DISCRIMINATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATIONAL UNITS

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Abstract

Discrimination is a social phenomenon with a negative impact not only on the people to whom this treatment is applied, but on the whole community that will have to advise the victims of this antisocial behavior. It is quite possible that all persons, at least once in their lives, have been discriminated against, socially, medically, ethnically, racially, spiritually, culturally or for other reasons that are not the subject of this study. Young people, most of the time, represent the category most often discriminated against, especially in school. Cyberbullying is the most widespread form of discrimination among young people, having some of the most unfortunate consequences, such as depression, low self-esteem, uselessness, marginalization and social exclusion, inability to become a leader, anxiety, and even suicide. How can we limit this social phenomenon? Realizing that, at some point, any aggressor or discriminator can become a victim. The present study presents the results of an anti-discrimination campaign implemented by the Association „Sf. Voievod Ştefan cel Mare – Hârja", Bacău County, through an activity within the Human Capital Operational Program (POCU), a campaign addressed to a number of almost 500 young people from pre-university education from Bacău County.

Keywords: discrimination, bullying, cyberbullying, counselling, disability, education, victim.

Resumé

La discrimination est un phénomène social avec un impact négatif non seulement sur les personnes à qui ce traitement est appliqué, mais sur toute la communauté qui devra informer les victimes de ce comportement antisocial. Il est fort possible que toutes les personnes, au moins une fois dans leur vie, aient été discriminées, socialement, médicalement, ethniquement, racialement, spirituellement, culturellement ou pour d'autres raisons qui ne font pas l'objet de cette étude. Les jeunes, la plupart du temps, représentent la catégorie la plus souvent discriminée, notamment à l'école. La cyberintimidation est la forme de discrimination la plus répandue chez les jeunes, ayant certaines des conséquences les plus malheureuses, telles que la dépression, la faible estime de soi, l'inutilité, la marginalisation et l'exclusion sociale, l'incapacité à devenir un leader, l'anxiété et même le suicide. Comment limiter ce phénomène social ? Se rendre compte qu'à un moment donné,

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tout agresseur ou discriminateur peut devenir une victime. La présente étude présente les résultats d'une campagne anti-discrimination mise en œuvre par l'Association de Saint-Voïvode Ştefan cel Mare – Hârja, département de Bacău, à travers une activité dans le cadre du Programme opérationnel de capital humain (POCU), une campagne adressée à un nombre de 501 jeunes de l'enseignement pré-universitaire du département de Bacău.

Mots clés: discrimination, harcèlement, cyber-harcèlement, conseil, handicap, éducation, victime.

Rezumat
Discriminarea reprezintă un fenomen social cu impact negativ nu doar asupra persoanelor cărora li se aplică aceste tratament, ci față de întreaga comunitate care va fi nevoită să consilieze victimele acestui comportament antisocial. Este foarte posibil ca toate persoanele, cel puțin o dată în viață, să fi fost discriminate, din punct de vedere social, medical, etnic, rasial, spiritual, cultural sau din alte motive care nu fac obiectul acestui studiu.
Tinerii, de cele mai multe ori, reprezintă categoria cea mai des discriminată, mai ales în școală. Cyberbullyng-ul este cea mai răspândită formă de discriminare în rândul tinerilor, având consecințe dintre cele mai nefericite, precum depresia, scăderea stimei de sine, inutilitatea, marginalizarea și excluziunea socială, incapabilitatea de a deveni leader, anxietatea, și chiar suicidul. Cum putem limita acest fenomen social? Conştientizând că, la o un moment dat, orice agresor sau discriminator, poate deveni o victimă. Studiul de față prezintă rezultatele unei campanii antidiscrimirare implementată de Asociația Sf. Voievod Ştefan cel Mare – Hârja, județul Bacău, prin intermediul unui activități din cadrul Programului Operațional Capital Uman (POCU), campanie adresată unui număr de 501 tineri din învățământul preuniversitar din județul Bacău.

Cuvinte cheie: discriminare, bullying, cyberbullying, consiliere, dizabilitatea, educație, victimă.

1. What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unequal treatment of individuals or groups in relation to some categorical traits such as ethnic, racial, religious or class membership (Gavriluţă, 2015; Andronache, 2011). The term is commonly used to describe the action of a dominant majority in relation to a dominated minority and implies harm to a person or group. The United Nations includes in the category of discrimination „any conduct based on the distinction made in relation to certain natural and social categories and which is not related to the individual capacities and merits or to the concrete behavior of a person" (Zamfir, Vlăsceanu, 1998, p. 174). Discrimination is favored by the following situations: ethnocentrism, insufficient knowledge of others, generalization of one's own life experience (issuing judgments regarding an entire group starting from the experience they had with a single member or with few members of this group), selecting stereotypes consistent with previous beliefs and impressions and developing prejudices regarding the people with whom they compete. Unequal treatment of people who are essentially equal is practised in all societies.

The assessment of this treatment as discrimination is made in relation to the social norms and values dominant in society. Egalitarian movements, of religious or utopian origin, which have pursued the complete elimination of discrimination, they have been partially successful. It should be noted that in all democratic societies, from a formal legal point of view, any form of discrimination is prohibited, in relation to sex, race, ethnic and religious affiliation. This does not mean that in concrete social action the constitutional provisions are fully respected. „Discrimination is practiced not only by individuals but also by institutions: companies, schools, hospitals, government organizations. In this case, there is an institutional discrimination” (Zamfir, Vlăsceanu, 1998, pp. 174-175).

Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, chronic non-contagious disease, HIV infection or membership of a disadvantaged category, and the purpose or effect of restricting or removing the recognition, use or exercise, on an equal basis, of human rights and fundamental freedoms or rights recognised by law, in the political, economic, social and cultural fields or in any other areas of public life. Discrimination involves: you differentiate between people, groups and communities, to the disadvantage of some of them; exclude certain individuals, groups and communities from activities, benefits and rights conferred by law; restrict to individuals, groups and communities the rights and freedoms conferred by law; you preferentially treat certain people, groups, communities, compared to others, granting privileges to the former and disadvantageting the latter (Association Training, Development, Assistance - FORDA Buzău, 2010, p. 12).

2. Effects of discrimination on children

In the guide „Multicultural Education. Roma Children in School” edited by save the children, psychologist Diana Ureche, dedicates a chapter to the long-term effects of discrimination on children. Without envisioning the effects, discrimination may be perceived as an act of lesser or lesser significance. Thus, the guide (Alexandrescu, 2005) mentions some of the immediate, medium-term and lasting effects:

The decrease of self-esteem / self-image - is an accumulation of feelings of inferiority, which the child internalizes, when he hears that he is not able, that he is not good, when he is shown that he is extra in class. The child begins to perceive himself lower than the others and no longer appreciates his progress. Depending on how frequently he is subject to discrimination, he may end up in group isolation and even dropping out of school.

Aggressiveness - discrimination is, under all conditions, an act of aggression against the discriminated one. It is quite possible that a child will respond aggressively, in turn, in an attempt to defend himself. Aggression can extend, as a response reaction, to any type of interaction with teachers or colleagues, but also in other contexts.

Depression - subjected to the stigma, the child may develop a state of deep sadness. He can become apathetic („what sense does it make to learn"), disinterested in whatever happens around him, pessimistic, exaggeratedly self-critical („I don't know how to do anything good"), he can ignore any success and, in the end, without receiving assistance, he will self-isolate himself from the rest of the group.

Addiction to substances (alcohol, tobacco, drugs) - in the case of middle school or high school students, the lack of recognition of efforts, progress and their continuous labeling can cause them to satisfy their emotional needs through substance use and abuse, especially in the conditions in which he becomes cool, acquires new friends, may seem more „mature" in the eyes of colleagues.

Eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia); another effect that may occur is *anxiety* - is the installation of a state of restlessness, diffuse fear, without a well-determined reason, which fuels states of fear related to various topics. There may be a fear of large spaces, getting out of the house, using public transport, etc. A guide of good practice for teachers (ISJ et al., 2013) mentioned that sometimes these fears, called phobias, become so intense that the person develops blockages in acting, in exams, in front of people or in various difficult periods.

3. Discrimination of young people on medical grounds: Disability

Disability is a generic term for impairments, limitations on activity and restrictions on participation. International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, World Health Organization mentioned that it denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between the individual (who has a health problem) and the context factors in which he finds himself (environmental and personal factors).

Disabilities can be of a sensory type (visual or hearing impairment), of a motor type (inability to partially or totally use the limbs), neurological, mental, intellectual, or can be determined by certain genetic disorders or syndromes whose causes of occurrence are not yet determined. Many disabilities are invisible, so sometimes we interact, in everyday life with people we do not know have a disability.

Given that in Romania the start for the normalization of the lives of people with disabilities took place later in relation to most of the European Union countries, the involvement of the school environment becomes fundamental in their integration into social life. If, in addition to the condition they already have, stigma is also added, then children with disabilities are subjected to double suffering, which will make their academic advances, adaptation and living infinitely more difficult.

What is a disabled child? First of all, it's a child. When the fact that his progress is slower, when he does not understand as quickly, when he refuses or he cannot do certain things that typical peers easily achieve, we must remember that he is a child. Like others, children with disabilities are differentiated by the needs, capabilities and interests they have. Therefore, if we look at them and approach

them in this way, we will naturally discover the ways of working effectively with them so that they can overcome certain limits or difficulties. The child with disabilities in society

Disability attracts the attention of those around you, but the correct information of the local and school community can turn this attention into a positive one, which serves as a starting point for social and school inclusion actions for the child. Adapting the disabled child to the environment is all the easier as those around him maintain attention on his needs and there is a joint effort to increase his comfort. The effort is all the less, as it is shared by as many members of the community as possible: family, friends, children, teachers, specialists and the local community in general.

4. Equal opportunities for those with disabilities

People with disabilities have more difficult access to education and as a result a greater number of them have a lower level of schooling with implications for employment.

According to a study by the Romanian Academic Society, Obstacles in the employment of people with disabilities in Romania, the percentage of people with disabilities in school is 7 times higher than the national average. Dropping out of school after the first 4 classes is twice as common among people with disabilities. Only 17.5 percent of people with disabilities manage to complete their high school studies compared to the national average of about 31 percent. Only 8.3 percent of people with disabilities who have a job are graduates of higher education.

A child with disabilities who is institutionalized, who does not receive adequate education and does not socialize, will never reach his full potential so that he can have a job, according to his powers and skill.

5. Discrimination of young people in schools

School violence is a complex phenomenon due to the multitude of forms, causes and other specific aspects that have been the subject of several specialized studies in various fields: psychology, pedagogy, sociology, medicine etc. „Bullying behavior can be classified in the sphere of the general concept of school violence as a specific form of it" (Beldean-Galea et al., 2016, p. 32).

Bullying can be defined as a specific type of aggression in which: a) the behavior is intended to harm or disturb; b) the behavior is repeated repeatedly over time; c) there is an imbalance of power, with a strong person or group attacking a less powerful one. Aggression behaviors are intended to cause harm, but these definitions do not indicate specific types of behaviors to recognize that there are many different forms of aggression. The most commonly identified forms of harassment are physical harassment, verbal harassment, property damage, social harassment, and cyberbullying. Physical harassment refers to the use of force by the aggressor/aggressors and includes behaviors such as hitting the victim. Verbal harassment refers to contemptuous, oral or written communication directed at the

victim and includes taunts, insults, and the sending of mischievous notes. Social bullying is aimed at affecting one's social status or relationships. Common examples of socially aggressive behaviour include social exclusion, malicious gossip and manipulation of friendship. Relational harassment and indirect harassment are terms that have been used to refer to similar constructs. Of all the terms exposed, social harassment is the broadest in recognizing aggressive behaviors that are both verbal and nonverbal and of a direct and indirect nature (Rosen et al., 2017, p.3).

Bullying is serious. It is intentional, unprovoked, aggressive, repeated physical or mental attacks on another student who is perceived as powerless and defenseless against abuse. Bullying can be perpetrated by a single student or by a group of students against a student or group of students. Sometimes bullying is sporadic and may even be directed at friends, but in its worst form, it is chronic and endless for the victim. This chronic form of aggression is taken into account antisocial behavior, leading to short- and long-term negative consequences for victims and perpetrators: the development of conduct disorders in bullies, which leads to antisocial problems in adulthood; and lasting trauma to victims, with the most severe reactions culminating in suicide or homicide, as seen in the wave of shootings in schools by people assaulted by students.

U.S. government research groups, as well as other global organizations studying bullying, report that more than 70 percent of all schoolchildren report that they have been the victim of an incident of bullying. Some research shows that as children enter middle school, open attacks are peak, but decrease in high school, although verbal insults and isolation seem to remain constant in all grades. Other studies indicate that in elementary school, where everything begins, children are more likely to be harassed direct forms, such as pushing and shouting, than in the upper classes (Mayer, 2008, pp. 113-114).

Bullying at school and at the playground can include a child ridiculing a classmate who is taking good grades; a classmate in an inclusion class blocking a special needs the child to descend on a sliding plank; or a group of students excluding a child from a game. „Harassing in the cafeteria includes throwing food at another student or telling another child can't sit at a certain table. Neighborhood harassment can include ignoring other children or not inviting them to participate in group activities" (Depino, 2011, p. 3).

The pandemic period brought an amelioration of the bulling phenomenon through isolation but developed other forms of harassment and abuse in the virtual space which could lead to mental disorders and behavioral changes (Mihalache, 2021, p. 45).

Harassing others through electronic channels is a relatively new phenomenon, and many terms have been used to refer to this type of behavior, including cyberbullying, electronic harassment, online harassment, cyberbullying, and social cruelty. The term cyberbullying is becoming widely adopted and has been defined as „malicious and repeated caused by the use of computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices.

Going beyond the focus on bullies and victims, research began to examine the association between simply witnessing harassment and unjustifiability. In a daily journal study, 42 percent of middle school students reported witnessing at least one incident of peer-to-peer harassment at school. These bystanders may be at risk, as are bullies and victims, as the findings suggest that „bullying is associated with several forms of misadaptation, including substance use, anxiety, somatic complaints, and depressive symptoms" (Rosen et al., 2017, p. 13).

An important concept underlying a functional vision of bullying is the idea that any behavior serves a particular purpose. The theory of applied behavior analysis holds that organisms engage in behavior in order to have access to hardening or to avoid punishment. Behaviors that result in hardening are more likely to occur in the future in similar circumstances, while behaviors that are not strengthened or that lead to punishment are less likely to occur in the future in similar circumstances. For example, „a student can give a correct answer to a question during math classes and receive praise from the teacher. If adult praise works as a hardener for that student, it is more likely that she will answer questions in the future. Instead, a student may give an incorrect answer and be teased because they do not know the correct answer. Teasing can serve as punishment for future answers, which makes the student less likely to answer questions in the future. This principle applies to any behavior and can be conceptualized into a three-step contingency, Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC), where the antecedent is a trigger for a particular behavior and the consequence is the result of the behavior" (Rosen et al., 2017, p. 24).

While social reinforcement fuels the behavior of perpetrators, it also has implications for victims. In every bullying incident, a victim's behavior can be reinforced or punished by the behavior of the perpetrators and those around them. Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression are often harmful and punitive to the victim, resulting in the victim's avoidance of the perpetrator, the environment, or the school. However, bullying incidents can also provide a form of peer attention to the victim. Some victims of bullying are unpopular and have few friends. Peer attention from bullying incidents, despite being negative and hurtful, can still reinforce the triggering behavior of victims. If the reinforcing effects of peer attention from perpetrators and bystanders outweigh the punishing effects of bullying, the victim may learn that victimization is an effective means of gaining peer attention. In the future, that individual may seek similar interactions, even when those interactions result in some harm. They may also learn to instigate aggression (ie, bully/victim) if they have poor social skills or cannot access peer attention more adequately. Unfortunately, „this is usually the case for students with disabilities, especially those with emotional disturbances, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, autism spectrum disorder, or orthopedic impairments" (Rosen *et al.*, 2017, p. 27).

Children and parents see teachers as educators, decision makers and protectors of students in the classroom. When children report to their parents about difficulties with other students at school, parents tend to refer their children

to the teacher as a source of help and support. Society has traditionally viewed teachers as the first line of defense in identifying and intervening against student bullying; however, teachers may unintentionally play a passive and/or active role in contributing to school bullying. Today, teachers have a wide set of responsibilities that involve more than just teaching students. While teachers focus on these additional tasks, they may inadvertently overlook serious behavioral issues, such as peer bullying, that do not directly affect the learning environment. This can be especially true when teachers are under pressure to get their students to perform well during high-stakes tests. The emphasis on high-stakes test scores has led to „a narrowed curriculum, increased stress on teachers and students, and reduced teacher attention to other aspects of student development." The resulting classroom is likely to be less inclusive and feel less comfortable for students. In this stressful environment, teachers may not be aware that bullying is occurring in their classroom context, thus inadvertently contributing to the bullying situation.

How much does bullying really matter? One can still come across the view that bullying is training for „real life" and a necessary part of growing up. However, the more serious forms of bullying, at least, can have very serious consequences; „real life" would no doubt seem like a welcome escape for the victimized. For children who are bullied, their lives often become miserable for a considerable period of time. „They probably already lack close friends at school, they are likely to lose even more confidence and self-esteem" (Smith, Thompson, 2018, p. 6).

6. Cyberbullying

The development of the Internet and the generalization of access to the „network" from the youngest ages has given rise to extensive discussions regarding the risks it brings with it. Especially for child users, „easy access to pornography, meeting strangers as a result of online contact, receiving and/or sending messages (text, audio, video) with sexual content or harassment and bullying on the Internet are considered to be risks of the internet from which the child must, as far as possible, be protected" (Velicu, 2014, p. 2).

Cyberbullying is the intentional act of online/digital intimidation, embarrassment or harassment and is operationalized to directly include verbal and non-verbal behaviour, including mean messages; violent, intimate and unpleasant images; and silent phone calls. „There is debate as to whether cyberbullying is an extension of face-to-face bullying" (Betts *et al.*, 2019, pp. 1-2).

There is compelling evidence that being cyberbullied can lead to serious psychosomatic and psychosocial health problems. Several studies have found that victims of cyberbullying feel depressed, confused, guilty, fearful, lonely, embarrassed, angry, sad, and experience low self-esteem and more interpersonal problems than non-victims. Other studies have found clear evidence for negative behavioral and physical consequences associated with cyberbullying, such as offline interpersonal victimization, drug and alcohol use, problems at school and with peers, physical or sexual abuse. delinquency and aggressive behavior. Some researchers suggest that the effects of cyberbullying are more severe than the

effects of traditional bullying due to the anonymity of the bully and the continuity of the messages. Researching the literature mentioned above reveals that cyberbullying is a serious problem with serious consequences. Very little is known about the role of the parent in cyberbullying. „Parents are often excluded from children's Internet activities" (Dehue *et al.*, 2012, p. 7).

Three other criteria specifically distinguish bullying. The pain done is unprovoked, at least by any action that would normally be considered provocation. (Being clumsy, for example, might invite some aggression, but wouldn't normally be considered legitimate provocation). Bullying is thought of as a repeated action; something that only happens once or twice would not be called bullying. Finally, the child who commits aggression is generally considered stronger, or perceived as stronger; at least, the victim is not (or does not feel he/she is) able to fight back very effectively. These latter characteristics mean that bullying behavior can be extremely distressing for the recipient and, in particular, have unfortunate long-term effects (Smith, Thompson, 2018, p. 2).

Although participants believed that cyberbullying could occur among elementary school students, they believed that it was likely to become more common during adolescence. Among high school students there appears to be a peak in cyberbullying involvement at around age 15. This peaks in middle childhood. Cyberbullying among teenagers is said to be more severe than cyberbullying experienced by younger students, although some have felt that younger children may be more negatively affected by cyberbullying. byage and that children can „overcome certain types of cyberbullying when that mode of contact was no longer used by that age group". This may have implications for intervention/prevention work, as it may be possible when discussing cyberbullying with younger children to use examples that are more resonant with their experiences. Other researchers have pointed out that ICT is „constantly changing and trends in the use of different forms of online communication are also changing, which by extension means that the types of cyberbullying are evolving" (Monks *et al.*, 2016, p. 42).

7. The main forms of discrimination

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when an employer refuses to hire a person because of race, color or national origin. Intent is easy to establish when the employer has expressly or impliedly stated that he does not want to hire members of a particular race. Intent, however, can also be inferred from the employer's conduct. Such an inference might be drawn where an employer refuses to hire a qualified person who is a member of a particular race and the position remains open to similarly qualified candidates of a different race. Unless the employer can justify that decision on legitimate grounds, such behavior would constitute direct discrimination.

Discrimination can also be indirect, as when institutional policies or practices have the effect of systematically excluding members of certain groups from employment opportunities. This form of discrimination is perhaps the most

widespread and also the most difficult to eradicate. It occurs when seemingly neutral job requirements consistently exclude members of a particular racial or ethnic background. Such requirements include height or weight restrictions and degree or other formal requirements unrelated to the specific position. The United States Supreme Court declared this type of discrimination illegal in 1971 in its famous Griggs v. Duke Power Co. decision. In that case," the employer required a high school diploma and a minimum intelligence test score for a job that objectively did not require those qualifications. The Court found that although the employer did not intend to discriminate, the conduct was unlawful" (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Right [OUNHCHR], 2005, p. 42).

It is said that an equal opportunity system guarantees equal treatment, not equal results. In this system, all participants are considered to have the same basic means to achieve the desired goal, but not all succeed in achieving it. Only the most skilled do it, as not all competitors perform their skills in the same way. Equality of opportunity is thus consistent with the model of a market system in which unequal outcomes are seen as the engine that motivates people to compete. Because in an ideal market system competition is a continuous process, those who do not reach their goal today know that they will always have another chance.

This reasonable justification for unequal outcomes faces a major difficulty when it is used to explain inequalities arising from a historical pattern of racial discrimination. Why do blacks, or other members of minority or economically disadvantaged groups, never seem able to catch up with members of economically or socially dominant groups? In the United States, for example, despite enormous efforts to ensure equal opportunity, racial and ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented at higher levels of employment and continue to be overrepresented among the unemployed. This is partly because members of groups that have been victims of racial discrimination in the past cannot compete in the labor market on equal terms today. The unequal distribution of the means to compete is often a direct consequence of an unequal distribution in previous rounds of asset allocation. This leads to the development of a vicious circle of discrimination. „Today's unequal outcomes are the consequence of yesterday's unequal outcomes and in turn will become a factor in determining tomorrow's unequal outcomes" (OUNHCHR, 2005, p. 64).

Stereotyping is one of the reasons why discrimination persists and why, despite individual efforts, victims of discrimination find it so difficult to overcome barriers to employment. In the context of employment, the most familiar and depressing illustration of stereotyping is when equally qualified people compete for the same job and the only difference between them is that one belongs to a minority race or ethnic group. In these situations, employers will usually refuse to hire a member of the minority group because of the assumptions they make about their character and other attributes. Such assumptions include the idea that they are lazy, dishonest, unstable, prone to alcoholism or violent. The European Court of Justice has recently recognized, in the context of gender discrimination, that

stereotyping can have illegal consequences in the field of employment and therefore special preventive measures are warranted.

Employment decisions based on such stereotypes have the effect of sustaining and perpetuating prevailing patterns of discrimination. Stereotyping is particularly insidious because those who rely on it are often unaware of their own biases. Stereotyping as a factor in hiring decisions also contradicts the view held by some economists that market forces left alone can end discrimination. This particular economic interpretation of discrimination deserves careful consideration because it is very influential and, on the surface, quite persuasive. The argument, albeit in sketchy form, is that employment discrimination exists because some employers who have a taste for discrimination might be willing to bear the costs of refusing to hire people with whom they do not wish to associate. Since allowing discrimination is costly, employers „will only do so if there are conditions" (OUNHCHR, 2005, p. 65).

Ethnic conflict produces many refugees and internally displaced persons. In addition to the conditions faced by male refugees, women who are refugees or internally displaced also face increased vulnerability to sexual violence, domestic violence and limitations on their freedom of movement. For example, Burundian women in refugee camps in the United Republic of Tanzania were regularly attacked while carrying out daily tasks. In fact, 80% of the world's refugees are women and children 15, although these groups have traditionally been marginalized in asylum law. This is exemplified by the failure of many countries to recognize gender-based violence as a ground for asylum, and can be seen in the absence of culturally and gender-sensitive procedures for refugee determination, which are essential to enable women to and describes the experiences of those making a decision about their asylum claim. In addition, an increasing number of women are victims of human trafficking who suffer serious harm at the hands of traffickers. „There is little recognition that the experience of trafficking can itself give grounds for refugee status under the 1951 Refugee Convention" (OUNHCHR, p. 184).

8. The anti-discrimination campaign in pre-university education units in Bacău County[2]

Between September 19 and 22, 2022, the Association „Sf. Voivod Ștefan cel Mare-Hârja" organized the anti-discrimination campaign „Stop discrimination! Acceptance begins with you!", which involved the dissemination of information in high school and secondary schools, the organization of a conference and a workshop at the association's headquarters. The campaign is aimed at a minimum number of 1000 young people, the association from Hârja is currently completing the first stage of the campaign, and will reach another 500 students in September next year.

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[2] https://eprb.ro/campanie-antidiscriminare-unitati-de-invatamant-preuniversitar, accesed at 05.10.2022.

The campaign was carried out in collaboration with the Bacău County School Inspectorate and had the role of informing and making young people aware of the risks faced by students discriminated from a medical, religious, social, ethnic and racial point of view.

The educational units where the campaign was carried out were: Gheorghe Asachi Onești Technical College, „Grigore Moisil" Onești National College, Carol Davila Post-Lice Health School, Oituz High School, No. 1 Oituz High School, Tg Ocna Technological High School.

During the meetings with middle school and high school students, experts from the project spoke to them about discrimination, its forms, prevention and intervention methods. Leaflets, flyers with information about discrimination and bullying, t-shirts and caps with the message of the campaign were also distributed to the students, to encourage them to become promoters of anti-discrimination. During the 3 days of the school campaign, we talked to over 500 students, who were receptive to the message of our campaign, and we hope that in the future they will be even more tolerant and sensitive to this issue.

On the last day of the campaign - September 22, a conference was organized at the Onești Municipal Library with the theme „Discrimination in schools and public institutions - approach and prevention methods!" which was attended by over 50 people: teachers, school principals and representatives of the Valea Trotușului Bacău LAG. During the conference, the following were presented: the POCU project and its objectives and activities, the activity of the „Sfântul Voivode Ștefan cel Mare – Hârja" Association, as well as the topics of main interest: Discrimination of children with autism and other disorders from the perspective of the therapist - lecture given by mrs. Psych. Țuțianu Marilena, Discrimination of children at risk of poverty from the pedagogical perspective - lecture given by Mrs. Prof. Buță Dorica, Discrimination from the perspective of the parent of a child diagnosed with autism - lecture given by Mrs. Negoita Bianca.

We hope that the message of our campaign has reached as many people and vulnerable people as possible: children at risk of poverty, children diagnosed with autism, adults and young people at risk of poverty will no longer be discriminated against, especially in spaces that should to give them safety and the chance for a better future: schools and public institutions!

People who wish to receive information about this campaign can visit the project website (https://asociatiaharja.ro/despre-proiect/) and ask questions on the Facebook page: Association „Sfântul Voievod Ștefan cel Mare Hârja" or by phone : +40 752 270 375 and email: parohiaharja@yahoo.com.

After applying the questionnaire, the results from the 10 questions of the test instrument can be captured in the 3 figures below.
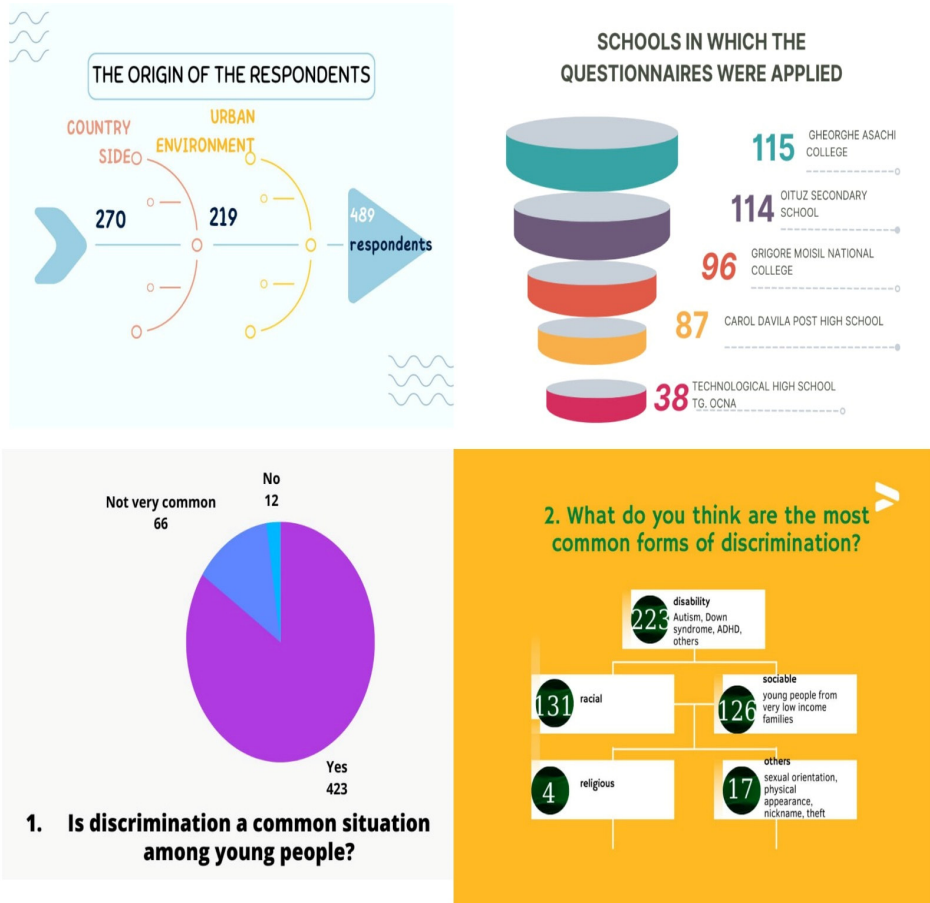
Research results

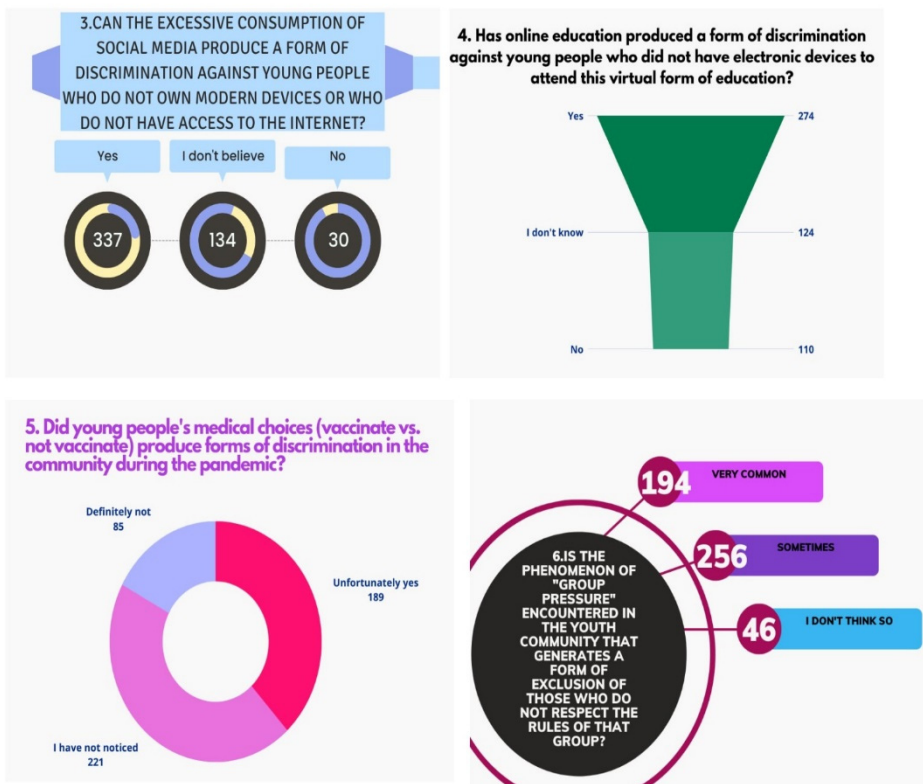*Figure no 1. The group campaign target and the first two questions in the questionnaire*

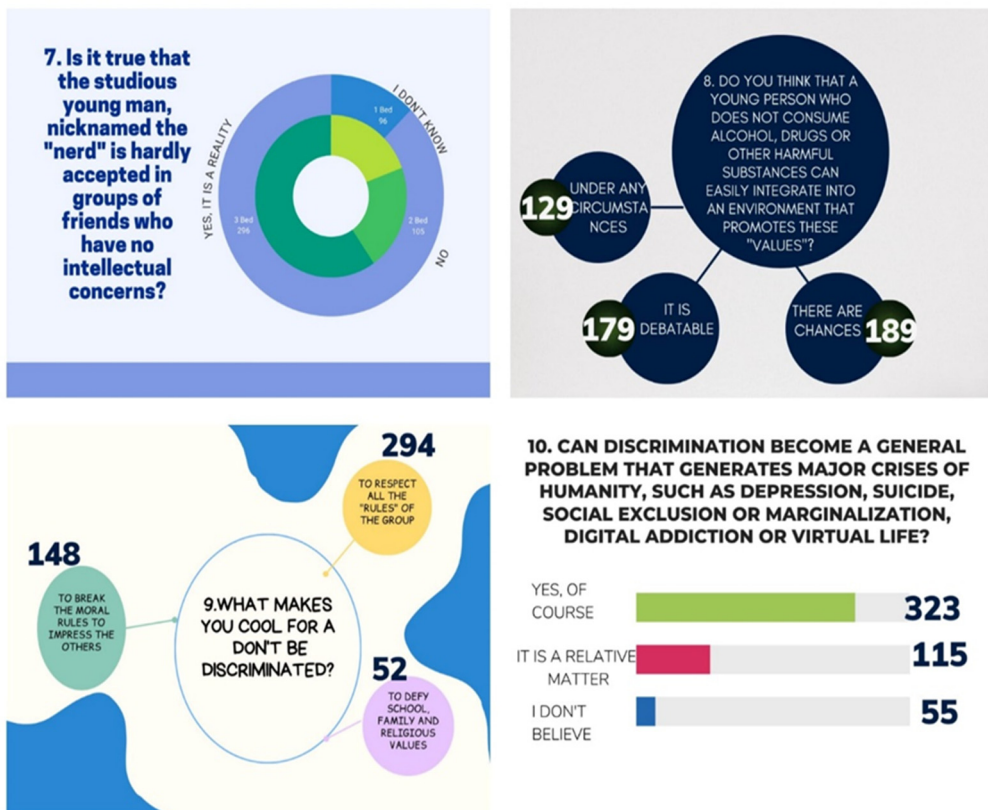*Figure no. 2. The following 4 questions and answers from the survey*

*Figure no 3. The last 4 questions and answers of the
anti-discrimination campaign questionnaire*

9. Conclusion

Young people are exposed to a multitude of forms of discrimination. Every day we meet discriminated people, especially young people, who cannot face discrimination. These interventions in the community through information and awareness campaigns have the role of signaling a social problem faced by a person or a group of people. In one way or another, it is unlikely that a person has not been discriminated against in their lifetime.

Children and young people feel discrimination harder. In schools and high schools, bullying is common, daily in all groups of students.

Discrimination, regardless of its form, medical, racial, ethnic, gender and social, even if it does not take an aggressive form, it produces states of frustration, anxiety, depression and isolation.

The newest and most harmful form of discrimination is cyberbullying, very common among young people, with an extraordinarily high psychological burden, which can even lead to suicide.

The results of the qualitative analysis of the questionnaire applied to a number of 489 young people from the pre-university education system in Bacău county, demonstrate the fact that discrimination is found in school, regardless of the young person's background and level of education. Unfortunately, we find at the same time, in the same group of students, several forms of discrimination. This reality is confirmed by the young people's answers to the question about the forms of discrimination and the frequency with which we find it in school.

The solution is to constantly discuss this topic with young people, to be open and to find together with them optimal solutions to successfully overcome these unpleasant moments in their lives. It is certain that, at some point, an aggressor who uses any form of discrimination against a colleague or another young person, may himself become a victim of another aggressor, perhaps even of one of the young people previously assaulted by him. Therefore, the purpose of this campaign „Stop discrimination! Acceptance starts with you!" had the main purpose of showing that often abnormality becomes normality and that tolerance or acceptance of those around us as they are, is a natural way of being and living in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and pluri-religious society.

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