



Out of The Net
Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership
2020-1-PL01-KA201-082223

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union 

OUT OF THE NET

2020-1-PL01-KA201-082223

Output 01

Social, psychological and pedagogical approach to Hikikomori Syndrome Prevention in the educational environment



Polo Europeo
della Conoscenza



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA



PANEVEŽIO RAJONO
ŠVIETIMO CENTRAS



Junta de
Castilla y León
Consejería de Educación



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

INDEX

The HIKIKOMORI phenomenon.....	3
NATIONAL ANALYSIS of the STATE of the ART.....	5
POLAND.....	5
ITALY.....	8
LITHUANIA.....	13
RUSSIAN FEDERATION.....	15
SPAIN.....	19
BULGARIA.....	25

The HIKIKOMORI phenomenon

The term Hikikomori is derived from the Japanese word 引籠もり which consists of two characters: 'hiku' which means 'pull' and 'komoru' which means 'isolated space', 'basket', or 'social isolation'. Hikikomori (a form of social withdrawal¹) describes behaviour in which adolescents and young adults refuse all real life (excluding virtual) contacts with society and withdraw from all social activities. This syndrome is also called abnormal withdrawal from social contact.²

It is a phenomenon in which young adults who have either graduated from high school or university, or who have dropped out and not completed their education, do not take up employment but rather cut off contact with society and confine their lives mainly to the family home. In Japan the hikikomori syndrome is more often related to men (76.4%).

The Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare defined hikikomori as a state in which a young person

1. mainly stays at home,
2. cannot or does not engage in social activities such as going to school or working ,
3. has continued in this state for more than 6 months,
4. has neither a psychotic pathology nor medium to lower level mental retardation,
5. has no close friends.

Being quite widespread in Japan, there is research and reports confirming that people with the hikikomori syndrome are also found in South Korea, the UK, Oman, Spain, Italy, etc.

Psychological patterns:

- Compensatory motivation of avoiding failure
- Anxiety, fear, phobias
- Distress
- Game addiction (online video games)
- Loneliness
- Apathy, subdepressive disorder, depressive and asocial attitude
- Inadequate self-judgement
- Egoism
- Infantile personality (reluctant to take responsibility for one's own life, unable to make decisions, inclined to blaming others)
- Protesting against parental and social pressure that deprives of personal choice
- Suppression (frustration) of basic needs, such as communication, vital needs, clean and orderly living space, etc.
- Potential suicidal tendencies
- Agoraphobia

Social patterns:

- Social isolation (social withdrawal, reclusion)
- Social maladaptation (avoiding communication, reserved demeanor, lowered emotional response, etc.)

1 <https://people.onliner.by/2020/01/16/xikki>

2 <https://www.lexico.com/definition/hikikomori>

- Aggression towards others
- Addictive behavioral patterns
- “Social protest, renunciation of consumerist society, its rules and hypocrisy”³
- Rejecting rules and norms of common social life
- Absence of live relationships with people, avoidance of social duties, emotional connection, care, engagement

Trigger factors:

Autopathic (primary hikikomori)⁴

- Genetic pre-requisites of social phobia
- Autism
- Mental disorders

Psychological and social (secondary hikikomori)

- Bullying and other stressful experiences
- Non-balanced conflict relationships in a family, authoritarian parents
- Rejection by peers (low social status, social outcast)
- Experience of failure

Associative semantic range (concepts related to hikikomori): voluntary self-isolation, social phobia, procrastination a type of existential suicide, existential escapism, deviation, a type of youth subculture, digital downshifting⁵ (terms in Russian)

3 <https://www.the-village.ru/city/ustory/226427-hikki>(article in Russian)

4 not enough evidence, a special longitudinal research with a wider sampling is required

5 <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/eskapizm-v-tsifrovom-sotsiume-ot-hikikomori-do-grupp-smerti/viewer>

NATIONAL ANALYSIS of the STATE of the ART

POLAND

NATIONAL SITUATION	
Educational policies aimed at prevention and dealing with the hikikomori phenomenon	<p>Program Active forms of counteracting social exclusion. New dimension 2020</p> <p>The program "National Program for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2020. A new dimension of active inclusion</p> <p>Act of July 7, 2017 amending certain acts related to family support systems (Journal of Laws, item 1428)</p> <p>Addictions to e-activities among young people: diagnosis and determinants. Report Prepared by: Małgorzata Styśko-Kunkowska and Grażyna Wąsowicz</p>
Official statistics of people with the hikikomori syndrome	<p>There is no such statistics due to the inconsistency of the term 'hikikomori' and non-recognition of the term at an official level</p>
Popular communities on social media	<p>Epidemia depresji i cierpienia 201 tys. wyświetleń 1 rok temu</p> <p>Drogowskazy: o skutkach izolacji wśród dzieci i hikikomori, japońskim wirusie samotności 189 wyświetleń 6 miesięcy temu</p> <p>http://blog.ozonee.pl/hikikomori-dotarło-do-polski-co-to-jest/</p> <p>„Hikikomori. Syndrom wycofania społecznego”, Marek Krzystanek, w: http://www.poradnia.pl</p> <p>„Narkomani internetu”, Violetta Ozminkowski współpraca Agata Budny, Adrian Todorczuk, w: http://polska.newsweek.pl</p>
Diagnosis and popularization of the problem	<p>The problem also exists in Poland. The first case was diagnosed in 2001 by a psychiatrist from Katowice, Marek Krzystanek, and it was described in the book "Crises, catastrophes, cataclysms in a psychological perspective", in the chapter devoted to diseases plaguing modern civilization. The title: "Hikikomori. The shadow of the city" speaks for itself. You can hear more about the problem thanks to the film "Suicide Room" made in Poland. Undoubtedly, the character of Dominik Santorski, created on the screen, would require a detailed diagnosis, but</p>

	<p>his behavior certainly contains many elements characteristic of hikikomori. It is also worth paying attention to the social reality outlined in the film - parents who are busy with intense work, deeply immersed in their world, do not understand what is happening to their son. The school reality also fosters alienation and is largely moving to the Internet. Dominik, harassed online, accused of homosexuality, escapes from the real world, locking himself in his room and avoiding direct contact with people. On the Internet, he meets Sylwia, who introduces him to the virtual suicide room, which is disastrous for Dominik.</p>
SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	
Support in Krakow for addicted youth	<p>https://www.centrumdobrejterapii.pl/kontakt/ Małopolska Psychological Assistance Center Malopolska Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Addictions. NZOZ</p>
Programmes for teachers	<p>file:///C:/Users/dyrektor/AppData/Local/Temp/E-uzaleznienia.%20Teoria,%20profilaktyka,%20terapia.pdf</p>
<u>Teachers</u>	<p>There are specialized institutions where teachers learn, raise and have sociotherapy for children with behavioral disorders, and thus computer-dependent children in social isolation. Teachers have special preparation in the field of sociotherapy, social rehabilitation and therapy of emotional disorders of children and adolescents. Students who have a certificate of the need for special education due to the risk of social maladjustment have 2 additional hours of sociotherapy at school. There is also a possibility of therapy in psychological and pedagogical counseling centers that closely cooperate with schools. A child may be given home tuition</p>
Work with parents	<p>Problems with addiction are dealt with by special state and private centers for combating addictions. The therapy includes meetings with parents and family therapy. Parents are educated by psychological and pedagogical counseling centers as part of group and individual meetings.</p>
INTERVENTION AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
Diagnosis of the problem	<p>In the Complex of Schools and Special Institutions, a survey on safe use of the Internet was conducted among students. The results show that 50% of students spend more than 3 hours or more in front of the computer after school. Most often, students play games (80%), 50% believe that it is their form of spending time. From the group of respondents, 30% believe that they cannot do without a computer. As many as half of the students' parents are not interested in how they spend their time and do not limit their access to the computer. When asked what the virtual world of internet means to them, 40% answered</p>

that it was an escape from everyday problems and an anonymous reality. Over 80% of students make friends on the Internet but only half of them later meet these people in the real world. Half of the respondents provide an e-mail address, telephone number or photo on the Internet. More than half of the respondents claim that using the Internet does not limit real interpersonal contacts. A disturbing phenomenon was noticed: 75% of students called out insults, used offensive words on the Internet, and 40% experienced ridiculing and upsetting another person on the Internet. If we analyze only chat and instant messaging, as many as half of the respondents indicated that they insult other people through these instant messengers. It is comforting that 50% of children still spend time in the yard every day and have real friends. However, in the same group of students, half of them prefer online contacts. One person in the anonymous survey revealed that he/she does not spend any time outside home and has no friends outside the network. Two people revealed experiencing anxiety in direct contact with others. It is also disturbing that only 40% of students talk about their problems with parents and guardians.

Conclusions:

The situation related to the pandemic and online learning is very dangerous for young primary school students, it may contribute to deepening social withdrawal and computer addiction. Although in Poland there is no diagnostics for the Hikikomori syndrome, adolescents are diagnosed with computer addiction, social isolation and anxiety disorders related to direct contacts with others. The problem exists and will continue to worsen in the future. It is therefore reasonable to create preventive and diagnostic programs for teachers and parents to quickly diagnose the problem and counteract it.

NATIONAL SITUATION

Educational policies aimed at prevention and dealing with the hikikomori phenomenon

The Hikikomori syndrome and the social withdrawal are usually considered in the general context of early school leaving, even if these students have different characteristics.

A first MOU has been signed in 2018 between Piemonte Region, Italian Ministry of Education and Hikikomori Italia Association for “promotion of culture and the definition of intervention strategies on the emerging phenomenon of voluntary social withdrawal - Hikikomori”. The aim was to increase awareness about this theme and collect information and practices for defining strategies of educational intervention. This has led to the definition of a Technical Committee from the Ministry of Education for defining national guidelines for supporting the educational rights of students in condition of voluntary social retirement.

See:

Memorandum of Understanding between the Region, the Piedmont Regional School Office of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research and the Hikikomori Italia Genitori Onlus Association for the promotion of culture and the definition of intervention strategies on the emerging phenomenon of voluntary social withdrawal - Hikikomori. http://www.regione.piemonte.it/governo/bollettino/abbonati/2018/46/attach/dgr_07727_1050_19102018.pdf

Official statistics of people with the hikikomori syndrome

Official statistics are not yet available, since the phenomenon is too recent. However, a first demographical survey about the hikikomori syndrome in Italy has been made by the Italian association Hikikomori Italia (see the following link https://www.hikikomoriitalia.it/p/the-first-statistical-data-on_26.html)

Other information can be found in the first surveys that have been developed recently, such as the research project by Unità Funzionale Salute Mentale Infanzia e Adolescenza della Az. USL 8 Arezzo (UFSMIA), which showed that in their sample (Ranieri et al., 2015), the phenomenon of school and social withdrawn seemed to affect the 1% of the school population in the age range of 12-16 (mean age: 14,5 years), with a light prevalence of male students (about 59,3%).

References:

Ranieri F, Andreoli M, Bellagamba E et al.: *Adolescenti tra abbandono scolastico e ritiro sociale: il fenomeno degli “hikikomori” ad Arezzo. Il Cesalpino 2015a*; 14: 13-17.

Crepaldi, M. (2019). *Hikikomori: i giovani che non escono di casa. Hikikomori*, 1-124.

Popular communities on social media

They are related to the main association on this topic in Italy, the Hikikomori Italia:

Website: <https://www.hikikomoriitalia.it/>

on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/HikikomoriItalia>

on Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/hikikomoriitalia/>

on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdfuMjhHrZd0OeLnKOVfhog>

Another Italian association that also includes in its activity the analysis and the treatment of hikikomori syndrome is the Cooperativa Minotauro Italia (Milan), which can be found on the Net on the following website:

<https://www.minotauro.it/hikikomori-in-italia/>

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Activities

The work with socially withdrawn adolescents requires a multifocal approach involving several operators: in parallel with psychotherapy and parental training activities with parents, home-based interventions should be envisaged or using computer technologies, if the adolescent is not willing to leave home but agrees to talk to a psychologist, individual and small group workshop activities with the aim of facilitating access to real interpersonal relationships, exercises to facilitate school and social reintegration. A careful assessment of the degree of Internet addiction should also be carried out using appropriate diagnostic tools.

The ministry of Education has created a technical Committee for defining national guidelines for students in a condition of voluntary social withdrawal.

Organisations that provide versatile support of students,

The Hikikomori Italia Association has a specific group for parents, the Hikikomori Italia Genitori.

teachers and parents

<https://www.hikikomoriitalia.it/p/onlus-parents.html>

Programmes for teachers

Other associations offer opportunities for professional development on the topic of hikikomori and voluntary social retirement for teachers. See, for example:

<https://www.centro-hikikomori.it/corsi-docenti-urs.html>

<https://www.igeacps.it/corso/seminario-online-hikikomori-conoscere-prevenire-e-affrontare/>

They are mainly focused on increasing awareness about the phenomenon of voluntary social withdrawn and the hikikomori syndrome

INTERVENTION AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Teachers

At the moment the only official intervention at educational level is the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding between the Region, the Piedmont Regional School Office of the Ministry of Education.

The teachers and schools can use some strategies to tackle the withdrawal issue according to the individual needs of the students:

- Interventions supporting the right to education and training on the basis of Regional Law n. 28/2007
- Personalisation and differentiation of the student's educational pathway on the basis of Law n. 53/2003 and of the current pedagogical principles, sanctioned and recognised at constitutional, national and transnational level (guarantee of the educational success of each individual, removal of obstacles to inclusion and participation)
- Activation of an "autonomous" Home Education pathway, decided by the school
- Derogation from the maximum number of absences provided for in the legislation, in cases of special educational needs.

Psychologists

The schools in their autonomy can decide to activate a psychological desk. Even if they are not specialized in the treatment of this syndrome, the school psychologists can represent an important first intervention to face the social anxiety and the first signs of social withdrawal.

In the last years, the psychotherapeutic approach to the Hikikomori syndrome and to the social withdraw has began to consider the home visiting as possible intervention in the most severe cases.

Specific courses has been activated (usually held by the association Hikikomori Italia) to provide psychologists with competences on the intervention with these young patients. A multifocused approach is often promoted (individual, family, socialization)

Work with parents

As identified by the association Hkikomori Italia, the family can implement different modes of intervention:

- Acknowledging the distress value the child's suffering
- Giving priority to the child's well-being over fulfilling social obligations, as would be the case with a physical illness
- Lowering expectations of the son/daughter and leaving more room for the expression of personal passions
- Seeking psychological help for the whole family, or at least for both parents.
- Take an interest in the son/daughter's passions, even if they are online (e.g. video games), giving them value and investigating their relationship with new technologies, paying greater attention to their online activities
- Constantly seek a two-way dialogue that is as constructive and empathetic as possible,
- Empower the child and have an equal relationship with him/her: do not treat him/her as someone who needs to be constantly helped or educated.
- Involve him/her in family decisions and strategies that concern him/her, trying to be as sincere and transparent as possible.
- Accept their social needs and take action to promote their expression and fulfilment.
- Seek dialogue with institutions and third sector organisations that can support the family, with a view to strengthening the intervention network.

LITHUANIA

NATIONAL SITUATION

Educational policies aimed at prevention and dealing with the hikikomori phenomenon

Legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania:

- Law on the protection of minors against the detrimental effect of public information;
- Law on the provision of information to the public;
- Rules of the control of sensitive information not to be published and of the dissemination of limited public information in public computer networks, approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania;
- Guidelines for using smart devices and the internet.

Official statistics of people with the hikikomori syndrome

In Lithuania there is no such statistics due to the inconsistency of the term 'hikikomori' and non-recognition of the term at the official level.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Activities

There are children daily care centers and summer camps for children in Lithuania.

Organizations that provide versatile support of students, teachers and parents

„Safer Internet Centre Lithuania: draugiskasinternetas.lt II”

www.pvc.lt – it is a non-governmental organization that has been providing psychological assistance to families and children experiencing psychological difficulties since 1995.

„Children Support Center“ runs the following programs:”Big Brothers”, ”Big Sisters”, ”Step Two”, ”Positive Parenting”, and ”Parent Line”.

www.didelimaziekranai.lt – the project aims to develop the media literacy of Lithuanian teachers and senior students

Child line – “Vaiku linija” (vaikulinja.lt) - emotional support to resolve difficulties, disagreements with friends, parents, or teachers.

Parent line – “Tėvų linija” - provides telephone consultations of professional psychologists to parents, adoptive parents, guardians, and grandparents.

Programmes for teachers

for <https://www.bepatyciu.lt> – A campaign initiated by Child line (“Vaiku linija”), the main goal of which is the prevention of violence and bullying.

<https://www.bepatyciu.lt/tevams/apie-elektronines-patycias>

INTERVENTION AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Teachers

<https://www.vaikolabui.lt/pedagogams/>

<http://www.stepgrupes.lt/pirma-karta-lietuvoje-step-m-programa-mokytojams/>

Psychologists

[Priklausomybė nuo interneto | Vaikų linija \(vaikulinija.lt\)](#)

[Vaikų priklausomybė nuo kompiuterio | Specializuota psichologinė pagalba! \(seimospsichologas.lt\)](#) – a paid service, where trainings and consultations take place.

The memo “WHEN THE COMPUTER BECOMES A BEST FRIEND ...” for parents, published by the State Mental Health Center.

Work with parents

Digital Ethics Center. Its goal is the well-being of whole society, especially children and young people, in the digital world. Here you will find reliable, research-based information and expert advice on when and how the use of technology is beneficial and when it may pose a threat to your health, safety or reputation.

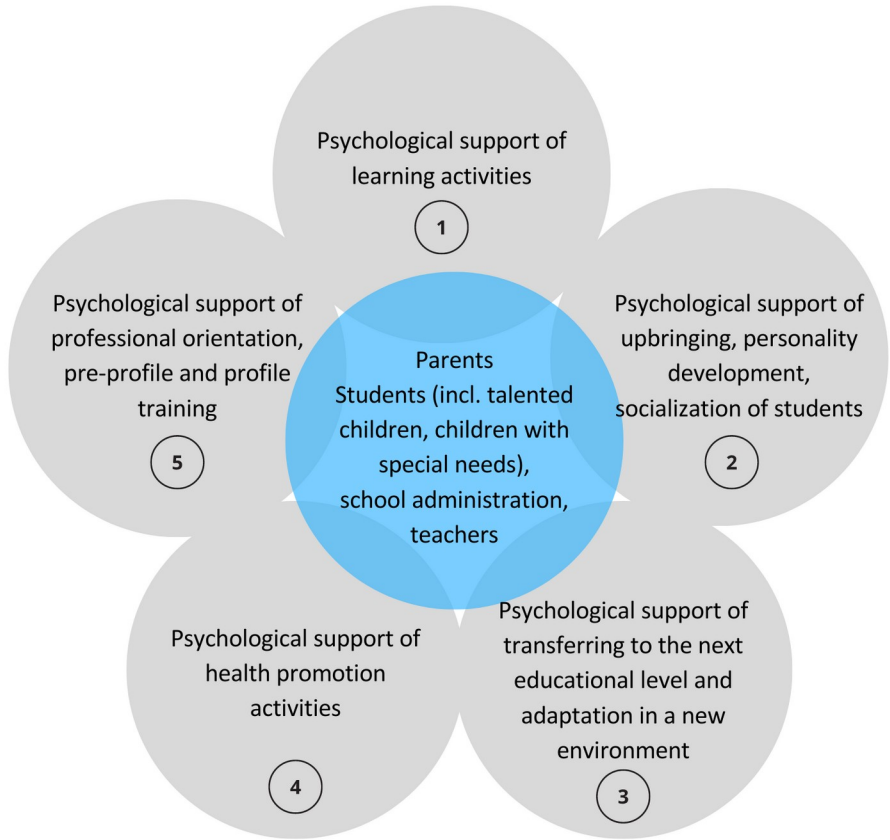
One of the activities of the “Digital Ethics Center” is training for parents and children, the aim of which is the well-being of the whole society, especially children and young people in the digital world.

Lectures for organizations - on skills that determine personal productivity, on the social responsibility and sustainability of the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, and on childcare workers - on the digital well-being of families.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

NATIONAL SITUATION	
Educational policies aimed at prevention and dealing with the hikikomori phenomenon	<p>The Federal State Educational Standards,</p> <p>The Foundations of the National Youth Policy in the Russian Federation by 2025,</p> <p>The Federal law “On Education in the Russian Federation” dated 29.12.2012 № 273-Ф3 (latest revision)</p>
Official statistics of people with the hikikomori syndrome	In Russia there is no such statistics due to the inconsistency of the term ‘hikikomori’ and non-recognition of the term at the official level
Popular communities on social media	<p>https://vk.com/hikkikomorii (726 898 followers),</p> <p>https://vk.com/lastchancefordeath (9 844 followers),</p> <p>https://vk.com/hikikomori_lifestyle (8 072 followers),</p> <p>https://vk.com/hikikomorikai (6 214 followers),</p> <p>https://vk.com/lifeofhikkey (5 369 followers)</p>
SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	
Activities	<p>Saturdays for Moscow’s school students</p> <p>Navigator of youth learning activities</p>
Organisations that provide versatile support of students, teachers and parents	<p>The City Psychological and Pedagogical Center</p> <p>The Association of Homeroom teachers</p> <p>The youth technoparks of Moscow</p>
Programmes for teachers	The programme of professional retraining “Psychologist for a youth community” (270 academic hours, qualification of a teacher psychologist). The programme includes 5 modules: 1. Childhood in the modern world: contexts, special aspects, issues and challenges; 2. Design and creating of a comfortable and safe learning environment; 3. Management of interaction between key educational stakeholders; 4. A child in class: formats and technologies of working with a group of young students; 5. Academic and life performance of students of different categories.

	The School of best homeroom teachers (the Moscow's contest for teams of homeroom teachers)
INTERVENTION AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
Teachers	<p>Homeroom teacher <u>(In Moscow's schools a homeroom teacher exercises three functions: coordinator, communicator and facilitator)</u></p> <p><u>Best practices of homeroom teacher activities</u></p> <p><u>The projects designed by the graduates of the programme "Psychologist for a youth community"</u></p> <p>Teachers <u>The types of extra-curricular activities in general school:</u></p> <p>General intellectual activities: library workshops, weeks of different disciplines, academic competitions, business and role plays, guided tours, conferences, contests, project design by disciplines</p> <p>Sports and health-promotion activities: hiking, guided tours, sports games, school sports days, school health days, sports competitions at the school, district or regional level, discussions on healthy lifestyle, physical activity breaks and active play elements at lessons.</p> <p>Social activities: purpose-oriented walks, guided tours, experiments, role plays, discussions, art competitions and events, case studies, participation in various events, project design.</p> <p>General cultural activities: participation in competitions, travel games, socio-dramatic plays, guided tours, discussions.</p> <p>Activities promoting ethical and spiritual values: museum and theatre days, artwork exhibitions, guided tours, topic discussions and meetings, class hours, participation in youth art exhibitions and competitions at the school, city and regional level.</p>

<p>Psychologists</p>	
<p>Work with parents</p>	<p><u>The stages of work with parents :</u></p> <p>1st stage – conducting a survey of parents at the beginning of every school year to define their characteristics. Developing a social passport for every class at school.</p> <p>2nd stage – identification of socially vulnerable families and children with psychological issues, such as difficulties in adaptation, aggressive behavior, fears, difficulties of communicating with peers, struggling with the school programme, etc.</p> <p>3rd stage – analysis of collected data, creating of a database to develop a plan of teacher-parent interaction for the following school year.</p> <p>The types of work with families are divided into daily, weekly, monthly and one-time.</p> <p><i>Daily</i> communication with parents of school students is conducted by homeroom teachers. The communication is aimed at providing consistent information on a regular basis about the life of students at school and supporting contact inside families.</p> <p><i>Every week</i> parents have an opportunity to discuss with their homeroom teacher the personal development of their children. In case of children with issues, parents are to meet with a team of specialists according to the developed intervention programme. The issues and objectives for discussions are defined in the meeting plan according to the empirical evidence, diagnosis and content of the programme.</p> <p><i>Monthly</i> communication with parents includes participation in festive activities, parents’ meetings, sports events, hiking, etc.</p> <p>Alternative types of engaging parents: Parents’ clubs, the club of young</p>

	families, the school of motherhood, the parents' university, the family club, public lectures for parents, counselling services, the family parlour, the school of parent love, the online parents' school, online teacher-parent meetings, online parents' meetings
--	--

SPAIN

NATIONAL SITUATION

Educational policies aimed at prevention and dealing with the hikikomori phenomenon

Organic law of education (December 2020)- [Organic Law 3/2020, of December 29, which modifies Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, on Education.](#)

The organic law is a national framework and then most of the regions have autonomy in the educational field (except the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla):

[Decree 5/2018, that establishes the model of educational, vocational and professional guidance in the Community of Castilla y León.](#)

[ORDER EDU / 939/2018, that regulates the "2030 Program" to promote inclusive quality education through the prevention and elimination of school segregation due to socio-educational vulnerability.](#)

[Agreement 29/2017 of June 15 of the Junta de Castilla y León approving the II Plan of Attention to Diversity in Education of Castilla y León 2017-2022](#)

[Decree 23/2014, that establishes the framework of government and autonomy of the educational centers supported with public funds that impart non-university education in the Community of Castilla y León.](#)

[ORDER EDU/987/2012, that regulates the organization and functioning of educational guidance teams in the Community of Castilla y León](#)

[ORDER EDU/1054/2012, that regulates the organization and functioning of the guidance departments of the educational centers of the Community of Castilla y León](#)

[Order EDU/1152/2010 to regulate the educational answer to students with specific needs, from early childhood to High school education in the educational centers of Castilla and León.](#)

[ORDER EDU/1603/2009, that establishes the templates to be used in the psychopedagogical evaluation process.](#)

[DECREE 51/2007, that regulates the rights and duties of students and the participation and commitments of families in the educational process, and establishes the rules of coexistence and discipline in the Educational Centers of Castile and Leon.](#)

Official statistics of people with the hikikomori syndrome

There are no official statistics but a study carried out by the Institute of Neuropsychiatry and Addictions of the Hospital del Mar (Barcelona).

The study reported 164 cases of Hikikomori in Spain in 2014.

It has been published in the Journal of Social Psychiatry, and the researchers have stated that “this syndrome is underestimated in Spain due to the difficulty of accessing these people and the lack of specialized home care teams”.

There are certain differences between the cases of Hikikomori in Spain regarding to those described in Japan. Most Spanish patients suffer associated mental disorders, such as psychotic disorders (34.7%), anxiety (22%) or affective disorders (74.5%), which is known as secondary Hikikomori. The primary Hikikomori is the one that does not present comorbidity with other psychological disorders.

Most cases in Spain, according to the study above, concern men and most of those affected live with the family, half of them having higher education studies.

Popular communities on social media

[Spanish Association of Mutual Help against Social Phobia and Anxiety Disorders.](#)

[Social anxiety. support groups](#)

[Association of people affected by anxiety disorders. Social anxiety](#)

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Activities

Schools develop **ordinary actions** aimed at preventing the appearance of this syndrome, being reflected in the following documents that are compulsory in all educational centres:

Welcome plan: aimed at students newly incorporated to the school in order to facilitate their adaptation and inclusion in the new school.

Diversity Care Plan: it includes the measures taken by the school to give answer to educational needs that may arise along the schooling years.

Tutorial Action Plan in order to prevent and intervene in the different aspects that may affect the socio-educational development of students: acceptance, expression, conflict resolution, self-acceptance, self-esteem...

There are also **extracurricular activities** that enhance socialization and outdoor activities, those activities are often organized by city councils but are implemented at school, such as theatre groups, sports activities (football, basketball, skating, volleyball, swimming...), dancing lessons, crafts and arts, Spanish signs language courses for children, storytellers, guitar lessons.

The Castilla y León symphony orchestra in its social foundation, has some musical instrument teaching and choral singing programs forwarded to children living in vulnerable social environments and also to children with disabilities.

Programs for improving the coexistence in schools are compulsory in each school including the development of educational programs for managing conflict resolutions and the Development of emotional intelligence. All schools, from infant to high school levels, have a coexistence coordinator, that is a teacher, and in many schools there are “school mediators”, students who intervene in the resolution of conflicts between equals.

Training programs for both teachers and mediator students. They also act both as detectors of problems of social isolation, bullying, etc as well as preventive and palliative intervention in conflictive situations of social relationship between equals.

Organisations that provide versatile support of students, teachers and parents

<https://www.asociacionrea.org/>

<https://fundacionpersonas.es/>

<http://elpuentesaludmental.org/>

“Association Open Minds-Asociación Mentes Abiertas” (Madrid)

[“AMTAES, Asociación Española de Ayuda Mutua contra Fobia Social y Trastornos de Ansiedad”.](#)

Programmes for teachers

There are courses for teachers, organized by the Teachers’ training centres, about attention to diversity, although there aren’t any training courses regarding specifically the Hikikomori syndrome. In case of need, teachers on service can communicate their training needs, so they may be admitted to courses, including the ones about this topic, from the Teachers’ training centers, by filling in the following form: <https://www.educa.jcyl.es/conivenciaescolar/es/apoyo-formacion>

INTERVENTION AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Teachers

Absenteeism program: teachers detect and intervene in cases of absence from school. Once detected that a pupil is not coming to school, the case is followed by the school itself and supported by social services professionals in order to determine the reasons for truancy. When there are social phobia causes or other similar, mental health services will also be involved.

Psychologists

All infant and primary schools are assigned an Educational Guidance Team formed by educational psychologists, pedagogues or psychopedagogues and social workers. In secondary and high schools there is a specific Department for educational guidance, integrated by an educational psychologist, pedagogue or psychopedagogue and by secondary school teachers.

This Team is widespread in all educational centers supported by public funds.

The region of Castilla y León also counts with provincial teams for attention to students with behavioral disturbances, which are specialized educational guidance teams in existence since 1992.

Many of the cases on which these teams intervene are related to "social phobia", the term used to refer to subjects who are susceptible to presenting diagnostic characteristics which could be related to the Hikikomori phenomenon.

These Guidance teams intervene at request of educational centres in the school context, together with families, developing individual intervention plans.

The intervention and support offered by this teams to schools and families are different, depending on the casuistry:

- Active resistance to leaving home: in this case the educative intervention is limited and is performed together with the paidopsychiatry services and through the families.
- Avoidance and flight behaviours, which are sometimes accompanied by verbal and physical aggression, that manifest themselves in schools as serious behavioural disorders.
- Behaviours of social non aggressive isolation, which imply a very important affectation in the daily school/family activities.

In any case, the intervention of these specialized teams is carried out on "single case" models, so that both the enquiry on the manifestation of the problem and the strategies to solve it are individual.

Work with parents

Most schools count with parents' associations, integrated by the families with children in the school. Together with the Educational guidance team they use to promote, as an ordinary activity, "Schools of parents" where they afford topics such as prevention of drugs, regulated use of the Internet, prevention of bullying, positive parenting, ways to establishing rules in early ages, promoting social skills development. In the "Schools of parents" topics are flexible, adapted to the participants' interests and needs.

The Regional Ministry for Family issues and promotes preventive programs for parents.

Intervention with families is present all throughout the educational process. When there are difficulties, the model of intervention is the **systemic model**, that includes not only the educational field but also the socio-familiar field, neighborhood, social services, health services and a synergy among all of them.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TOPIC

(not above mentioned)

The Guidance Team for attention to students with behavioral disorders of Valladolid participated in 2002 in the preparation of a specific questionnaire for the detection of social phobia in school environments, carrying out a sampling among the school population of the province of Valladolid in order to study the prevalence of social phobia, since it is considered a hidden phenomenon in schools and therefore not afforded. The doctors involved were Carmen Ballesteros Alcalde and Asunción Bartolome.

The questionnaires for detection of social phobia in school environments are in Spanish and not specifically about the Hikikomori syndrome even if closely related to it and could be translated and shared in case the partners would show an interest in them.

BULGARIA

NATIONAL SITUATION	
Educational policies aimed at prevention and dealing with the hikikomori phenomenon	Hikikomori syndrome was mentioned in an article on general psychology and in a forum to promote "News" and psychological culture back in 2015, professionals signal, but the public is poorly informed. The manifestations of the syndrome are correlated with the Autistic sector and with social deficits and disorders, but there are no data from a study of adults, there are no data for children. Under the terms of COV19, the Ministry does not have a special policy for counteracting isolation, but has developed a mechanism for healthy training: Measures to prevent mental (mental, social and emotional) health are not covered by regulations. However, at the state level, fragmentary prevention measures can be found in regulations.
Official statistics of people with the hikikomori syndrome	<p>Early diagnosis. No national statistics are available. No research data have been found for Bulgaria. In the health sector of the National Statistical Institute, there is no module for monitoring social exclusion in the digital age. For comparison - There are parameters "Social exclusion due to poverty", depending on the economic conditions of the environment, but the parameter "social isolation or digital dependence" is not currently noted in regulations or in health and education policies.</p> <p>There is no information in the analyzes and programs of the National Center for Public Health and Analysis about conducted research or markers for an existing problem, therefore no prevention program is developed.</p>
Popular communities on social media	Friends of Japan in Bulgaria is the only open group dedicated to Hikikomori.
SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	
Activities	
Organisations that provide versatile	In the conditions of COV 19, due to the long social isolation, telephones are available nationwide for additional support.

<p>support of students, teachers and parents</p>	<p>Psychological support at the national level is represented through the network of "School Psychologists" - an informal organization covering all psychologists and pedagogical counselors working in schools and / or other educational institutions. In addition, there is a developed and working network of specialists for prevention and psycho-social rehabilitation at the Ministry of Health with a National network of rehabilitation and support centers. Both private and public organizations work in the network. The non-governmental sector is also active. Covered by specialists are the larger regional cities: Varna, Sofia, Ruse, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo, Dobrich, Yambol. In the Republic of Bulgaria a license regime is applied for psychological support and prevention. There are currently 10 licensed centers.</p> <p>Some of them:</p> <p>http://www.solidarnost-bg.org/; http://phoenixhouse.bg/ www.bilani.bg www.novo-nachalo.net;</p> <p>NGO:</p> <p>Social Innovators https://www.social-innovators.eu</p> <p>ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛНАТА МЕДИАЦИЯ В БЪЛГАРИЯ ... - EPALE https://epale.ec.europa.eu</p> <p>Стартиране проект „Обучени, мотивирани, сензитивни ... http://ravnovesie.eu</p>
<p>INTERVENTION AT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</p>	
<p>Programmes for teachers and Work with parents</p>	<p>There are great opportunities in teacher training in Bulgaria. At the National level there is a "National Education Register of organizations that offer training. The register includes formal (University) and non-formal forms of education. There are also portals for support and exchange of activities and good practices "From teacher to teacher" and the portal of the Association "Parents" for activities for support from parents to parents and parents.</p>

	<p>KITE LTD. is a private company in the field of education and innovation.</p> <p>The company's team has its own opportunities for activities and partnerships in each of the above structures.</p>
--	--