

**June 25, 2010 - Brazil – A project against bullying in schools, organized by a Salesian school**



**(ANS – Belo Horizonte)** – The Salesian school in Rio do Sul, in the south of Brazil, has organized a project involving staff, pupils, and civil officials to combat the phenomenon of bullying in schools.

Students in the 9th year course in religious education at the Don Bosco School have been dealing with a problem that is present in schools throughout the world, which consists in repeated acts of violence that often hide behind the pretense of being only a joke.

The Bullying in Schools Project set out to identify dangerous situations and open a discussion on the best ways of finding common solutions.

It was organized in four stages. The first was participation in the Ibirajá Project (this is an Indian word meaning fruit-bearing tree) promoted by the Prevention of Violence in Schools Forum, attended by the pupils from the first five years of primary school, who then produced posters, while the pupils from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades designed strip cartoons, and those from high school wrote stories.

The second stage involved over 400 pupils from the Salesian school together with those from the Paulo Zimmermann School, also in Rio do Sul, with various workshops on the theme.

The third stage was an enquiry about the problem involving about 400 people from the local community.

The fourth stage, on June 10 with 600 teenagers for the Salesian school, was a discussion at which various representatives of the local government were present, including Marcelo Mengarda, a justice of the peace for Rio do Sul who is a specialist in the field of children and adolescents.

Even though the phenomenon is not a new one, it always demands the attention of teachers and of the authorities. Generally, the victims of bullying and violence are abandoned by their school companions and then become even more vulnerable because they are isolated and suffer not only physically but also psychologically.