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BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT DAN OLWEUS

Dan Olweus, who was born in Sweden, took his doctoral degree at the University of Umeå, Sweden, in 1969. From 1970 up to 1995 he was professor of psychology at the University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway. From 1996 he is **research professor of psychology**, affiliated with the Research Center for Health Promotion (HEMIL) at the the same university. For nine years (1962-70) he was director of the Erica Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden, a training institute for clinical child psychologists.

For approximately 40 years, Dan Olweus has been involved in research and intervention work in the area of bully/victim problems among school children and youth. Already in 1970, he started a large-scale project which is now generally regarded as the first scientific study of bully/victim problems in the world. (Published as a book in Scandinavia in 1973, and in 1978 in the US under the title **Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys.**) In the 1980's, he conducted the first systematic intervention study against bullying in the world which documented a number of quite positive effects of what has later become known as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, OBPP (e.g., Olweus, 1991, 1994, 2005; Olweus & Limber, 1999, 2007, 2010). In 2000, the OBPP was the only program against various forms of "problem behavior in school" that was recommended for continued use by a Norwegian expert committee evaluating 55 different programs in use in Norwegian schools. On that basis, the Government decided to offer the OBPP to all comprehensive schools as part of a national initiative against bullying. Since 2001, the program has been implemented in approximately 500 elementary and lower secondary/junior high schools in Norway. The program has been systematically evaluated in six large-scale studies comprising more than 20 000 Norwegian students. Typical results have been a reduction in self-reports on "being bullied" and "bullying other students" by 35-45 percent after 8 months of work with the program (Olweus, 2005; Olweus & Limber, 2010). The OBPP has also been successfully implemented in several other countries including Iceland, Sweden, Lithuania, and the US, in particular. In the US, a special Olweus training and research group has been established at Clemson University, South Carolina, headed by Dr Sue Limber who is the first holder of a "Distinguished Dan Olweus Professorship" ("...to ensure continuation of Dr. Olweus' important research and program development..."). This group has trained more than 500 Olweus trainers/instructors and the program has been implemented in more than 5000 US schools.

Olweus also conducted the first systematic study of bullying of students by teachers comprising some 2400 grade 7-10 students in 102 classrooms. This study has only been published in Norwegian (1996) under the title Mobbing av elever av lærere (Bullying of students by teachers).

Olweus is generally recognized as a pioneer and Founding Father of research on bully/victim problems and as a world leading expert in this area both by the research community and by the society at large (e.g., described with terms such as 'the world's leading authority' by the British newspaper "The Times" and several other sources; see attached excerpts). The book **Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do** (Olweus, 1993) has been



published in 20 different languages. The leading position of Olweus is also documented by the fact that he is, and has been for a number of years, the most cited Norwegian/Scandinavian researcher in psychology and education according to several independent analyses of citation frequency (according to the Social Citation Index and the Science Citation Index).

Olweus has received a number of awards and recognitions for his research and intervention work. For his general research on aggression, Olweus received in 1976 the award for "outstanding aggression research" by the International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA) which consists of leading aggression/violence researchers from all over the world. For the period of 1995-96, Olweus was elected President of the same Society. In year 2000, the "Spirit of Crazy Horse" award was conferred on him for "bringing courage to the discouraged" by the US Reclaiming Youth International organization, as an appreciation of his efforts to research and combat bullying. Recently, he was given an award for "outstanding publication and dissemination activity" by the University of Bergen, and in 2002, he received the "Nordic Public Health Prize" ("Nordiske folkehelseprisen") by the Nordic Minister Council (Nordiska Ministerrådet) for his achievements with regard to public health in the Nordic countries. In 2003, Dan Olweus was given the award for "Distinguished Contributions to Public Policy for Children" by the international research organization "Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)". In 2005, he was awarded the Queen Sofia of Spain Medal for his contributions as well as the "Honorary Prize" of the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Bergen.

As another indication of the international recognition and impact of his work, Olweus has been invited to spend a year at the prestigious Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS), Stanford, USA (which he did in 1986/87) Dan Olweus has given invited and keynote addresses about his bully/victim and aggression research at a number of international congresses or meetings including conferences of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), of the International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA), and at the International World Congress of Psychology. He has given invited lectures at about 30 US universities including Stanford, Harvard, Yale, and Berkely and a number of English universities including Oxford, Cambridge, and London. Only in 2009, he was keynote speaker at four large international conferences/congresses.

Olweus's intervention program against bullying has gained both international and national recognition. Among other things, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was recently selected as one of 10 "Blueprint (model) programs" (only 10 out of more than 600 evaluated programs were approved) to be used in a national violence prevention initiative in the USA (in 1999-), supported by the US Department of Justice (OJJDP; see Olweus & Limber, 1999). One of the criteria for the selection of the model programs was that the program had been exposed to rigorous, scientific evaluation (with positive and long-term results). The OBPP is the only model program of non-US origin, and the only one directed at bully/victim problems in school (only four of the Blueprint programs are school based). The program has also been recognized as a Model Program by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), and as an Effective Program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

In a recent meta-analysis, ordered by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and conducted by researchers at Cambridge University, UK, under the leadership of a respected criminologist, professor David Farrington, all anti-bullying programs in the world were



evaluated with regard to effectiveness and other aspects. In this analysis, comprising 30 programs and 59 studies, the OBPP received a top position with statements like "Future interventions could be grounded in the successful Olweus programme ..." and "...programmes inspired by the work of Dan Olweus worked best" (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009, p. 23). The OBPP was actually the only program that had been replicated with positive results a number of times, all the other program evaluations were based on first-time, demonstration projects.

Olweus' research and intervention work has played a key role in the partly dramatic changes that have occurred in many countries (such as Norway, Sweden, England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Germany, Australia, Japan, and the US) over the past 15-year period: from viewing (being exposed to) bullying as a natural part of school life and growing up to a pressing social issue which must be taken seriously and be systematically addressed by the schools/school authorities and society at large. As only one indication of this shifting zeitgeist, since 2000, more than 40 states in the US have passed legislation addressing bullying among students in public schools.

Reference

Ttofi, M.M., & Farrington, D.P. (2009). What works in preventing bullying: Effective elements of anti-bullying programmes. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 1, 13-24.