PART I. The prerequisites and factors contributing to violence perpetrated by children

1. Research Questions

The main research question for the current study was what approaches, practices, methods and settings of prevention and intervention decrease repeated violent behavior of adolescents in residential care. Regarding the context, the following questions were addressed:

- What are adolescents' perceptions and attitudes towards violent behavior?

- Which are the risks and the protective factors involved in the occurrence of youth violence?

- What is the social context of the phenomenon and the way the state perceives it and regulates it in the three countries?

- Which elements of residential care institutions lead to decrease in the violent behavior of the residents?

2. Definition of key concepts

Violence. In the Daphne project, it's defined as given in the World Report on Violence and Health (WHO, 2002; 4), namely:

"The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, against a group or

community, or against property that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, deprivation or damage."

The definitions of antisocial behavior given in sources such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders (DSM, 2013), the International Classification of Diseases – ICD-10 (WHO, 1990), and other sources were also taken into consideration.

The given definition includes interpersonal violence as well as suicidal behavior (that is, violence against oneself), covering a wide range of acts not only physical, but including threats and intimidation as well, against individuals, families and communities (WHO, 2002).

The violence against property has been added by the team of researchers because of the high incidence of such cases in the researched environment.

Adolescents, youngsters, youth. It concerns mainly the group of underaged between 14 to 18 years old, age group object of the research.

3. Main findings

In this chapter are exposed the main factors that explain the development, prevalence and maintenance of violent behavior in the youths studied, according to their personal descriptions, as well as those given by parents, caregivers and professionals altogether.

First of all, we present the principal sources of this misconduct with detailed descriptions, followed by an outline of the main aggressive and violent behaviors that characterize these children.

FOCUS POINT:
Dysfunctional environmental dynamics

From an ecological approach, we can classify the explanations and categories in several factorial levels. But before listing and detailing the traits and elements that make these children violent, we'd highlight a general reflection regarding the importance of understanding the problem more as a **dysfunctional environmental dynamic**, not (or not only) focusing on the individual child as ' the' problem. Even though the violent adolescent is indeed the core instance of the issue studied and expressed, we understand him or her as **the result** of a confluence of various problems and processes occurring contextually. As a result, their individual behavior, even biological predispositions, are always influenced (if not determined) by the environment, in all the levels in which the kids develop – i.e., the family, groups and society; detailed next. We must remember that, as under aged, they are particularly sensitive and subject to the rearing practices, faults or influences of the adults and institutions that rear them.

3.1. Factors for violence and violent behavior.

3.1.1. Personal factors

The children studied are characterized by certain traits they have developed, that were later manifested in violent outbursts, such as low frustration tolerance, low self-esteem, self-regulation problems, or disproportioned reactions in general. Many of them have also developed inadequate relationship patterns, mainly due to the dynamics of their relationship background (i.e., systematically dysfunctional interactions between individuals), more than due to an 'original personality predisposition' establish such relationships.

Many **unsatisfied needs** are manifested in the resulting aggressive acts. In many cases this does not even concern actual everyday

necessities, but the more basic, structural and non-material things; flaws which may have never been satisfied or repaired but still exist even the pass of time. From this point of view, their personal construction is weak in the sense that all their future development and behavior falls into *'failure'*, and certainly is failure:

"Many of the children want attention. […] Or perhaps they also need to hear that they are good, that they are worthy of it. Because they don't appear to have heard that so often in their lives. Attention, physical contact."

(Therapeutic Community caretaker, Austria)

We mentioned that unsatisfied needs refer to more immaterial things. Even though disadvantaged social and economic conditions constitute of course a risk in general, the children from the residential examined centers are **not particularly characterized by an outstanding materially deprived background**. As a matter of fact, some of the Bulgarian interviewed come from (adoptive) families that are quite well-off. The same tendency has been noticed in Spain - the profile of the kid attended has been changing in the last years to a non-materially deprived one. Therefore, the researchers decided to analyze the relationship patterns and educational practices more than just economical deprivation. Professionals from the three countries mention that the lack of attention, parental absence and incapacity to conduct and limit the children has a central role in the explanation of the problem. It is quite outstanding that many of the children developed inadequate relationship patterns just because they **didn't have any adequate or stable role model to follow**; not necessarily because they learned to misbehave from a bad one. On the other hand, the non-active role of their parents in conducting and controlling their kids' energy, occurrences or actions, sometimes 'spoiling' them, is indicative of **negligence and of lack of loving-care**, as can be seen in further consequences (we retake this issue in the next point). Taking this in consideration, we may realize why a supportive factor and an adequate

applied service is one that gives **stable conditions, positive role models, and external limits while learning to apply self-regulation.**

Apart from this pattern, the interviewed professionals also mention as a recent **profile shift**, the higher frequency, diversity and coexistence of mental diseases; apparition of these and of violent conduct at younger ages, accompanied by higher levels of violence. Also, gang membership and immigration background is very frequent (particularly in the Spanish case). The number of attendees (or demanders) of the services is increasing instead of decreasing in all countries. Many of them have a relatively long story of **substance abuse and consumption** related to or a leading factor for uninhibited impulses. Psychiatric (medical) treatment seems to be of help in general, always accompanied by psycho-educational interventions. At this point, it is important to say that some children who engage in violent behavior against themselves – as considered in the research structure and profiling *"due to heavy substance consumption"*- do not consider themselves aggressive; not seeing the harm they make physically by drug abuse (this issue is discussed further in the contextual factors point).

Going deeper in the examination of personality traits and profiles, low self-esteem is expressed not only by self-harm antecedents, but also explicitly mentioned by the interviewees; as a past factor or still present. **They feel and are convinced of their negativity or low value as a person** (for example, some interviewees from Spain say they do not have any good qualities) and accept, with different levels of recognition, the actions and antisocial acts they have committed in the past. The lack of healthy self-esteem is sometimes expressed and explains their participation in property destruction, robberies, quarrels: it reflects their need of recognition and attention, which they haven't been capable of satisfying by other means. At a time, this is connected to their constant academic flaws at school and in other organized contexts (retaken below). The long lists of self-reported defects also refer a commonly negative self-concept; some find themselves stubborn, obstinate or obsessive; tend to show negativity; hyperactive but sometimes lazy; all things contributing (according to their own descriptions) to the violent

5

acts they've committed. Even though, not all find it easy to describe themselves.

Besides, they are especially sensitive children, who frequently report a feeling of loneliness, or of not having received adequate or enough love and understanding; scornful towards people and the whole world, all perceived as being against them. Scorn, anger or rancor many times bottled-up (as frequently mentioned by the Austrian sample) that then "exploded" in different outbursts.

They have **internalized** that the normal or adequate response to conflicts is reacting with more conflict and aggression, as in many cases their family relates commonly. Self-control just has not been developed or has been developed inadequately, giving space to uncontrolled reactions of anger, hitting, disrespect, etc. Educators see that **alternative ways of conflict solving and frustration canalizing in general** is one of the key necessities they need to develop in priority for their future, in order to 'survive' socially and in order not to experience relapses.

Finally, other **milestones** in their lives have marked them and thus contributed indirectly to the apparition and maintenance of violence. Deaths of important relatives, divorce or absence of a parent, important developmental lacks (of affection; experiences; opportunities), traumatizing changes in living conditions, dwelling, or long-lasting runaways from home, all usually leading to instability in many aspects; of special importance is the case of attachments, lost relationships or belonging to groups which were meaningful for them.

3.1.2. Family factors

The vast majority of children who have developed violent behavior come from disintegrated, split, torn and / or conflictive families, structured in different ways (e.g., several half-siblings from different parent living together; extended family; several step-fathers, etc.) but having in common that **their members tend to relate with noticeable levels of aggressiveness** and have **violent antecedents as well**, with a

general conflictive dynamic of relationship, as we said before. Usually one or both parents, step-parents and other individuals in the household have exteriorized this kind of conducts or patterns, afterwards repeated similarly by the child. Substance consumption, alcoholism, self-harm, violence towards others, robberies and property destruction have been frequent, but also **other psychosocial problems** are present, such as gambling, unemployment, prosecution, heavy maltreatment, abusing or being abused (in most cases - the mother).

The **absence** of at least one of the parents is also common. In such cases, usually other family member (often the grandmother) has actively raised the child, functioning significantly as a **substitute figure** for attention, care, understanding and support; with whom nonetheless the child sometimes has had important conflicts or maltreatment suffering. The children interviewed gave many arguments that depict an **idealized image** of the parents (absent or not) or the substitutive figures, even though they could at a time recognize or blame them for the maltreatment or misbehavior, detachment or rejection towards them or in general. Certainly, witnessing separations, comes-and-goes of members, instability of all kinds or family disintegration entail part of the traumatic trace these adolescents show.

As we first mentioned the majority of cases come from families with some or most of the traits described, but there are cases in which the children explicitly maintained not having lived in a violent family environment at all (for example, some of the Bulgarian interviewees are adopted children and the new family hasn't shown violent antecedents). In these cases, it is quite outstanding not the inadequate but just **lack of presence and developmental guidance** from the adults in the family. As a matter of fact, arguments from the interviews with professionals and youths (and more stressed in the Spanish ones) are very often in terms of a general **indulgent and weak discipline** raising pattern. Some other filial relationships and parenting styles are characterized by **severe strictness and conservative principles and limiting** – e.g., in immigrated families with different cultural values. The overall trait is

that in almost every case, the styles showed are characterized by **borderline patterns, situations and experiences; taken to the limit**.

When parents talk about this issue, they tend to deny, minimize, trivialize or justify some of these factors or realities, as repeatedly reflected the analyses of arguments from all the three nations. Some of them, anyhow, accept having 'done it wrongly' – a recognition that, evidently, means accepting their own personal mistakes and problems. In the case of some Bulgarian parents, for example, they are aware that their overprotection, *'loving'* intention to control and suffocating way of raising the sons had much to do with the further problem apparition in them; even though, they put a big amount of the blame in the *'other'* kids as the responsible of driving their kid to the bad way:

"I always remind him to be careful where he goes, what he does. Sometimes too much. /.../ Many of the problems are because of his friends. /.../ He got friends with this boy… and the troubles began…"

(Father of 18 y.o. boy, Bulgaria)

In other cases, the parent, often alone, has found herself **unable to either cope with the raising of the kid** and has given him/her in a home for children deprived of parental care; **or to control the child's aggressiveness** (often towards the parent too), asking therefore for help to the system after trying to control it with different punishments, lecturing and limiting. So in these cases underaged don't arrive for neglect but because of a real incapacity of the caregiver, usually also in deprivation situations, to endure the situation or find alternative nearer support.

FOCUS POINT:
Uncommon developmental pattern of reference figures.

Apart from the absence or strong inadequacy of parental figures during earlier development, some of the adolescents studied have arrived to this stage with a lack of them. In fact, for some the opportunity of meeting an educator in the residential centers with whom build up a secure, deep and strong bond is a new experience, never lived before, and very revealing. Moreover, many of them have found out in the center which is the adequate role of an underage semi-dependent person, according to social and legal standards, when living in a home. This is because they use to come with **problems of role definition, confusion or impersonation** within their past family structure. Children with marked basic communication problems; forced to have sibling quarrels; or acting as parents of their parents; at times, deeply embedded in the conflict dynamic of the couple, forced to standing for one of the members, or used by the father or mother to manipulate or extort the other, are illustrative examples of this inadequacy. Thus, they many times harbor future hatred, or feel relief once separated from the other parent, but with ambivalence and possibly intense guilt or rancor feelings:

"My mother and I used to drink and smoke 'pot' together /.../ I've seen her being raped by my father in front of me /.../ he's the only referent I don't want to be like; not finish like him… To have, to do something with my life…"

(14 y.o. boy, Spain).

Of course, the lack of opportunities to find different, positive reference figures has also to do with their belonging to equally deprived or disrupted social and cultural environments.

When asked about their mid or late future plans, many of the adolescents studied stress their necessity not only of reuniting with their parents and family, but making really important efforts to reunite members and recompose relations. Also, they stand on their partner strongly to build up a tight compromise and found a family of their own, and to pose it in- and as the center of their lives. As the analyses of the three countries returns, **they transfer their need for family affiliation to their ideas and dreams for that family they will create someday.**

Finally, we could find out that the link between family problems and commitment of violent acts has sometimes come not only by 'modeling for the child' with their example, but also by **encouraging them directly or even forcing violent or illegal behavior on them**.

3.1.3. Peers and significant networks

The last mentioned factor for parents also applies in the case of peer or other social groups to which the violent child has belonged. The profile of the adolescent attended in the residential centers approached to, shows a **vulnerability to be strongly influenced, catapulted to and driven through antisocial behavior or used as delinquent**. It's not that the child doesn't have an inner locus of control, but they seem to accept or even rely on the 'suggestions' of the peers or adults that push them. This happens even more in the case of coming from an environment where this kind of behavior prevails; and more even when the kid shows strong antecedents of negligence, failures in situations and structured activities –i.e., school and other institutions, or both. As we know, peers in the adolescent period may mean a lot in their lives, so they would just act in determined ways by contagion or under peer or group pressure, without questioning themselves too much before acting. It is relevant that very rarely the interviewees mention other good friends besides those who drove them into antisocial behavior, with whom they have done other things and shared other values. When they have had the opportunity to choose the right people, they would rather **prefer the thrill and attraction of the 'bad friends'**, which is too strong to be resisted; though the other half agonist of violence is the

lack of positive constructive relations and activities. They also show a **necessity** of being recognized or approved, show self-determination, exercise leadership and compensate other flaws; enthroning violence as a desirable thing, regardless of (without caring about) the consequences of the acts… and what better than the peer group to find the way for it:

"So I started to rise there. When I became 13-14 years old I started to manage the other kids, to decide which house or shop to rob, how, when, who to do it. When I was 10-11 years old, the others told me what to do, then I got to be the boss there."

(Boy, 18 y. o., Bulgaria)

Moreover, the analysis showed that the *'bad'* friends' environment strengthens its pressure at any hesitation of the child and often makes it clear that it shall keep him or her even by force if necessary.

We mentioned school as one of the contexts where many times violence is nested and expressed; an easy to understand reality considering the amount of time passed there. Numerous youths have **long school conflict and failure history**; not only in terms of time of apparition, but also for the threading that this history has woven for future schooling complications. Many times they arrive to another school or activity with a tainted 'presentation letter', because institutions might often know the antecedents of the cases when they arrive. Besides, dragging their lack of study habits, unattained grades, makes each time the problem bigger and narrows their future possibilities. In sum, we wouldn't focus just in the conflicts at school, truancy commitment, or specific academic failures, because it is rather **the whole situation which is full of conflict; anomic.**

In this sense, we must reflect that suffering rejection, prejudices, discrediting, lack of understanding or denial for help from teachers or leaders, as well as being part of different dynamics of abuser-abused, have a lot to do with the **miss or lack of opportunities** lived. That, in fact, turns into a form of institutional abuse and a factor for violence

apparition itself, and indeed has contributed to a negative self-concept in the child. This way, **violence might come increased or reinforced by the consequences of the acts**, which not always or certainly produce the effect they firstly would be intended to: expulsion and punishment may not work in a positive way, just as one mother of an 18 y.o. boy from Spain clearly exemplifies:

"Even I went to ask for another opportunity, they expelled him from the football team because somebody 'said' he stole a mobile phone; nobody knows if it happened like that; he cried and swore he didn't do it. I asked the municipal social educator for help so he could enter another team; she said that if he robbed nobody would let him in. –So, he didn't train ever again…? –But where…? In my sons' schools they always talk of mobile thefts; why aren't kids thrown out?? In any case, we must punish them, but not take away what is their life… They said that if in my country [Morocco] everybody steals, here they didn't need another thief 'Moor'. /…/ nobody helped him. Children should be forgiven and supported and helped; if they are rejected, they'll hate everybody; and that's where everything began /…/ he never overcame that."

We would insist as well that **frequently violent outbursts appear in violent environment** and are not – or not only – an *individual 'act of meaning'* or issue to analyze and focus on. In many cases, violent events and relations have been part of the general climate at schools, some other type of social services, and even in centers of the protection system where they have been firstly attended; part of the *'normal'* interaction there before the interviewees arrived or became an outstanding problem.

As the analysis of interviews to Austrian parents revealed too**, there is an overall shortcoming at the family-school-psychosocial interface**, which is then concreted and visible in the child's behavior. Also, the constant breaks in the social networks, as suggested before, **hinders the development of sustained and secure attachments and relationships** with friends or other adults; including the lost contacts with effective staff members when roaming through many public, residential and/or anti-violence housing services. These problems are object of analysis in the next chapter.

3.1.4. Society / Context

Running through different stations and being constantly **rejected** from structured environment, as we just analyzed, considerably explain why the child reacts with violence on many occasions. But, as we found out through the research, apart from rejection often the **violent relations or niches attract or inspire** the child in order to put in act aggressiveness, not finding an agent of control or a better option.

This is because there is certain **tolerance, plausibility, and even, promotion of violence** within the kid's community, and even beyond. Therefore, we ought to focus consciously and attentively on the environmental elements that contribute.

The social and cultural factors are often so broad, that they are difficult to perceive, and hence control, at individual levels. For instance, we are all used to **violent images, actions and interactions in the mass media in so many forms**, that it results in a difficulty to split or isolate the non-violent elements from the violent ones. These violent elements even constitute part of the **promoted models of behavior**, since, for example, without violence it is difficult to **achieve and show their power and success**.

It seems as well, in the postmodern world we live in, that everything is in some way valid, because everything is initially questionable, so violence might be valid for many, when chosen consciously as **an option to be like and act**. The evolution in the apparition of the

problem mentioned before: earlier ages, combined types of violence, greater aggressive challenging attitudes with high questioning of norms and authorities, among others, are somehow a reflection of this eco-cultural broader situation. Evidently, all of the societies in the different historical periods put limits and are aware of the necessity to redirect the violent conduct of their underrated population. We have found out that, to a certain extent, in the nations studied there tends to be some **relaxation of norms and firmness of educational practices** and, as we said, praiseworthiness and promotion of, if not violence directly, at least the agents of its appearance or demonstration:

"It's this pattern of lack of limits, so they say 'if others do it [a violent act], I can do it as well. I want to be the leader'. And the leader is the one who breaks the law, or consumes. – It's also the permissiveness, familiar and social… institutional, as well… –Which elements of society? Could you clarify? –In the past delinquent children were brought in front of the judge, and they'd shiver… Nowadays they laugh, because they know that the Law for the Minors is very soft, and they laugh at this /…/ there's no impact for them; they know how to elude things, until they reach intimidation robbery; until they reach imprisonment…"

(Direct attention professionals; Spanish focus group)

In all this context, also of **growing individualism and stressed competitiveness**, the child tends to find himself or herself at a time very alone; while showing every time less and **less empathy, consciousness and consideration for the Other**. But usually in proportion to the degree of neglect they have suffered by the system. Parents blaming teachers, teachers blaming social authorities and these calling parents as responsible for their offspring's misbehavior… at the end the individual child finds him/herself disoriented; on some occasions mixed up with **heavy guilt feelings**. It is very interesting the high proportion of adults

attending children, with lots of people and resources moved or spent to attend the problem, and the child feels deeply neglected by everybody; both before and after being attended by the protection system. The aim of the coming chapter is to analyze this issue.

FOCUS POINT:
Social tolerance, indulgence and negligence.

All these seem to be a constant and contribute to the development of violence in every systemic level. In many cases, violent children show having been neglected because limits weren't imposed on time, for numerous reasons. Their gross misbehavior was tolerated as any other way of behaving; as if it wasn't something necessary to stop in order to prevent it from growing. Many weren't seriously confronted on time to make them reflect about its consequences. But this pattern of lack of control is much beyond the parents' non-guidance; it involves all the social circles in which the child has been developing; and even the macro system. Ultimately, it is a **social responsibility** to assume the point where the violent children have come to; to assume not be constructing enough appreciable alternatives that don't even make violence attractive.

Things such as school and centers professional's avoidance; or authorities occasional concealment of the problem behind numbers, non-actively constructing useful alternatives of guidance; compliance of institutions with their bureaucratic delays, making the child accumulate scorn until a point of explosion; tolerating little episodes of aggressiveness in everyday interactions; or making marketing of violence as a nice behavior, are just examples of how **all individuals in the system are implied** in its permanence and, moreover, to assure future new cases. The change should come even at a cultural level; at the most deep elementary level of meanings and value coding.

Furthermore, the lack of opportunities mentioned occurs not only within organized activities but is a general trait of societies, in groups suffering

social exclusion. This appears in many varied forms –i.e., lack of integration, acceptance, or prejudice; not only lack of money; and shows its importance as a factor in the apparition of violence when we can explain this as a consequences of social exclusion.

3.2. Violent behaviour outline: triggers, responses, soothing and coping strategies.

As we analyzed in all the factors, the situations lived before entering care centers have triggered violence in the children. We go deeper in this triggering now, the most common violent behavior shown, their consequences and what helps them overcome and cope. These are both described for their life before entering the protection/correction system and within the centers.

3.2.1. Triggers for violence.

It seems that throughout their younger years some kids have been developing violence as **a common and ordinary outlet, a form of expression**; even more, as mentioned before, when all the systemic levels in which they develop, use it too.

Either the stimuli that trigger violence are over-dimensioned, or the own violent responses are not seen as such. We could find numerous cases and arguments that show the interviewees are **unaware of their own limits**, where there is not a perception (a real self-assumption) of being violent; in some cases, only accepting it until an external power has been used to stop the behavior; and sometimes as a surprise, because some kids really didn't realize their way of expressing, (over)reacting or responding could be called violent: **they just hadn't learned any other way of reacting**. In these conditions, it is comprehensible that anything can initially be triggering for violence.

Violence has been used as a solution to diverse situations and states, both **related to their internal world** and **to the interaction with other**

people. In the first case, **negative thoughts** associated with **feelings** of hopelessness, indifference, overwhelming anger or impotence; everyday boredom and malaise can trigger minor limit violations, producing diverse and numerous **outbursts**, without any external stimulus, behaving in a violent way 'just because', as an Austrian caregiver mentioned, *"...physical boundary transgressions only happen for the sole reason that someone wants to pester someone"*.

The kids have at times also learned that it was the way **to get their way**, until some external human source or situation stops them, as said before. In this case, the thing or state of things desired makes them 'put the energy in action' to achieve it. Furthermore, many have been repressing **emotions and repeated tough situations**, swallowing them until their endurance is insufficient, so a new event (e.g., a violent scene at home) triggers a response when it turns impossible to put up with. As a matter of fact, occasions when violence errupts, coming out at the least provocation, are associated with issues that are sensitive due to **the young person's history**:

"Ye-es, what usually made me mad [before turning violent] was that my Grandma kept comparing me with my mother because, to be honest, people say you can't hate your own mother, but I hate her."

<div align="right">(17 y.o. girl, Austria)</div>

These triggers are thus often used to **legitimize violent acts**, particularly in the case of violence against others.

In the case of triggers externally originated, the children would blame these others for "provoking" them, seeing their outbursts as the logic, fair or proportioned adequate defensive reaction to the stimulus sent. They'd justify themselves arguing that they had just responded when being victimized with physical abuse, teasing, ridicule, etc., not only against them, but also against others, case in which they had acted aggressively to protect or defend other people, finding there a sense of

justice, as some parents described. In many unbearable situations, they would give warnings, but thereafter reacting due to being ignored or misunderstood.

Within the residential care, some interviewees would mention also reasons for violence, when feeling **unfairly treated by the educators**, when these act negligently, commit injustices or trivialize what is important to them. With regards to the peers, they are guided (or were initially, when first entering the centers) by the logic of responding with the same degree of aggression they are treated with.

3.2.2. Behaviour and consequences.

What comes clear from the aforementioned facts is that these juveniles' first violent acts constituted **decisive turning points**, especially when those permitted a change in a situation that they found uncomfortable – in the broad sense: dispensing from something they'd like to experiment; stop an abusive or demanding situation; desiring something only achievable by robbery, etc. At this point, committing offenses or acting against themselves or others, is often related with good sensations or apparently beneficial consequences. Usually, **the beginnings of antisocial behavior and petty crimes have been an inspiring path.**

As the analyses of the Bulgarian and Spanish information concluded, **escapes are common of the first antisocial behavior shown** – from home, school or care institutions. Many of these escapes are planned with friends, to avoid rules, norms or prohibitions, and to have fun together. Gradually, the fun starts to include thefts, sometimes accompanied by property destruction, beating other people and prostitution (girls). Some children leave school (in the Bulgarian case, considered as an antisocial behavior by the law) or run away from home when threatened to be put in a correctional residential care institution.

We specify the following broad categories given that we established the cases study parting from this classification.

Violence against oneself

Takes diverse forms of self-harm, mainly **body bruising, hitting and cuts**, as well as **substance consumption**; which is not usually recognized as an effective way of harmful long-lasting conduct, as suggested before. The sample even included subjects that have committed suicide attempts. On the other hand, in several cases the self-harm is not serious and the effects of their uncontrollable cries and somatization don't last long. A convergent result between the three countries is that **directing aggression to oneself is more typical of girls** who were placed in centers. The aggressive style passes into auto-aggressive when emotions "boil over" and the kids feel they have to react, and all other resources to deal with the critical situation (including verbal and physical aggression) have been depleted without resolving it. They usually also direct their aggression towards themselves when the person causing a sense of frustration is the parent or other significant adult, who they find more powerful or is unaffordable.

Violence towards others

Many youths use violence in their everyday interactions and as a **communication style**. Thus, they find normal to react this way and don't feel guilty for the 'accidents' since they consider (or are convinced) that they have been provoked; that someone has made them angry so they had to respond. Subsequently, they act equally if there's no outside intervention for moderation. But even when this is present and the 'social machinery' has all been put into functioning and social workers and educators talk to them, the children would not only blame the other participant(s) about the conflict, but moreover feel not understood or even **interpret that the system is against them**; what at times provokes more scorn accumulation and further aggression deployment. When they've accepted rules, questions, prohibitions and sanctions, it has been rather **in a hostile way** and under the interpretation of **an imposition of someone else's will**. At

a time this can make them feel alienated, punished or trying to be really affected, thus opting for the new 'good sensations' that their violent behaviors have been bringing:

"I had an argument with a teacher… because she started to insult me and this made me very angry… so this turned into a beating, an incident, you know... Because she doesn't have the right to hit me or to insult me. She hit me so I had to act too. Then of course she blamed me for everything so she wouldn't be ashamed in front of her colleagues…"

(Girl, 17 y.o., Bulgaria)

Some interviewees mentioned that apart from insulting, hitting and hurting their 'victims', peers and teachers, they **have maltreated and insulted their parents or family adults**, especially the mother. This sometimes had as consequence the parents' complaints that drove them to the net of educational semi-closed centers, asking for help when they felt overwhelmed by their kids' outbursts. The children from time to time confronted their parents with reproaches and questions as to why they could no longer live at home.

Professionals describe how within the residential care there are everyday situations in which aggression is put into **a wide range of escalating acts** – i.e., treating someone roughly ☐ insulting ☐ menacing ☐ spitting ☐ kicking, hitting, biting and pushing; occasionally going beyond, exhibiting sturdy fights. With the care staff an **ambivalent relation** of attachment and reproach-manipulation (or intents of) can be established, and from time to time they've been also object of the children's aggressions. In the case of school violence, expulsion had been the most common consequence of their acts; even though the kids made **a clear differentiation between effective and ineffective measures or punishment** in general; a not really positive discipline application which to a certain point could be considered a reinforcing of

violence, in the sense that the subject doesn't develop an image of inadequateness of their responses:

"– What happened when you did things like these [hitting somebody for vengeance, or throwing the ball far away]? – The teachers came and that's it. – So…? What would they do? –"What are you doing? [they'd say]" – I mean, was there no consequence? – Expelled, or… – If they did so, that would work so you'd quit [doing that]? – No; I thought "hey, 3 days without school… holidays!" – Did you see it as something good, then? – No, but neither as something bad. – And now..? – Now yes; if they expel me there are more consequences."

<div align="right">(15 y.o. boy, Spain)</div>

Violence against property

Boys and girls with history of property destruction, drug dealing, robberies and stealing many times repeat these acts before being stopped. When they are not punished for a long time or when they are punished inadequately, it creates in **an impression of impunity in them**, which soothes their sense of guilt and gradually **strengthens their idea of thefts as normal and acceptable actions.** A self impoverished image might be constructed (and assumed) in order to justify their "necessity" of having the thing(s) desired. It is here where we can see very clearly how when a behavior is not affected by its consequences, it will be seen as normal or not problematic. In this case, **the youths could even see the stealing act as just**, under their perspective that they deserve what they're looking for.

3.2.3. Soothers and other supportive factors.

A) The ways the interviewed kids coped with their boiling emotions, violent behavior and precipitating thoughts in the years **before entering**

closed residential centers used to be isolation, moving away from the situations, talking in order to eliminate the sources of conflict or changing relations that resulted harmful, as the **non-aggressive strategies**. But on the other hand they might react in difficult situations by bigger hitting, fighting and/or substance abuse. Lowering the consumption would be sometimes of help, but in other cases, on the contrary, what they would find "helpful" to feel better would be consuming more. They report as the most outstanding feelings those of impotence, strong frustration, and death wishes; along with fear towards the possibility of being sent to residential centers, which at times resulted to be a deterrent resource.

Interviewees describe that in all these situations – at the time when "everything started" – it might have been of help to apply **an approach based on understanding, acceptance and support**; which in turn should sensitively point to new opportunities that provide a strong sense of belonging, personal expression, confidence in their own abilities, development of new skills, self-improvement and recognition from their significant others. In numerous cases, children from the three countries express a feeling of **not being understood or helped** by members of the protection and intervention system, who supposedly work for their welfare. They appreciate some interventions made previously; for example, the Bulgarian youths, when evaluating the Juvenile Pedagogic Department and the Local Commission for Combating Juvenile Delinquency, evaluate these professionals as 'good people' with 'good intentions' towards them; though they don't understand their lives, their motivation, their needs and therefore could not really help them:

"The people from the Local Commission, they are trying to help… I had consultations with them, went to sessions, talks, they told me I have to stop behaving like this, that a day will come when I'll be sorry… I kept promising them that I'll stop, that I'll change… but after a while I was always going back to my old ways…"

<div align="right">(Girl, 18 y.o., Bulgaria)</div>

Throughout the years many have developed their own **personal resources** to lean on, and report in the interviews that these have been determining in their achievement of emotional maturity and their coping with their harsh life, conflicts and crisis situations. They feel as if they have developed a noticeable resilience and thriving capacity, and big sense of responsibility for their age, especially towards the family. For this, as well as for their present (ameliorated) situation, their **positive qualities of character** have been helpful; such as being kind, comprehensive, affectionate and cheerful. They also describe themselves as sportive and very active, hard-working, strong willed, perseverant, with a fighting spirit, strength of character and obstinate (in a sense of constructive effort).

B) Anyhow, generally they tend to associate their qualities potentiating, actualization and usefulness with the behavioral changes they've been making since they entered the protection system, visualizing **a clear difference between past and present effectiveness**. The later improvements in their aggressive behavior, thus, have been mainly due to the interventions of the staff and **within the context of residential centers.** The next chapter explains deeply in detail these improvements; but in general and at the most behavioral level, some elements that the youths find as soothing and protective against violence are:

- **Disengaging from or leaving situations** where they can't control themselves –or predict they won't be able to. When this is not possible, also ignoring people who cause negative feelings and aggressive behavior.

- Related to that, *'hooking up'* **with other activity or ritual** that results relaxing, calming and interesting in order to sublimate all their aggressive energy –i.e., listening to music, drawing, jogging, eating something, etc. More specifically, several children find it soothing to have time to stay in privacy, alone, until the strong emotions are over; in it, they might apply the

relaxing techniques they have learnt, adapting them in a personally effective way.

- Consciously **experimenting, suffering and/or thinking about the provoked feelings and perceptions**, in order to deal with their boiling emotions.

- The aforesaid tends to be helpful as well when thereafter talked with educators, the psychologist or other children from the boarding schools. **Sharing their experience** usually deals to focus the triggers from another perspective and give new meaning to them and how to face situations.

- **Making a call to the educators** when, within residential centers, they feel a violent outburst can eventually or momentarily come out, in conflictive situations with peers.

Overall, **relationships with the supportive people** in the young person's environment are used to avoid triggers. Not only the subjective feeling of having someone to rely on, to trust or **someone who could make them feel content**, but specific patterns of conjoint behavior too. For instance, in Austria the care staff has a very scheduled relationship work, in which they make a deep **conjoint reflection process** in order to focus on the explanation and interpretation of the behavior so the children can adjust it appropriately in further situations and develop coping strategies. In this context, to keep busy learning the basics of order, discipline and primary school knowledge (usually heavily flawed) **soothes indirectly when distracting to help constructively for new developments**. Processes such as accepting imposed rules, attending school units and engaging in extracurricular activities are therefore soothing and in turn protective factors, conjointly with all the mentioned.

It's important to point out here the importance of the **physical aspect** in *'terms'* of soothing and protecting. Not only the youths use deliberately their body to protect either themselves or other people from harm; it also seems to be a key element when working in residential setting to

de-escalate violence when the staff touches them, and also when the kids ask actively for physical contact; *"and what often helps them is if you really sit down and hold them in your arms and simply give them physical support […]"*. On the other hand, the body itself symbolizes a brake to violence in cases where it is necessary to pin down the child to ground by force, in order to control them when embodying an outburst:

"And if the worst comes to the worst we have to hold them down. […] So that they can't harm themselves or anyone else. Which of course is very strenuous, for both parties […] That can go on for up to 3 hours."

(Idem)

Even though all the interviewees recognize **difficulties in managing violence**, the professionals and parents report clear **changes in the children after their stay**. For instance, the Spanish parents see a big motivation to thrive and for achievement; also bigger responsibility for themselves, centeredness, calm, obedience, happiness, confidence, gratefulness; less reactivity to anger, aggressive and impulsive behaviors. Professionals mention too noticeable anxiety decrease, compensation in their basic needs, and values and norms internalization. Most of all, what seems to really sooth violent behavior from the basis, protective and functional from the beginning is **working with the whole environment where the violence factors appear and are constructed, as well as giving these adolescents the adequate strategies and tools** in order to develop successfully beyond the residential context. In the coming chapter we analyze more deeply the programs and services of direct attention and that pursue these goals too.

4. Conclusions

• The study shows that the main factors leading to effecting acts of violence in all three countries are similar - personal factors, family, peers and significant networks and society. The influence of these factors is different. Neither should they be considered separately, nor analyzed out of their context.

• After understanding all the factors that explain and contribute to the apparition and expression of the kids' behavior, we certainly understand this as a result of the confluence of all these elements. As said at the beginning, we cannot just focus on the individual child when trying to find solutions, but we have to influence all the elements of which their violence is just the 'explosive outcome'.

• With regards to the parents, we shall understand and integrate the idea that they need support and, in certain way, their children are "everybody's"; offspring of the whole society. Because fathers and mothers have also their own limitations and are subjects in development, who learn to rear their kids every day and are developing their self as parents too.

• Foremost among the factors leading to violence is the family environment that creates conditions for illegal activities and acts of violence by emotional distress, where children are placed (unstable environment, lack of care, attention, love, support, security and predictability) and by behavioural patterns that this family environment creates (conflicting relationships, lack of tolerance for others' opinions, resolving disagreements with scandals, physical abuse). Thus, it's important to think of doing intervention with all members of the immediate system of the children; very central with their parents due to the strong linkage they share.

• At personal and emotional level, frequent violence acts are an expression of the sensitivity and susceptibility of these children; as a result of traumatic experiences in the family, lack of communication culture and low tolerance for different opinions and criticism due to internalized values and styles of behavior, a complex emotional response to negative experiences of stigmatization and rejection by the

community, and high irritability and reactivity coming from specific character and learned behavior. This makes children who are perpetrators of repeated violence to a high extent constantly exposed to situations in which they tend to react aggressively. On a personal level, they have almost no resources to deal with these situations without aggression (as emotional maturity and competence and learned behavior patterns).Such conflicts can be mastered only with external interference.

• Another factor is the need for self-affirmation and recognition from their peers. Interviewed parents reported that their children seek self-expression, independence and a need to prove themselves to others, to show their skills in order to gain popularity and other signs of approval from their peers. Parents describe them as very energetic and dynamic, even too "wild" and "turbulent", in need of constant motivation to maintain their interest. According to the mothers and fathers, the fact that they have too much energy and do not know how to channel it into something positive or helpful is somewhat reason for their deviant behavior.

• The analysis of the interviews with all the samples revealed every now and then the importance of the reference figures and the effectiveness of its interventions when carried out within the residential settings. Therefore, we must contemplate its potential, promotion and possibilities as a preventive factor in the broader context, in the normal environment of the child and previous to the development of violence.

• In all the countries it is quite evident that the residential settings that house children previous to the "great misconduct" ones have a weak impact on the readdressing or diminishing of violent conduct; therefore, it is necessary to parallel their way of functioning to the settings where intensive work is being carried out. Clear programming to work purposefully against the problem of violence has to be elaborated, including set indicators that let us determine whether residential centers prove to be effective in this respect.

• It is priority to promote post-care support, which is not being supported in many (or any) ways by institutional procedures, activities and services. The youths can count on support from their family, and

some education that through work can help normalize their lives; but without social participation-responsibility it is impossible to take out fruitful outcomes. Additionally, social stigmatization, prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory treatment make it difficult for them to find a job in their early adulthood.

References

Atkinson, D. (1999). Advocacy: a review. Brighton, UK: Pavilion Publishing for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Auckenthaler, A. (1990). Bedingungen und Voraussetzungen für eine personenzentrierte Praxisforschung. In D. Deter & U. Straumann (Hrsg.), Personenzentriert Verstehen - Gesellschaftsbezogen Denken - Verantwortlich Handeln. Theorie, Methodik und Umsetzung in der psychosozialen Praxis (S. 105-114). Köln, Germany: GwG.

Baur, D., Finkel, M., Hamberger, M. & Kühn, A. D. (1998). Leistungen und Grenzen der Heimerziehung. Ergebnisse einer Evaluationsstudie stationärer und teilstationärer Erziehungshilfen (Reihe: Schriftenreihe des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Bd. 170). Stuttgart, Germany: Kohlhammer.

Gabriel, T. (2001). Forschung zur Heimerziehung. Eine vergleichende Bilanzierung in Großbritannien und Deutschland. Weinheim, Germany: Juventa.

Köckeis-Stangl, E. (1980). Methoden der Sozialisationsforschung. In K. Hurrelmann & D. Ulich (Hrsg.), Handbuch der Sozialisationsforschung (S. 321-370). Weinheim, Germany: Beltz.

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 1(2), Art. 20.Verfügbar unter: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2383 [01.03.2013].

Mayring, P. & Gahleitner, S. B. (2010). Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. In K. Bock & I. Miethe (Hrsg.), Handbuch qualitative Methoden in der Sozialen Arbeit (S. 295-304). Opladen, COUNTRY??: Budrich.

Petr, C. G., Walter, U. M. (2009). Evidence-based practice: a critical reflection. European Journal of Social Work, 12 (2), 221–232.

Schmidt, M. H., Schneider, K., Hohm, E., Pickartz, A., Macsenaere, M. & Petermann, F. (2002). Effekte erzieherischer Hilfen und ihre Hintergründe (Reihe: Schriftenreihe des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Bd. 219). Stuttgart, Germany: Kohlhammer.

Strauss, A. L. (1987). Qualitative analysis for social scientists. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2001). The World Health Report 2001. Mental health: new perspectives, new hope. Geneva: WHO.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2002). World Report on Violence and Health: Summary. Geneva; WHO.

Witzel, A. (2000). Das problemzentrierte Interview. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 1(1), Art. 22. Verfügbar unter: http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1132/2519 [01.03.2013].

PART II. Systems for providing specific services and practices for behavioral change of the children perpetrators of violence

1. The current situation in three countries

1.1. Supply situation in Austria

There are three systems available in Austria dealing with adolescents inclined to use violence: **psychiatry, legal system and youth welfare system.** The efforts to react to the increasing demand were until now successful only to a limited extent. The strategies of the federal ministry of health intend the construction and expansion of stationary psychiatry for children and adolescents and concern better maintenance as well as increased training of specialists, since it can be expected that currently only about 50% of the required places for treatment in the stationary sector and in day clinics are available. **Simultaneously, there is a lack of a sufficient amount of settled child- and youth psychiatrists that can be consulted by the patients and their families in problematic situations (ibid.)** Therefore, the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic supply in Austria can still be described as deficient. Juvenile criminal law plays an important role in the "public"response to violent young offenders. In Austria this is governed by a separate law, the **Juvenile Court Act of 1988 (JGG).** The law defines the following age categories:

- Children, up to an age of 14 years, are not legally responsible for their actions.

- The unlawful acts of youths from the age of 14 to 18 years fall under the juvenile criminal law.

- Adult criminal law is applied to 18 to 21 year-olds, with some special regulations.

The penalties under the Juvenile criminal law have a primarily educational objective (reparation of damages or community service). Judges and prosecutors are required to have a necessary pedagogic understanding. Experts, usually psychiatrists and psychotherapists, specialized in the field of children and youth, can be consulted to evaluate the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of the juveniles. Within the juvenile criminal law system the juvenile court support services play an important role. They are regulated by the sixth section of the Federal Act of October 20, 1988, Federal Law Gazette 599 on the administration of justice cases of juvenile criminality (Juvenile Court Act of 1988 – JGG). The courts and prosecutors can entrust the bodies of the juvenile court support services to investigate all circumstances and facts surrounding the juvenile that are pertinent for:

- the judgment;
- the life situation;
- the ability to take part in the restorative justice;
- the placement in and fulfilling of a community service;
- taking part in trainings or courses and
- removal of any dangers for the upbringing or health of the juvenile,
- the decision about the release of the accused according to §35 abs.1.

The juvenile court support services can also make suggestions to the guardianship court or the youth welfare institution, take appropriate steps in case of an impending, immediate danger, and provide legal counsel in juvenile justice cases on the level of district courts. Among the main legal procedures employed to deal with violent juvenile offenders is restorative justice (for every-day offences). This means that restorative justice can be chosen as an alternative to a trial. A mediator establishes contact between the accused and the victim and tries to

achieve a settlement or reconciliation together with both of them – without a court trial and without a conviction (NEUSTART). Thus the accused are not criminalized and are spared having a criminal record. Providing the prosecutor classifies the guilt as "not severe" and the Organization NEUSTART agrees to take the case. The court may also decide initially not to pass a judgment and instead to order the offender to undergo what is referred to as anti-aggression training. In Austria such training is offered by various associations and counseling centers. Most of them are run by counseling centers for men or centers providing counseling for men with violence problems. If an adolescent fails to complete such a training "successfully", he runs the risk of having his proceedings resumed and thus of being sentenced.

Aside from the legal system, the youth welfare department and the educational system are predominantly affected by the problem of violent youth. In the autumn of 2012 a "Co-ordination centre against violence" was established at the Austrian Federal Criminal Office, which coordinates all activities and under whose direction the strands are brought together centrally. This was done with a view to closing information gaps and launching and supporting concrete plans and projects. Based on the idea that more can be achieved collectively than singly, last year departments, 'Länder' (federal states) and numerous organizations and institutions that were already successfully addressing the problem of the prevention of violence were invited to present their approaches and projects in a programme entitled "Bündnis gegen Gewalt" (Alliance against Violence). This way 650 schemes and initiatives from all parts of Austria were presented and were evaluated by an external scientific team according to criteria such as innovation and sustainability (BM.l, 2012).

More and more children and adolescents can therefore not be treated sufficiently in this way and have demand for long-term stationary or part-stationary accommodation in the youth welfare system. In 2007, about 10.000 minors have been in out-of-home or alternative care in Austria (after the 6th report about the situation of young people; every

168th minor in Austria (0, 60%). The tendency is qualitatively as well as quantitatively increasing. This situation in Austria is shared by its neighboring countries Germany and Switzerland. The concentration of severe problems in the family of origin of those children and adolescents is high – according to research results in Germany. Over 60% of the adolescents in out-of-home care show youth-psychiatric conditions that require treatment, almost 80% have had traumatic experiences, and many are systematically traumatized). An important role in the "public" social interaction with juvenile offenders is played by the juvenile criminal law. In Austria it is regulated in a specific law, the Jugendgerichtsgesetz (Juvenile Courts Act) of 1988 (JGG). The sanctions in juvenile crime law are mainly educational (compensation for damages or community services).

Within the juvenile law the Jugendgerichtshilfe (juvenile legal support agency) is playing a superior role. This is regulated in the sixth part of the federal act of October 20th 1988, BGBl 599 and standardized by the administration of justice in the cases of juvenile crime (Jugendgerichtsgesetz [Juvenile Courts Act]; JGG). Within the legal possibilities in the interaction with juvenile offenders, the so called offence resolution plays a central role (criminal offence in every-day life), as well. Thereby, a person regulating the conflict establishes a contact between accused and victim and tries to jointly find a balance or reconciliation – without a trial and without a conviction (Organization NEUSTART). The accused are thereby not being criminalized and can avoid receiving a criminal record.

Additionally, there is a possibility for the court to abstain from conviction during a trial and instead of giving a directive that requires "compulsorily" participation in the so called anti-aggression trainings. In Austria these trainings are provided by various clubs and information centers The dense supply of these courses can be found in the so called Männer-Beratung (men-counselling) or Männer-Gewaltberatungstellen (information centers about violence for men). If adolescents do not complete this training "successfully", they face the threat of their trial being reopened and risk conviction.

Every adolescent that, due to acts of violence, cannot live in his/her home anymore but is not appropriately placed neither in the clinic nor in the penal system, is accepted in stationary facilities of the youth welfare. Consequently, more and more children and adolescents with aggressive behavior get treated there but there is no nationally coordinated approach available yet and controversy still exists about which concepts should be underlying these efforts. **The following project tries to question the addressees and the parents as well as the professionals working there and to answer this question.**

1.2. Supply situation in Bulgaria

International legal basis for the Bulgarian legislation in this area, which is binding for Bulgaria, provided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to the current Penal Code (Art. 31, paragraph 1) criminally responsible is an adult –over the age of 18, who in sound mind commits a crime. Paragraph 2 provides that a minor –over 14 years, but under 18 years of age– is criminal responsible, if he could understand the character and meaning of the act and was able to control his or her activities.

At present there are two current laws that operate simultaneously – *Law on Child Protection*, which regulates the social relations pertaining to protection of the normal physical, mental, moral and social development of a child and, valid as of 1961, *the Law on Combating the Anti-Social Behavior of Minors and Under-aged* (LCABMU) which regulates in details the activity for prevention and counteraction to anti-social behavior of under-aged and minors and is supposed to ensure normal development and education of the offenders. In order to meet the changed situation after 1989 the LCABMU underwent two major reforms – in 1996, when Labor Educational Schools have been renamed in Correctional Boarding Schools (CBS) and judicial review was introduced of the decisions for placement in them, and in 2004 – when judicial placement in CBS and Social-Educational Boarding Schools (SEBS) has been launched.

Residential institutions for children with anti-social behavior have been described in the Rules for Implementation of the Educational Act (adopted in1999) –Art. 73, as follows:

Organization and structure of CBS and SEBS is regulated by the Rules of Structure and Activities of Correctional Boarding Schools. Although in the legislation there is no concrete definition of the term anti-social behavior, **its content can be derived from the practice of local commissions for combating anti-social behavior**, as reflected in the statistics of "National Statistics Institute". According to it anti-social behavior is running away from home, wandering, drinking, drug use, prostitution, homosexuality, truancy and begging.

If a child applies violence, i.e. has a deviant or delinquent behavior, it becomes subject of attention of the child protection system or of the system for combating anti-social behavior upon receipt of a signal for its negative acts. Such a signal can be initiated by parents/ relatives of the child, state authorities and institutions or any natural or corporate body.

Both systems have defined their priorities – one is based on the child's rights and the other one on maintenance of public order. Accordingly, the Child Protection Act and related subordinated acts and ordinances regulate operation of the first, and the LCABMU and related acts – the second system. They are supposed to function in interaction and with good communication, information exchange on children and families in need of protection and social support, as well as actions' coordination, but at the moment both systems are rather working in parallel.

A child falls in the system of child protection when a signal arrives at the Directorate "Social Assistance". A social worker from Directorate "Social Assistance" conducts investigation and evaluation of the signal by collecting the necessary information from the family, child, school, nursery and garden, specialized institution, family, neighbors, other directorate "Social assistance ", general practitioner and other sources if necessary.

Based on the completed assessment the social worker prepares an action plan that includes long-term goal and short-term objectives, activities for their achievement and protection measures. Protection measures under the Child Protection Act (CPA) are implemented by providers of social services for children or by Directorate "Social assistance".

First, protection measures are implemented in family environment, and placement of child outside family shall be imposed as protection measure after exhausting of all other options for family protection except the cases when an urgent placement is required.

Placement of the child in a specialized institution is applied as a last resort for protection after exhausting the cultivation possibilities of relatives, adoption and in case of lack of suitable host family, except in cases of emergency placement. Emergency accommodation outside the family shall be applied in cases where there is danger to life and health of the child. It takes place immediately after receipt of a signal upon order of the director of Directorate "Social Assistance". In case of placement in an institution (in an emergency or after exhausting of all other possibilities), Directorate "Social Assistance" requests the court to impose such measures.

When the Child Protection Department (CPD) faces a case with a child who has committed delinquent activities, the Directorate "Social Assistance "(DSA) and CPD inform the Municipality commissions for combating anti-social behavior of minors and under-aged to take the necessary actions. A child comes in the system for combating anti-social behavior of minors and under-aged when it gets the attention of Juvenile Pedagogic Police Department (JPPD) of the Ministry of Interior or of the Municipality Commission for Combating anti-social behavior of minors and under-aged (MCCABMU) to the respective municipality or region.

The Law on Combating Anti-Social behavior of Minors and Under-aged (LCABMU) envisages for the Municipality Commission a more pro-active and wide-ranging role than the CPA does it for the Child

protection Department. They organize and coordinate social-preventive activities on the territory of the municipality, seek and identify (together with inspectors to Juvenile Pedagogic Police Department and Directorates "Social Assistance") minors and under-aged who needs help and take measures for their social protection and development.

In addition, Municipality commissions are called upon to follow-up the behavior and development of children, placed in SEBS and CBS (through their participation in meetings of these institutions, through proposals for termination of the educational measures, which they address to court as well as through control which they perform on these institutions), to assist children who left educational institutions to solve their (domestic) problems and to "closely monitor behavior and development of minors and under-aged, who left correctional boarding schools and reformatories , as well as conditionally sentenced or of earlier released from reformatories, and to take measures for their further proper development" (LCABMU, Art. 10, para 6).

Also, the Municipality Commissions deal with correctional cases of antisocial behavior committed by minors and juveniles, and crimes, committed by juveniles released from criminal liability under Art. 61 of the Penal Code. Local committees help and support parents who have difficulties in their children's upbringing. Separately, they study the situation and the reasons for delinquency of minors and under-aged in the municipality and make proposals to the relevant state bodies and public institutions. Signals for a child with violent or delinquent behavior the Municipality Commission receives by court or prosecutors bodies, police offices, officials and citizens. The commission member initiate correctional case and appoint a date for its reviewing, and promptly notifies the juvenile, his parents or the persons substituting them, and also the respective Directorate "Social Assistance".

The correctional case is judged in closed session with obligatory presence of the child and its parents and with optional presence of a lawyer or a trusted person, representative of Directorate "Social Assistance" and other experts invited at the discretion of the

Municipality Commission (psychologist, teacher etc.) and the victim of the offense.

Correctional measures which might be imposed on the child are: warning, obligation to apologize to the victim; obligation to participate in counseling; trainings and programs to overcome behavioral deviations; placement under corrective supervision of parents or persons substituting them, with duty to implement intensified care; direction to corrective supervision of a public educator; prohibition of the juvenile to visit certain places and facilities; prohibition to the juvenile to meet and establish contact with certain people; prohibition to the juvenile to leave the current address; obligation of the juvenile to remove by his labor caused damages if it is in his power, obligation of the juvenile to perform work for benefit of society ; placement in social-educational boarding school; warning for placement in correctional boarding school for a probation period of 6 months; placement in correctional boarding school.

When the correctional measure is placement of the child in a specialized institution, the Municipality Commission makes a proposal for such a measure, and the decision is taken by the district court. If after examination of the correctional case the Municipality Commission considers that the committed act constitutes a crime, it forwards the materials to the prosecutor, except in cases, where the juvenile is released from criminal liability under Art. 61 of the Penal Code.

1.3. Supply situation in Spain

In Spain, the regional governments have the duties in child protection and tutorship institutions, within a general constitutional statewide frame and respecting the civil, criminal and penitentiary laws. Therefore, all the management, actions, and specific regulations depend of the Catalan government (and some, of even more local authorities); so all the explanations in this document refer to the data and treatment of juvenile violence in Catalonia, except when differently specified. On

the other hand, the legal system in this subject developed in Catalonia has been the basis for the Spanish general and other regional ones. Three principal laws regulate and manage this subject:

1. The Regulatory Law of Penal Responsibility of Minors (2000), of statewide level, is guided by an educational-sanctioning nature of the procedure and the measures applicable to the underaged, considering disciplinary and procedural effects according to different age categories, with flexibility in the adoption and implementation of the recommended measures according to the case, and regional adoption of decisions. The implementation of the educational measures is determined by specialized technical teams in order to avoid any kind of counterproductive effect in the child's welfare and to induct the assumption of responsibility, respecting the best interest of the child (UNICEF, 1989/2006) In fact, the Law is innovative in taking in account the "supportive responsibility" of the parents, tutors or caregivers and the whole society when considering the reparation and assistance to the victim. It is also flexible in the use of the minimal intervention principle (GENCAT, 2000), giving relevance to the possibilities of resignation or not even opening a penal procedure, an anticipated restoration to the victim or a reconciliation between them and the offender, and the conditional suspension or substitution of measures.

Youngsters under 14 years old have no sanctioning responsibility, and the Law is differently applied to adolescents aged 14-16 and older; considering that violent, intimidating or hazardous-to-people crimes have an aggravation when committed by youngsters over 16 year. In the cases of people aged 18-21, judges may decide on its application, taking in account the personal circumstances, maturity of the author, nature and seriousness of the facts. A specific answer is given in cases in which the underage presents with alienation or mental disorders, or other special circumstances that modify their responsibility. This law states that reckless actions or omissions cannot be sanctioned with closed regime measures. It also details the concrete finalities and intended purposes of the measures listed, required by the behavioral

sciences. Finally, a special interest is given to the possible conciliatory agreement the victim and the offender might reach, in terms of repentance, apologizing and reparation, this last by working for the benefit of the community or the victim. The internment is for the most serious cases, aiming to give the adequate educational conditions (detailed below) to redirect the antisocial behavior and assuring restricted liberty. Attendance to a day care centre is a common measure, since it is the environment where the social-educational program for the offender is carried out.

2. The Juvenile Justice Law (GENCAT, 2001), of Catalan scope, parts from the necessity of separating the protective and reformatory functions, considering internment of adolescents as the last option and constituting expert teams to attend this population and also to carry out the mentioned priority of open environment measures. The outcome of the political application of this law is that only 10% of judicial resolutions of juvenile offenses end in an internment in a residential centre; that is, that most of the measures faced by adolescent offenders are within their own social and family environment. The main alternative resources and programmes that have made this possible are probation ("watched liberty"), mediation, and the formerly cited services for the benefit of the community and reparation of the victim.

This law establishes a series of action principles which come directly from international recent juvenile justice norms, declarations and recommendations. It promotes and regulates the resources that accomplish the social integration and reinsertion of the population treated, mainly from and educational perspective and respecting their rights thoroughly. Certainly, the "educational intervention" programmes are given in a penal context, hence of control. The answer to the penal infraction must therefore help the youngsters feel responsible for their own actions and understand their effects over other people to stimulate a behavioral change. So the recognition of their capacity to assume the consequences of their own actions is in the basis of the educational intervention towards or applied to them. This is also characterized by the individualization of the interventions, according to the

circumstances of the case; the specialized training of the professionals and teams for each phase, and the promotion of the participation and collaboration of other public and private instances in the interventional processes. The implementation of the open environment measures is intended to affect the youngsters' socialization process, in close coordination with institutions, organizations and professionals from the individual's community that might also have a positive impact by promoting collaboration and participation of the family and using, preferably, the communitarian resources and services. Finally, this law regulates:

a) The action of the cautionary or final internment in specialized centres, according to the resolutions of the judicial authority.

b) The support to the individual processes of the adolescents' reinsertion, establishing the actions that the professionals must follow prior the finalization of the measures, in order to facilitate their integration to their own social and familiar environment.

c) The inspection functions that the public administration must follow to ensure the work of the centres and professionals, in line with the principles of this law, respecting all the adolescents' rights and warranties, and the data management to warrantee confidentiality.

3. The Catalan Law of Rights and Opportunities of Childhood (GENCAT, 2010), innovatively promotes and actualizes the children's right to participate and to develop their personality in the familiar and social context. Not only in cases of unprotected or at risk populations, but for all children, working from a preventive view and with preventive systematized actions and giving opportunities for their health and well-being. It also gives primacy to the best interest of the child (UNICEF 1989/2006) in legal proceedings, making this a transverse axis in all actions regarding their care. In short, this law pursues to give an ordered framework to improve programs of promotion, prevention, care, protection and participation for all the children and adolescents in Catalonia; providing also a framework for coordination and cooperation

to address and prevent social risk situations, as suggested before. In relation to violence, the law considers its prevention, treatment and coping in the following aspects:

a) Against child maltreatment, dedicating a complete "chapter" to this issue.

b) Another one to regulate and address actions at risk and helplessness situations, derived partly or completely from a context of violence; prioritizing the stay of the children in a family context free of violence.

c) Violence incitation and/or use of violent, pornographic or degrading images or contents in publicity, publications, spectacles, audiovisual material or any other mean. Also, violent games or incitation to violence in gaming machines.

d) The identification and citizen action on violent behavior among adolescents.

e) Eradication of violent behavior, situations, attitudes and male violence within the educational system, community and curriculum.

f) Self-inflicted violence and violent practices (i.e., contention and isolation measures) in residential care centres.

General conclusions:

1. The factors that exert influence in the cases of children perpetrators of repeated violence are complex, and must be examined separately for each case as work should be done on each of them separately.

2. Professionals outline that preventive work with children, perpetrators of repeated violence, is of key importance.

3. Work with the parents as well as work with all the members of the extended family is of key importance, too.

4. It is evident that the residential settings need clear programming to work purposefully against the problem of violence, including set indicators that let determine whether residential centers prove to be effective in this respect.

5. It is priority to promote post-care support by institutional procedures, activities and services. The youths can count with support of their family, and education that through work can help normalize their lives; there is need for developing of social participation-responsibility to take out fruitful outcomes. The work with attitudes of society regarding stigmatization of children perpetrators of violence is important in order to provide them with prospects of professional realization.

2. Main findings

2.1. Preventive programs and services.

In the three countries there are preventive programs and services provided by the Youth Welfare System (Austria), General Directorate for the Care of Children and Adolescents (Spain), Child Protection Offices and Local Commissions for combating antisocial behaviour of minors (Bulgaria). Those institutions are supported in their offer by relevant services provided by NGOs.

The research shows that in Spain, Austria and Bulgaria, most of the measures faced by adolescent offenders are within their own social and family environment. The services within the community are intended to **support the violent youngsters' socialization process, rebuild family ties and attachment to significant adult(s), and redirect the young person to new activities and opportunities** through the communitarian resources and programs. There is a palette of services that vary on design, philosophy and methodology applied, target group, provider, etc. They prove to achieve different levels of effectiveness working with violent youth. The results of the study also show that a **key for**

effectiveness appears to be integral solutions envisaging comprehensive work with all the systems in which the child develops. The research reveals as well that more **flexible services, tailored by the individual needs have much more efficiency than pre-defined programs.**

Intervention at school appears to be crucial for the violent child's future development and trajectory. This is where the child's problems usually become evident, where the young person might feel pressure, disapproval, rejection from teachers and/or peers, where the parents have to face criticism about their offspring and/or their child rearing; and it is the institution that reports children's first problematic behaviour to the authorities. The social environment of school provides a fruitful setting for intervention activities and programs for children with violent behaviour, but overall **the education systems in the three countries prove to face difficulties to meet the needs of children with deviant behaviour and to interfere effectively**, so as to provoke positive change at an early stage of the manifestation of the problem.

School staff seeks the assistance of parents, but often the family already has exhausted its resources to master the situation and cannot take action. Parents react with much shame to the request to come to their child's school and talk to the teaching staff and representatives of social system. As said before, the analysis of the interviews with parents shows that in this regard there is a **shortcoming at the school-family-psychosocial care interface**. Parents report that decisions are made rapidly and prematurely, without them being able to participate.

Many of the interviewed children experience **disappointment with their teachers at school** because they feel that they have not shown understanding or given support to them while they were going through difficult time.

The supportive role of police in prevention programs for youth violence (especially in cooperation with school and local community) seems to be quite valuable as the young people could benefit from another

perspective towards the challenges, perils and opportunities in the life of the teenager.

Social counseling, leisure programs, workshops prove to be very useful as preventive measures for repeated violent behaviour as most of the contemporary youngsters with aggressive attitude have a lot of uncontrolled energy, feel bored, and lack self-expression and development of their talents. BEST PRACTICES of work with children with history of violence include **basic habits and skills compensation, dynamic healthy activities, education in values, social & communicative ability teaching.** It appears to be crucial for the child **to be starring in their own process of change** and growth – considering, moreover, his/her superior interest and participation as an exercise of their rights. Different community services and NGO supplied programs have done a lot of important work in this field in all of the three countries. Yet, often **financial challenges, lack of trained professionals or bureaucratic obstacles** impede the effective implementation of valuable preventive services. The resultant categorical analyses of the three nations surprisingly showed convergent problems in these issues.

The early diagnosis and treatment is another preventive measure that was revealed to be very helpful for the violent children. **Psychotherapy** is one of the main ways for the child to realize his/her needs, to stop sources of frustration or dissatisfaction, to be able to verbalize it and find coping strategies for moments that trigger their aggression. The keys for successful intervention seem to be **well-trained professionals, flexibility and enough resources** so such services could be available and approachable for everyone who needs them. The medical care is another approach for treatment of violent youth, commonly used in Austria (with sometimes the problem of high dose of the medicine and long stays in psychiatric clinics) and Spain, but possibly not enough applied in Bulgaria.

The importance of the work with the family is stressed by all the professionals who took part in the research. Although, in all the three

countries there is (some) assessment, support and treatment for the family, more needs to be done for the effective prevention of youth violence on family level. The study suggests insufficiency of services providing **training of child rearing, positive resolution of family conflicts, or dealing with youth violent behaviour**. While Spain and Austria have established certain best practices of support for the family and parents implication in the process of work with the violent child, in Bulgaria this area of prevention and intervention remains quite poor.

The research results show that in the three countries parents don't have enough information about the support they could get in case of violent or antisocial behaviour of their children (or in case of any problem with the child rearing they face) and don't feel comfortable asking for help. From the interviews with the parents it is evident they count on having good interpersonal connection with the social worker or the representative of the institution who leads their case, and that they would like to be given information and detailed explanation about the decisions made for themselves and their children. The parents appreciate when the professionals show interest and engagement with their case and assist them with what they need without limiting themselves within their institutional role.

Austria, Bulgaria and Spain face common main challenges for providing more efficient preventive services and programs:

- Insufficient financial resources, lack of investment in preventive programs

- Deficiency in training for professionals working with violent youth, e.g. social workers, educators, care takers

- Devaluation & burn out of professionals and vulnerability of staff.

- Unsatisfactory cooperation between the different institutions, poor regional coordination.

- Discontinuity of the connection and cooperation between the professionals working with the youngsters

- Often processes incompleteness due to age – all services are limited to the age of 18, with few options of supporting the child's processes to adult life.

- In the three countries, there is a need of professional foster parents prepared and willing to take in youngsters with violent behaviour for determined periods of time.

2.2. Residential care institutions

A) Many residential care institutions fail to help youngsters with violent behaviour.

Sending the child with deviant behaviour to a residential care institution is the last resort, after exhausting all possible measures and services within the community – unfortunately, sometimes this happens much before that, due to lack of adequate services, rash decisions, systems impotence. Many of the interviewed children have spent much of their lives in institutions. The research shows that **resident care institutions without specialisation on violence do not have the capacity to manage children with aggressive and antisocial behaviour and often seek a solution in the transfer of the "problematic children" in another institution**. Thus, the children live "institution-hopping careers" with constant moves and stays in various different institutions. These constant breaks in the continuity of their life trajectories **reveal the breaks in their social networks, as a result of which they can hardly develop or sustain attachments to and relationships with friends at school, other residents and care staff**, as was suggested in the previous chapter.

The stories of the children testified that **they often felt misunderstood** in the previous institutions they lived in, and that they could not find attention and support by a significant adult there. They also often criticized **the lack or, on the contrary, excess of control; the**

behaviour and attitude of inefficient, negligent and abusive staff members; high conflict situations, stigmatization, iniquities, robberies, and abuses, both from the personnel and among/between other teens. The various way stations that the children have experienced have also left their mark on their parents' life histories. The families felt helpless, confused and disappointed by the institutions that failed to help their child.

B) Residential institutions attempt to provoke significant change in aggressive youth.

The residential care institutions specialized in violent, antisocial and/or criminal behaviour aim at helping the youngsters realize their needs, adequate their reactions, feel responsible for their own actions and understand their effects over other people; learn coping mechanisms, social skills and competences for independent living so to stimulate attitudinal and behavioural change in the violent youth and make possible their reintegration to the community. The research results show that the different residential institutions that were included in the study in the three countries have different philosophy, methodology and organization of work with aggressive children, and respectively their effectiveness varies. Yet, from the interviews with the young people who currently use the residential services, parents and experts, it is evident that the KEY ELEMENTS that help children discontinue their violent conduct **are very similar**:

1. Stabilizing and normalizing environment: structure, firm rules, adequate measures that promote self-control.

2. Integral and individualized education: workshops and classroom, valuable and diverse spare-time activities, sports, positive value transmission.

3. Attachments: trust, personal relationships with the staff (better when finding one or more reference stable figures), and friendships with other children in the centre.

Many examples from the interviews with children provide an overview of the organizations, structures and house rules of the residential institutions. The interviewees reported how the house rules provide them with a **good structural basis and can be considered an indirect and effective support for order in their life worlds.**

"Here I've learnt how important is to have order and structure."

(Girl, 15 y.o., Bulgaria)

The importance of structure, adequate everyday routine and habits and skills for independent living for the behavioural change in the violent youth is also emphasized by many of the experts and some of the parents who participated in the study. Some professionals also speak about the value of youth active participation in making the rules in the institution and / or their group, in the elaboration of their program of activities, social work and school classes, in the choice of staff members to work with them (as mentors) or having a youth committee at the institution.

"We believe it is very beneficial for the children to be part of the decision-making in the institution. We have a children's council, the youngsters elect several kids to represent them, we meet once per week and we discuss everything they want to regarding the organisation, rules, classes, they suggest solutions, we see what is feasible and then we apply it."

(Professional, Bulgaria)

The narratives of children who took part in the research show quite **positive evaluation** of the education and the leisure time activities they have in the residential care institutions. Many young people share they have rediscovered school, started to **appreciate learning** and want to complete an educational degree. The leisure activities are revealed to be very helpful for them as well, making them feel more active and

involved in their own lives, inspiring their confidence **in their own abilities and availability of opportunities that life presents to them too**, motivating them to demonstrate and improve their skills.

To children proved to be interesting and meaningful, both in terms of their future realization and in terms of calming aggressive behaviour, to get labour training so as to develop work habits and acquire professional skills:

"– Tell me about the things of the programme that you see as good… – Yes, I find it good, because I'm busy all day; in other centres I was all the time thinking 'I'm here locked up, I don't see my family…' In the morning I do my homework at the school unit; in the afternoon I take care of the animals, clean the swimming pool, or I'm doing sports… then we have supper. When I realize it's time to go to bed! /.../ I learn things in the workshop, which is good so if for example in the future I want to have an orchard, I might know how to take care of it".

(15 y.o. boy, Spain)

Professionals speak a lot about the essential role of education and valuable spare-time activities for the work with violent young people. They believe that participation in diverse extracurricular activities such as sport, workshops, cultural programs, excursions, scout organizations, and programs for integration with the local community through community services, performances, etc., is very beneficial for the youngsters in residential care as these help them **realize their abilities and talents, to make them feel capable and proud with themselves, channel their energy** in a positive way but also make **a personal contribution, feel part of something, or experience the appreciation and gratitude of others**. Experts mention also the value of forming professional competences in the young people, work habits and therapeutic effects of work with youth with history of violence.

In addition to the structure provided by the rules and events such as excursions or infrastructural elements such as leisure facilities, the youths also considered the aspect of **their** relationships and attachments to their educators as a fundamental element. They all talk about how much they value that they have someone to **trust**, with whom to **share** their joys and worries, on whom to rely to understand them and **stand "on their side"**, who will do everything possible to help them. In staff they find people who give them **attention, respect, understanding, support and assistance**. Many of the children placed in residential care feel **they have a real trustful relationship with a significant adult for the first time in their lives**. This possibility to talk openly about their problems, to feel accepted and understood, to have someone with whom to jointly seek solutions, **helps them rethink many things in life, achieve peace with themselves, build self-confidence and have a more open attitude** towards new and different directions for their own development. The tutors' and educators' interference and influence are also constantly highlighted when valuing them and detailing the behaviours of their **positive reference figures.**

 "– How do you get along with all the members of the staff…? – Well; with some better than with others. – Who do you trust here? – In my tutor, I. [name]. He's as if he was… my father. – That much…? – Yes. – Do you love him? – Yes, very much!"

(16 y.o. boy, Spain)

This attachment aspect is judged by some of the professionals to be much **more important and helpful than measures oriented towards behaviour change or control**. In this context the dimension of trust plays a crucial role. Very valuable in this aspect is the work done by the residential care institutions in Spain, and in the Austrian therapeutic communities. They clearly set their goal –the relationship work between the care staff and the residents and eventually, if possible, the return of the young people to their families of origin and use their methodology to achieve it.

The idea of the therapeutic communities leads to pressure to bring about a behaviour change. According to the programme this should take place by means of **intensive relationship work**. The group discussions with care staff clearly revealed that the main emphasis is laid on **detecting and reflecting on triggers for possible violent acts**. Young people's needs and their understanding of them in the moment play an important role in this. The idea is that these should be **recognised and expressed together with the care staff with a view to prevent a violent outburst**. In addition to these efforts to understand the triggers and causes it seems to be a central element of the relationship work to give the youths advice as to how to react in certain situations, that is, to draw their attention to the response options open to them and to assist them with implementing those considered adequate:

"[I tell them] 'If you're angry, go away, go outside. Do something else in the garden. Shout or do something else rather than breaking things up or going for other people'. And if they remember it or still have a modicum of awareness amongst all this anger, they do it, too"

(direct attention professionals; Austria)

What seems to be important here is the care staff's **secondary prevention approach**, according to which they are called to "wake the youths up" in the actual situation so as to reduce the anger that gets dammed up or to protect themselves, the other residents and the premises of the therapeutic community.

This procedure is more or less similarly followed in the Spanish case, with the ultimate and main goal of returning the child to the original family as soon as possible; but the problem often is that **the family problematic situation tends to be worsened rather than solved**.

The **social network** both inside and outside of the institution also proved to be an essential and useful element of the context of care.

Making friends with their fellow residents is not always easy for the children. Many of them have trust issues because they felt betrayed many times –by friends, by family, by various members of the community. Many of them neither have experience of strong trust relationship and do not know how to build a relationship that is based on respect, reliance and selfless and unconditional support. But several interviewees shared they have managed to establish true friendships. Experience from the establishment and exploration of these friendships can be very **valuable for the personal development** of these youngsters.

In addition to the social contacts within the supported institutions there are also the **relationships with resident families**. For many residential care institutions the contact and the work with the family is quite problematic (Bulgaria), while others have established good practices of regular meetings, thus managing a **constant attachment and stable relationship between the young people in the centre and their relatives** (Austria, Spain).

Some of the residents mention the supportive effect of their therapies in direct connection with a new way of dealing with situations that lead them to get violent:

"Now I go to therapy with /.../ every once a week and I think in general if you talk to somebody like that then you learn to talk. Because before I used to bottle it up and I never wanted to talk."

(Girl, 16 y.o., Austria)

The dampening effect of the medication was also evident in the interviews from Austria. The results show the **need to provide the young people with support for finding their own, inner resources and potential for change**.

Overall the young people explicitly addressed **their own change processes** in regard to aggressive behaviour during the interviews.

These process descriptions usually had to do with using different **ways of dealing with tense situations** and associated explanations. The youths told in vivid terms why they now act differently from before. Some of them also get their motivation from a **hope that their lives will improve**, i.e. from goal-setting processes. Some of them **do not want to face judicial charges again** or **want to have a good chance of learning an occupation**. However, their narratives also show how important it is that their social environments note that they have changed or improved. In their own reports they attribute partly their new ways of handling violence to **their own maturation**.

The interviewees mentioned **as positive effects of their stay** a large list of things. Apart from the re-education measures, responsibility promotion and family environment mentioned before, they had achieved a **deep change of vision of life and themselves (self-reflexivity);** also **improved their self-concept,** with a much **bigger self-regulation and self-control**. Other things they will "take with them" is the possibility of **withdrawing from past or new bad influences**, the **transcendence of the values learned** and even, as a "secondary effect", the help the stay has given to restore their family relations.

Overall, the parents who participated in the research **perceive the residential care institution as beneficial for their children.** They talk about its effectiveness in terms of behavioural change –discontinuation of violent or antisocial behaviour, family relation restoration, resocialization, attitudinal change– positive attitude towards opportunities in their life, interest in school, or motivation for a professional qualification and a career. Parents are content that due to the stay in the institution –as a result of its structure and regime, its activities (classes, excursions, hiking, theatre, courses, etc.), psychological therapy and relationships with educators, their child realized the harm of their actions (for themselves and for others) and opened them to more positive life paths. Parents tend to evaluate positively the residential care staff as well as to value the attention given to families.

"– I value that educators would get up to give him food at 4 AM. – But have you seen anything that is wrong or needs to be improved or changed…? – I cannot comment; when I talk with the directors, all perfect, when I call and ask for something, they have treated me very well. I started and finished trusting them, I cannot complain at all. The only thing was that H. sometimes said "this ..." but I do not trust much the child, who likes to be on the street... you know? But for me, all they have told me, they have really done it; they have never lied to me"

(mother, 17 y.o. boy, Spain)

2.3. Post residential care services

Professionals emphasized the strong need of services at the exit of residential care. It appears that in the three countries there is considerable **lack or insufficiency of support for the youngsters who have turned 18 years old.** The young people also reported that it would be helpful if some elements of the support provided were **sustained beyond the point where they move out of the residential institution**. According to the interviews it makes sense to continue providing the youths with suitable professional support, assistance for further living arrangements and job assignments in order to enable them to live self-determined lives.

On the one hand they expressed **fears and anxieties** about future events – e.g. unemployment, bad influences, and going down to the same path again- and on the other hand they were quite confident that there will be positive developments. Developments and fears go hand to hand, since the same things they are eager to construct actively might entail other they can't control, or they don't see how in this moment of their lives: failure to thrive, rest unprotected, work adaptation, success in pending trials, or different relational problems (affection losses, disappointments, new family problems) are some of the mentioned.

They often talked of career prospects, e.g. starting an apprenticeship or a university course and also wishes to have a partner with whom one can be oneself as well as reintegration into their families of origin.

When asked about the **out-of-centre antiviolence resources that might be helpful** for them in the future, the interviewed youngsters clearly mention on one hand some self related, such as having a clear vision of (their) life, being capable of controlling themselves (self control) and being active, in a physically sportive way, doing many things, that for sure would be of help. On the other hand, resources **more related with the interactions with the others**, are avoiding bad influences, having, oppositely, the support from their partner, friends and family, as well as establishing one of their own.

3. Conclusions

The comparative analysis shows that in terms of legislation, policy and services have significant similarities and some differences. Differences are in the degree of development of the systems and methodology. In all three countries, there are various services to support the perpetrators of violence and their families. They are at three levels:

- Preventive programs

- Resident settings

- Post residential care services

In all three countries various systems are involved in this support: educational, social and justice. All three countries have legislation that makes it possible to work with this target group. Different is the extent to which this legislation regulating effective support models for prevention of repeated events. In terms of effectiveness of the services the results of the study show that a **key for effectiveness appears to be integral solutions envisaging comprehensive work with all the systems in which the child develops. The research reveals as well**

that more flexible services, tailored by the individual needs have much more efficiency than pre-defined programs.

3.1. Preventive programme

The preventive programs, developed in the three countries are effective in regard to the support of the family, the early diagnostics and measures in a family environment. They are:

- The early diagnosis and treatment

- The supportive role of police

- Intervention at school

- Social counseling, leisure programs, workshops

- Work with the family

Their success is due to the fact that they support all family members and work on changing the environment as a whole. Though these programs are not developed enough and not always provide the necessary and specific support. The main challenges are in terms of support in the school and family inclusion.

3.2 Resident care institutions

Resident care institutions without specialisation on violence do not have the capacity to manage children with aggressive and antisocial behaviour and often seek a solution in the transfer of the "problematic children" in another institution. Thus, the children live "institution-hopping careers" with constant moves and stays in various different institutions. These constant breaks in the continuity of their life trajectories **reveal the breaks in their social networks, as a result of which they can hardly develop or sustain attachments to and relationships with friends at school, other residents and care staff**, as was suggested in the previous chapter.

The research results show that the different residential institutions that were included in the study in the three countries have different philosophy, methodology and organization of work with aggressive children, and respectively their effectiveness varies. The research shows that in Spain, Austria and Bulgaria, most of the measures faced by adolescent offenders are within their own social and family environment. The services within the community are intended to support the violent youngsters' socialization process, rebuild family ties and attachment to significant adult(s), and redirect the young person to new activities and opportunities through the communitarian resources and programs. There is a palette of services that vary on design, philosophy and methodology applied, target group, provider, etc. They prove to achieve different levels of effectiveness working with violent youth.

3.3. Main challenges

Austria, Bulgaria and Spain face common main challenges for providing more efficient services and programs:

- Work with the family, especially in cases where the child has to be removed from the family environment.

- The inclusion of all family members and determine the significant adult when the child has to be removed from the family environment.

- Insufficient financial resources for the development of various preventive support programs in various cases.

- Deficiency in training for professionals working with violent youth, e.g. social workers, educators, care takers.

- Devaluation & burn out of professionals and vulnerability of staff.

- Unsatisfactory cooperation between the different institutions, poor regional coordination.

- Discontinuity of the connection and cooperation between the professionals working with the youngsters.

- Casework as the process of setting clear goals, objectives and indicators for measurement of the achievements and changes.

- Participation of children and young people in the process of planning and decision-making about their lives.

- Development of various models of residential support to ensure a change of the behaviour of the child.

Bibliography

American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2000). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – DSM-IV-TR (4th ed., text revision). Washington, DC: APA.

Arbeitskreis der Therapeutischen Jugendwohngruppen Berlin (Hrsg.). (2009). Abschlussbericht der Katamnesestudie therapeutischer Wohngruppen in Berlin. KATA-TWG. Berlin: Verlag allgemeine jugendberatung.

Bausum, J., Besser, L., Kühn, M. & Weiß, W. (Hrsg.). (2011). Traumapädagogik. Grundlagen, Arbeitsfelder und Methoden für die pädagogische Praxis (2., erg. und korr. Aufl.). Weinheim: Juventa.

Beck, U. (1986). „Risikogesellschaft". Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Beck, N. (2012). Kinder und Jugendliche in Therapeutischen Gruppen. In S. B. Gahleitner & H. G. Homfeldt (Hrsg.), Kinder und Jugendliche mit speziellem Versorgungsbedarf. Beispiele und Lösungswege für Kooperation der sozialen Dienste (Reihe: Studien und Praxishilfen zum Kinderschutz; S. 115-132). Weinheim: Juventa.

BT-Drs. 17/12200 (Deutscher Bundestag. Drucksache vom 30.01.2013) (2013). Bericht über die Lebenssituation junger Menschen und die Leistungen der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe in Deutschland – 14. Kinder- und Jugendbericht – und Stellungnahme der Bundesregierung. Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag.

Verfügbar   unter: http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/122/1712200.pdf
[01.03.2013].

Bundesministerium für Inneres (BM.I) (2012). Symposium „Bündnis gegen
Gewalt". 27. November 2012. Präsentation. Wien: BM.I. Verfügbar unter:
http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BK/buendnis_gegen_/aktuelles/files/Prsentation_Bn
dnis_fertig_2.pdf [01.03.2013].

Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (BMAS). (2008). Lebenslagen in
Deutschland. Der 3. Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung.
Berlin: BMAS.   Verfügbar   unter:
http://www.bmas.de/portal/26742/property=pdf/dritter__armuts__und__reichtu
msbericht.pdf [01.03.2013].

Bundesministerium für Gesundheit (BMG) (2012). Kinder- und
Jugendgesundheitsstrategie.   Wien: BMG.   Verfügbar   unter:
http://bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/9/1/1/CH1351/CMS1354113085605/ki
nderjugendgesundheitsstrategie_2012.pdf [01.03.2013].

Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend (BMWFJ) (Hrsg.).
(2011). Sechster Bericht zur Lage der Jugend in Österreich - auf einen Blick.
Wien: BMWFJ.   Verfügbar   unter:
http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Jugend/Forschung/jugendbericht/Documents/Sechster
_Jugendbericht_Auf_einen_Blick.pdf [01.03.2013].

Cabezas, J. (2011). Superación del modelo anterior de justicia juvenil (tutelar)
por el actual modelo (de responsabilidad). ¿Se lo ha creído alguien? Revista
Crítica Penal y Poder, 1, 158-173.

Departament de Benestar Social i Família (DBSF); Generalitat de Catalunya
(2012). Els centres d'acolliment (CA) dins el sistema de protecció a la infància.
Jornades de treball entre la Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància I
l'Adolescència i la Direcció General d'Execució Penal a la Comunitat I Justícia
Juvenil,   20   d'abril,   Barcelona.   Recovered   from:
http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/bsf/03Ambits%20tematics/07Infanciaiadolescen
cia/Temes_Relacionats/jornades_treball_dgaia_2012/docs_20_abril/centres_ac
olliment.pdf

Departament de Justicia; Generalitat de Catalunya (2012a). Programa de
tractament de delictes violents. Recovered from:

http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/Justicia/Home/%C3%80mbits/Just%C3%ADcia%20juvenil/%C3%80mbits%20d%27actuaci%C3%B3/Internament/delictes_violents.pdf

Departament de Justicia; Generalitat de Catalunya (2012b). Valoració del risc de reincidència amb joves infractors. Recovered from:

http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/bsf/03Ambits%20tematics/07Infanciaiadolescencia/Temes_Relacionats/jornades_treball_dgaia_2012/docs_3_maig/valoracio_risc_reincidencia.pdf

Direcció General d'Execució Penal a la Comunitat i Justícia Juvenil (DGEPCJ) (2012a). Estadística bàsica de justícia juvenil 2011. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya; Departament de Justícia.

Direcció General d'Execució Penal a la Comunitat i Justícia Juvenil (DGEPCJ); Generalitat de Catalunya (2012b). Organigrama del Departament de Justícia i Àmbit de Justícia Juvenil. Jornades de la Direcció General d'Execució Penal a la Comunitat I Justícia Juvenil amb la Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància I l'Adolescència, 3 de maig, Barcelona. Recovered from:

http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/bsf/03Ambits%20tematics/07Infanciaiadolescencia/Temes_Relacionats/jornades_treball_dgaia_2012/docs_3_maig/d_g_execucio_penal.pdf

Direcció General d'Execució Penal a la Comunitat i Justícia Juvenil (DGEPCJ); Generalitat de Catalunya (2012c). L'execució de les mesures d'internament en centre. Jornades de la Direcció General d'Execució Penal a la Comunitat I Justícia Juvenil amb la Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància I l'Adolescència, 3 de maig, Barcelona. Recovered from http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/bsf/03Ambits%20tematics/07Infanciaiadolescencia/Temes_Relacionats/jornades_treball_dgaia_2012/docs_3maig/execucio_mesures_centre.pdf

EFE Madrid Agency (2013, January 10). La meitat dels adolescents defense la violència i un de cada quatre vol aprendre a fer server armes. Ara.cat. Recovered from: http://www.ara.cat/societat/joventut-ue-enquesta-adolescencia_0_844715683.html

Fierro, D. (2001). Reflexiones en torno a la historia del maltrato infantil. México, D. F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Facultad de Psicología.

Essau, C. A. (2003). Epidemiology and comorbidity. In C. A. Essau (Ed.), Conduct and oppositional defiant disorders: Epidemiology, risk factors, and treatment (pp.33-59). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Felitti, V. J. (2002). Belastungen in der Kindheit und Gesundheit im Erwachsenenalter: die Verwandlung von Gold in Blei. Zeitschrift für Psychosomatische Medizin und Psychotherapie, 48(4), 359-369.

Franzkowiak, P., Homfeldt, H. G. & Mühlum, A. (2011). Lehrbuch Gesundheit (Reihe: Studienmodule Soziale Arbeit). Weinheim: Juventa.

Gahleitner, S. B. (2011). Das Therapeutische Milieu in der Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen. Trauma- und Beziehungsarbeit in stationären Einrichtungen. Bonn: Psychiatrie-Verlag.

Gahleitner, S. B. & Homfeldt, H. G. (Hrsg.). (2012). Kinder und Jugendliche mit speziellem Versorgungsbedarf. Beispiele und Lösungswege für Kooperation. Weinheim: Juventa.

Generalitat de Catalunya (GENCAT) (2000). Llei orgànica 5/2000, de 13 de gener, reguladora de la responsabilitat penal dels menors. Boletí Oficial de l'Estat (09.02.2002).

Generalitat de Catalunya (GENCAT) (2001). Llei 27/2001, de 31 de desembre, de justícia juvenil. Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya (21.02.2002).

Generalitat de Catalunya (GENCAT) (2010). Llei 14/2010, de 27 de maig, dels drets I les oportunitats en la infància i l'adolescència. Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya (26.05.2010).

Ihle, W. & Esser, G. (2002). Epidemiologie psychischer Störungen im Kindes- und Jugendalter. Prävalenz, Verlauf, Komorbidität und Geschlechterunterschiede. Psychologische Rundschau, 53(4), 159-169.

Jugendgerichtsgesetz (JGG) (1988). Bundesgesetz vom 20. Oktober 1988 über die Rechtspflege bei Jugendstraftaten (Jugendgerichtsgesetz 1988 - JGG) StF: BGBl. Nr. 599/1988 (NR: GP XVII RV 486 AB 738 S. 76. BR: AB 3573 S.

507). Wien: Bundeskanzleramt. Verfügbar unter: http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10002825 [01.03.2013]

Keupp, H. (2012). Alltägliche Lebensführung in der fluiden Gesellschaft. In S. B. Gahleitner & G. Hahn (Hrsg.), Übergänge gestalten, Lebenskrisen begleiten (Reihe: Klinische Sozialarbeit. Beiträge zur psychosozialen Praxis und Forschung, Bd. 4; S. 34-51). Bonn: Psychiatrie-Verlag.

Krug, Etienne G., Dahlberg, Linda L., Mercy, James A., Zwi, Anthony B. & Lozano, Rafael (Eds.) (2007). World report on violence and health. Geneva: WHO. Available online: http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2002/9241545615_eng.pdf [01.03.2013].

Martínez, M. (2000). Representaciones sociales de los adolescents madrileños sobre la violencia. Madrid: Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia (POI).

Mielck, A. (2011). Soziale und gesundheitliche Ungleichheit. In Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA) (Hrsg.), Leitbegriffe der Gesundheitsförderung und Prävention. Köln: BZgA. Verfügbar unter: http://www.leitbegriffe.bzga.de/?uid=622d06170f2bbbc8c579abfb1706f3e1&id=angebote&idx=165 [03.01.2012].

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Corporation (OEDC) (Hrsg.). (2009). Doing better for children. Paris: OECD.

Omer, H. (2012). Autorität ohne Gewalt. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Österreichische Liga für Kinder- und Jugendgesundheit. (2012) Bericht zur Lage der Kinder- und Jugendgesundheit in Österreich 2012. Wien: Österreichische Liga für Kinder- und Jugendgesundheit.

Petermann, F. & Petermann, U. (2000). Aggressionsdiagnostik. Göttingen: Hogrefe.

Petermann, F., Döpfner, M. & Schmidt, M. H. (2007). Aggressiv-dissoziale Störungen (2. korr. Aufl.). Göttingen: Hogrefe.

Popp, U. (1997). Gewalt an Schulen – ein „Jungenphänomen"? Die Deutsche Schule, 89(1), 77-87.

Ravens-Sieberer, U., Wille, N., Bettge, S. & Erhart, M. (2007). Psychische Gesundheit von Kindern und Jugendlichen in Deutschland. Ergebnisse aus der BELLA-Studie im Kinder- und Jugendgesundheitssurvey (KIGGS). Bundesgesundheitsblatt - Gesundheitsforschung - Gesundheitsschutz, 50(5-6), 871-878.

Schmid, M. (2007). Psychische Gesundheit von Heimkindern. Eine Studie zur Prävalenz psychischer Störungen in der stationären Jugendhilfe. Weinheim: Juventa.

Schmid, M. (2010). Psychisch belastete Heimkinder – eine besondere Herausforderung für die Schnittstelle zwischen Klinischer Sozialarbeit und Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie/-psychotherapie. In S. B. Gahleitner & G. Hahn (Hrsg.), Klinische Sozialarbeit. Gefährdete Kindheit – Risiko, Resilienz und Hilfen (Reihe: Beiträge zur psychosozialen Praxis und Forschung, Bd. 3; S. 113-121). Bonn: Psychiatrie-Verlag.

Stankov, B. 2008, Criminal Justice for minors – deviation from principles or advanced decision; http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=7840

Tröster, H. & Reineke, D. (2007). Prävalenz von Verhaltens- und Entwicklungsauffälligkeiten im Kindergartenalter: Ergebnisse einer Erhebung in Kindergärten eines Landkreises. Kindheit und Entwicklung, 16(3), 171-179.

Vitiello, B. & Stoff, D.M. (1997). Subtypes of aggression and their relevance to child psychiatry. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 36(3), 307-315.

Weiß, W. (2011). Philipp sucht sein Ich. Zum pädagogischen Umgang mit Traumata in den Erziehungshilfen (6. überarb. Aufl.). Weinheim: Juventa.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2001). The World Health Report 2001. Mental health: new perspectives, new hope. Genf: WHO.

Wilkinson, R. G. & Pickett, K. (2010). The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone. London: Penguin.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (1989/2006). Convención sobre los derechos del niño. Madrid: Unicef-Comité Español.