anti-bullying programme in the UAE. The SCMC's lead technical adviser indicated that the programme was consistent with the SCMC's child protection efforts. He also highlighted the joint efforts behind the anti-bullying award.

The Council, collaborating with various entities, launched strategies aimed at promoting welfare and development for mothers and children in all fields and establishing a primary point of reference to guide professionals and organisations towards continued progress in maternal care and childcare.²⁰

¹⁹ Respondents were identified in the following four categories: School Discipline Committee members (social workers, activities teachers, and special education teachers), students, parents, and school principals.

²⁰ The official website of the SCMC, <https://scmc.gov.ae/en>

5-2 Programme relevance to the MOE strategy

The MOE's mission is to “develop an innovative education system for a knowledge-based and global competitive society that embraces all age groups in order to meet future labour-market demand by ensuring the quality of the Ministry of Education's outputs, and provide the best services for internal and external customers.”²¹ The MOE implemented the programme via the National Programme for the Prevention of Bullying by establishing a National Commission for the Prevention of Bullying in the School Environment and a support team for the National Week for the Prevention of Bullying in Schools, creating an approved training nucleus for bullying, preparing training workshops for all school staff, and holding the National Week for the Prevention of Bullying. The evaluation found that the MOE's National Programme for the Prevention of Bullying in the School Environment and the Anti-Bullying Programme, the subject of this evaluation, were complementary and reinforced each other.

5-3 Programme relevance vis-à-vis the Ministry of the Interior

Since the promulgation of the Wadeema Law in 2016, the Ministry of the Interior has played an important role in investigating Wadeema Law violations and ensuring that the law is enforced, especially against abusers.²² The evaluation revealed the following active anti-bullying services: use of the Hemayati app, emails, the ministry website, and a hotline. The ministry also offers lectures at schools through the community police department. The ministry holds awareness sessions at school level to explain more about child rights, the protection cycle, and measures necessary to protect children from being involved in any abuse-related incidents. Cases may be reported by parents, the school, the ministry, or other parties. The Anti-Bullying Programme, the subject of this evaluation, was relevant to the reinforcement of the measures pursued by the Ministry of the Interior.

5-4 Programme relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals



²¹ Ministry of Education, National Educational System in the United Arab Emirates, 2020/2021, <https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/ImportantLinks/Documents/matrix/MOEducationSystem2020-2021.pdf>. In addition, some of the MOE's strategic objectives are to deliver inclusive quality education, including pre-school education, achieve excellent leadership and educational efficiency, and ensure that learning environments are safe, conducive, and challenging.

²² In addition, the ministry has established the Child Protection Centre, with the aim of implementing processes geared towards the provision of safety, security and protection for all children living in the UAE or coming as visitors.

The evaluation found that the programme was contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 10, and 16, the most relevant indicators being 4.7;²³ 4.A;²⁴ 4.C;²⁵ 5.2;²⁶ 5.C;²⁷ 10.2;²⁸ 16.2;²⁹ and 16.6.³⁰

5-5 To what extent are the programme's intervention approaches evidence-based?



The evaluation concluded that programme interventions were based on sound evidence and well tested. More specifically, in 2014, a situation analysis of the school environment in the UAE was conducted to develop a framework for protection and safety in the school and learning environment.³¹ The programme design was guided by global best practices, specifically those from Australia, Finland (KiVa) and the United States (Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme). Experts from such programmes in these countries shared their experiences with various UAE education, health and protection authorities. The training manual is based on six methods for intervention with those involved in bullying: Direct Sanctions, Restorative Practice, Mediation, Support Group, Shared Concern, and Strengthening the Victim.

A section on social skills activities was also drawn up, which compiled different interactive activities to equip students with adequate social skills. The methodology of the school-based bullying programme is based on the active involvement of students and encompasses changes in the attitudes of school staff, improvements in the social environment in general, and

awareness-raising among parents.

²³ By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

²⁴ Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

²⁵ By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

²⁶ Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

²⁷ Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

²⁸ By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

²⁹ End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

³⁰ Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. For more information, see UN, Sustainable Development Goals, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>.

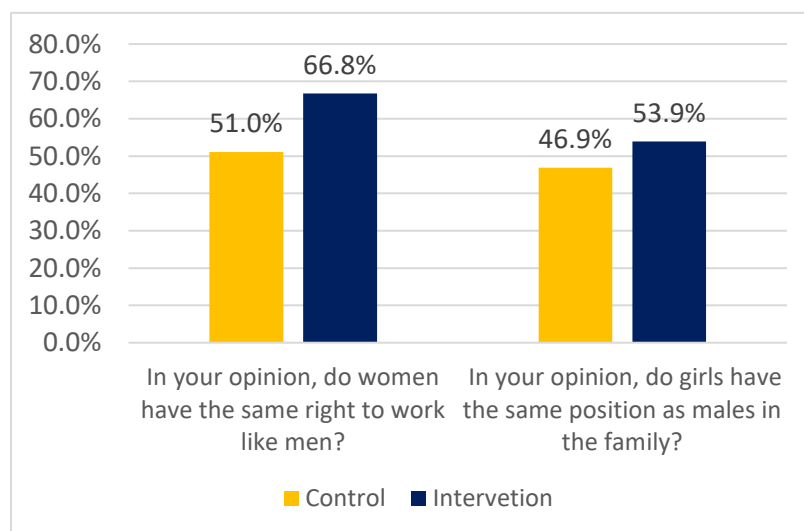
³¹ This was conducted by way of general group discussions with parents, school staff, social workers and students. The situation analysis yielded the following results, used to guide programme interventions: students were subjected to bullying by other students; students were subjected to bullying by their teachers; younger students (11-12 years) were franker about the problems they faced; verbal bullying was the most common form of bullying; few teachers reported being subjected to verbal and physical abuse by students; students were under constant surveillance by school staff; school staff and parents did not acknowledge the negative impact of bullying on children; school staff are not able to identify signs of bullying; parents were not actively involved in their children's school.

5-6 To what extent did the programme adapt to the new realities triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic?

COVID-19 posed a major challenge to the programme’s implementation. In-person school attendance ended and online education methods were introduced. Key bullying and child protection issues engendered by COVID-19 were bullying via text messages and emails. The programme responded to this type of bullying effectively, with the training manual and the programme’s relevant interventions covering online bullying such as receiving unpleasant messages from other students via computer, phone, and/or online. However, four other online protection challenges emerged with COVID-19. The first was the privacy of families, as students had their cameras on during classes. Their mothers complained about home privacy. The other challenges were extensive use of YouTube and social media, the emergence of “being-on-trend phenomena”,³² and advertisements that ran when online games were played – some of them had a violent and sexual connotation.

5-7 Programme design and implementation alignment with gender mainstreaming

Figure 1. Students' views on gender roles and social position



Although bullying rates can be attributed mainly to male students, training materials and programme policies are gender neutral, cover bullying issues where all students should be equally protected, and power relations between boys and girls are balanced.³³ While students offered relatively positive views on gender equality, especially gender roles and social position, it is important to take into account the fact that bullying is more prevalent among male children.

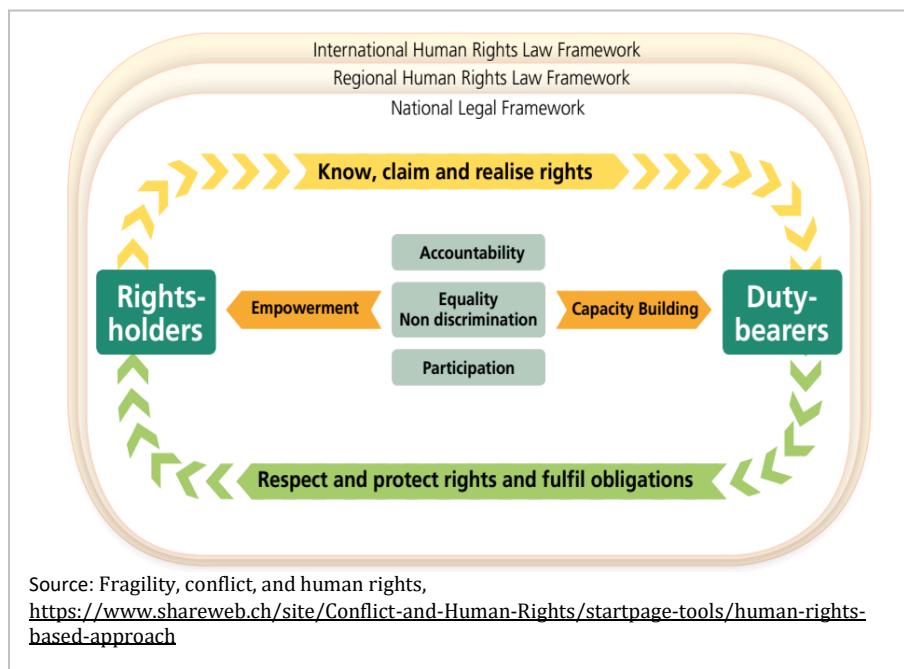
³² I have used this term to express social media trends (which include repeating certain idioms, selfies, engaging in certain challenges, wearing certain clothes and haircuts, or acting toward others in a certain manner) that emerge, with children and young people imitating these trends without taking time to understand their meaning or implications.

³³ Possible recommendation: if UNICEF and the SCMC are planning to scale up the programme, gender can be mainstreamed at all programme levels, starting with a definition of gender challenges at the planning phase – set gender-based outcomes and relevant interventions, and how these interventions will be monitored to deliver specific gender-based outcomes. In addition, a gender transformative approach can offer options that would support girls’ leadership.

5-8 Programme relevance to the human rights-based approach (HRBA)

The integration of human rights into the broad range of all UN activities is at the centre of ongoing efforts by the UN. The UN's specialised agencies, programmes, and bodies have repeatedly shown their commitment to the mainstreaming of human rights in their work; in 2003, they agreed on a common understanding relating to the content of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to programming.³⁴ The HRBA has two objectives: (a) to empower rights-holders in asserting and exercising their rights; and (b) to strengthen the capacity of duty-bearers, who have the obligation to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil human rights.³⁵ These objectives are pursued through human rights principals, such as participation, accountability,

Shape 2. Human rights-based approach



and non-discrimination. Table 8 summarises how the programme follows human right principles. The evaluation concludes that the programme is highly relevant in each aspect analysed.

³⁴UNESCO, Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming, <https://en.unesco.org/human-rights/hrba>

³⁵ Rights-holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to duty-bearers.

Duty-bearers are state or non-state actors, that have the obligation to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil human rights of rights-holders. The HRBA is underpinned by five key human rights principles, also known as PANEL: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and Legality.

Table 8. Programme relevance to HRBA human rights principles

Human rights principles	Explanation of principle	Relevance to the programme
Participation	Everyone is entitled to participate actively in decision-making processes which affect the enjoyment of their rights.	Students, teachers, and school staff were systemically engaged in the project process by having awareness raised about their rights, and the fact that they should not remain silent in the face of bullying abuses.
Accountability	Duty-bearers are held accountable for failing to fulfil their obligations towards rights-holders. There should be effective remedies in place when human rights breaches occur.	The anti-bullying programme created a clear path for reporting. For example, 75% of students agreed that the programme’s activities gave them sufficient knowledge about bullying and how to act against it.
Non-discrimination and equality	All individuals are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind. All types of discrimination should be prohibited, prevented, and eliminated.	The programme vigorously countered all type of discriminations and defined them as bullying issues that need to be treated and eliminated.
Universality	Human rights are universal and inalienable, no one can voluntarily give them up. Nor can they be taken away by others.	The programme contributed to the universality of children’s rights by raising their awareness about these rights, and by detecting and acting against actions that may cause harm or prevent them from enjoying these rights.
Indivisibility	Human rights are indivisible. Whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural in nature, they are all inherent to the dignity of every human. Consequently, they all have equal status as rights. There is no such thing as a “small” right. There is no hierarchy of human rights.	The programme protected children’s rights and upheld the indivisibility principle by contributing to the school safety, while protecting other student rights.

6. Coherence

In evaluating coherence, the evaluator captured the extent to which relevant interventions (particularly policies) supported or undermined the programme.

6-1 Programme alignment with relevant school policies

In the first few years, few school policies were in place. However, since 2018, several new policies have been introduced. Shape 3 summarises schools’ key policies and structures.

The key dominant structure in a school is the School Discipline Committee,³⁶ which encompasses all student aspects, such as appearance, uniform, attendance, school violence, and bullying – a fourth-degree violation. To move up to the next grade, students must score 60/100 in their committee assessment. Students who fail cannot move on to the next grade. Interviews and group discussions with the School Discipline Committee have indicated that their approaches to these cases include warning students and their parents several times before deploying the sanctions mentioned in the code of conduct. Students and their families try to avoid being held back a grade under the code of conduct. Likewise, social workers do not want children to be held

³⁶ The School Discipline Committee implements both the anti-bullying programme and the code of conduct policy

back a grade either. However, there is a gap here as educators and school social workers have few resources they can use to change students' aggressive behaviours. The pilot schools have materials on anti-bullying, but the code of conduct covers a huge number of topics – not only bullying, but also issues such as appearance, uniform, smoking, drugs, sexual harassment, misuse of computers and school appliances, taking photos of others without their consent, driving cars and controlling other vehicles, absence, and being late to school.

The following findings emerged from the key informant interviews and general group discussions:

- The punitive nature of sanctions under the code of conduct are not enough, as restorative practices are needed;
- Restorative practices and behavioural-change activities are more effective than punitive sanctions;
- This does not mean detracting from the code of conduct, but complementing it with a behavioural-change component;
- Awareness-raising is a critically effective method in decreasing the number of cases subject to sanctions under the code of conduct;
- Several schools have few social workers. Some schools have employed student officers to fill the social-worker gap. It is also worth mentioning that some schools have employed non-specialised staff to do social-worker jobs. Also, staff available in the Northern Emirates tended to lack suitable qualifications and the training needed for their job.

Shape 3. Summary of key policies, committees, and functions in child protection under the programme

School Discipline Committee	Wadeema Law	Anti-bullying committee	Health and safety policy	Quality of life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The key school structure managing students' behaviour •Under the code of conduct, a student's morals and behaviour are marked according to a system of degree-based violations •Mechanism of penalties for violations •Deductions from conduct scores depend on the type of violation, as follows: •First-degree violation: 4-point deduction •Second-degree violation: 8-point deduction •Third-degree violation: 12-point deduction •Fourth-degree violation: the student is failed. •In violent cases, the school reports to the MOE and blocks the student's admission for the next year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The MOE has created a link between the school and the Wadeema Law by reporting two types of cases: first, parental neglect, which becomes apparent in students' weak performance, absence from school with no reason, and failure to do assignments or homework on a regular basis; second, parental harm, where students come to school injured or abused by parents •A special form is sent to the MOE with all action taken to report a violation of the Wadeema Law to the police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The anti-bullying policy was issued by the MOE under Ministerial Decree 645 for 2020 •The policy offered a comprehensive approach to bullying. The policy drew on the programme's concepts and definitions, and international best practices •The policy highlighted the programme as a preventive mechanism to raise students' awareness of bullying in schools and provide behavioural-change activities •The policy also provided a mechanism for reporting cases to the MOE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Every school has a nurse who works to monitor the students' health, lecture them about healthy food, check their weight and height, test their hearing, and check their skin and teeth •The safety officer is responsible for students' safety on buses, and monitors the school infrastructure. Safety officers played an important role when students returned to school after the covid-19 pandemic •In addition, all schools have a special education teacher who works with students on study difficulties and supports students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A new school structure that works on students' quality of life as they develop school initiatives on several environmental issues, aimed at raising awareness about quality of life not only through environmental matters, but also through healthy practices, sports, and hygiene. These initiatives are receiving increasing attention with the UAE hosting the UN's COP 28 climate change conference next November

School Discipline Committee members currently employ the same type of activities for all child-related violations, including discussions with children, plays, and school initiatives. Nonetheless, there is little evidence that using the same social activities for all violation types is effective. Each type of abuse/violation needs a commensurate set of interventions. These interventions should be planned on three levels: first, awareness and prevention; second, behavioural change when the violation takes place; and third, a dispute settlement process that ensures justice among students when a violation happens. However, overall, the programme brought about social behaviour changes reflecting the code of conduct. The MOE representative has highlighted that they receive reports about cases and sanctions that have been imposed in response to student bullying, but the actual reasons behind the aggressive behaviour are not addressed.³⁷ *“The Ministry receives reports from schools about bullying cases and sanctions that have been imposed in response to student bullying, but the actual reasons behind the aggressive behaviour need to be treated” – child protection unit head, Emirates Establishment for Education*

6-2 Programme support of the operationalisation of the anti-bullying and anti-violence mechanism

The MOE issues its anti-bullying policy under Ministerial Decree 645 for 2020. This policy offered a comprehensive approach to bullying phenomena. The policy drew on the programme’s concepts and definitions, and international best practices. The policy highlighted the programme as a preventive mechanism to raise students’ awareness about bullying in schools and provide behavioural-change support. Unlike the school code of conduct, the programme did not offer a case management structure. It did, however, offer a reporting system. The ministry initiated the policy for purposes of prevention rather than case management. The decree also mentioned other anti-bullying programmes, e.g. the National Pact Initiative, which enhances Emirati students’ cognitive and personal skills in order to prepare them for the knowledge-based economy and promote a culture of innovation and leadership. This is in addition to the student code of conduct monitoring students’ behaviour at school. The decree mentioned the formation of an anti-bullying committee to pursue a plan that would address anti-bullying, raise awareness, and report on cases. The programme also mentioned an ethics course to be taught as a class. In addition, the decree provided monitoring and reporting forms that are to be used by schools to report cases to the MOE. The national policy acknowledged the UNICEF SCMC Anti-Bullying Programme by using the programme’s materials to raise awareness and a questionnaire to monitor and report cases to the MOE. The policy was prepared and issued in 2020, a few weeks before the COVID-19 outbreak and seven years after the programme started. However, schools have also been using interventions developed in the early stages of the programme, especially manuals, training materials, and pre- and post-knowledge questionnaires. The materials on anti-bullying in schools clearly stemmed primarily from the UNICEF SCMC programme.

6-3 Is there an overlap with MOE interventions?

As mentioned in the last point, the MOE policy referred to three anti-bullying programmes in the implementation the National Pact and the student code of conduct.

³⁷Possible recommendation: in the scale-up phase, there is an urgent need to cover many important child protection topics that are interrelated with bullying, to deepen the current anti-bullying interventions in order to capture the huge change in bullying following COVID-19, and to have a comprehensive approach to cases before, during and after their resolution.

However, the evaluation found little evidence of this overlap at school level. These programmes jointly contribute to the school bullying challenge. A key knowledge material at school level is the anti-bullying manual developed by the programme. Ministerial Decree 645 for 2020 on the anti-bullying policy has given impetus to the UNICEF programme and the MOE's willingness to cooperate with UNICEF.

The policy drew on the programme's concepts and definitions, international best practices, training materials, and the reporting system developed under the UNICEF programme.

The policy highlighted the programme as a preventive mechanism to raise students' awareness of bullying in schools and provide behavioural-change activities. Unlike the school code of conduct, the programme did not offer a case management structure.

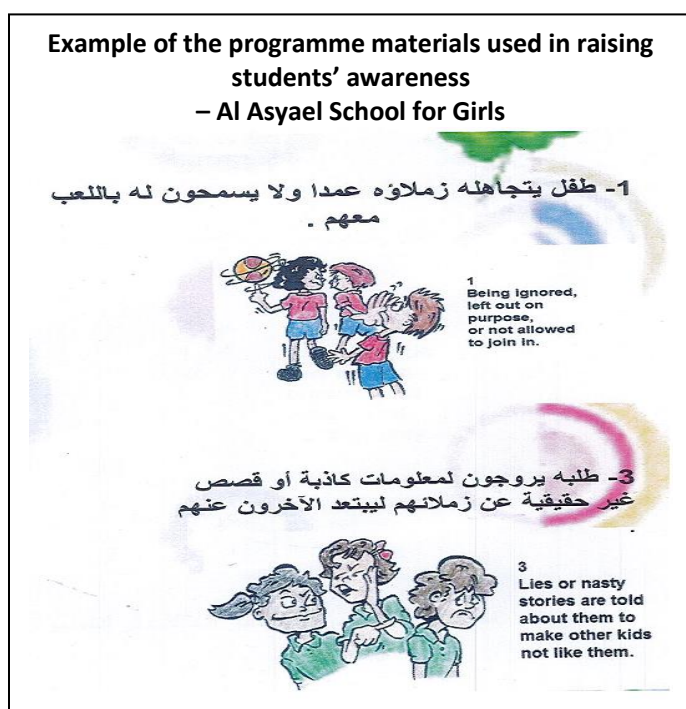
The national policy has acknowledged the anti-bullying programme by drawing on the programme's materials to raise awareness and the programme questionnaire to monitor and report cases to the MOE.

The reason why the school code of conduct did not overlap with the anti-bullying programme is that each of them plays a different role. Also, the anti-bullying programme pursues behavioural change.

Some of the best practices under the programme are as follows:

- the anti-bullying programme has offered behavioural-change interventions to support the school code of conduct and enhance students' positive behaviour;
- these interventions offered strong support for prevention and awareness;
- the programme can be enhanced by further supporting interventions in the dispute settlement process and at punitive stages.

The evaluation concludes that the programme is coherent and aligned with national strategies and policies.



7. Efficiency

The evaluation looked at how resources/materials (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are mainstreamed into results.

7-1 To what extent have the programme's funds and resources been utilised efficiently?

The evaluator did not receive the relevant documents. The UNICEF UAE programme associate reported that most of the programme costs were covered by the government, using their resources-management systems.³⁸

7-2 How well was the establishment and implementation of the programme planned and managed?³⁹

The programme was developed and implemented by UNICEF, the SCMC and the MOE. The MOE drew up a national anti-bullying policy that covered all the programme's aspects, including definitions of bullying, types of bullying, training materials, and the formation of the School Discipline Committee.⁴⁰

Three factors affected programme management:

- the Covid-19 outbreak paused education, and new bullying issues emerged;
- the MOE split into two entities: the MOE and the Emirates Schools Establishment. It took time to establish the programme within the MOE after these structural reforms;
- follow-ups on the programme's yearly activities have been limited.

A key highlight is that, after the delivery of programme interventions (training and materials), the pilot schools themselves take a lead in implementing and sustaining the programme's activities.

7-3 How often did data collection and monitoring activities impact the results?

The data collection activities benefited the programme's design and implementation. Data was collected at several stages of the programme.

³⁸ Possible recommendation for scale-up purposes: the programme needs to enforce clear implementation modalities. UN organisations have several models of partnership with governments, and a study of the feasibility of the options described below is recommended. A joint implementation model: this model applies where both parties finance the programme together. They engage in planning, implementation, and monitoring via a joint implementation unit. In this model, implementation takes place within the government structure. Each government implementer offers detailed regular reporting to the joint unit. The unit also has the right to conduct mid-term assessments and third-party monitoring to ensure the quality of the application. A contract-based implementation model: here, the government finances most or all the programme activities. Under this model, the two parties sign a contract defining all the programme's aspects, especially the roles of the signatories. The programme is managed by a programme steering committee, with all relevant stakeholders engaged in the decision-making process. Implementation is mostly via the donor agency. On the technical side, UNICEF can assess the SCMC's role within several childhood, motherhood and education policies to define gaps that can effectively be filled by the SCMC. Since the SCMC is not an executive arm, it can offer a third-party cross cutting research and monitoring function to several childhood issues, including bullying and child protection.

³⁹ To better manage the programme in the scale-up phase, procedures need to be devised under a results programme where all parties agree to decrease the current level of bullying. The results programme should have a shorter timeline to capture changes in the nature of bullying. A strong follow-up monitoring system needs to be built, and data should be collected regularly to ensure the quality of implementation and enhance learning.

⁴⁰ The MOE has formed The National Commission for the Prevention of Bullying in the School Environment with the following partners: the Ministry of Culture; the Ministry of Health and Prevention; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of Community Development; the Dubai Police; the telecommunications regulation authority; the Sharjah Education Council; the Dubai Health Authority; the Youth Council; the Community Development Authority; Abu Dhabi Media; Sharjah media cooperation; Dubai media, including the Department of Education and Knowledge, Social Services Department – Sharjah, the National Programme for Happiness and Well-being, the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, Child Safety, Dubai Knowledge, the Supreme Council of Family Affairs – Sharjah Khalifa Media City.

- In the early stage of the programme, a situation analysis was conducted to analyse the bullying situation. The situation analysis was used to define the bullying types and stages of interventions.
- At the capacity-building stage, pre- and post-intervention assessments were conducted to validate the programme interventions. This data was used to test the programme's key interventions and ensure its impact.

While the programme was taken up by the MOE, there is little evidence that any data was collected, except for the schools' self-monitoring data. Three factors affected the programme monitoring:

1. the lack of a project document with a clear MOE plan to report data regularly;
2. the lack of regular reporting by schools to the MOE;
3. the lack of regular data collection for monitoring and learning. This was highlighted by the UNICEF programme associate: *"There is a need for a yearly reporting system that offers data about bullying cases so we can use this data to measure the programme's performance. Also, a steering committee that works on these reports and leads discussions on them among stakeholders"*. Some schools use Excel spreadsheets to report cases to the MOE, but other schools, especially in the Northern Emirates, have little knowledge about the reporting process using Excel.

Additional data gaps were pinpointed by the MOE. Schools which did not participate in the programme lack a clear methodology to calculate bullying rates. In the UAE, there is also a need to support national statistics to calculate the national prevalence of bullying rates.

The evaluation concludes that it was not possible to analyse and present all aspects of efficiency due to a lack of critical data.

8. Effectiveness

Within the scope of the effectiveness criterion, the evaluation looked into critical positive and negative short- and long-term consequences spurred by the programme, either directly or indirectly.

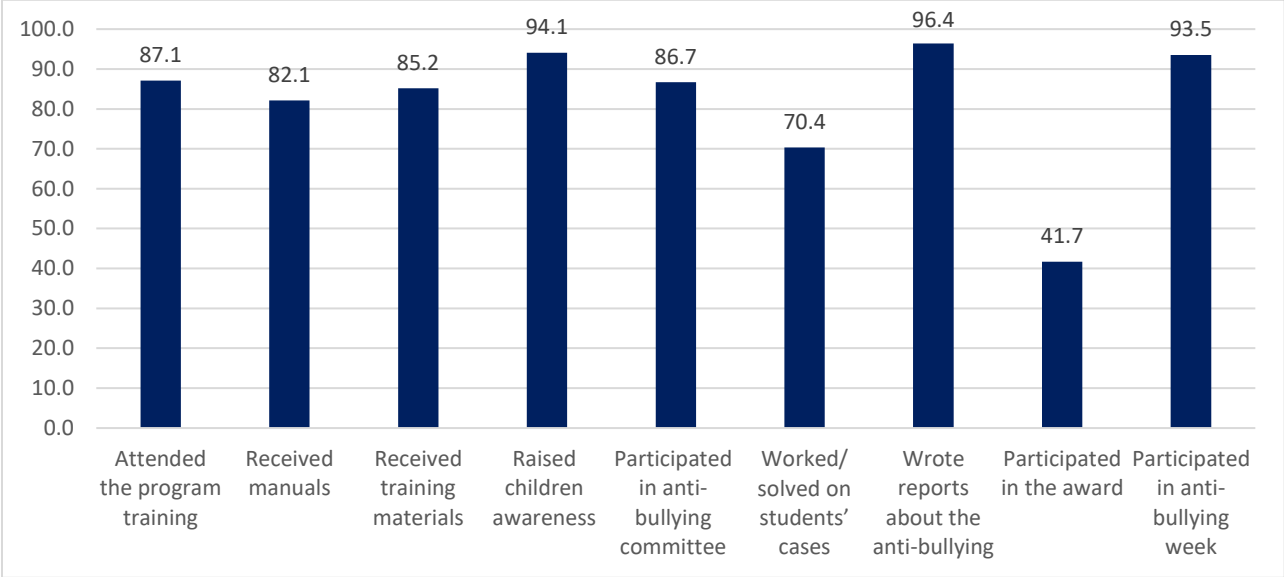
8-1 To what extent have the target groups been reached?

The programme has reached the target groups in the pilot schools effectively. Trainers were trained once at the beginning of the programme, and schools have since delivered training to their staff on a yearly basis. Likewise, school staff have raised awareness among children and their parents. The programme has reached around 80-100 school students each year, with both female and male students receiving awareness sessions. The average school size is 475 students according to data reported by schools. The average number of students reached, as estimated by this evaluation, is 445 students per school. That means 6,230 in the first phase of 14 schools from 2014–2015, with a total 12,460 students, and for the second phase at 64 schools 28,480 students were reached yearly; 227,840 students were reached in 2016–2023. The total programme reach is 240,300 students.

School staff, teachers and social workers have acknowledged the usefulness of programme interventions, especially programme manuals and training materials. More than 90% of school staffs and social workers indicated that they have engaged with the programme by raising students’ awareness of bullying. 96.4% of them documented bullying cases and 90.5% participated in the anti-bullying week organised by the MOE. 87% attended the training programme and 82.1% received the training manuals.

Only 41.7% of School Discipline Committee members/staff participated in the Anti-Bullying Award. The main reason behind the low participation rate is a lack of awareness about the award.

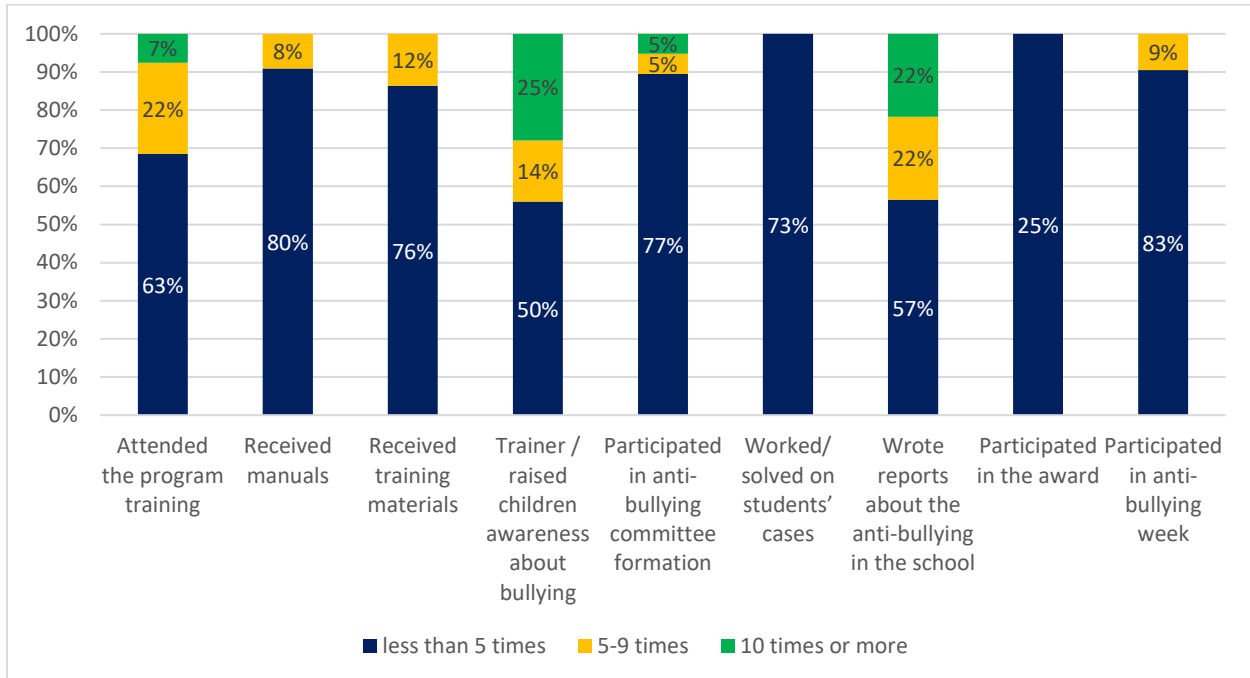
Figure 2. How did you engage with the anti-bullying programme? - school committee



Also, 85.3% of school staff and social workers reported that bullying rates had decreased after implementing the programme. 14.7% think the bullying rates are the same or increasing due to the emergence of online bullying and the effects of social media.

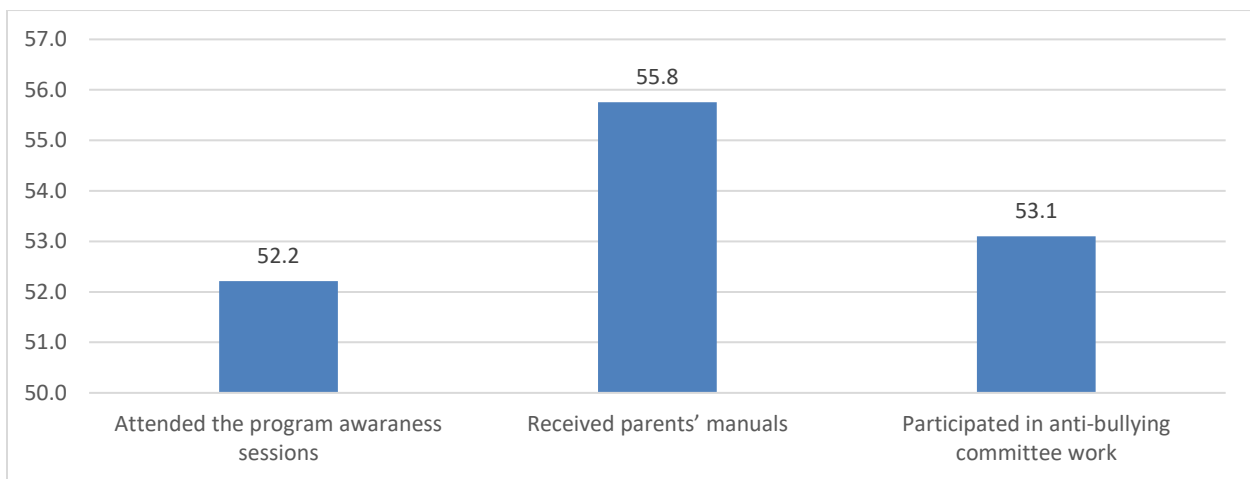
The most commonly used strategies reported by the School Discipline Committee members are the raising of children’s awareness, the reporting and documenting of bullying cases, and attendance of training sessions organised within the framework of TOT.

Figure 3. Frequency of use of the following strategies reported by the School Discipline Committee



Schools also drew up yearly plans to deal with bullying. These plans contain awareness activities, such as plays, drawings, student activities, and school competitions. Parents benefited from attending training and awareness sessions, where they received a parents' manual and participated in the anti-bullying week.

Figure 4. How did you engage with the anti-bullying programme? - parents



8-2 Are the programme objectives realistic? To what extent has the programme achieved its planned goals?

The programme has no programme document or time-bound quantitative targets. Accordingly, the programme results were assessed in relation to the general objective of reducing bullying in schools and creating a safe environment. The programme made progress towards the general objective of creating a safe school environment and preventing school violence and bullying. To

measure if the programme had reached its overall goal, a sample of 1,330 students responded to a questionnaire measuring three behaviours: students’ pro-social behaviour, students reporting being bullied, and students reporting bullying others. The results are presented in the following breakdown: control intervention versus intervention group, by Emirate, and Emirate nationals versus expatriates.

Students from 14 schools participated in this evaluation – 12 intervention/pilot schools and two control schools. The sample covers boys’ schools, girls’ schools, and mixed schools. There were 11 public schools and three private schools. Both private and public schools have national and foreign students. The sample selection method is proportion-to-size, meaning that the sample represents the programme’s pilot school distribution. Since the pilot programme has not been implemented in all schools, the sample does not represent all schools in the UAE. For further details, see the methodology section.

Intervention group versus control group⁴¹

Students acting pro-socially: students in the intervention group are 8.24% less likely to play sport, 4.48% less likely to get good marks, and 1.1% more likely to make friends. Bullying behaviour was sometimes accompanied by pro-social skills. Research noticed, in several studies, that bullying students are generally social. These studies suggest that most children and young people who bully others wield considerable power within their peer network and that high-status perpetrators tend to be perceived by peers as being popular, socially skilled, and leaders.⁴²

Table 9. Students reporting acting pro-socially: control group v intervention group

	Control	Intervention	Difference
I like playing sport	88.0%	81.3%	-8.24
I get good marks in class	88.7%	84.9%	-4.48
I like to make friends	74.8%	75.7%	1.19
I like to help people	92.8%	90.7%	-2.32
I share things with others	70.9%	70.0%	-1.29

Students being bullied: the evaluation found that there are significant differences between the control group and intervention group. Students in the intervention group are 27.31% less likely to be called names, 41.2% less likely to get picked on by other students, 35.37% less likely to be made fun of, 46.84% less likely to get hit by others, and 73.60% less likely to receive unpleasant messages from other students via computer, phone, and/or online.

⁴¹ The intervention group is the group of sampled schools benefiting from the programme; the control group is a group of sampled schools that have characteristics similar to the beneficiary schools, but have not benefited from the programme. For details, please refer to 4. Evaluation Methodology.

⁴² E.g. de Bruyn E, Cillessen A, Wissink I. “Associations of peer acceptance and perceived popularity with bullying and victimisation in early adolescence”. *Journal of Early Adolescence*. 2010

Table 10. Students reporting being bullied: control group v intervention group

	Control	Intervention	Difference
I get called names by others	29.8%	23.4%	-27.31
I get picked on by other students	25.8%	18.3%	-41.20
Others make fun of me	22.4%	16.5%	-35.37
I get hit and pushed around by others	13.9%	9.5%	-46.84
I receive unpleasant messages from other students via computer/phone/online	13.9%	8.0%	-73.60

Students bullying other students: students at the pilot schools are 7.4% less likely to join a group that teases others, 95.2% less likely to make fun of others and, 78.1% less likely to upset weak students. They are also 110.63% less likely to get into a fight with someone they can easily beat.

Table 11. Students reporting bullying others: control group v intervention group

	Control	Intervention	Difference
I am part of a group that goes around teasing others	4.61%	4.29%	-7.46
I like to make others scared of me	13.42%	6.88%	-95.06
I enjoy upsetting weak people	4.67%	2.62%	-78.24
I like getting into a fight with someone I can easily beat	7.33%	3.48%	-110.63

Breakdown by Emirate

Students acting pro-socially: students from Ajman have the highest pro-social skills, i.e. 86.36% of students. In Sharjah, 81.5% of students have social skills, followed by 81.22% of students in Abu Dhabi and 76.9% in Ras Al Khaimah.

Table 12. Students reporting acting pro-socially: by Emirate

	Abu Dhabi	Ajman	Dubai	Ras Al Khaimah	Sharjah	Average
I like playing sport	82.8%	92.3%	81.0%	77.7%	79.3%	82.0%
I get good marks in class	85.9%	94.9%	87.3%	76.5%	83.8%	85.2%
I like to make friends	75.4%	85.7%	77.6%	66.9%	78.4%	75.6%
I like to help people	90.4%	96.1%	83.4%	94.5%	94.3%	91.74%
I share things with others	71.6%	62.8%	66.7%	69.3%	71.7%	68.42%
Average	81.22%	86.36%	79.20%	76.98%	81.50%	81.05%

Students being bullied: regarding students being bullied, the lowest rate of students being bullied is in Abu Dhabi (14.5%), followed by Sharjah (15.2%). The highest rates are in Ajman (21.2%) and in Ras Al Khaimah (19.1%).

Table 13. Students reporting being bullied: by Emirate

	Abu Dhabi	Ajman	Dubai	Ras Al Khaimah	Sharjah	Average
I get called names by others	22.3%	36.4%	21.8%	29.7%	23.3%	26.7%
I get picked on by other students	18.5%	26.0%	19.8%	24.2%	14.0%	20.5%
Others make fun of me	15.4%	18.2%	22.6%	20.5%	16.8%	18.7%
I get hit and pushed around by others	9.3%	11.5%	11.3%	10.2%	10.4%	10.5%
I receive unpleasant messages via computer/phone/online or on social media	6.9%	14.1%	7.2%	10.8%	11.5%	10.1%
Average	14.5%	21.2%	16.5%	19.1%	15.2%	17.31%

Students bullying other students: regarding students who admit to bullying other students, Abu Dhabi has the lowest rate: 3.3% of students said they bully others, followed by Ajman (4.6%). The highest rate is in Sharjah (10%), while in Dubai it is 5.3%.

Table 14. Students reporting bullying others: by Emirate

	Abu Dhabi	Ajman	Dubai	Ras Al Khaimah	Sharjah	Average
I am part of a group that goes around teasing others	2.8%	2.6%	7.8%	5.5%	7.5%	5.24%
I like to make others scared of me	6.2%	3.8%	7.3%	7.4%	16.3%	8.2%
I enjoy upsetting weak people	2.1%	3.8%	3.7%	2.5%	5.8%	3.58%
I like getting into a fight with someone I can easily beat	2.2%	8.0%	2.4%	4.3%	10.4%	5.46%
Average	3.3%	4.6%	5.3%	4.9%	10.0%	4.5%

Overall, the programme clearly had a positive impact on the school environment in each of the pilot schools to varying degrees and offered the whole school community a different level of understanding of the prevention of school violence and bullying.

Emirate nationals versus expatriates

Students acting pro-socially: expatriate students have more social and cooperative skills than Emiratis. The Emirate national students represent 79.8% of the sample and the expatriate students 20.2% of the sample.

Table 15. Students reporting acting pro-socially: Emiratis v expatriates

	Emiratis	Expatriates	Difference
I like playing sport	81.5%	84.5%	3.7%
I get good marks in class	83.6%	91.3%	9.2%
I like to make friends	74.3%	80.4%	8.1%
I like to help people	90.8%	92.5%	1.8%

I share things with others	69.7%	71.3%	2.3%
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Students being bullied: the evaluation found that there are differences between Emiratis and expatriate students. Expatriate students are 19.3% less likely to be called names, 6.8% less likely to get picked on by other students, 11.5% less likely to be made fun of, 15.6% more likely to be hit by others, and 71.6% less likely to receive unpleasant messages from other students via computer, phone, and/or online.

Table 16. Students reporting being bullied: Emiratis v expatriates

	Emiratis	Expatriates	Difference
I get called names by others	24.76%	20.75%	-19.3%
I get picked on by other students	19.34%	18.11%	-6.8%
Others make fun of me	17.32%	15.53%	-11.5%
I get hit and pushed around by others	9.55%	11.32%	15.6%
I receive unpleasant messages from other students via computer/phone/online	9.06%	5.28%	-71.6%

Students bullying other students: expatriate students are 32% less likely to join a group that teases others, 21.3% more likely to scare others, 4% less likely to upset weak students. They are also 18% less likely to get into a fight with someone they can easily beat.

Table 17. Students reporting bullying others: Emiratis v expatriates

	Emiratis	Expatriates	Difference
I am part of a group that goes around teasing others	4.51%	3.41%	-32.18%
I like to make others scared of me	7.29%	9.27%	21.34%
I enjoy upsetting weak people	2.82%	2.71%	-4.08%
I like to get into fights with someone I can easily beat	4.08%	3.45%	-18%

Males versus females

Students acting pro-socially: male students have more social and cooperative skills than the female students.

Table 18. Students reporting acting pro-socially: boys v girls

	Male	Female	Difference
I like playing sport	89.8%	77.3%	-16.12
I get good marks in class	87.9%	83.5%	-5.23
I like to make friends	75.9%	75.6%	-0.50
I like to help people	90.6%	90.7%	0.19
I share things with others	68.0%	71.0%	4.16

Students being bullied: regarding students being bullied, girls are 72.2% less likely to get called names. Girls also are 41.6% less likely to get picked on by other students, and 50.9% less likely to get hit or pushed around. They are 26.5% less likely to receive unpleasant messages from other students via computer/phone/online.

Table 19. Students reporting being bullied: boys v girls

	Male	Female	Difference
I get called names by others	32.8%	19.0%	-72.2
I get picked on by other students	22.9%	16.2%	-41.6
Others make fun of me	18.3%	15.7%	-16.8
I get hit and pushed around by others	12.3%	8.1%	-50.9
I receive unpleasant messages from other students via computer/phone/online	9.4%	7.4%	-26.6

Students bullying other students: girls are almost as likely to join a group that teases others as boys. Girls are 11.5% less likely to scare others, and 25.7% less likely to upset weak students. They are also 30.6% less likely to get into fights with someone they can easily beat.

Table 20. Students reporting bullying others: boys v girls

	Male	Female	Difference
I am part of a group that goes around teasing others	4.28%	4.29%	0.34
I like to make others scared of me	7.4%	6.6%	-11.5
I enjoy upsetting weak people	3.0%	2.4%	-25.7
I like to get into a fight with someone I can easily beat	4.1%	3.2%	-30.6

8-3 Has the programme managed to reach out to the most vulnerable children?

To answer this question, we need to start by explaining the four types of vulnerabilities as defined by schools: economic vulnerabilities, students with disabilities, parental neglect of children, and students who live with a single parent (see shape 4).

School staff and management conduct a systemic assessment of the students' situation and they offer support when possible. In the Northern Emirates, social workers have records of cases with relatively large numbers of students. They prefer to channel support via the government, or via the Shekh Khalifa Foundation or a similar foundation.

Shape 4. Summary of students' vulnerabilities identified at schools

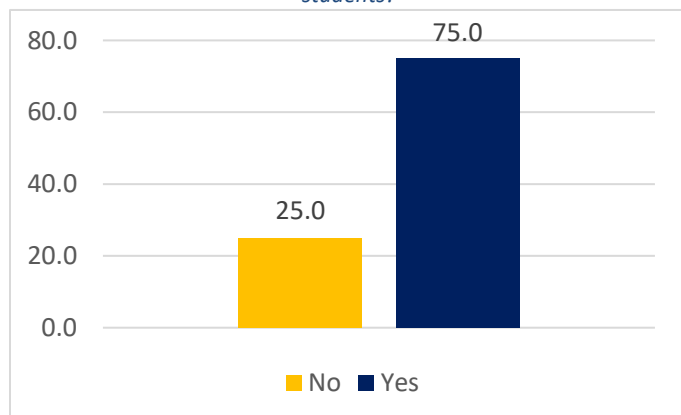
Economic vulnerabilities	Students with disabilities	Parental neglect	Parents separated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The school sends an assessment form to the parents. asking them to fill it in and send it back •The MOE forwards the forms to the Sheikh Khalifa Foundation •The Sheikh Khalifa Foundation covers all students' costs, including uniform, sportswear, stationery, everyday expenses and any school costs •Students' privacy is maintained •Economic vulnerabilities are not common in Abu Dhab, but cases are increasing in the Northen Emirates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All UAE schools, street and public transporatoon are disgned to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities and are fitted with ramps and elevators •Schools have a private education teacher who is responsible for conducting the relevent assessments •Schools can also offer wheelchairs, learning materials, and shadow teachers if needed ▪Schools offer study support materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parental neglect is another key issue where a family either causes harm to a child or they are not careful about his/her studies, leading to absences and the failure to do homework •Other schools noted domestic violence, with children attending school with marks on their face or body •Schools were very detailed with these cases as they reported them according to the Wadeema Law to other authorities so that action could be taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •In the first week of the year, schools meet parents to explain the school rules, and to ask about the family situation and who is responsible for the child ▪However, in some cases families avoid reporting issues like these ▪Some students with multiple vulnerabilities, especially girls, have aggressive behaviour towards other school students ▪This is one area where schools find managing these cases very challenging

Regarding students with disabilities, relatively few cases are identified. Schools have a programme specifically dedicated to them. Most students showed sympathy and support towards students with disabilities (“people of determination”, as named by students). Self-identified cases reported in the student questionnaire came to 2% in the control schools and 1.7% in the intervention schools. The main types of disabilities mentioned are hearing, mobility, and visual impairments. Other students mentioned learning difficulties and distraction.

The number of cases of family neglect is low. However, schools still find them challenging to address. Students with single parents have shown aggressive behaviours that their peers cannot cope with.

Students in single-parent families sometimes face economic vulnerability at the same time. Some of them engage In aggressive behaviour towards other children. School Discipline Committees often seem not to have strategies to support such students or contain their aggressive behaviour towards other children. Instead, such aggressive

Figure 5. Are there any special procedures for the most vulnerable students?



behaviour is sometimes explained as being associated with psychological illness. However, the programme generally addresses bullying, including that against vulnerable groups of children.

It is recommended that a special module be introduced to deal not only with bullied students, but also with students who bully others, in order to integrate them into the school community. The programme could also devise a vulnerability assessment tool that can assess multi-dimensional vulnerabilities.

Additionally, both aggressive bullying students and victims have a degree of vulnerability. Therefore, there is a need to create additional advanced modules to support and enhance the life skills of regularly bullied students and another module to deal with aggressive students. They should also be provided with additional support by a support team, including their parents, teachers, and psychologists. In most cases, the most vulnerable students need referrals to organisations beyond the education sector, such as child protection authorities and community-based service providers, which are specialised in working with vulnerable children and their families.

8-4 What are the critical determinants of the programme’s effectiveness and their impact on the beneficiary groups?

The programme has several determinants to safeguard the programme’s effectiveness, as described below.

- 1- The UAE government’s commitment to recognise the challenges of bullying and take action against it.
- 2- A strong programme concept by UNICEF and evidence-based interventions; the programme has benefited from very strong international experience.
- 3- Schools’ willingness and commitment to benefit from the training provided. They were trained for the first time during 2016. Then, the school trainers passed on this training on a yearly basis.
- 4- Quality of the training of trainers, with content in both Arabic and English. The presentations and

Figure 6. In your opinion, what factors contributed to the success of the programme vis-a-vis the vulnerable group?

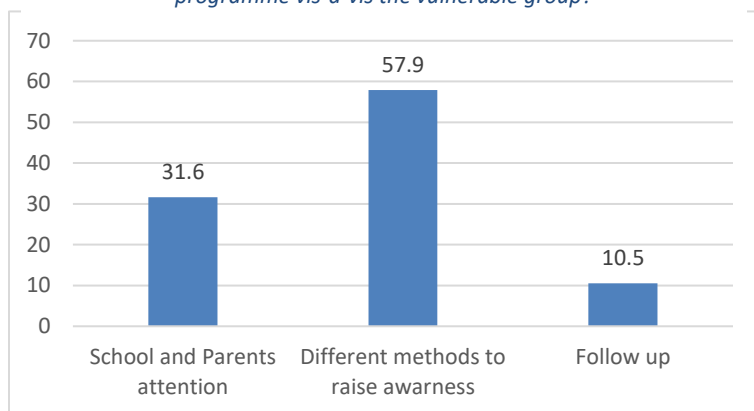
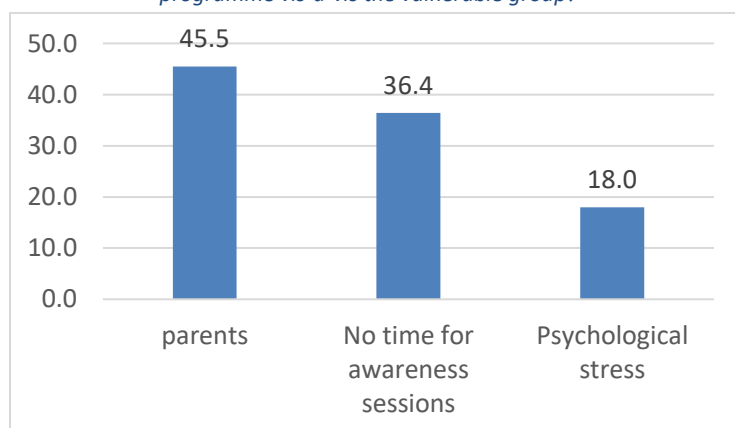


Figure 7. In your opinion, what factors hindered the success of the programme vis-a-vis the vulnerable group?

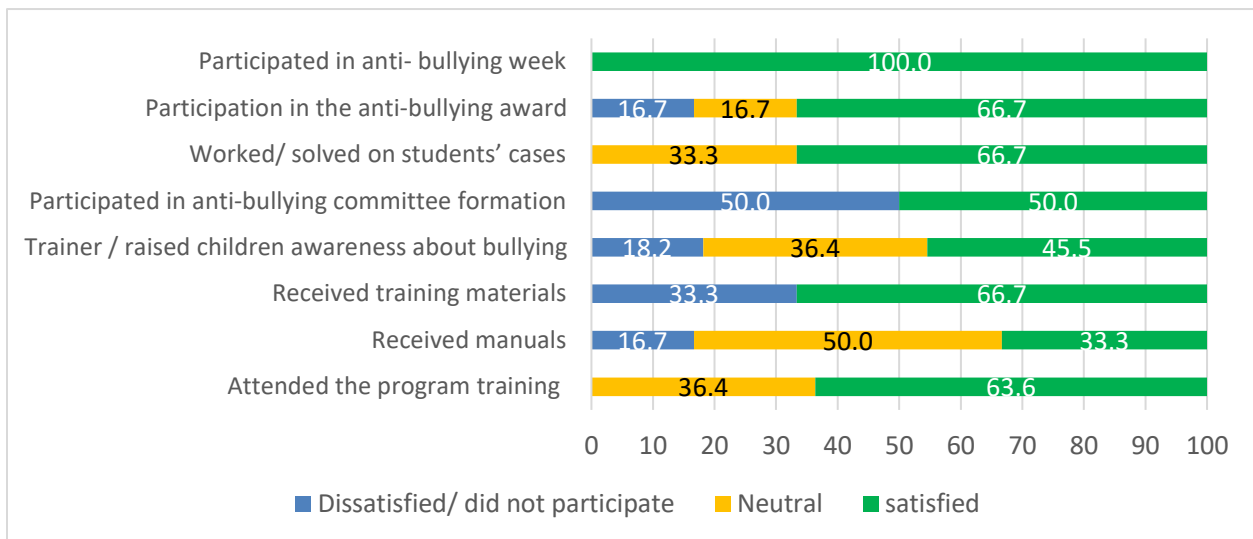


training materials have been very useful. Schools have strong evidence that they used materials developed by the programme, including pictures, definitions, concepts, and students’ activities. A School Discipline Committee member has mentioned “Enhancing student knowledge, developing teachers professionally, and helping to create a school-wide approach to anti-bullying”.

8-5 Level of satisfaction of each beneficiary group?

The level of satisfaction was measured across the evaluation questionnaires. It was linked to the key benefits they got from the programme (explained in 8-1). It is important to highlight that not all the interviewed groups received the same benefit. The School Discipline Committee, for example, is composed of limited number of individuals. The committee should define the responsibilities of its members so that everyone does not participate in the decision-making process of the committee, but they contribute to the committee’s work. The anti-bullying award was not recognised by several social workers and School Discipline Committees.

Figure 8. School Discipline Committee rates of satisfaction with programme interventions

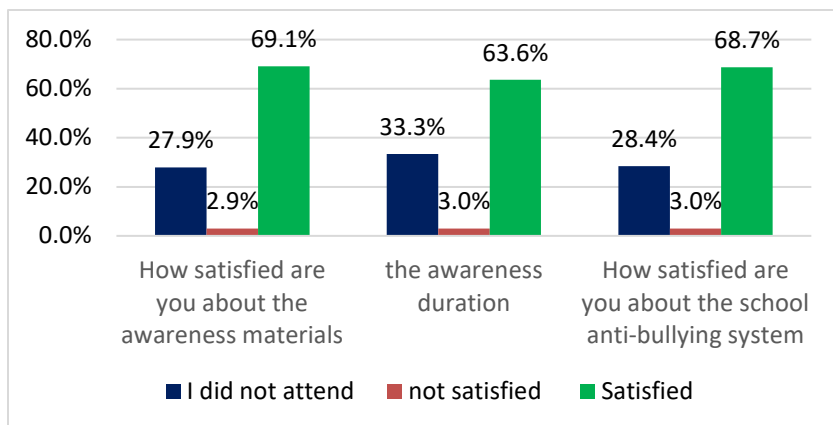


To measure satisfaction rates across all the programme activities, the evaluation measured satisfaction among School Discipline Committees, school principals, parents and children. The results for the School Discipline Committees show that the anti-bullying week received the highest satisfaction rate among all school activities, as 100% of the School Discipline Committees are satisfied, followed by the resolution of students’ cases and training materials. The training materials, for example, got a higher satisfaction rate than the programme’s training manuals.

The programme’s manuals need to be localised rather than translated so that they are easily understood by any school staff. The manuals should also add more examples and situations from life so that school staff can easily judge and investigate cases. Investigations also need to be conducted to verify cases. In addition, terminology needs to be adjusted to meet the local context.

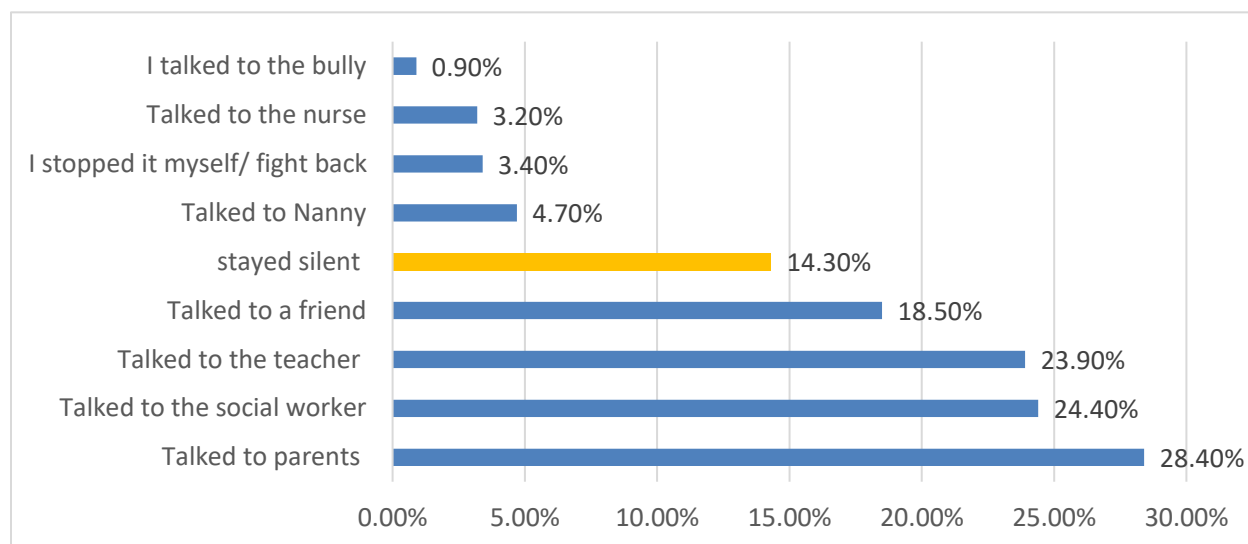
Regarding school principals, 75% of them were either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the programme. Parents were invited by schools to attend awareness activities. They were very satisfied with the awareness session materials and duration, and with the School Discipline Committee system.

Figure 9. Parent satisfaction with programme intervention



As for students, the evaluation used a multi-level approach to understand their satisfaction. It started by asking how they normally act when they face any bullying or abuse. 28% of students responded that they usually talk to their parents. 24% usually talk to social workers, 23.9% talk to a teacher, and 18.5% talk to their peers. 3.4% of students responded that they stopped it or took revenge themselves, 3.4% of students responded that they stopped it or took revenge themselves,

Figure 10. How students normally act when they face a bullying issue



either verbally or physically.

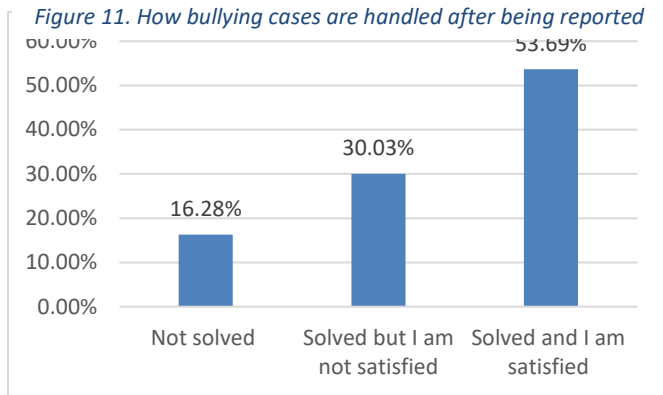
Students who face bullying issues were asked if they talked to anyone. Around 14.3% of students remained silent, around 3.4% stopped the bully either by fighting back or replying to the assault, and less than 1% talked to the bully.

81.3% of students decided to talk to someone. Those who decided to talk to someone were asked how bullying cases were handled after they mentioned the case. 79.9% of students responded that the person they spoke to offered to help them. Among those students, 72.9% indicated that that action was taken. Only 53.7% of students were satisfied with the proposed solution, 30.03% were not satisfied with the proposed solution, and 16.28% thought that their complaints were not addressed. Attention should be paid to the 14.28% students who remained silent about bullying issues. 20.1% of students who mentioned a bullying case to someone indicated that no

action was taken by the person they mentioned it to. Even when any action was taken, 16.3% of students indicated the problem was not resolved.

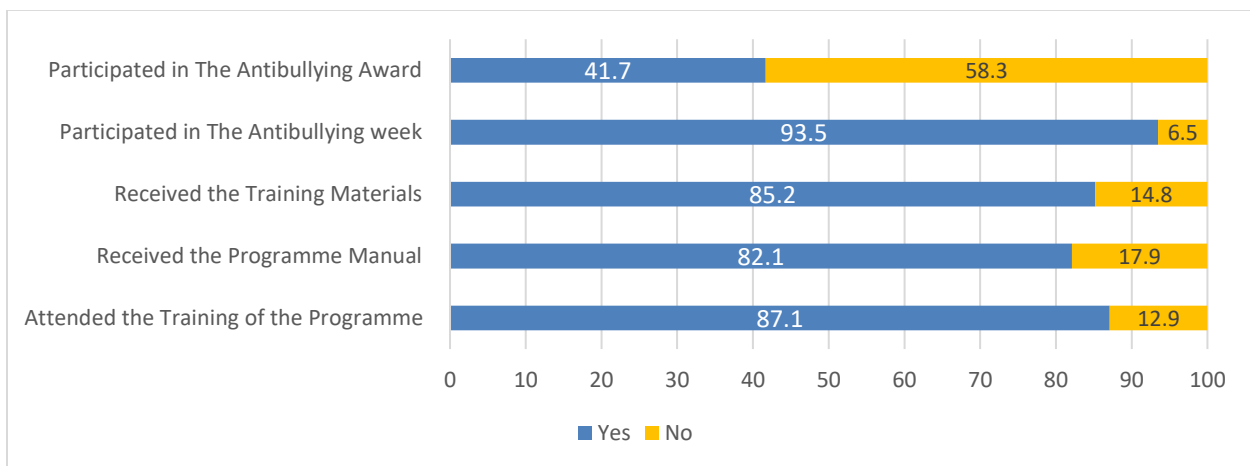
8-6 How effective are the capacity-building activities supported by the programme?

Capacity-building activities were assessed and given high satisfaction rates among School Discipline Committees, as indicated in a previous section. This evaluation measured the benefits perceived by the trained group of school social workers and staff. It also assessed the quality of capacity-building methods used in the programme.



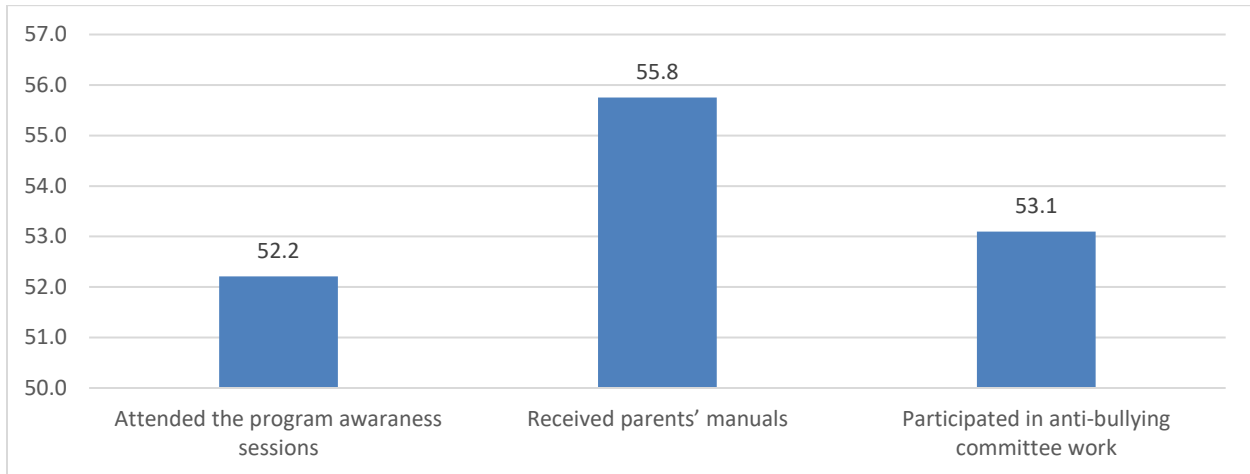
87.1% of school staff, teachers and social workers attended the training, and 85.2% received training materials. These include the 82.1% who received the anti-bullying manual. 93.5% attended the anti-bullying week, and 41.7% participated in the National Anti-Bullying Award.

Figure 12. Have you attended the following capacity-building activities under the programme?



The schools who benefited from the programme devised annual plans to deal with bullying, encompassing awareness activities, such as plays, drawings, student’s activities, and school competitions. Parents benefited from attending training and awareness sessions, where they received the parent manual. They also participated in the anti-bullying week.

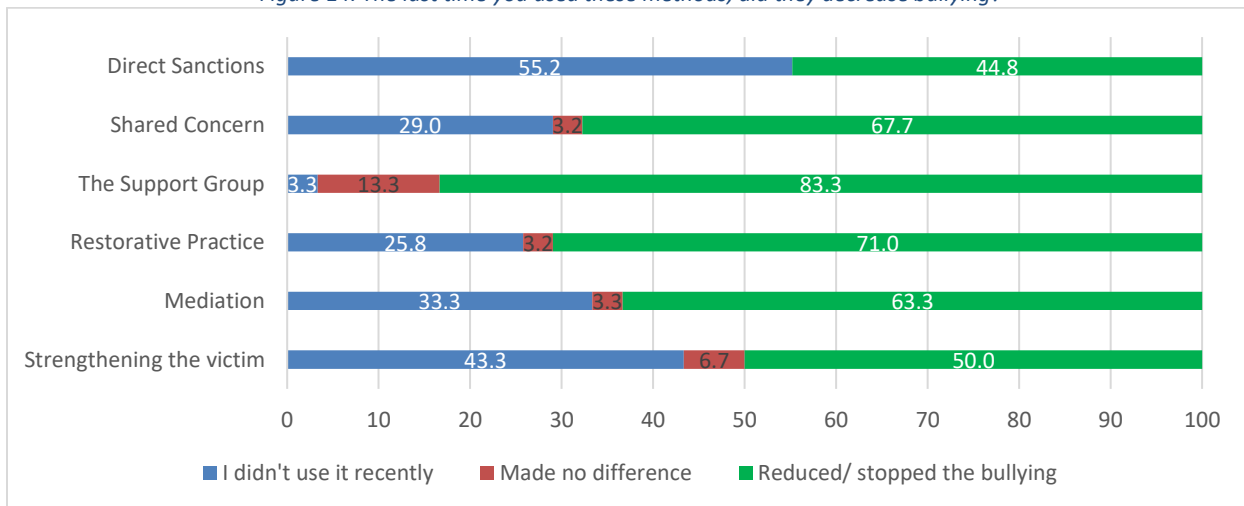
Figure 13. How did you engage with the anti-bullying programme? - parents



The evaluation found that the capacity-building activities were effective for two reasons. First, they became reference points used by schools to educate and teach staff, students, and parents about bullying. Secondly, school staff and social workers regularly used the training materials and programme exercises to improve students' awareness.

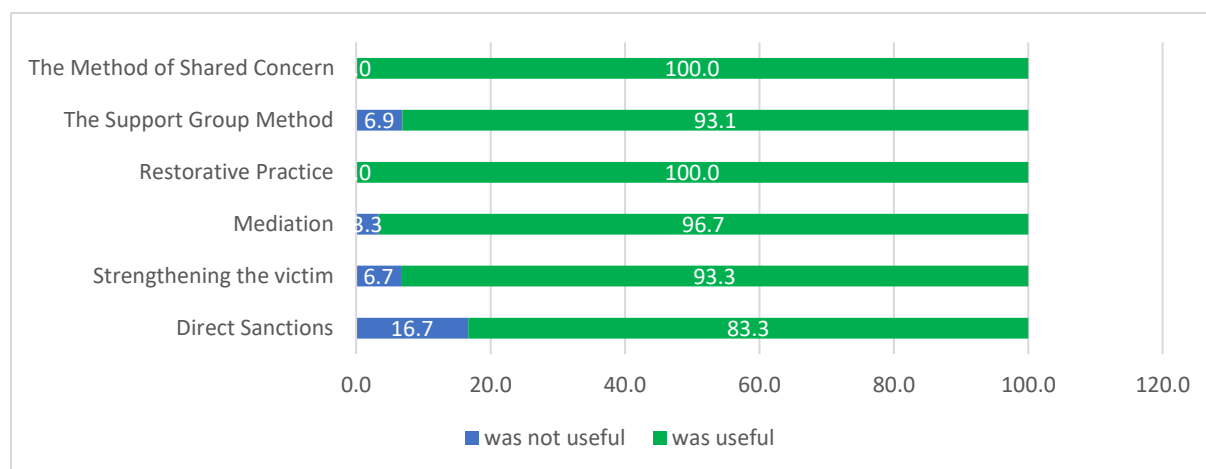
The evaluation tracked the knowledge of school staff and the use of the key trained skills, and found that the support-group method is the most effective method, followed by restorative practice. The shared-concern method came third. Direct sanctions were the least effective method, and strengthening the victim also had little effect, despite its importance. This information should guide the programme's upcoming review of the content of training materials.⁴³

Figure 14. The last time you used these methods, did they decrease bullying?



⁴³ For more details about the key knowledge imparted under the programme, see the training manual delivered by the programme

Figure 15. In your experience, were these practices useful to your work? - school committee



These results were confirmed when school committee members were asked how useful the key knowledge imparted had been in their experience. They found all the student-support methods useful, especially the shared-concern method and restorative practice.

8-7 What happens to the cases reported and what are the response mechanisms?

After students complain about bullying, social workers warn the bully. If the bullying stops, then no case is reported.⁴⁴ If it is repeated, the school calls the bully's parents to inform them of the case, indicating their child's behaviour and possible sanctions based on the school code of conduct. If it is repeated for a third time, the parents are expected come to the school and sign a written commitment form which indicates that the child will not repeat the bullying. If the issue persists, the school applies the school code of conduct procedures and deducts degrees.

Cases that a school considers to be parental abuses are reported, in accordance with the Wadeema Law, to the child protection unit at the MOE, which coordinates with the police to keep the parents accountable.

9. Sustainability

9-1 To what extent have UNICEF, the SCMC, and the MOE promoted a spirit of joint ownership of the programme?

The programme created strong ownership for pilot schools by delivering programme interventions to the MOE. The training of trainers gave schools the impetus to sustain the programme interventions. The majority of the staff trained were school principals and

⁴⁴ The code of conduct has four degrees of deduction. First-degree violation: 4 points are deducted; second-degree violation: 8 points are deducted; third-degree violation: 12 points are deducted; fourth-degree violation: the student fails the grade. However, some cases where bullying is accompanied with physical harm or socially unacceptable verbal insults are reported directly without having to follow these procedures. Extreme cases are either reported to the MOE, which refers them to the police, especially if there is physical harm, or a student is given a fail mark as per the code of conduct. Some schools prevent students from applying for the next year if their behaviour has not changed.

As for parents' or caregivers' violations against children, the school discusses these with the parents and warns them. If the students do not improve, they report them to the MOE using an assessment form. If a violation concerns students' absence and persistently late homework or other educational issues, the case is referred to the MOE for assessment, and the MOE may turn to the police for action pursuant to the Wadeema Law. If a case concerns family abuse or violations, schools take the same path of reporting to the MOE and then the police for an investigation pursuant to the Wadeema Law.

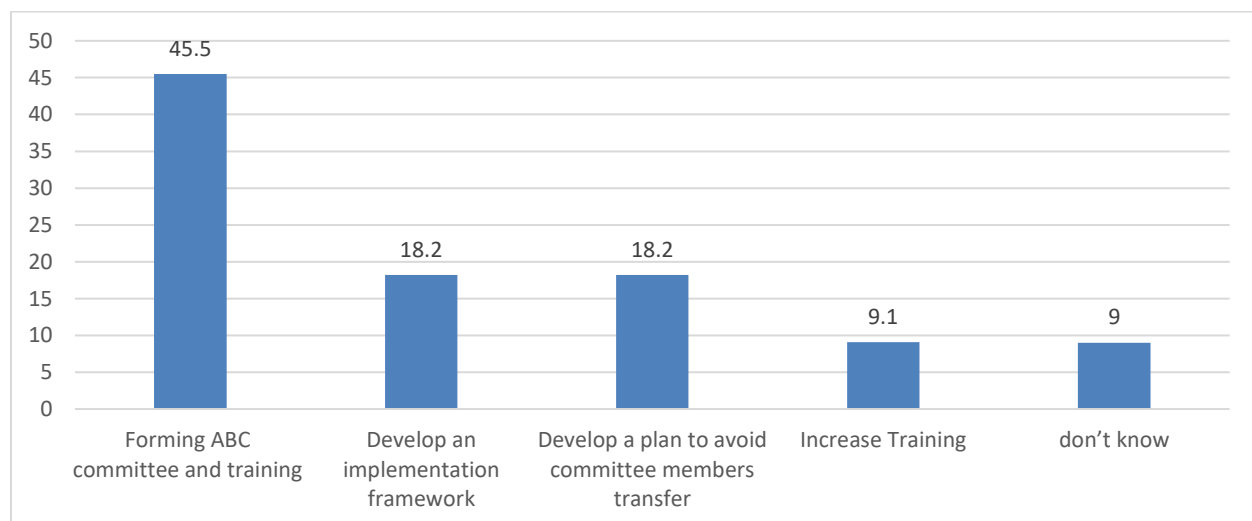
experienced social workers. These trained trainers enabled schools to be the key sustainability actor. Each year, the trained staff at schools conducted refresher training and awareness sessions for other staff, who raised students’ and parents’ awareness of anti-bullying.

9-2 Have legal, institutional, and financial mechanisms encouraged the programme’s sustainability?

The programme’s sustainability measures are described below.

- The training of trainers is known to be one of the strongest sustainability measures. As per the data presented in the effectiveness section of this report, every year several training sessions take place for school staff, teachers, and social workers, in addition to awareness sessions for parents and students.
- Ministerial Decree 645, issued in 2020, constitutes a legislative sustainability measure. It was developed seven years after the programme started. However, due to the COVID-19 crisis and the suspension of in-person education, the anti-bullying committee and the MOE reporting system have not been fully activated.
- As for institutional sustainability, the programme is currently managed by the MOE. However, no refresher training has been provided. The reporting of data has been irregular and inconsistent among schools. This may affect the programme’s long-term sustainability.
- Little information has been registered about financial sustainability.
- When School Discipline Committee members were asked to suggest sustainability measures, some of them recommended forming and training a new anti-bullying committee. Others recommended revising the programme with a new implementation framework (including a full system of training, committee and school reporting to the MOE’s child protection unit, and the Wadeema Law), devising a plan to avoid staff transfers to new schools, and increasing the amount of training.

Figure 16. How will the school continue the programme after anti-bullying committee members move to other schools or if there is a lack of follow up? - School Discipline Committee



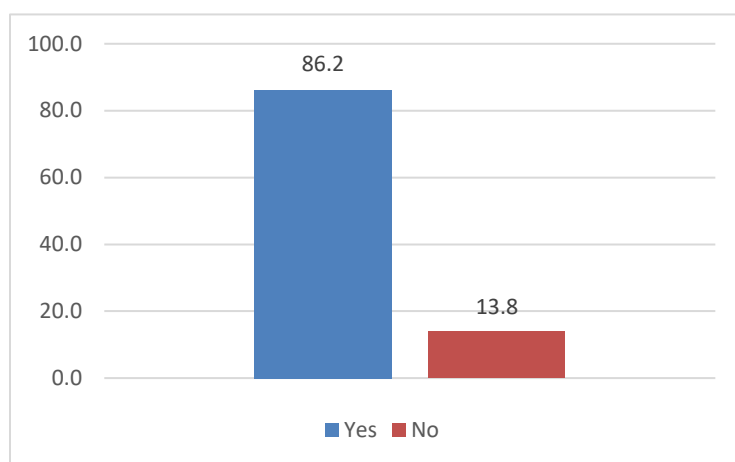
9-3 How sustainable are the results achieved thus far for the broader school community at the 64 pilot schools?

The programme has been proven to be sustainable from 2014 to the present. School principals and School Discipline Committee members are planning to continue using the programme materials. However, the high turnover of school staff and social workers may affect the programme's sustainability. In this regard, refresher training is recommended. The school anti-bullying week initiated by the MOE and the anti-bullying award initiated by the SCMC are planned to continue being organised by both entities.

For the programme's scale-up, School Discipline Committee members were asked how the programme's interventions could be sustained. They recommended forming an anti-bullying committee, retraining staff, and devising a plan to deal with high School Discipline Committee turnover. They also urged more field visits, increased awareness, and improvements in the case reporting system.

Figure 17. Do schools need a child protection specialist on a permanent basis?

Around 86% of School Discipline Committee members think that schools need a child protection specialist on a permanent basis. The lack of trained social workers to support the student committees is another factor restricting the programme's sustainability. The evaluation found, for example, a pilot school managed by one social worker with no previous experience. One control school had no social worker



and assigned a student affairs officer to fill the position temporarily. The MOE and SCMC could draw up a one-year programme to train a social worker and equip them with the necessary skills. Graduates from relevant education institutions could join the programme to fill the gap.

The evaluation concludes that there is a high possibility for the programme to be sustained if additional technical resources are forthcoming – see the annexes for details.

10. Looking Ahead

The bullying issue will remain a key priority for the programme, as verbal abuse was reported as a key challenge by 32.2% of schools' committee members. Relational bullying was reported by 14.5% of the members. Gestural abuses were reported by 8.1%, and physical means of abuse were reported by 4.8% of the members.

10-1 Stakeholders' priorities

Her Highness the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Motherhood & Childhood, representing the UAE government, has highlighted the programme's goals and expressed her willingness to completely eradicate bullying behaviour among students. This goal is

ambitious but not unattainable; it can be divided into sub-targets for careful monitoring with a dynamic programme concept.

All the stakeholders interviewed expressed a willingness to expand the cooperation to create a wider child protection umbrella. For example, the lead technical adviser at the SCMC highlighted the fact that bullying takes many forms and there is a need to include other child protection challenges in the programme besides bullying. The programme also needs to be adapted to emerging changes. Furthermore, the government needs to develop these initiatives into permanent policies so that future generations can benefit from them.

The UNICEF GAO deputy director highlighted the fact that UNICEF is exploring the possibility of cooperation beyond bullying. She also pointed to the scarcity of data in the region and the need to carry out more research for evidence-based interventions.

Table 21. Priorities identified by the stakeholders interviewed

	Key priorities	Their recommendation
SCMC	Reduce bullying rates	1- Scale up the programme so other schools can benefit 2- Deepen the intervention
	Smoking and drugs	3- The need for more awareness and prevention work 4- The need for public clinics for child addicts
MOE	Plug the gap in child protection and social workers	1- The need for more social workers 2- Improve school reporting
	Improve the national statistics	3- Improve statistics reported internationally
UNICEF	Offer support when needed	1- Scale up the programme so other schools can benefit
	Fix the data scarcity	2- Support for more data collection
	Strengthen the partnership model so that it is more responsive to emerging needs	3- Participate in the programme at all stages, especially monitoring and budget decisions

Research has shown that bullying and abuse are by no means standalone factors. Children who are frequently bullied are nearly three times more likely to feel like an outsider at school and more than twice as likely to miss school as those who are not frequently bullied. Children who are bullied have worse educational outcomes than children who do not. They score lower in mathematics and reading tests. The more often they are bullied, the worse their scores tend to be. Children who are frequently bullied are also more likely to expect to leave formal education after finishing secondary school than those children who are not frequently bullied.

School violence and bullying affect the overall attainment of the student population at a school. Poor discipline and an unsafe school environment are associated with lower academic achievements. Bullying can have a significant impact on children’s mental health, quality of life,

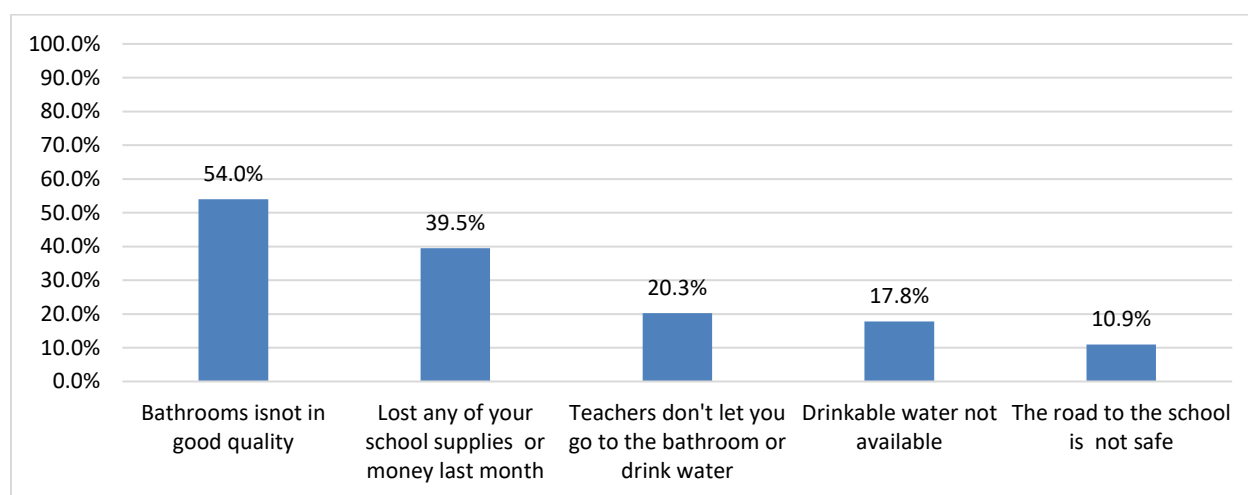
and risk behaviours. Children who are bullied are about twice as likely to feel lonely, have a sleeping disorder, and have contemplated suicide as those who are not bullied.⁴⁵

In the following section, different tools were used to obtain the views of various duty-bearers and rights-holders about the school environment, key challenges, and needs.

10-2 Students' priorities

Students were asked to assess the school environment by means of two data collection tools: a student questionnaire and risk maps. The questionnaire results revealed key school-environment challenges. It was found that 54% of students have complained about the quality of the toilets, 39.5% of students lost belongings in the past month, and 20% of students indicated that teachers did not allow them to go and get water or go to the toilet during lessontime. 17.8% of students responded that no drinking water is available, and 11% do not feel safe on the way to school.

Figure 18. Key challenges faced by students in the school environment



For detailed aspects of the school environment, a risk map was used to assess the school-wide environment. 93 students participated in the risk-map exercise. 56 of them were girls and 37 were boys. The exercise revealed the findings described below.

a. Toilets

55.4% of girls do not feel comfortable using the toilets. They complained about the cleanliness, water cuts, abusive words written on the walls, and rumours about other students written on the walls. Additionally, some girls congregate in the toilets to talk or to use phones, which is disturbing for others.

13.9% of boys were not comfortable about the toilets. Some boys sometimes meet in the toilets to smoke and hide electronic cigarettes there, use phones, and occasionally fight. Some boys avoid going to toilet so as not to be bothered by others. Some schools have used surveillance cameras directed at the toilet door to watch who comes in and out.

⁴⁵ UNESCO, Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483>

Table 22. Key challenges in the school environment as defined by students using risk maps (n=93)

	Girls (N= 56) % of students who face challenges	Boys (N=37) % of students who face challenges
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the toilets?	55.4	13.9
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the canteen, in terms of ease of access to food, availability, quality?	32.5	31
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the classroom (chairs and benches, air-conditioning)?	35.71	30.6
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the drinking-water situation?	23.2	11.1
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the stairs?	16	16.7
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the school playground / sports facilities?	12.5	13.9
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the lighting in classrooms?	16	2.7
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the bus/transport to schools?	10.7	5.6
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the way to school?	5.4	11.1
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the school fencing?	5.3	8.3
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the library?	3.6	2.7
To what extent do you feel comfortable with the labs?	0	2.7

b. Canteen

The evaluation found that 32.5% of girls and 31% of boys complained about the canteen. For example, some schools have created one lane for each grade, which is perceived as insufficient, given the number of students using the canteen. In some schools, students are not satisfied with the type or quality of the meals. Sometimes, there is not enough food for all students to buy. In one of the schools, expired milk was sold to children.

c. Classrooms

35.71% of the interviewed girls and 30.6% of the interviewed boys commented on the classrooms, despite the investments made and the high quality of the school infrastructure. Some students face challenges in the classroom, e.g. they did not like the chairs. They dislike sitting in the last row of the classroom. It was also mentioned that the electric board sometimes stops working. Finally, air-conditioners are sometimes too cold, too hot, or out of order. It is better for any future infrastructure development to integrate students' views into selected materials

d. Drinking water

Free drinking-water fountains are found in some schools. In other schools, students bring water from home, or buy it in the canteen. A key challenge is that some students spend the entire schoolday with no water if the canteen is crowded.

Other places assessed, such as labs, music rooms, and libraries, are comfortable for students. They are also satisfied with school fencing and roads.

In some schools, teachers are perceived to be a part of the problem. Anecdotally, a girl was accused by one teacher of having a crush on a male teacher. While this may be normal in other countries, it is very sensitive in an Arabic context. In this specific case, the girl and her mother took action against the teacher. The investigation concluded that the girl had not done anything wrong. This again highlights the importance of the rights-based approach empowering a victim to act against such abuses.

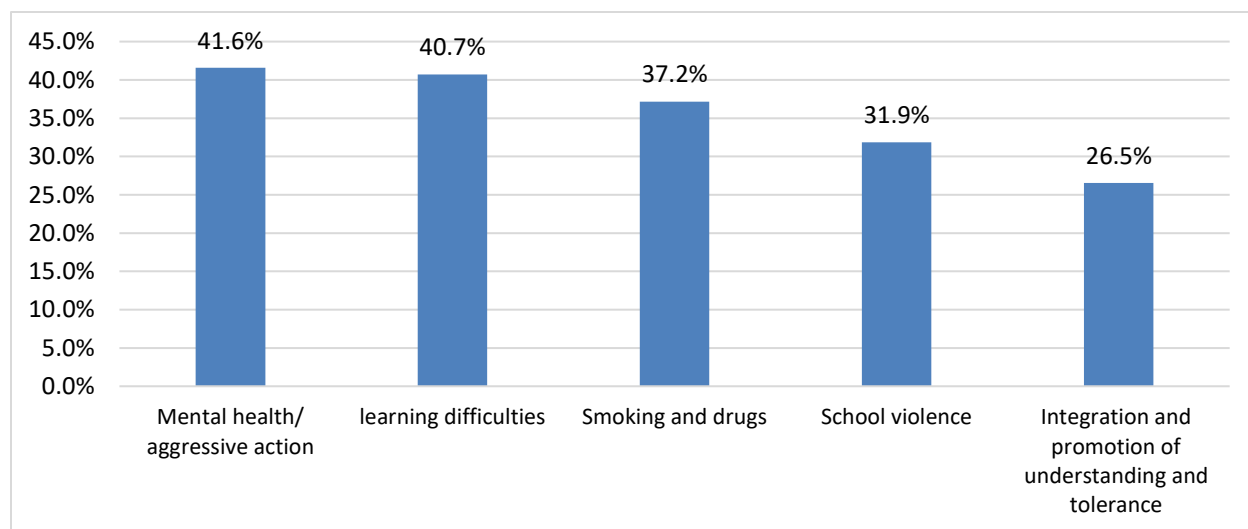
The risk maps also highlighted other issues, such as comments about colour, hair, and clothing. They also indicated discrimination against students from different nationalities, a factor which has emerged in particular from other school discussions.

10-3 School Discipline Committees' priorities

Verbal abuse was reported as a key school challenge by 32.2% of schools' committee members. Relational bullying was reported by 14.5% of schools' committee members. Gestural abuse was reported by 8.1%, and physical abuse by 4.8%.

Broadly, School Discipline Committee staff have defined two key areas of work. First, they need more support on students' mental health, learning difficulties, smoking and drugs, and school violence. In addition, they have defined the following challenges faced by children at school: study difficulties and stress, girls' transition to maturity, obesity, school

Figure 19. Should any type of child protection be added to the programme? - School Discipline Committee

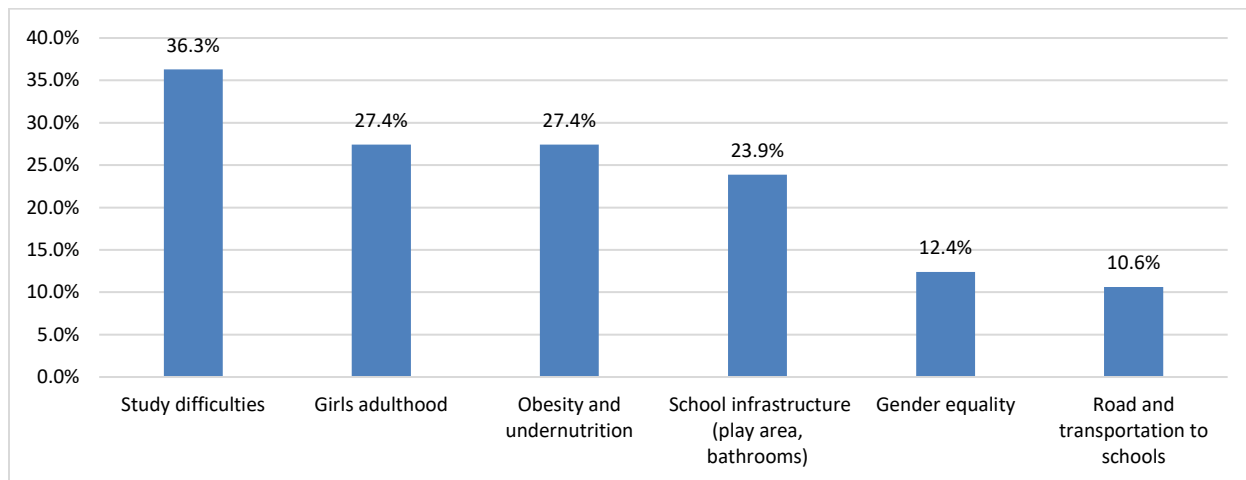


infrastructure, and gender equality.

Girls' transition to maturity is a critical issue as girls and boys need to learn about the changes that happen physically and emotionally, and how to handle them. Such awareness-raising is best target at grade 7 or 8, because those in grade 5 and 6 are still relatively young.

In several schools, committee members highlighted the need for more support, including additional trained social workers, more training sessions, more awareness sessions, and more materials to meet emerging challenges.

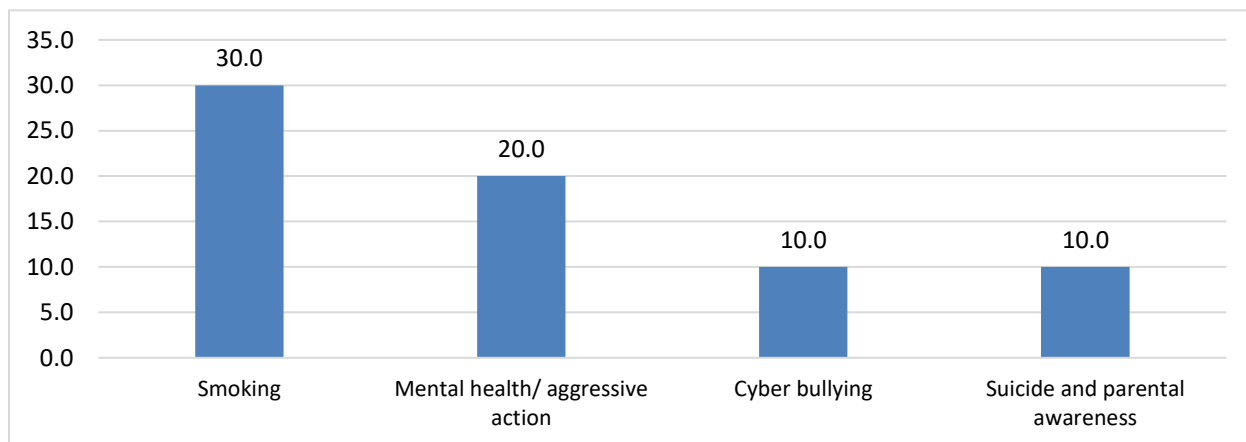
Figure 20. Are any other challenges faced by the children?



10-4 School principals' priorities

School principals indicated that they need support to deal with smoking, mental health, girls' transition to maturity, and study pressures. School principals have defined key challenges faced by students, such as girls' transition to maturity, study difficulties, gender equality, obesity, and school infrastructure.

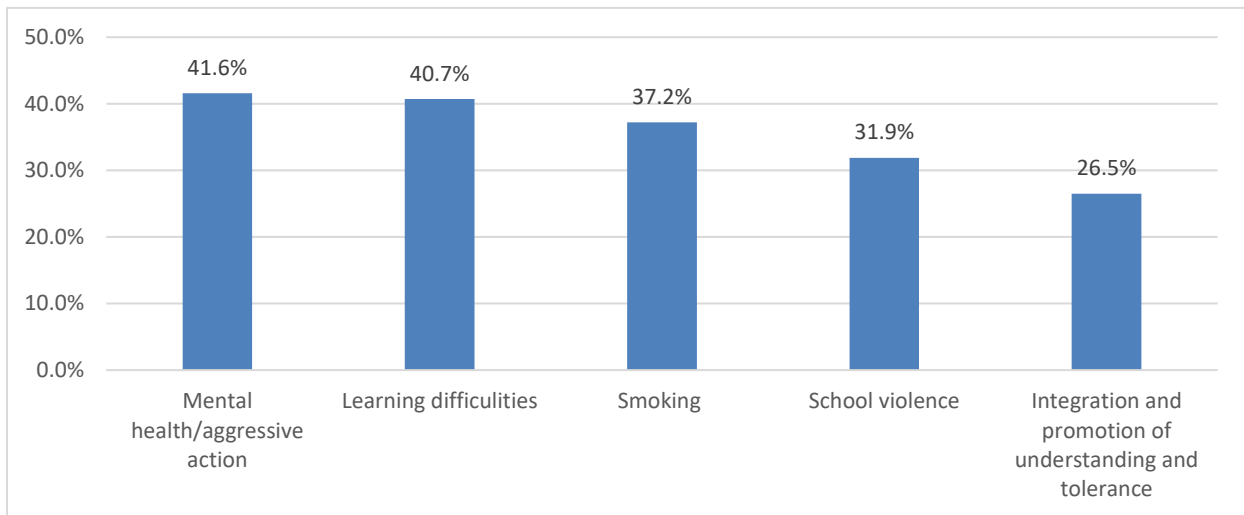
Figure 21. Should any type of child protection be added to the programme? - school principals



10-5 Parents' priorities

The key school challenges raised by parents are study difficulties, girls' transition to maturity, school violence, and obesity. They also requested support in addressing mental health, learning difficulties, smoking, and violence. Discussions with the SCMC representative highlighted the need for smoking, drugs, and addiction centres, where secondary and territory support can be provided. Families need to have addiction cases diagnosed and medical support provided so that addicted students can be properly supported.

Figure 22. Should any type of child protection be added to the programme? - parents



As regards the key child-protection aspects parents feel should be added to the programme, they defined the following priorities: students' mental health, learning difficulties, smoking and drugs, school violence, integration, and tolerance.

9-5 External factors that drive bullying

Finally, as bullying has both internal and external drivers, the questionnaire asked duty-bearers about factors that drive school bullying. School Discipline Committee members believe that YouTube and social media drive bullying more than peer behaviour, TV, and movies.

Figure 23. Are there other challenges faced by the children? - parents

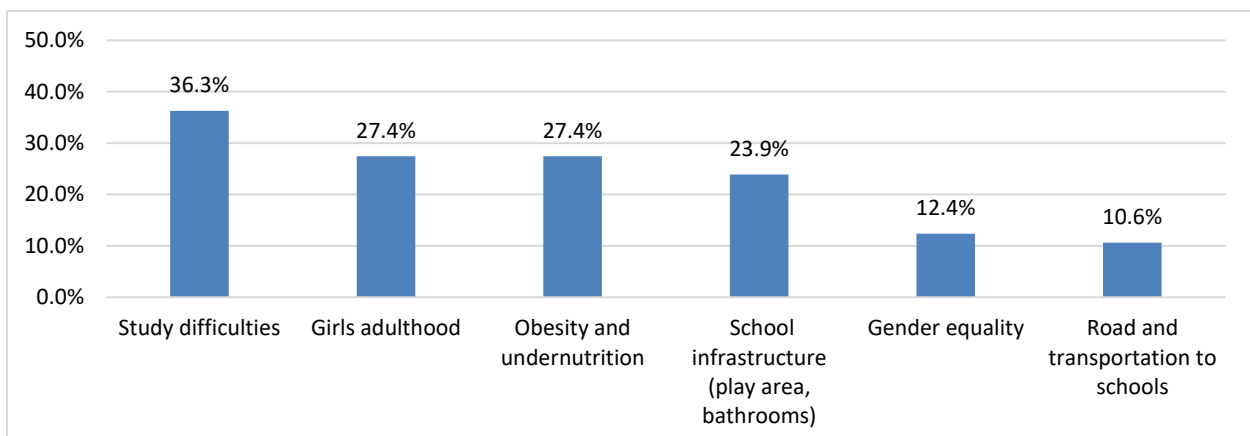
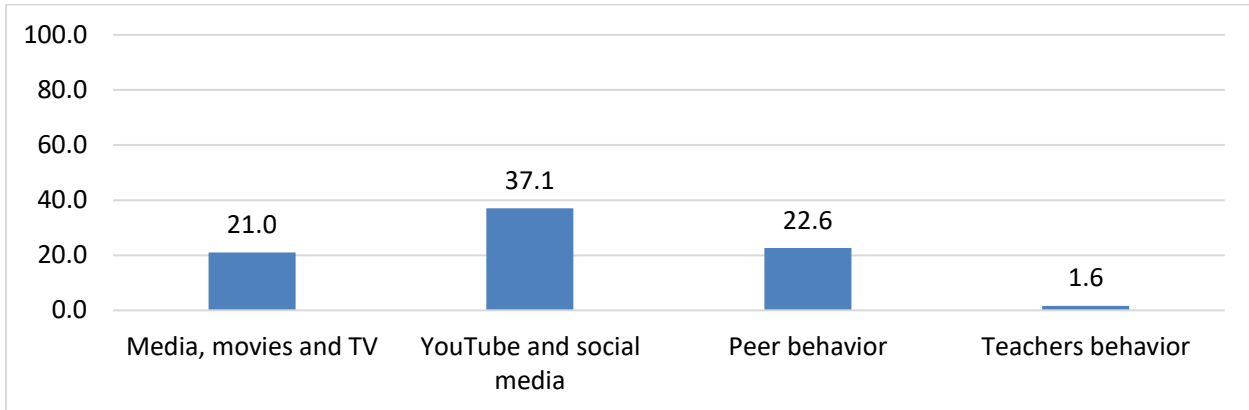
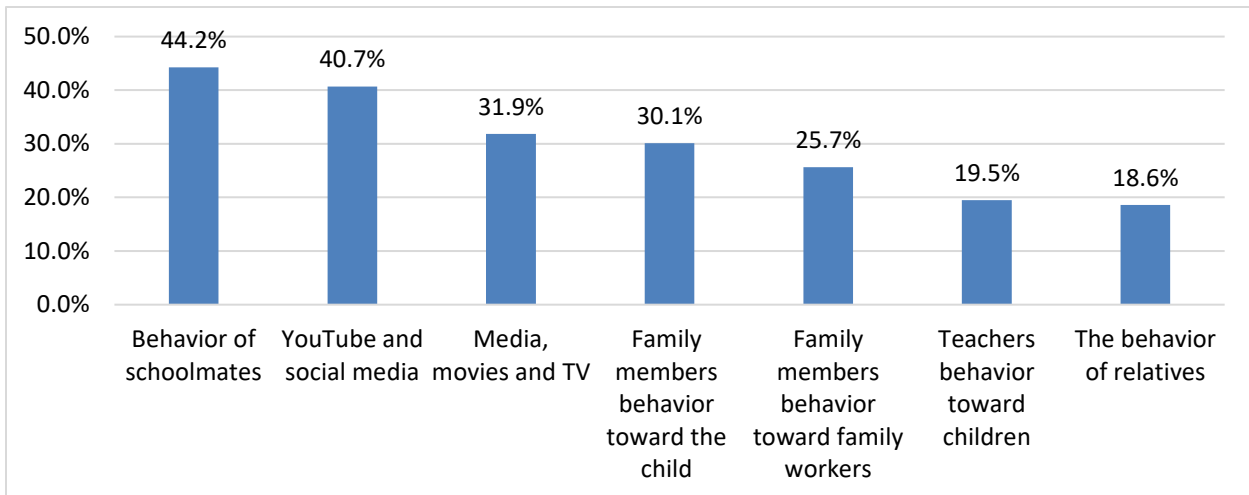


Figure 24. In your experience, what factors drive bullying more?



Parents singled out the behaviour of peers and classmates, YouTube, social media, movies, and TV as major factors. They admitted that family members’ behaviour could be a driver of bullying, as could the behaviour of other relatives and teachers.

Figure 25. In your experience, what factors drive bullying more? - parents



YouTube, Facebook, and Google have child protection polices, but these do not appear to be sufficient. Furthermore, new platforms, such as TikTok and snapchat, regulate child protection issues very poorly. Similarly, online advertisements that appear between games are poorly regulated. The programme could cooperate with international stakeholders, such as the International Communication Union, and the UAE Ministry of Communication and Information Technology to strengthen the relevant online child protection policies.

In addition, UNICEF needs to address the effects that artificial intelligence has on child protection and on children’s mental and psychological health, and come up with a guideline in response. Governments and parents could use or limit AI applications according to that guideline.

11. Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

11-1 Lessons learnt

The programme has offered learning experiences that could support future programming:

- Better coordination between UNICEF, the SCMC, and government stakeholders at all levels would help to better achieve anti-bullying goals. As several government entities at national level and Emirate level work on child protection inside and outside schools, these efforts need to be mapped and coordinated to help citizens benefit more from the services. Coordination needs to be well maintained between the SCMC, the Child Protection Unit at the MOE, the Ministry of Community Development, the Child Protection Committee and Centre at the Ministry of the Interior, the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority, the Family Care Authority – Abu Dhabi, the Nedaa service established to find missing children, the Child Safety Department of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs-Sharjah, the Ministry of Health and Prevention, the Endowment and Minors' Trust Foundation in Dubai, the Child Safety Department in Sharjah, the Dubai Early Childhood Development Centre, the National Child Care Centre Dubai, the child protection hotline, and the Social Care and Minors' Affairs Foundation.
- A clear and comprehensive programme document with the programme's intended results, components, activities, timeline, key roles and responsibilities, and a monitoring framework to support the programme learning process would facilitate performance tracking. A theory of programme change with identified assumptions, risks, and bottlenecks could facilitate the attainment of the planned results. There is no programme monitoring and evaluation plan with tailored data collection activities for learning and monitoring.
- Since the MOE took over the programme's implementation, there has been little evidence of data collection and programme performance monitoring, with the exception of schools' self-monitoring data.

11-2 Best practices

- The programme is based on international best practices and successful models. Prior to its implementation, more than 15 international dedicated anti-bullying programmes were analysed. Three well-tested programmes in Australia, Finland (KiVa) and the United States (Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme) were presented prior to implementation. Experts from the three programmes shared their school-based models to combat bullying, educational material, lessons learnt, and evidence of the effectiveness of these models in their respective countries.
- Programme ownership: the programme achieved a high level of programme ownership by schools through engagement, resourcing, and the empowerment of schools to take a lead in the programme. The training of trainers gave schools the impetus to sustain the programme's interventions. Most of the staff trained in the Training of Trainers system were school principals and experienced social workers. The trained staff enabled schools

to be a key sustainability actor. Each year, the trained staff conduct refresher training and awareness sessions at their school for other staff, who raise students' and parents' awareness of anti-bullying.

- Reward system at school level: The Anti-bullying Award is a very important tool in identifying and rewarding the best performing staff, students, and parents. Schools present Anti-bullying Awards to students who change their behaviour to a positive model.

11-3 Success stories

The evaluator documented three schools that had been exceptionally successful in implementing the programme. These schools are in Abu Dhabi:

- a) School Hamdan Bin Zayed School: the School Discipline Committee is comprehensively organised. In addition to social workers, they have added music and theatre teachers, sports teachers, and other types of teachers. The school formed a students' support group composed of senior students, who observe and support younger students' behaviours. The school invested heavily in delivering awareness sessions in a child-friendly way through drawings and videos. The school has a strong, diversified team.
- b) Al Rawafed private school: this school has fully documented all programme activities. It has applied all the programme's processes on an annual basis. The school principal has been very engaged in the process.
- c) Al Shawaekh School for Girls: this school has collected data and analysed identified cases of bullying.

12. Conclusions

The conclusions presented below are derived from the findings and are associated with the programme's objectives of creating a school-wide approach, fostering a safe school environment, and preventing school violence and bullying.

- The programme is particularly relevant to the UAE SCMC 2017–2021 Strategy, and relevant to the MOE strategy.
- The programme has been found to be relevant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. More specifically, when it comes to its principles of non-discrimination, the programme has effectively worked to eliminate all types of discrimination. Children's views and opinions have been prioritised at all the programme's stages.
- The programme was devised on the basis of sound evidence, including the use of pre- and post-assessments. The programme has also been influenced by global best practices.
- The programme's concept contributed to the attainment of the intended results and outcomes with relevant interventions, including staff training, training materials, and anti-bullying guides in Arabic and English.

- The programme needs a programme document summarising and defining the logical framework, theory of change, outcomes, activities, timeline, and monitoring plan.
- The programme is in line with the human rights-based approach from the perspectives of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, empowerment, and legality.
- The programme is aligned with relevant school policies and the school code of conduct. The programme served to bring about social behavioural changes. It supported the operationalisation of the anti-bullying and anti-violence mechanism in pilot schools.
- However, the programme did not offer a case management structure similar to that of the school code of conduct. Even so, schools used the programme manuals, training materials, and pre- and post-knowledge questionnaire.
- The programme made progress toward its planned objectives of creating a safe school environment and preventing school violence and bullying. One of the programme's milestones was to create evidence-based anti-bullying manuals that draw on global best practices. These were created, distributed and used for training purposes. The results from students' questionnaires have shown a significant decrease in bullying rates in the pilot schools in comparison to the control group.
- The bullying rates have decreased, as documented by the comparison between control schools and intervention schools. For example, students' likelihood of being victimised is significantly lower among the interventions group.
- The programme had a positive impact on the school environment in each of the pilot schools to varying degrees and offered the whole school community a different level of understanding in relation to the prevention of school violence and bullying. When it comes to equity, the programme reached out to the most vulnerable children, and the evaluation found that school staff and management systemically assess the students' situation and offer support. Schools have tailored programmes to students with disabilities.
- The programme fostered strong programme ownership by running the training of trainers among national counterparts as a programme tool. TOT gave schools the lead, as most of those trained in the TOT scheme were school principals and experienced social workers. TOT allowed schools to be a key implementation mechanism. The evaluation concludes that the programme is sustainable legally, institutionally, with a financial sustainability component depending on the evolving country context.

13. Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on findings, conclusions and lessons learnt from this evaluation. The recommendations have also been guided by good practices identified during the evaluation stakeholders' interviews, school meetings, and data analysis.

The recommendations focus on the process of institutionalising and scaling up the programme nationally, and on actions that need to be taken to ensure the high-quality and sustainable implementation of the programme in the future.

13-1 Strengthen the service response

For the government to ensure the successful scale-up of the programme to national level, it needs to consider strengthening the service response as detailed below.

- Review and support the legal and policy framework. Investment in policy advocacy and technical support will lead to a strong legal and regulatory framework for child protection and the associated systems.
- Collaboration and partnerships. At national level, this includes partnerships between the education and other sectoral ministries, civil society organisations, academic institutions, professional associations, and the media.
- Assessment of reporting by schools in relation to the Wadeema Law. This reporting should expand types of abuse and vulnerabilities.
- Evidence-based approaches, informed by accurate and comprehensive data and systematic monitoring of the results achieved and impacts made.^{46, 47}
- Incentives to encourage schools to report data on child abuse to the MOE.
- A safe reporting channel that allows students to report staff abuse.

13-2 Support pilot schools in continuing to adopt programme interventions

- UNICEF, the SCMC and the MOE should devise a plan to ensure continuity in the support provided to pilot schools to implement the programme, particularly those pilot schools that are committed to strengthening their capacities to implement the programme effectively. During refresher training, additional copies of the manual and the relevant training materials should be distributed. The pilot schools should also be supported in their access to the National Anti-bullying Award.
- They also need to recognise and reward pilot schools' efforts and contributions to the programme from 2014 to the present, specifically school principals, students, School Discipline Committee members, and parents.

13-3 Improve the programme manuals

UNICEF and the SCMC should have an expert group review the programme manuals with a view to adding more modules to meet emerging needs and localise the manuals' content. This will consolidate understanding among school staff. Specifically:

⁴⁶ UNICEF, Child Protection System Strengthening, September 2021.

⁴⁷ UNESCO, Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying.

- add more examples and situations from school life so that school staff can easily investigate and verify cases. In addition, the terminology needs to be revisited and adapted to the local context;
- directly and clearly integrate CRC principles and rights protected by national regulations into the training materials and awareness sessions. This will help children to learn their rights.

Mainstream gender equality in all the programme components – define gender challenges at the planning phase, set gender-based outcomes, and devise the relevant interventions. There should be monitoring to gauge to what extent these interventions have contributed to specific gender-based outcomes. In addition, the gender transformative approach can offer options that will encourage girls’ leadership.

13-4 Update the anti-bullying programme materials

It is recommended that the anti-bullying materials be updated to ensure the diversity and localisation of the content. This can be done by adding more modules to meet emerging needs defined by students participating in this study and their parents, and to ensure the localisation of the content accommodates cross-Emirate cultural differences and diversity.

- Adopt up-to-date and child-friendly training materials. These materials can be drawn up by children themselves in a competition, or by experts, but then tested and evaluated by children. These materials might be short videos, logos, and online exercises.

13-5 Develop a results framework for the programme

- UNICEF should take the lead in working with national stakeholders to develop a programme for results, with clear and quantified targets. For instance, the programme document should clearly identify the programme components, detailed activities, timeline, key roles and responsibilities.
- The programme needs to document theory of change and identify assumptions, risks, and bottlenecks that may affect the achievement of planned results. It should define strategies to mitigate the bottlenecks identified.
- The programme needs to develop a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework. The programme lacks a regular reporting system for activities implemented at school level. Schools do not regularly report their data to the MOE. Likewise, the programme needs to strengthen regular data collection for learning and monitoring.
- Additional support should be provided to the MOE to develop a universal methodology that can be used to calculate bullying rates at all education cycles/stages. Support should be also provided to the UAE national statistics office to calculate the national prevalence of bullying rates per 1,000 students as per the intranational statistical standard.

13-6 Accelerate the programme’s implementation

- Stakeholders should consider a shorter programme timeframe to regularly capture changes in the field.

- Shorter projects can be financed more easily than a very long programme. The programme can create sub-projects with different stakeholders. This will lead to the diversity of stakeholders and partners. Stakeholder diversification would be beneficial for programming and financing.
- On the other hand, this type of short project needs an agile response from the government. Otherwise, it will be challenging to achieve the programme's intended goals.

13-7 Expand the scope of the programme to deal with the topics mentioned in the school code of conduct, and integrate the beneficiaries' priorities

The MOE and the Emirates School Establishment should take the lead in the programme scale-up phase, taking into account the considerations mentioned below.

- As schools already have an active child policy as part of the code of conduct, creating a parallel school structure dedicated to bullying may not be the best option. Therefore, use of the current code-of-conduct policy is recommended.
- However, the code of conduct needs to be audited from a child-protection perspective and incorporate training and social-change materials. The process should include, but not be limited to, increasing children's knowledge of their rights and providing information about the support institution.
- The current school code of conduct allows students to complain to social workers. Students perceive them as teachers. There is a parallel online system linked to the education portal. The evaluation could not test it to see if it offers enough privacy. Usually, students do not want anyone to know that they have complained about teachers. The MOE needs to create a pathway for detecting and managing cases that keeps children's identities anonymous.
- Students tend to have a fear of being known or attacked if they complain about school staff. Whenever possible, the child protection unit needs to create a trusted pathway and find a means to keep students' identities anonymous. They need to keep students' identity anonymous both during investigations and after decisions have been reached. This will foster trust, so students will be more open to talking about teacher and staff abuses. Otherwise, students will remain silent on them.
- Some aggressive behaviour reported by students and parents, such as smoking and drugs, needs to be addressed, because addicted students/smokers may bully other students and provoke them into engaging in the same behaviour. Girls are susceptible to bullying as they transition to maturity. For example, they may be accused or bullied for being in love or in a relationship with someone else, or vice versa.

13-8 Offer non-school support to regularly bullied students and aggressive bullies

- The UAE already has three levels of service response: primary, secondary and tertiary. This needs to be mainstreamed into the school system, especially for students who aggressively bully others for and regularly bullied students. The reporting channel from schools to the child protection unit needs to be tested and strengthened.

- Aggressive bullies and victims alike tend to have a certain degree of vulnerability. Additional advanced modules need to be created to support and enhance the life skills of regularly bullied students to increase their self-esteem. Another module or policy to deal with aggressive students involves identifying these students and having them provided with additional layers of support by a support team – their parents, teachers, and psychologists. In most cases, the most vulnerable students need referrals beyond schools, such as child protection authorities and community-based service providers, which are specialise in working with vulnerable children and their families.

13-9 Develop a capacity-building programme for implementation partners

An important way of keeping all stakeholders on the same track is to engage in strong programme-based capacity building for all stakeholders involved in implementation at the beginning in order to enhance their skills and transfer all programme experience to them.

13-10 Position the SCMC as a third-party monitor

Under the programme, it is recommended that the SCMC’s capacities be built up so that it can be positioned as a third-party monitor playing a cross-cutting research and monitoring role for several childhood issues, including bullying and child protection.

13-11 Build the capabilities of social workers and school staff through a dedicated programme to plug the human-resources gaps among social protection specialists and social workers

The MOE needs to consider plugging the child protection human-resources gap at schools by:

- developing a one-year degree in child protection, to be taught as a professional degree or a joint programme with a higher-education institution;
- creating a test and certification centre for social workers and child protection specialists;
- conducting a study to project the number of social protection specialists needed in the next 30 years;
- assessing the human-resources gap in school social workers and the capacity of existing social workers;
- studying the attitudes and perceptions of social workers towards bullying issues, especially their views of media and the effects of social media on children.

13-12 Strengthen the UNICEF’s role in the programme to maximise the impacts

The current Implementation model has exposed limitations in systematic monitoring and learning. After UNICEF’s involvement in the design and first phase, the programme was managed by national stakeholders. UNICEF can play a role in strengthening the results-based management of the programme. Accordingly, national stakeholders and UNICEF should explore alternative modalities, where UNICEF has a greater role in the programme, as exemplified below.

- They could create a special results-based child protection fund for relevant programmes to receive funding. One advantage of such a fund is that it will strengthen the results-based programming and improve accountability. This can be an effective tool in tying funding to the results achieved. This fund will allow UNICEF and relevant donors to cooperate with local stakeholders from the government, NGOs and the private sector

who provide support services at school level. These stakeholders can play a role in enhancing implementation, monitoring, and learning to maximise the impact.

- They could devise a joint implementation model. This model would be used where two parties finance the programme jointly. They plan, implement, and monitor via a joint implementation unit. In this model, implementation takes place within the government structure. Each government implementer regularly reports to the joint unit. The unit would have the right to conduct mid-term assessments and third-party monitoring to ensure the quality of the programme.
- They could adopt the contractual implementation model. In this model, two parties sign a contract defining all programme aspects, especially the roles of the signatories. The programme is managed via a programme steering committee, where all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the decision-making process. The programme would be implemented mostly by donor agencies, such as UNICEF.

13-13 Support the scale-up

To scale up the programme nationwide, the SCMC and MOE should consider taking the actions described below.

- Assess stakeholders' willingness and readiness to scale up the programme technically and financially.
- Assess and plug the human-resources gaps in well-trained social workers and child protection specialists. The programme can invest in multi-year programmes to qualify Emirati graduates for such professions.
- Review the programme materials so that they are adapted to the latest developments and reflect the views of schools, parents, students and principals.
- Draw up a results-based programme with clear and time-bound objectives and targets.
- Create a strong regular data collection process for monitoring and learning.
- Conduct a scale-phase costing study. Carrying out a costing analysis or cost comparison for the programme was beyond the scope of this evaluation.