



Erasmus+



Cre@t1ve Conflict Resolution and Peer-To-Peer School Mediation

A CASE STUDY

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CASE 1

1. Identification of the problem

It was reported that some irregularities and disturbing behavior in the sphere of friendship and social relations were noticed among the students of one of the first grades. One of the girls was isolated by the rest of the class community. The class teacher's was informed about the existence of a conflict in the peer group. He concluded that the girl is not only rejected by the class, but even discriminated against. During the lesson, she sits alone in the desk, and during breaks she does not talk to anyone. It also turned out that some nasty girls from the class posted on school's FB account some rumors as well as offensive and funny information to make fun of her and to humiliate her in from the wider environment beyond the class.

2. The genesis and development of the situation

It was not easy to diagnose the situation that ensued. The conversation with the tutor and her parents during the class explained a lot. The girl came from a small town, far away from Białystok. She had broad literary interests and was very sensitive. It turned out that she is unfamiliar with the latest fashion trends. There were attempts to relegate Maxie to the position of a class scapegoat. The schoolgirl was mocked by two wealthy girls.

3. The scale of the problem

Part of the class distanced itself from this situation. They condemned the harassment of the girl, but remained passive. Another part of the class was cheering and stirring

up with mocking activities. After talking to the student and her parents, it turned out that they were considering changing schools because Maxie was close to depression, which made the teacher very concerned.

4. Prognosis

a) Without peer mediation

- a) lack of pro-social behavior skills,
- b) the emergence of teaching difficulties,
- c) deepening isolation behavior, loneliness,
- d) threat to the safety and health of the student - health negligence, truancy,
- e) isolation in the peer group,
- f) inadequate low self-esteem and self-acceptance.

b) With peer mediation

- a) acquiring the ability to control negative emotions,
- b) improvement of teaching backlogs,
- c) behavior appropriate to the situation,
- d) increasing the value of oneself, faith in one's own abilities,
- e) establishing appropriate social relations with peers and adults,
- f) improving the image of the child,
- g) acceptance and openness to peer group.

The psychologist interviewed her parents during individual consultations. The girl never complained about her persecutor. The contact with the parents of the harassing girls explained a lot. It turned out that the parents of one of them are getting divorced, and the other are so busy that they do not show interest in their child.

Having the full picture of the situation, the teacher predicted that it was necessary and as soon as possible to undertake such educational activities that would lead to the extinction of the conflict without overt interference. Developing a camouflaged strategy has become a huge challenge for the teacher. He decided that actions taken in this form will be appropriate and effective. He was afraid that Maxie's school change, as planned by her parents, would not solve the problem.

5. Aims of peer mediation and social dialogue

The aim of our actions was to extinguish the problem between the girls and bring about correct relations. The mediation team decided to conduct workshops in this class, proposing a form of group work. All activities were consulted with the form teacher and school's psychologist. After assigning the tasks, it turned out that Maxie is the perfect leader of the group. The team strengthened the position of the student in the class, emphasizing her knowledge. Due to the fact that different opinions were exchanged and shared the class understood the source of the problem and began to perceive Maxie differently.

6. Results

The effects of peer mediation sessions in connection to psychologist's consultations and form teacher's persuasive arguments resulted in success. Not only Maxie's position in the class was changed, but also the educational situation in the whole class improved. An interview with Maxie's parents confirmed that the problem was alleviated. The girl stopped being ridiculed and attacked, as well as being isolated by the rest of the class. She established relationships with two girls who began to appreciate her knowledge and interests.

7. Conclusion

Only by the constructive dialogue between the parties was this conflict resolved. There were many people involved into the negotiation process which enabled broadening the minds and full understanding of conflicted parties. It was also because of the fact that participants have a common ground that is unrelated to the conflict, such as: both groups belong to the same generation, the same school, are at the same age. In this case, mediation strengthened by social dialogue was the most effective tool for resolving this conflict.