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Save the Children



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REPORT

# PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SITUATION ON PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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### ANNEX

- This session will include a short description of the completed work up to target findings for the report.

In the framework of designing a module for teachers that aims to prevent and reintegrate radicalized children in schools and communities of the Republic of Albania, the Center of Coordination against Violent Extremism (CVE Center), the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MESY), in collaboration with Save the Children Albania, and with the financial support of UNICEF Albania, organized 8 informative meetings/sessions in 8 local pre-university education offices (LPUEO). Several officers of education institutions, coordinating teachers against extremism, psychosocial service and school safety officers attended these meetings.

The information provided during these meetings related to the acquisition of knowledge on violent extremism and radicalization and the role of schools, families, media and communities, etc. In the information provided during these meetings, special attention was paid to the importance of education in preventing violent extremism, where teachers are the first stakeholders in preventing violent extremism and radicalization. The meetings included discussions on who may get affected by this phenomenon, who are more at risk of radicalization, what can be done to prevent it and who can prevent it.

Participants in these meetings were also provided with the necessary information in identifying those cases that may be at risk of radicalization and on the importance of identification at the earliest possible time. Recognizing the identifying symptoms and signs that a radicalized student may display, enabled the participants to identify the suspected cases.

During the meetings, we noticed an increased interest on theoretical information in relation to violent extremism and radicalization and concrete cases derived from the Albanian context.

As regards the resource materials, many participants emphasized the fact that there was a variety of materials, many of which were quite contemporary.



The presentation was very straightforward, well-structured and easy to learn by the participants.

The participants appreciated the organization of meetings, the methodology employed, and the way that information was conveyed. The participants stated that group work and case studies were the moments they felt most involved and productive.

By the end of the sessions/meetings, the participants:

- Were informed on the concept of radicalization and violent extremism, the existing national and international legal framework;
- Were introduced to social factors, pull and push factors that drive youth towards radicalized behaviors;
- Were introduced to the role of education in preventing violent extremism;
- Received practical advice such as when, where and how teachers discuss with students;
- Were oriented on how to create an inclusive classroom environment, which favors dialog, open discussions and critical thinking;
- Recognized and discussed on two profiles (case studies) of violent extremists of Albanian origin.
- Expressed their thoughts/opinions in relation to the measuring instruments and made suggestions for policy-makers.

# REPORT

## METHODOLOGY

— This session contains information on the way of organization, methods used, instruments, participants, etc.

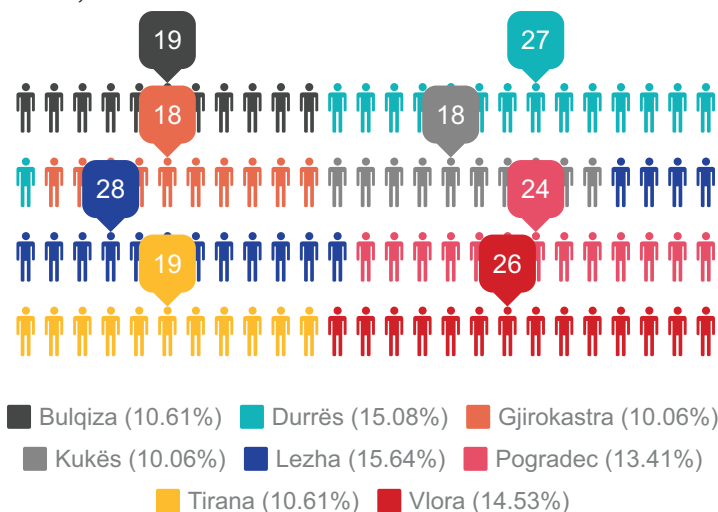
The meetings were foreseen to take place in 8 Local Pre-university Education Offices, considered as “hot spots” by law enforcement authorities. Lower secondary and upper secondary education staff participated to these meetings. The informative meetings were conducted according to the following schedule:

<u>Bulqiza</u>	<u>Gjirokastra</u>	<u>Tirana</u>	<u>Pogradec</u>
09. 09. 2019	12. 09. 2019	13. 09. 2019	17. 09. 2019
<u>Vlora</u>	<u>Lezha</u>	<u>Durrës</u>	<u>Kukës</u>
19. 09. 2019	24. 09. 2019	26. 09. 2019	30. 09. 2019

The meetings were expected to be conducted in auditoriums in 4 hours, which involved a combination of activities, such as information providing activities, group work, case studies, etc.

The methodology of the informative sessions/meetings was arranged in 3 sessions:

- **In the first session** teachers received theoretical information on violent extremism and radicalization, its definition, legal framework, early signs, international practices; the role of education, media, family and community, etc.
- **In the second session** two case studies from the Albanian context were treated, in which the participants were given the opportunity to share thoughts from their point of view and state their solutions of the case's key moments, the role and responsibility of each stakeholder, etc.



- **In the third session** a measurement instrument was completed; the findings of which will serve experts in designing a resource material to train teachers. The instrument was composed of 13 statements in an intertwined method, in which the statements required qualitative and quantitative data.

A total of 179 participants attended these meetings (educational institution's officers, coordinating teachers against extremism, psychosocial services and school safety officers).

The number of participants was almost equal in the 8 respective Local Pre-university Education Offices.

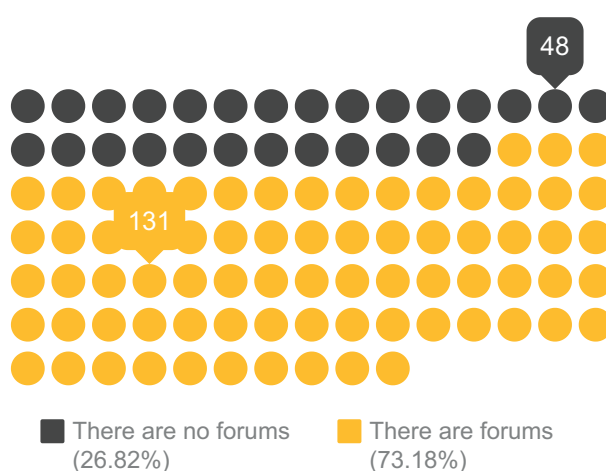
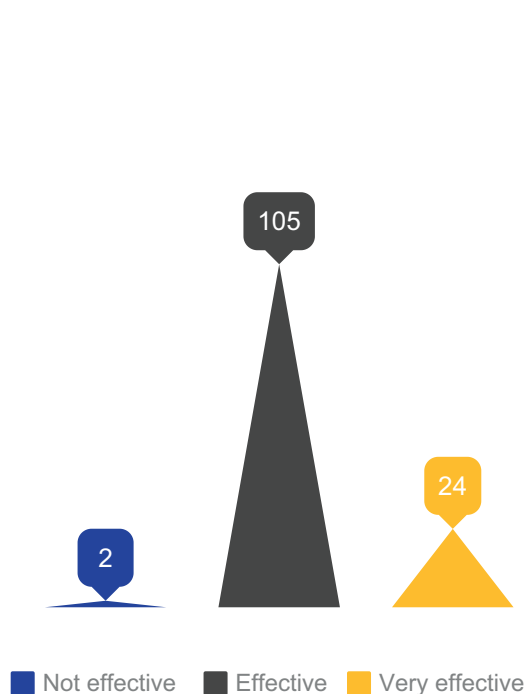
The above presentation shows the distribution of participants, whereby Lezha LPUEO has the highest participation, with 28 participants or 15.6% of the entire sample. Moreover, Durrës LPUEO (15.1% of the total sample) and Vlora LPUEO (15.5% of the total sample) have almost the same participation rate. During these 8 meetings, the lowest participation was noted in Kukës LPUEO and Gjirokastra LPUEO, with 18 participants respectively (10.1% of each total sample).

# REPORT FINDINGS

*In this session we will indicate the findings of the instrument used in the meetings with education staff, as well as other information.*

**Forums where students can share with each other their thoughts, opinions and experiences.**

In regard to the instrument used, the participants were questioned whether the schools where they work provide forums where students can share their thoughts, opinions and experiences. Based on the obtained outcomes we note that 73.2% of the sample stated that there are forums or other forms of communication in the school they work in, where students can share their thoughts, opinions and experiences. 26.8 % of the sample is the percentage of education staff, who state that the schools where they work do not provide such communication forms or forums where students can share or learn from the experiences of their peers and discuss their opinions.



18.3% of the participants who stated that such communication forms exist in their schools stated that they are very effective, while 80% state that they are effective. A really small figure (1.5%) represents the sample which states that the forms of communication and student forums are not effective at all.

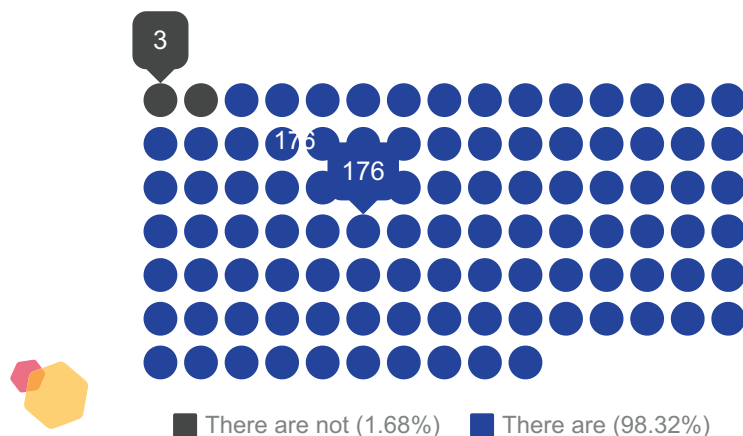


# REPORT FINDINGS

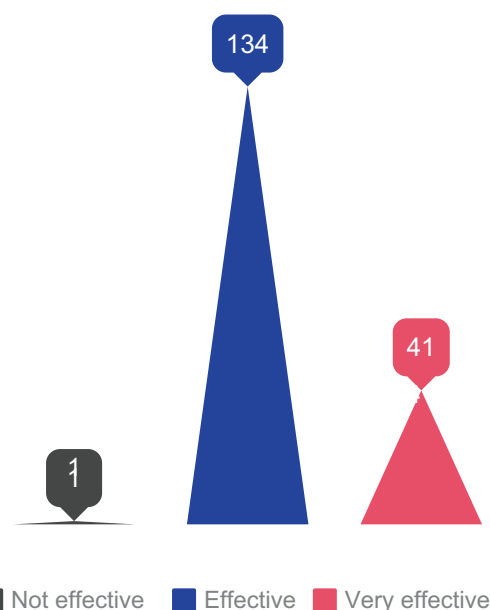


In the second statement of the instrument, the sample which has participated in its completion has stated its opinion on whether schools should include mechanisms through which students can solve their problems. From the obtained outcomes, it results that 98.3% state that there are school mechanisms through which students can address and solve their problems. A very low percentage of the sample has stated that in the educational institutions in which they exercise their profession, there are not mechanisms through which the students can solve their different problems.

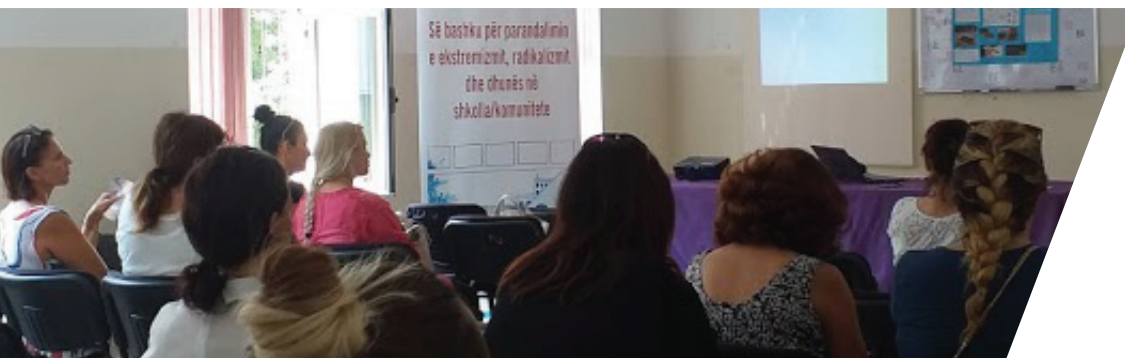
**Mechanisms through which students can solve their problems.**



Regarding to the effectiveness of these mechanisms 23.2% of the participants have stated that they are very effective or moderately effective. The sample of participants that have stated that there are mechanisms to which students can address and solve their problems and that these mechanisms are not effective at all is 0.5%.



# REPORT FINDINGS



The school capacities for identifying students in need of psycho-social support was the focus of the third statement provided by the participants in the meetings held in all 8 LPUEOs. By analyzing this statement, we noticed that 97.8% of the participants have stated that the school provides opportunities to identify students in need of psycho-social support. A very low percentage of (2.2%) represents the sample implying that the school does not have the capacity to identify and support students as far as their psycho-social needs are concerned.

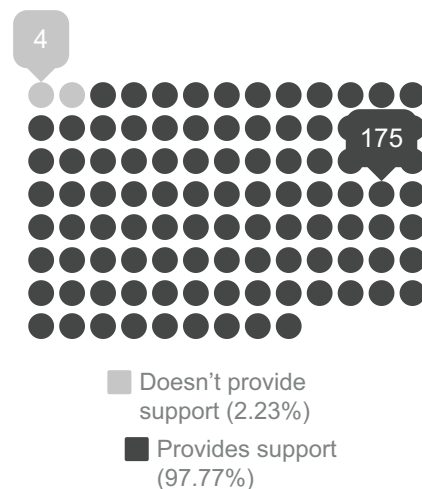
The participants, which stated that the school has such capacities to provide opportunities in identifying students in need for psycho-social support have been requested to state which are the people/structures charged to complete the identification of students in need of psycho-social support. This information has been required by the participants through an open question in which the participants had the opportunity to express themselves more than in a categorical or ordinal answer.

The structures or people in charge of identifying students in need for psycho-social support are almost the same in most of the statements of the participants, who note the importance of the school's psycho-social service.

The participants believe that the school psychologist and social worker are the first line in the identification of students in need of support, considering that they are the professionals in identifying cases of the same nature. We can't help but notice the important role of the school's teacher or subject teachers in identifying cases in need of psycho-social support. Even though the safety officer is a new structure in the pre-university system, it has taken the main role in identifying student's problems even in cases of need for psycho-social support.

From the data we notice that different institutions follow different practices, where it may be worth mentioning the commitment of the student government where each senator is responsible for identifying his peers in his classroom; or even practices in engaging the parents board or institution officers.

## The possibilities of identifying students in need for psycho-social support.



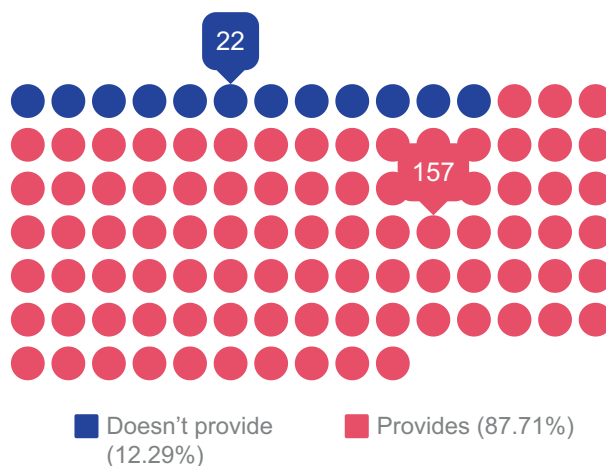


# REPORT FINDINGS



Participants were required to state if the school provides programs or services for psycho-social support towards radicalized students that show signs of violence use at home/in the classroom. The results demonstrate that 87.7% of education workers, which participated in the completion of the instrument state that the school provides programs or services for psycho-social support for radicalized students or students that show signs of violence use at home or in the classroom. 12.3% of the total sample state that the school doesn't provide programs or services for psycho-social support for radicalized students or students that show signs of violence use at home or in the classroom.

**Programs/services for the psycho-social support of radicalized students or students which show signs of the use of violence at home/in the classroom.**



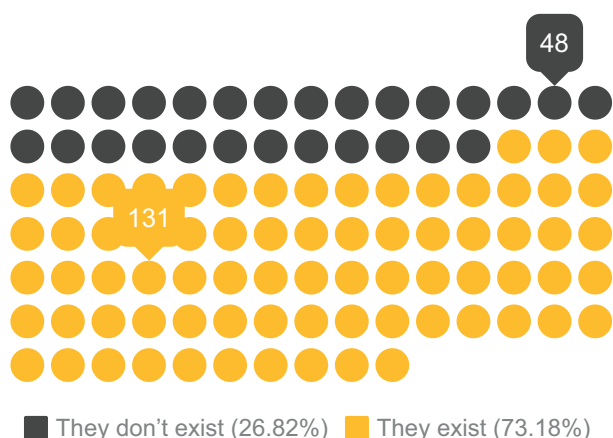
To get the picture on the effectiveness of these programs and services provided by the school, we only took into consideration the answers of the teachers who stated that these services and programs are provided by the school. 31% of the participants state that these programs or services are very effective. The highest percentage is that of the sample which is moderate in expression themselves on the effectiveness of these programs or services, exactly 76.5%, while 3.8% of them state that the programs and psycho-social services that are provided by the school are not effective at all in supporting radicalized students or students which show signs of violence use at home or that use violence in the school environment.

# REPORT FINDINGS



The existence of mechanisms that guarantee student's school safety was another topic discussed in the instrument used during the meetings. According to 81% of teacher statements, the school disposes of mechanisms that guarantee student safety. 19% of the sample was skeptical towards this issue stating that there are not such mechanisms or other forms that guarantee school safety.

To get a clear information on the safety mechanisms that exist in schools to guarantee student safety, the participants were asked an open question in which they mention these mechanisms. Only the part of the sample which has stated that the school disposes of mechanisms that guarantee student safety in schools.



By assessing the given answers, we noticed mechanisms in guaranteeing school safety for students are as similar as they are different from school to school.

## The existence of mechanisms that guarantee children's school safety

Through the data collection processing we noticed that schools that have safety officers, it has been stated as the main mechanisms for guaranteeing student safety. In those schools where the safety officer is not present, the school guard is viewed as a key mechanism in increasing the school safety impact in schools.

Regardless of the focus on the people responsible, from the statements of the teachers it is clear that the entire staff of the education institution should be involved in security aspects, starting off with the head of the institution, the psycho-social service, subject teachers etc. In certain schools the students government and the parent's board have been engaged in these issues.

The collaboration with law enforcement agencies, especially the State Police is another very important safety component for schools, which is viewed as very important in the education institutions to which they are attached.

The safety cameras system is another important component for guaranteeing student safety in schools and identifying different cases.

# REPORT FINDINGS

Another important information acquired by the participants in the meetings is related to the actions they are required to undertake if they would identify a radicalized student in the school or in the classroom. This information was acquired through an open question, so that the sample could express clearly all the steps that can be taken to identify a student which you suspect to be radicalized. In most of the statements, the steps to be undertaken are the same from the entire sample, but the role of the safety officer and of the psycho-social service are usually viewed as primary.

## Knowledge on case referral

As the first step, participants usually view the referral of the case to the safety officer or the psycho-social service in the school to refer the cases of students suspected to have become radicalized. The institution's head is also another important point of reference stated by the participants, whom should always address the student suspected to have become radicalized to their superior, regardless of the instance they choose to first address the case. Other participants have followed the longest road by informing all the stakeholders of the education institution starting with the class teacher, the psycho-social service, the safety officer and the institution's head.

The family institution has had an important role in the statements of the participants, as besides the steps undertaken, the parents and the institutions head should be notified in every case.

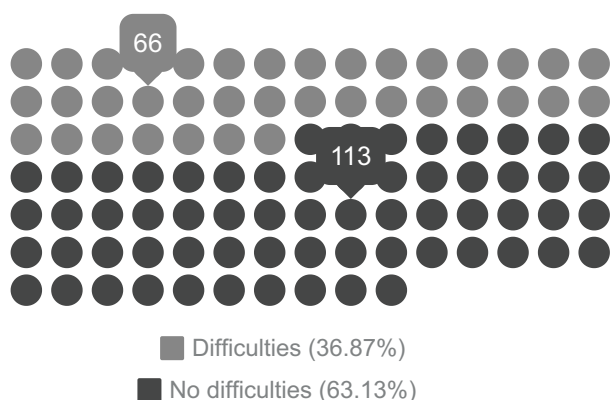
We have noticed that there are education workers which have no idea on how to share the information and what steps to take when they suspect that there are showing signs of becoming radicalized.

It is worth mentioning that that there were no cases of case reference to the State Police or relevant child protection authorities near any local government organs. The participants have considered solving the case within the school environment with the mechanisms disposed by the educational institution.



# REPORT FINDINGS

## The positive climate and collaboration between students



The data collected by the teacher's statements show that 36.9% of the teachers have difficulties in establishing a positive climate and collaboration between students, or in the classroom. Referring to the above statements, we can notice an increased value in which participants state that it is necessary to do more in creating a positive climate and collaboration between students. Besides the high number of participants which state that they have difficulties in creating a positive environment, 63.1% of them state that they have achieved to create a positive climate and collaboration spirit between the students within the class or in the school.

To get a better picture of the situation in relation to the climate in the school environment, participants which have declared not to have encountered difficulties in creating such an environment, were required to give examples of the practices they use most often, to identify the best practices and to evaluate why these practices are successful.

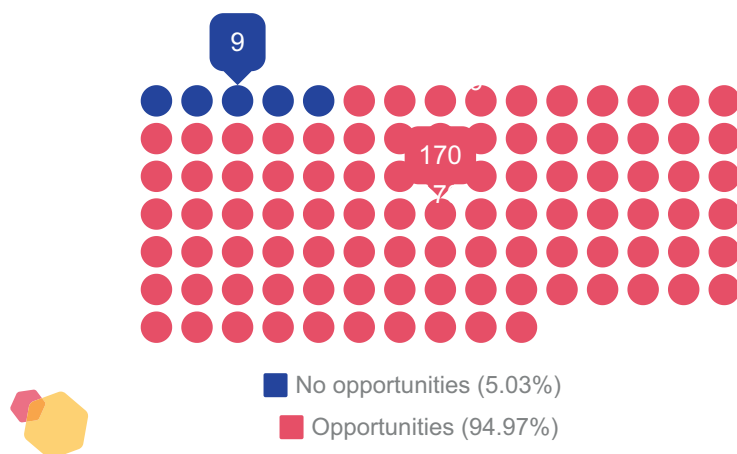
Further on we will provide some examples of the most frequently used practices which have resulted to be effective in creating a positive climate in the school environment:

- Discussing particular topics with students, asking them on the concerns and problems they have at school, at home and in the society in general.
- Warm and cautious communication, being honest, sincere and straightforward in relations, respecting and ensuring that there is no judgment or fake approvals;
- Active listening; Continuous monitoring; Flexibility;
- Establishing mutual rules;
- Student representation in decision-making concerning them; group work and group and individual; evaluation; the completion of activities of psycho-social nature; Frequent and periodic meetings;
- Bringing parents closer to the school

# REPORT FINDINGS



On the third statement of the instrument, the sample which participated in its completion has expressed its stance if participants make opportunities for students to listen to the views, opinions and experiences of each other. From the obtained results it turns out that 95% of the participants state that they create opportunities for students to listen to each other. A really low percentage of the sample, 5% to be exact, stated that the school does not give students the proper space to listen to each others views, opinions and experiences.



**Creating opportunities for students to listen to each others views, opinions and experiences.**

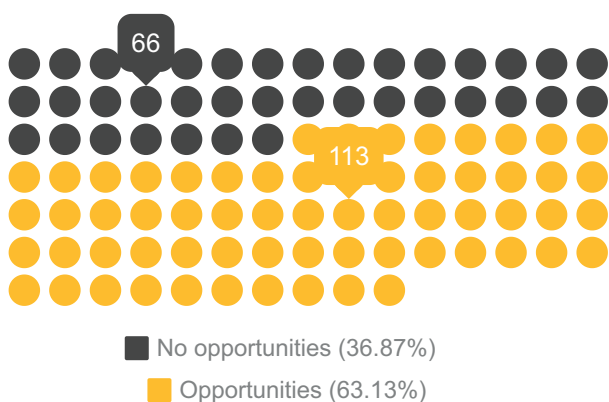
Regarding the effectiveness of these mechanisms and the role these techniques play in creating a positive climate and building critical thinking skills in the students, 62.3% of the participants state that they consider these techniques to be effective. 36.7% of the participants think that these techniques are being used and that they are very effective. We noticed that the “not effective” was never ticked by the participants, which makes using different mechanisms and techniques which promote creating a positive climate and building critical thinking skills even more important.





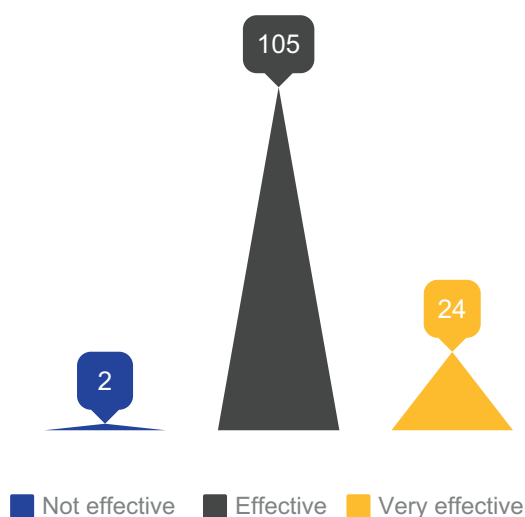
# REPORT FINDINGS

**Creating opportunities for students to get challenged and challenge their peers in a constructive way.**



Participants were required to declare if they give students the opportunity to get challenged or challenge their peers in a constructive way during class hours or different activities. The results show that 87.7% of educational workers which participated in the completion of the instrument state that they do create opportunities for their students to have constructive discussions or face different challenges against one another. While the participants that say that they don't create opportunities for their students to challenge each other in a constructive way are 12.3% of the total sample.

To get a clearer picture on the effectiveness of these mechanisms and the role these techniques play in creating a positive climate and building critical thinking skills, 76.2% of the participants which state that they do create these opportunities for their students, regard these techniques as effective. 21.7% think that these techniques used by the participants in school environment are very effective. A very low percentage of the sample, which states that creating opportunities for students to challenge each other in a constructive way is not an effective technique to create a positive climate and build critical thinking skills.





# REPORT FINDINGS

Another very important issue within the education institution is student behavior. Participants were required detailed information in relation to the steps they would take in they identify students with behavioral problems. Below you will find actions taken more frequently by each job position:

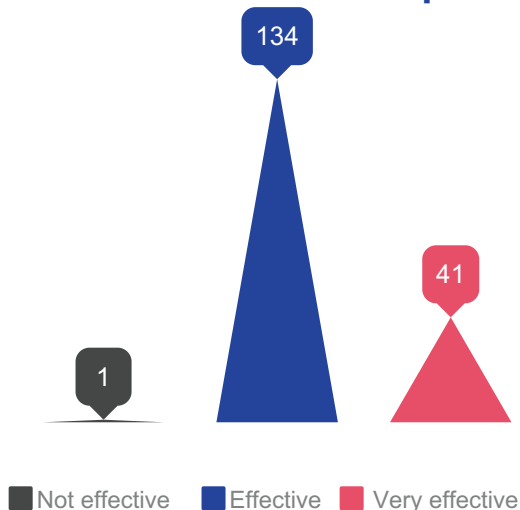
## a) Psycho-social service:

- Individual and group counseling;
- Continuous communication;
- Individual work plan;
- Continuous monitoring;
- Identification of the reasons for the behavior;
- Awareness on the consequences of problem behavioral problems;
- Engaging in different activities, etc.

## b) Safety officer

- Works with schools, families, psycho-social services;
- Raises awareness on the consequences of behavioral problems;
- Continuous monitoring;
- Refers the case to psycho-social services;
- Continuous communication with the student;
- Continuous communication with the family;
- Identification of the reason for the way the student is behaving;
- Collaborating with the student government;
- Inclusiveness, etc.

**Works with the parents with the school in relation to student's behavioral problems.**



## The identification problematic students and intervention strategies.

### c) The class teacher:

- Works with the school, family, psycho-social services;
- refers back to the psycho-social service and safety officer;
- Continuous monitoring;
- Identifies the reason for the behavior;
- Individual communication;
- Works with class senators, etc.

### d) Education institution officer

- Communicates continuously with the family;
- Communicates continuously with the class teacher;
- Communicates continuously with the psycho-social service;
- communicates personally with students;
- Coordinates individual work plans for behavior management etc.

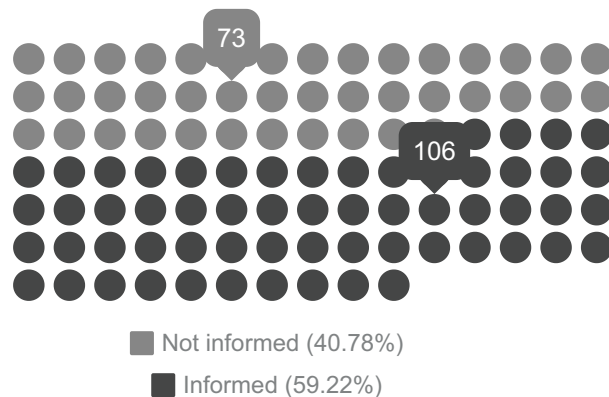
Family and school collaboration plays an important role in reducing problematic behaviors from the student's part. From the obtained results we can see that 7.8% of the participants considers as not effective the collaboration with parents in relation to anti-social problems or this collaboration does not provide the expected results. 64.2% of the participants state that the collaboration with the parents is effective in the school they represent in relation to student's behavioral issues. 27.9% of the sample considers the collaboration with the parents in reducing problematic behaviors as effective.

# REPORT FINDINGS

## Informing parents in relation to the referral of the suspected cases of violent extremism in their children.

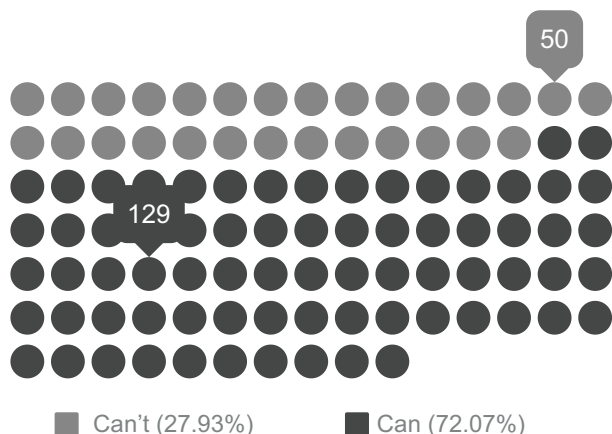
Participants were asked if parents know where to address their concerns in case they suspected their children demonstrate violent extremism behavior. The results show that 59.2% of the sample has stated that parents have the necessary information for the referral they have to do if they suspect that their children are at risk of becoming violent extremists.

It is concerning that the participants state that 40.8% of the parents don't have any information on where to address their concerns if they think that their child is at risk of becoming a violent extremist.



The participants were asked based on their experience, if parents can identify violent behavior from their children. From the analysis of the findings the participants have stated that 27.9% of the parents can't identify the behavioral problems of their children or they are not aware of these problems. 72.1% of the participants express that parents can identify behavioral problems or violent behavior from their children.

## Informing parents in relation to suspected cases of violent extremism in their children



# REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Based on the above submission and findings as a result of this analysis we have produced the following recommendations:**

- The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MESY) in collaboration with the Center of Coordination against Violent Extremism (CVE center) will conduct informing sessions on the pathways to manage and refer cases suspected of being involved in violent behavior, being radicalized or extremely violent.
- In its collaboration with CVE, MESY will continue supporting, teachers, school leaders, the psycho-social service and the safety officer in the short and long term through training and monitoring programs.
- In collaboration with CVE, MESY will continuously support the work of professional networks in these issues and others resulting from their needs, through training programs, the training of network leaders; by preparing support materials to help the networks, continuous communication with them through meetings and online communication.
- In its collaboration with CVE MESY will further develop the work for preparing support materials for teachers, school leaders, psycho-social service and safety officer.
- The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth will support the continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders in the basic education through policies and programs that address their specific needs.
- MESY will encourage the collaboration between teachers, school leaders, psycho-social service, safety officer and experts of different levels in relation of violent extremism.
- Promote and support the continuous professional development within the school, including their professional development in relation to cases of behavioral problems, behavior, violence, radicalization, violent extremism, etc.
- Promote round tables between teachers, psycho-social service and the safety officer on the identification of needs, finding common solutions and promoting positive experiences.
- Provide continuous feedback from the students, parents, teachers, psycho-social service, safety officers for the specific needs and difficulties.
- Provide discussion and debate forms, or mechanisms in which the students can get involved and share experiences with their peers.
- Strengthen school mechanisms in which students can address their polemics.
- Provide programs/services of psycho-social nature for students at high risk of becoming involved in violent behavior.
- Hold informative sessions in relation to the identification of suspected cases and their referral to the relevant structures.
- Work more on the collaboration between the school, student and family.
- Provide informative sessions and design resource materials for parents, in relation to the identification of violent behaviors and behaviors suspected as problematic and addressing them to the relevant structures.



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## Greetings,

The CVE Center, supported by UNICEF and with the implementation of “Save the Children” organization is completing the project on “Preventing extremism, radicalization and violence in schools and communities”, which aims to prevent and reintegrate radicalized children in schools and communities in the Republic of Albania. We appreciate you contributing with your thoughts and experience and by answering the submitted questions in these questionnaires.

### Maintaining privacy

You shouldn't write your name on the questionnaire. Your answers will be anonymous.

The questionnaires will be used for analysis by the working group headed by the CVE Center. The questionnaires will be physically collected at the “Save the Children” offices in Albania and will be uploaded to an accessible database by both the CVE Center and MESY. The results will be reported as a group of answers and not

1. Does the school have forums in which students can share with each other their thoughts, opinions and experiences?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “Yes”, how do you evaluate the effectiveness according to the scale below (circle the option that represents your opinion best)

☐ Not effective    ☐ effective    ☐ very effective

2. Does your school have mechanisms through which students can solve their problems?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “Yes”, how do you evaluate the effectiveness according to the scale below (circle the option that represents your opinion best)

☐ not effective      ☐ effective      ☐ very effective

3. Does your school provide opportunities for the identification of students in need of psycho-social support?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “Yes”, who is in charge of doing that? (make a description down below)

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4. Does your school provide a program/service for the psycho-social support of radicalized students which show signs of violence use at school/in the classroom?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “Yes” how do you evaluate its effectiveness according to the scale below? (Circle the option that represents your opinion best)

☐ not effective      ☐ effective      ☐ very effective

5. Do you think that the school has mechanisms which guarantee the children’s safety at school?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “Yes”, could you mention them down below?

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6. How would you act if you identified a radicalized student at your school or in the classroom

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7. Do you have difficulties in setting a positive climate and collaboration between the students in the classroom?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “No”, please note the practices you personally use on a daily basis with your students

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8. Do you create opportunities for students to listen to each-others views, opinions and experiences during class hours?

- Yes
- No

If the answer is “Yes”, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of this technique in creating a positive climate and building critical thinking skills for the students (circle the option that describes your opinion the best form the scale below)

☐ not effective    ☐ effective    ☐ very effective

9. Do you create opportunities for the students to get challenged and challenge their peers constructively during class hours?

- Yes
- No



- If yes, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of this technique in creating a positive climate and building critical thinking skills in the students( circle the option that describes your opinion the best form the scale below)

☐ not effective      ☐ effective      ☐ very effective

10. What are the steps to follow in order to help a student regulate its behavior if you notice anti-social attitudes or stances in the student?

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11. How would you evaluate the collaboration of the parents with your school in relation to the problems of antisocial behaviors?  
(circle the option that describes your opinion the best according to the scale below)

☐ not effective      ☐ effective      ☐ very effective

12. Are parents informed on where to address their concerns if they suspect their child is showcasing violent extremism behavior in their children?

- Yes
- No

If your answer is “Yes”, could you please note below where can they address themselves?

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13. Can parents identify if their children show violent behavior? How informed are they on the programs provided by the school (comment)?

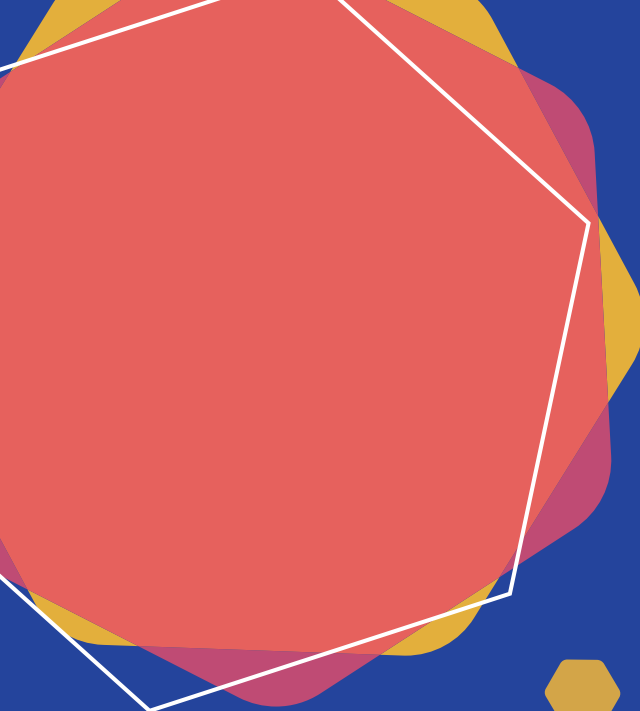
- Yes
- No

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Thank you for your collaboration



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This report was drafted by the Center of Coordination against Violent Extremism  
in cooperation with Save the Children  
and with the financial support of UNICEF Albania