

Girls and young women in Germany

Living situation – problem areas – measures needed

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Preface by the Minister

Introduction

The United Nations Commission on Women's Rights has chosen 'removing all forms of discrimination and violence against girls' as its principal focus for 2007. For this reason, Germany's Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth [*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend*, BMFSFJ] commissioned the German Youth Institute [*Deutsches Jugendinstitut*, DJI] to prepare the present report. The report is intended to provide an insight into the current living situation for girls and young women in Germany, summing up its findings under the major topics of what forms of disadvantage (still) exist for girls and young women in Germany and what measures are currently being taken to remove existing disadvantages.

As can be clearly seen from the example of the welfare services available for children and young people, policy on girls in Germany is characterized by gender mainstreaming, which is intended to promote equal opportunities and equal rights for men and women. Gender mainstreaming has been firmly established as a general principle in the guidelines of the Plan for Children and Young People [*Kinder- und Jugendplan*, KJP] since January 2001:

'The Plan for Children and Young People is intended to work towards the promotion of equal rights for girls and boys as a general guiding principle (gender mainstreaming)...' 'In all measures that are taken, particular attention must be given to the specific concerns of girls and boys and of young women and men in order to improve their living situations, as well as to the removal of gender-specific disadvantages.'¹

The 'National Action Plan for a Germany Suitable for Children' (2005–2010) emphasizes that:

'The Federal Government will – particularly through qualitative measures for social integration, through observing the equal-rights approach in planning and implementing all measures (gender mainstreaming) and specific projects against gender-specific discrimination – enhance its efforts to achieve increased gender justice and active involvement of girls (empowerment).'

To clarify the areas of life in which girls and young women (aged 0–18 years) are still disadvantaged, this report carries out a comparison between the genders. This makes it possible to identify the life contexts in which girls are disadvantaged because of their sex and the areas in which there is a particular need for action in order to improve their situation. On the basis of representative data, the present report first illustrates the living situation for girls and women in comparison with that for boys and young men (Chapter 1). In Chapter 2, a few theoretically relevant aspects of the process of growing up as a girl and the way in which these aspects interact are discussed. Specific problem situations for girls and young women are then taken up and presented, along with measures to be taken to overcome them (Chapter 3). In conclusion, further areas in which action is needed are indicated (section 3.7).

¹ The BMFSFJ supports the process of implementing gender mainstreaming in organizations involved in child and youth welfare, in the context of the accompanying scientific research project on 'Gender Mainstreaming in Child and Youth Welfare' that is being managed by the German Youth Institute (DJI).

1. On the living situation for girls in Germany

Germany is facing significant demographic changes. Due to the continually low birth rate and increasing life expectancy, the population in Germany is today made up of increasingly larger numbers of older people and increasingly fewer younger people. If the birth rate does not increase, by 2030 there will be only half as many people in Germany under the age of 20 as there are over the age of 60.² The reduction of the relative proportion of younger people means that as adults they will have to bear an increasing socio-economic burden, with growing sociopolitical responsibility for supporting the previous generations.

More than one-quarter of those under the age of 25 in Germany now have an immigrant background – i.e., they, their parents, or their grandparents were born outside of Germany's present borders. Among those over the age of 60, the proportion of immigrants is much lower. One in 10 of those under the age of 25 in Germany does not have German nationality; nearly one in 20 has German nationality but has personally immigrated. Just under half of young people with an immigrant background have German nationality and have not personally immigrated.³ Young people with an immigrant background thus have widely varying family histories.

Although the following report mainly discusses the living situation for girls and young women in relation to gender-specific considerations, it should always be borne in mind that young people as a group are socially structured not only by gender, but also in relation to different cultural roots, immigration, education, handicap, etc., and thus that the way in which they grow up in Germany is characterized by different advantages and disadvantages.

The demographic change presents today's younger generation with immense tasks, which it can best meet with optimistic visions of the future and a strong willingness to take the action needed. What the younger generation therefore needs is favourable living conditions and positive life experiences in relatively protected social contexts. Younger people are being required to make greater educational efforts; they need to invest more in their own ability to hold an occupation and they need to provide for their own health and retirement costs more than the generations before them. In the future, young women are more often going to have to be involved in working life for much longer than in previous generations and will have to earn their own livelihood. For German businesses as well, it will become increasingly important to allow well-qualified female employees to interrupt their careers in favour of family tasks only for comparatively brief periods. What is therefore needed is a new division of responsibilities between women and men and better ways of combining family and work.

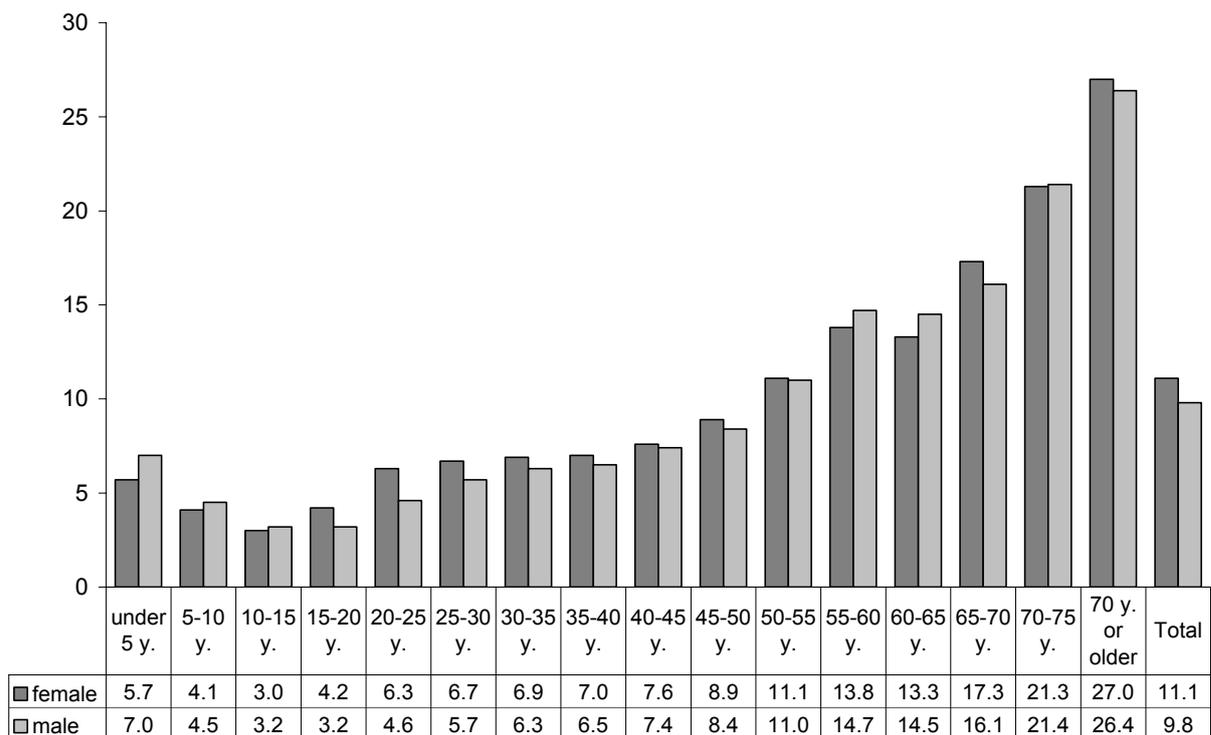
² Cf. Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006: 6–7.

³ Cf. Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006: 142.

1.1 Health and physical experience

Life expectancy has increased overall in Germany; the life expectancy of newly born girls, at 81.7 years, is higher than that of newly born boys, at 76.2 years.⁴ Measured using this indicator, opportunities in life for women are thus somewhat better than those for men. As Figure 1 shows, children and young people are comparatively rarely ill, and girls even more rarely than boys. However, after the 15th year of life, the proportion of women who feel they are suffering from impaired health is higher than that among men of the same age.

Figure 1: Individuals in ill health by sex and age group in Germany, 2003 (percentage figures)



Note: Individuals count as being in ill health if, at the time of the questionnaire or during the four previous weeks, they felt sufficiently impaired in their health that they were not fully able to carry out their usual activity (e.g., job or housework, or – in the case of children – attending school and kindergarten or playing). Pregnancy, birth and puerperium are not counted as illnesses. The data are based on self-reporting.

Basis for data: sample of the 2003 microcensus: individuals who provided details about their health.

Source: German Federal Office of Statistics, 2004; from: Stürzer and Cornelissen 2005, p. 465.

During childhood, *accidents* represent the greatest danger to children. Girls are less frequently affected than boys. The higher risk of accidents among boys is explained by boys' gender-specific risk behaviour, among other factors.⁵ The second most frequent cause of death among children and young people is suicide. Although the number of *actual suicides* is

⁴ See www.destatis.de/basis/d/bevoe/bevoetab3.php.

⁵ Cf. RKI 2004: 136–146.

greater among young men, larger numbers of *attempted* suicides by young women are recorded. Attempted suicide is generally regarded as representing a call for help.⁶

From the age of 13 onward, girls assess their *subjective state of health* as poorer than boys do. They report problems such as nervousness, headache, and sleep disturbances more often than boys do. Girls also take substantially more medication than boys. For example, nearly 20% of 13–16-year-old girls stated that they took pain-relievers at least once or twice a week, while among boys the figure was only 1.6%.⁷ From puberty onwards, *psychological abnormalities* occur more frequently among girls than among boys. Depression is observed twice as frequently among young women than among young men.⁸ Among young girls, the number of prescriptions for sedatives, antidepressives and neuroleptics increases with increasing age.⁹ This may be interpreted as evidence that a proportion of girls find it very difficult to cope with growing up.

Exercise makes a significant contribution to health. Seventy-seven per cent of children aged 3–10 play outdoors nearly every day, and 52% take part in *sport* at least once a week. There are hardly any gender-specific differences here, although there are some that are specific to social strata: children from immigrant families and families with a low social status are on average less active. Among 11–18-year-olds, the situation is different: girls take part in sport less often and more irregularly than boys and are less often active in sports clubs.¹⁰

A lack of exercise can lead to *excess weight*. Overall, 15% of children and young people aged 3–17 are overweight, and 6.3% suffer from obesity. There are no clear differences between boys and girls, or between children and young people from the newer and older federal states. The risk is higher among children from socially disadvantaged strata, among children with an immigrant background, and among children whose parents are also obese.¹¹ Excess weight is also favoured by poor diet. Dietary behaviour varies depending on gender and social status. Girls tend to have a healthier diet than boys, as they pay more attention to their bodies and weight. The lower their social class, the more unhealthy young people's diet is overall.¹²

Eating disorders occur mainly among girls, and particularly during puberty. During this period, girls are preoccupied with their appearance and figure, and compare themselves with ideals of beauty communicated in the media. Young women are dissatisfied with their bodies and feel they are too fat more often than young men do. This can lead to eating disorders. The

⁶ Suicide is not a specific problem of young people, however. In Germany, a total of 7,939 men and 2,794 women committed suicide in 2004. The higher rate of suicide deaths among men is observed in all age groups, particularly those over the age of 75 (see RKI 2006: 73).

⁷ See Glaeske 2005.

⁸ See RKI 2004: 124.

⁹ See BMFSFJ 2001: 235–6.

¹⁰ Cf. RKI 2006: 6.

¹¹ Cf. RKI 2006: 2.

¹² Cf. Langness, Leven and Hurrelman 2006: 93–4.

most frequent eating disorders include anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating. In this context, some young women consume unhealthy amounts of laxatives and weight-reducing preparations.¹³ Despite the mainly good health of girls and young women aged 0–18, there are thus high-risk aspects that need to be taken into account in health-prevention measures.

Overall, current findings show that 39% of girls and 33% of boys between the ages of 14 and 17 have already had sexual intercourse. It is becoming clear that girls generally have more experience than boys, as in earlier years. Nine per cent of girls and 15% of boys do not use contraception during their first sexual intercourse. The trend shows that the numbers of girls who do not use contraception are declining, by 3% in comparison with 2001.

Far more girls than boys are given advice from their parents on *contraception* issues. However, the risk of AIDS is left in the background during sex education. Due to its long incubation period, AIDS is not a disease that is typical for young people, but infection can occur during youth.

Only a minority of 14-year-old and 15-year-old girls (28% and 44%, respectively) visit a gynaecologist. Among 16-year-olds, the figure is nearly three out of four, while among 17-year-olds, 83% of girls visit a gynecologist. Although sexually active girls received advice regarding contraception slightly more frequently in 2005 than in 2001, the proportion of those requesting information about it before their first sexual intercourse declined from 40% to 34%. Nine per cent of 14–17-year-olds have experience with the morning-after pill (cf. BZgA 2005).

The consumption and abuse of addictive drugs represent a severe threat to health among young people, particularly since there is a connection between the use of various substances. For example, regular smoking favours the consumption of other psychotropic substances and promotes the development of psychological diseases. The proportion of smokers among young people generally increased up to 2001, but has declined again slightly today. Although it used to be the case that fewer girls smoked than boys, the sex ratio has now equalized: 19% of female and 21% of male 12–17-year-olds smoke occasionally to constantly today.¹⁴ The proportion of smokers increases markedly after the 13th year of life: for example, among 12–13-year-olds it is only 2%, while 10% of 14–15-year-olds are already regular smokers. Gender-specific and class-specific differences are also evident in smoking habits. Girls tend to smoke fewer and ‘milder’ cigarettes, while boys smoke more and smoke stronger, unfiltered cigarettes or brands that contain more tar. Pupils attending secondary modern schools (Hauptschule) include more daily and strong smokers than those going to other types of school.¹⁵

¹³ Cf. RKI 2006: 129–30.

¹⁴ Cf. BZgA 2005.

¹⁵ Cf. RKI 2004: 60–61; IFT 2004: 11.

Girls and boys drink their first glass of alcohol at the age of 14 on average. Twenty-eight per cent of 12–15-year-olds consume alcohol at least once a month. Mixed alcoholic drinks (including alcopop) are particularly preferred by young women. Three-quarters of those in the 16–19-year-old age group have been intoxicated with alcohol at least once or more. Young men drink more alcohol than young women. Nearly half of 16–19-year-olds drink five or more glasses of alcohol in succession (binge drinking) at least once a month. This high-risk drinking behaviour is less marked among young women than among young men. Hardly any 16–19-year-old young women and men do not consume any alcoholic drinks.¹⁶

Young women tend to try out and to consume illegal drugs less than young men do. By far the most frequently consumed illegal drug among young people is cannabis. Ten per cent of young girls have already had experience with the drug.¹⁷ The consumption of drugs among young people in eastern Germany is now the same as that among those in western Germany. In the period of the German Democratic Republic (former East Germany), it was much lower in the east.

The proportion of boys and girls with sexual experience rises with increasing age. Overall, current findings show that 39% of girls and 33% of boys between the ages of 14 and 17 have already had sexual intercourse. It is becoming clear that girls generally have more experience than boys, as in earlier years. Their sexual practices are not always safe and responsible. Nine per cent of girls and 15% of boys do not use contraception during their first sexual intercourse. The trend shows that the numbers of girls who do not use contraception are declining, by 3% in comparison with 2001.

Far more girls than boys are given advice from their parents on contraception issues. However, the risk of AIDS is left in the background during sex education. Due to its long incubation period, AIDS is not a disease that is typical for young people, but infection can occur during youth.

Among 14-year-old and 15-year-old girls, visits to the gynaecologist are not a very widespread practice (28% and 44%, respectively). Among 16-year-olds, the figure is already nearly three out of four, while among 17-year-olds, 83% of girls have visited a gynaecologist. Although sexually active girls received advice regarding contraception slightly more frequently in 2005 than in 2001, the proportion of those requesting information about it before their first sexual intercourse declined from 40% to 34%. Nine per cent of 14–17-year-olds have experience with the morning-after pill (cf. BZgA 2005). Sex education continues to be an important task.

¹⁶ Cf. BZgA 2004b.

¹⁷ Cf. BZgA 2004a.

Overall, girls' health is less at risk than that of boys. However, this does not mean that preventative health measures are not also needed in the interests of girls. Preventative health measures are specifically needed for girls in relation to diet, contraception, and prostitution.

1.2 Significant relationships during childhood and youth

During childhood, girls' significant relationships are above all those with *members of the family*. According to their own statements, the most important person for girls is their mother, followed by their father, brothers and sisters, and grandparents. Friends, neighbours, child-minders, and teachers – whom children sometimes count as family members – are often more important than aunts and uncles. Independently of gender and class, children of primary-school age evaluate their relationship with their parents very positively.¹⁸

In addition to relationships with parents, *relationships with brothers and sisters* are particularly important. The overwhelming majority (80%) of children of pre-school and primary-school age grow up with brothers and sisters. Only approximately 19% are only children, every second child has a sibling, every fifth has two brothers or sisters, and 8.5% grow up with three or more brothers and sisters. Nearly half of all children state that they get on very well with their brothers and sisters. A further 40% get on with them well, and 20% not so well. Relationships with brothers and sisters of the same sex tend to be better than to those of the opposite sex.¹⁹ Children with brothers and sisters grow up more often in families in which the parents are married and the mother works at most part-time. Mothers of only children are more often in employment. Children with many brothers and sisters grown up in financially precarious conditions more often than only children.²⁰

Girls aged 8–9 state on average that they have more *friends of the same age* than boys do. The proportion of friends of the same sex and opposite sex is more or less equal.²¹

During adolescence, most young people live with their biological parents. Some 10% live with their single mother. Although most young people live with their biological mother, only 80% of western German young people and approximately 70% of eastern German young people also live with their biological father. In western Germany, approximately 7% of young people under the age of 20 live with a stepfather or partner of their mother, while in eastern Germany the figure is 14%. Only approximately 2% of 12–20-year-olds live with single fathers.²²

Overall, 92% of 12–13-year-old girls state that their *mother* is the most important person for them, while the father is less important.²³ Approximately three-quarters of girls of this age as-

¹⁸ Cf. Teubner 2005: 80.

¹⁹ Cf. Teubner 2005: 81.

²⁰ Cf. Teubner 2005: 78.

²¹ Cf. Teubner 2005: 84–5.

²² Cf. Sardei-Biermann and Kanalas 2006: 44–5.

²³ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 106.

sess their relationship with their mother as being a very good and trusting one. Girls aged between 14 and 17 evaluate the quality of the relationship as less good. They distance themselves from their mothers only temporarily, however, since from the age of 18 onwards young women evaluate their relationship with their mother better again. Overall, three-quarters of 12–18-year-old girls state that they receive the support they want from their mother.²⁴

Girl in all age groups describe their relationship with their *fathers* as being less trusting than those with their mothers. Only about half of 14–17-year-old girls evaluate their relationship with their father as being very good.²⁵ Overall, only an average of 60% of 12–17-year-old girls feel adequately supported by their fathers.²⁶

Table 2: Importance of friends, best friends, parents, and siblings for young people and young adults, by age group in years and sex (percentage figures for ‘very important’)

	Age 12–13		Age 14–15		Age 16–17		Age 18–20	
	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male
Friends	73	66	77	65	71	66	67	66
Best female friend	89	66	91	70	89	74	86	73
Best male friend	70	78	85	80	86	80	80	81
Mother	92	87	86	82	81	76	82	72
Father	81	79	72	76	66	70	68	68
Sister(s)	72	53	65	49	68	47	68	49
Brother(s)	61	58	59	51	57	52	61	52

Note: The table is based on responses to the question ‘How important for you at the moment are the people in this list?’ In addition to the persons/groups listed in the table, grandmother and grandfather, other older and same-age relatives, fellow pupils or students, and work colleagues (only for 16–29-year-olds) were included in the list. The categories of response were ‘not important at all’, ‘not very important’, ‘quite important’ and ‘very important’, as well as ‘don’t have/don’t have any more’. The table shows the percentages of young people and young adults who gave ‘very important’ for the persons/groups listed; the basis used for the percentages was the individuals who had such persons (i.e., without participants who stated ‘don’t have/don’t have any more’).

Basis for data DJI youth survey 2003; cited after Sardei-Biermann 2006, p. 106.

Young people in western Germany have more *brothers and sisters* on average than those in eastern Germany. Immigrants have more brothers and sisters than local young people.²⁷ For young women, their relationship with their sister is the most important one.

Nearly all girls and young women have *friends* of the same sex. Girls and young women aged 12–18 state that they have approximately 20 friends who remain constant over the years, with the numbers of female and male friends being approximately equal.²⁸ Girls aged 12–16 with an immigrant background have a slightly larger group of friends than local girls. The majority of 12–15-year-old girls with an immigrant background have same-sex immigrant

²⁴ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 91.

²⁵ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 90.

²⁶ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 91.

²⁷ Cf. Sardei-Biermann and Kanalas 2006: 45.

²⁸ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 93–100.

friends and slightly less often opposite-sex immigrant friends. For immigrant girls, approximately 50% of their group of friends consists of immigrant young women, while for local girls only one-fifth or one-sixth of their group of friends are of immigrant origin.²⁹

For young women, their *best friend* is particularly important. Ninety per cent of the girls have a best friend who is a girl.³⁰ Nearly all 12–17-year-old girls describe their best friend as being very important, almost as important as their mother and more important than their father.³¹ With increasing age, a partner is added as a significant person for many young women; for example, 31% of girls aged 16, 45% of those aged 17, and 55% of 18-year-old young women state that they have a steady partner.³²

For girls, female family members and girlfriends are generally more important than male family members and friends. Overall, the majority of girls and young women have good relationships with all members of the family. However, the lesser importance attached to fathers is notable. With increasing age, non-family relationships become more important for young women. Young women start partner relationships at an earlier age, leave home earlier, and start families earlier than young men.³³

1.3 School

For decades, it was thought that schools neglected girls. However, there is now increasing evidence that girls benefit from the education provided by the German school system more than boys do. This applies not only to German girls, but also to girls with foreign nationality when their school performance is compared with that of foreign boys. Foreign girls achieve poorer school-leaving qualifications than German girls (see Figure 3).

Girls leave school without any qualifications less often than boys. Their school-leaving qualifications are limited to a secondary modern school leaving certificate [Hauptschulabschluss] less often than those of boys. They achieve a middle-level qualification or university entrance qualifications more often than boys do. However, young women with university entrance qualifications embark on university studies less often than young men do.³⁴

²⁹ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 96–7.

³⁰ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 97.

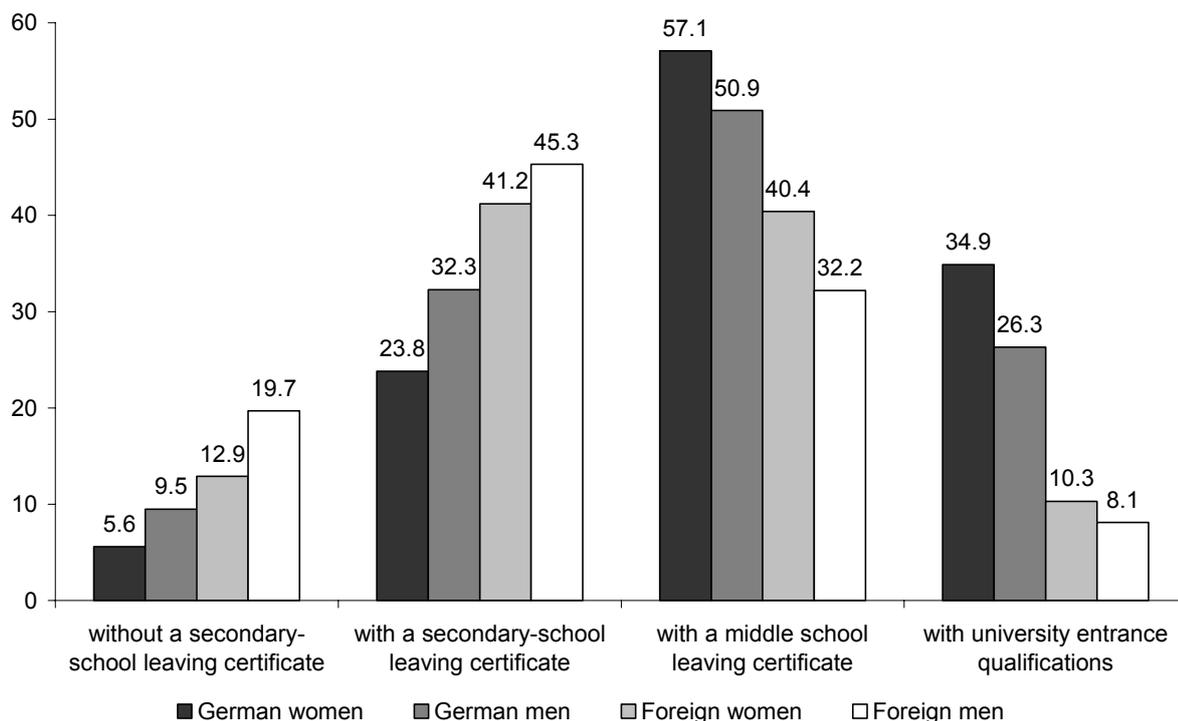
³¹ Cf. Sardei-Biermann 2006: 106.

³² Calculations by Sabine Sardei-Biermann based on the data in the DJI youth survey.

³³ Cf. Gille and Sardei-Biermann 2006: 12; Langness, Leven and Hurrelmann 2006: 64.

³⁴ Cf. Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006: 73.

Figure 3: German and foreign school leavers in 2004 by type of school-leaving qualification and sex (as a percentage of the resident population of the same age)*



* Not including applied-science colleges; based on the following age groups: 15 to under 17 years (with and without secondary modern school leaving qualifications), 16 to under 18 (middle-level qualifications), 18 to 21 (general university entrance qualifications).

Source: Federal Office of Statistics [Statistisches Bundesamt], Schulstatistik 2004/05, Bevölkerungsstatistik; cited after Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006, p. 73.

Even before starting school, girls have a slight advantage over boys. They are ready for school at an earlier age than boys.³⁵ Girls also have to repeat years less often. They attend special school much less often than boys.³⁶ In the eastern German states, girls' lead over boys, as marked by their school-leaving qualifications, is even more marked than in the western German states.³⁷

The fact that the school performance of girls is better than the school performance of boys, at least in the linguistic field, was made clear both by the International Primary-School Reading Study [*Internationale Grundschul-Leseuntersuchung, IGLU*] and by the PISA Performance Study in 15-year-olds.³⁸ Girls understand written texts on average better and are more often able to use the texts to solve set tasks.³⁹ The PISA Study also showed the performance weaknesses for girls in the mathematical field. However, the girls' deficits here were much smaller than their superiority over the boys in the linguistic field. The PISA Study did not

³⁵ Cf. Stürzer 2005: 24.

³⁶ Cf. Michel and Häussler-Szcepan 2005: 535.

³⁷ Cf. Stürzer 2005: 37.

³⁸ Cf. Bos *et al.* 2003 and Stanat and Kunter 2001.

³⁹ Cf. Stanat and Kunter 2001.

show any significant performance differences between girls and boys in the area of basic science education.⁴⁰

This summary of school performance should not disguise the fact that schools not only encourage girls in their development but also inhibit them at the same time because of their sex. For example, there is evidence that girls benefit more from teaching in exclusively girls' schools than is possible nowadays in most co-educational schools. In particular, girls are more open to the sciences and mathematics in purely girls' schools. Joint teaching of girls and boys does in fact provide teachers with constant occasions to attribute allegedly gender-typical characteristics to boys and girls. At the same time, pupils in co-educational classes more frequently feel obliged to emphasize and dramatize their own gender.⁴¹ This leads to gender stereotypes and hierarchies being strengthened in co-educational teaching and in pupils' informal interactions with each other, which evidently still impair girls' self-confidence.

Various studies have shown that girls regard their own abilities at school and university in a more critical way than boys do⁴² and that it is more difficult to interest them in mathematical, scientific and technological issues.⁴³ These findings have led many experts to accuse schools of disadvantaging girls. However, it is an open question whether the problems mentioned can be attributed exclusively to (co-educational) schools. School can certainly only make a limited contribution to the removal of culturally established role models.⁴⁴ In addition to the school's 'secret curriculum',⁴⁵ which suggests to girls the characteristics of adaptability, a willingness to compromise and weakness in male-associated disciplines, and robs them of their self-confidence, other interaction contexts are certainly also relevant for girls' self-image and interests – such as their family origins, the media, and their contemporaries in the same age group. Nevertheless, the question does arise of what contribution school can make to enabling girls to better develop their own potential during further training and employment after leaving school as well.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Cf. Enders-Dragässer and Fuchs 1989; Faulstich-Wieland *et al.* 2004 and Moser *et al.* 2006.

⁴² Cf. Horstkemper 1987, Milhoffer 2000, BMBF 2005a: 113.

⁴³ Cf. Faulstich-Wieland 1991 and Roisch 2003.

⁴⁴ Interesting findings on the issue of what schools can achieve here are presented in Spreng 2005.

⁴⁵ The term 'secret curriculum' was coined by Zinnecker (Zinnecker 1973). As early as the 1970s, he raised the issue of whether schools do not suggest 'female virtues' to girls in an unreflected way. This can happen in informal interactions at school, as well as in messages passed on 'between the lines' in text books (cf. Prengel 1986: 24 and Hunze 2003).

1.4 Life planning and gender-role orientations

Ideas about their own future and life planning are becoming more important for young girls. Life planning is influenced by parents, friends, sisters and brothers, and by the media. Despite educational successes and improving career opportunities for women, the patterns of the traditional division of labour in the girls' families of origin persist; for example, girls do more housework at home than boys.⁴⁶

For the great majority of young women, *employment* is nowadays a natural and central part of their life planning. It is important to them to have a secure job, a good working atmosphere and interesting work. However, young women regard a high level of income, promotion opportunities and management duties as less important than young men do. The caring professions and jobs that are easily combined with having a family are still more important to young women than they are to young men.⁴⁷

Although only some young women are nowadays guided by the classic gender-specific *division of labour*, it is nevertheless true that more women than men regard children and housekeeping as being the future central content of their lives. Young women in the older federal states (western Germany) aim for a *division of labour in the family* in which they are mainly concerned with children and housekeeping more often than young women in the new states (eastern Germany). Young women in western Germany endorse a job-oriented life less often and less often express a desire to share housework later on with their partner.⁴⁸ Overall, however, there is strong interest in having housekeeping managed on a partnership basis (cf. Table 4).

Table 4: Life planning and ideas for the future, by sex and age group (in percentages)

		Age 12–15		Age 16–18	
		female	male	female	male
I would like to be mainly concerned with children and housekeeping.	% ¹	43	34	35	24
I would like to share housework with my partner.	% ¹	89	73	92	73
My job will be the most important thing in my life.	% ¹	46	58	54	64
I would like to develop a shared life with my partner (only 16–18-year-olds)	% ¹	–	–	92	91

¹ Agreement with scale points 4 to 6 on a scale of 1 (= absolutely not true) to 6 (= absolutely true). Question for the 12–15-year-olds: 'Please state how much the following statements apply to you when you think about your future and about family and work.' Question for the 16–18-year-olds: 'Please state how much the following statements apply to you when you think about your future.'

Basis for data: DJI youth survey 2003; cited after Gille 2006, p. 191; statements for the 16–18-year-old age group: calculations by Sabine Sardei-Biermann (DJI).

⁴⁶ Cf. Cornelissen and Blanke 2004: 165.

⁴⁷ Cf. Gille and Sardej-Biermann 2006: 13.

⁴⁸ Cf. Gille and Sardej-Biermann 2006: 12–13.

Further evidence of the way in which young women imagine their later life with a partner can be obtained from the young women's views about *gender roles*. While 12–15-year-old girls tend to be oriented more strongly toward traditional models of the family, 16–18-year-olds tend more towards a partnership model (cf. Table 1.4). For example, 35% of 12–15-year-old girls and only just over a quarter of 16–18-year-olds consider that when children arrive, the husband should work and the wife should stay at home. Only 15% of 12–15-year-old girls and 10% of older young women are of the opinion that a husband who stays at home is not a proper man. Eighty-seven per cent of 12–15-year old girls and 91% of 16–18-year old young women consider that men are basically just as capable of bringing up children. Eighty-one per cent of 12–18-year-old women consider that men should work less and should spend more time with the family when children arrive.⁴⁹

Overall, the findings show that young women nowadays do not have standardized attitudes in relation to the role of the family and work in their lives. However, one thing is certain: a very large proportion of them want to have a long-term partnership in which housework is shared. Young men's ideas about the sharing of housework are less clear.

1.5 Desired careers and transitions from school to further training and employment

Girls' early *desired careers* are strongly oriented towards traditional gender-role stereotypes. The dream jobs for 10–12-year-old girls are thus mainly health professions such as being a doctor or nurse and jobs in the educational field such as being a teacher, as well as artistic jobs such as singing or acting.⁵⁰ By contrast, jobs in the information technology field tend to be unattractive for girls. The professional field of police work and computing science is more interesting for 13–15-year-olds, and working as a hairdresser becomes less attractive.⁵¹ While younger girls' desired careers are mainly based on vague self-images, with increasing age they develop a more realistic assessment of their own abilities and opportunities. From the age of 15, for example, girls only mention jobs such as being an artist or veterinarian rarely, and jobs are mentioned less often that require university entrance qualifications and studying; by contrast, becoming a trained clerical worker becomes more important.⁵²

After school, young women and men in Germany are able to complete *vocational training* in the setting of in-house training in the dual system, to start full-time vocational training in vocational schools, or to start courses at a university or college. The access requirement for university courses is general university entrance qualifications, but courses often have restricted

⁴⁹ Cf. Gille 2006: 175: calculations for the 16–18 age group by Sabine Sardei-Biermann from data in the DJI youth survey.

⁵⁰ Cf. Walper/Schröder 2002.

⁵¹ Cf. *Frauen geben Technik neue Impulse* 2003.

⁵² *Frauen geben Technik neue Impulse*, 2003, cited after Brandt/Cornelissen 2004: 22–3.

admission numbers. Training for many traditionally female jobs takes place in purely college-based training courses, for which fees apply.

In 2006, there were 15,387 training places available in companies in Germany, compared with 49,400 applicants.⁵³ The current *scarcity of training places* makes it more difficult for both girls and boys to pursue their own vocational interests and successfully manage the transition from school to further training, the so-called 'first hurdle'. This applies in particular to the further training market in eastern Germany. It is therefore hardly possible to speak of there being a free choice of occupation. Some young women are unable to find a training place in the occupation of their choice. In particular, women and men with few qualifications have to switch to alternative training courses or accept unqualified work or unemployment.⁵⁴

The proportion of young women among those starting in-house training courses declined between 2002 and 2004. In 2005 41.8% of training contracts were assigned to young women.⁵⁵ Young women are therefore less often able to take advantage of the training grants provided by the dual training system. Training grants for 'typical male occupations' are also often much higher than those for 'typical female occupations'.⁵⁶ Foreign young women and young women with handicaps have slightly poorer chances of obtaining an in-house training place than local women and those without handicaps.⁵⁷

Overall, young women pass through further training with better success rates than young men: although only 40% of trainees in eastern Germany and only 44% of those in western Germany are female, the proportion of young women among all those successfully qualifying was 43% in the east and 49% in the west.⁵⁸

The *range of training courses* for young women in companies is narrow. In 2005, just 54.8% of all training places for female trainees were concentrated in only 10 of a total of 348 recognized training occupations; 7.3% of the female trainee opted for the occupations of retail trade worker, 6.8% for the occupations of clerical worker and 6.1% for doctor's assistant (cf. Table 5).

⁵³ Cf. Federal Agency for Employment [Bundesagentur für Arbeit] 2006.

⁵⁴ Cf. Reissig *et al.* 2006.

⁵⁵ Cf. BMBF 2006: 18.

⁵⁶ Cf. Stürzer 2005: 50.

⁵⁷ Cf. BMBF 2006: 92.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hartung/Janik 2006: 3.

Table 5: The 10 most frequent training vocations for female trainees in 2005

Training vocation	Training field	Trainees		New qualifications	
		Number	Proportion of all female trainees (%)	Number	Proportion of all new qualifications for female trainees (%)
Trained clerical worker	Trade and industry	43.252	7,0	15.860	6,8
Doctor's assistant	Professional	42.218	6,8	14.245	6,1
Retail trade worker	Trade and industry	39.155	6,3	16.998	7,3
Hairdresser	Trade	35.716	5,8	13.843	6,0
Dental assistant	Professional	35.437	5,7	11.233	4,8
Industrial clerk	Trade and industry	31.112	5,0	11.115	4,8
Specialist saleswoman in food trade	Trade and industry	28.938	4,7	11.622	5,0
Clerk for office communication	Trade and industry	27.926	4,5	10.773	4,6
Hotel manageress	Trade and industry	22.794	3,7	9.241	4,0
Shop assistant	Trade	22.294	3,6	12.209	5,3
Total		328.842	53,3	127.139	54,8

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2006a).

The majority of the occupations that young women join are characterized by poor opportunities for promotion and by low wages. Better conditions are available in technologically oriented occupations, but women are barely represented in these.⁵⁹ For example, young women in training courses for the new information technology occupations are markedly underrepresented, with a proportion of only 10.8%. In the new media occupations, by contrast, the gender ratio is more or less equal.⁶⁰

Access for young women to a few classic 'male training courses' such as motor mechatronic is in fact made more difficult by the fact that young men are preferred. However, this does *not* apply to the information technology field, in which women are more likely to obtain a training place than men.⁶¹

Women are overrepresented in purely college-based training courses, such as those in *vocational colleges*, at approximately 60% (2004–05) and in colleges for the *health-care system*,

⁵⁹ Cf. Hartung and Janik 2006: 2.

⁶⁰ Cf. Statistisches Bundesamt 2006: 61.

⁶¹ Cf. Brandt/Cornelissen 2004: 23.

at approximately 80%. For example, young women in vocational colleges represent 94.8% of trainee children's nurses and 93.5% of trainee kindergarten teachers. In colleges belonging to the health-care system, the proportions of women in training courses for infant nurses and paediatric nurses is 97.2%, in courses for geriatric nurses 82.1%, and in courses for nurses 82%.⁶²

The gender-specific decisions about training taken by young women are due not only to potential obstacles that may make access to male-associated training courses difficult. The decisions are fundamentally determined by the young women's own desired careers.

Young women have quite different priorities from young men in choosing a career. This is also seen in the field of academic education: while nearly half of those starting university education are young women, the proportions of women vary widely depending on the subject. Young women are in the majority at 66% in the social sciences, at 61% in cultural studies, and at 60% in medicine. In faculties of law, the gender ratio is relatively equal, with the proportion of women at 49%. Female students are markedly underrepresented in engineering, at 21%, as well as in the natural sciences and economics, each at 38%. In applied-sciences colleges in Germany, 75% of the students in the social sciences are female, but only 37% of those in engineering.⁶³ The five subjects most frequently studied by women in Germany are business administration, German studies/German, law, medicine (general medicine) and educational science.⁶⁴

At what is known as the 'second hurdle', the transition from training to work, young women in Germany face additional obstacles. Since they generally complete training in the dual system less often, they also benefit less often from the fact that companies often keep their trainees on as employees after courses have finished. Of those who complete in-company training, on average slightly fewer young women than men are kept on as employees for an indefinite period.⁶⁵ As a result of having a school education that is on average better, young women do not become unemployed more often than men, despite some difficulties during the transitions to training and then to work.⁶⁶ The increase in the availability of jobs in the field of personal services in Germany has been improving job opportunities for women for several years.

⁶² Cf. Stürzer 2005: 50–1.

⁶³ Zahlen für 2004, vgl. BMBF 2005a: 19.

⁶⁴ Zahlen für das Wintersemester 2003/04, vgl. Statistisches Bundesamt 2006: 65ff.

⁶⁵ Cf. Stürzer 2005: 52ff.

⁶⁶ Cf. Dressel 2005, figs. 2.31 and 2.32: 145–6.

1.6 Social involvement and participation in politics

There are many opportunities for girls and boys to become involved in socio-political issues. More girls than boys take part in extracurricular *school activities*. For example, more 12–18-year-old girls act as class spokesperson or work on school newspapers, and they are involved more often in project groups, school drama groups, and school choirs.⁶⁷

Outside of school, young women are still socially involved less often than young men. Among women aged 14–24, 41% are members of clubs, groups, and action groups without active involvement and 33% with active involvement. Nearly half of those not actively involved would be willing to take part in voluntary activities, however. Among young people with active involvement, 45% of young men and only 31% of young women are active in the areas of sport and exercise. Voluntary activities at school and in the church are increasingly dominated by young women (cf. Table 6).

An interesting finding is the increase in the involvement of young women in the voluntary fire brigade and rescue services, as it was young men who were primarily active in these areas previously. By contrast, the involvement of young women in the field of politics shows a declining trend. Currently, only half as many young women as young men are involved in the political field. Young women also hold office on the committees of clubs and are elected to such positions less often. Among those with active involvement, only one in four women, compared with one in three young men, hold such offices. This proves to be an important advantage for young men when young people are being recruited for political offices (cf. Table 6).

In contrast to their lower level of actual political involvement, 12–18-year-old girls have a slightly greater *willingness* to participate in political activities than boys. For example, young women are more willing to vote, to take part in collecting signatures for a petition, to take part in an approved demonstration, or to be involved in an employees' co-determination committee. By contrast, girls are less willing than boys to vote for an extreme party or to take part in an unapproved demonstration, a trade union strike, an occupation of a building, boycotts, and actions possibly involving damage to property or injury to persons.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Cf. Gaiser and Rijke 2006: 218.

⁶⁸ Cf. Gaiser and Rijke 2006: 244; for the 16–18-year-old group, calculations by Sabine Sardei-Biermann from the DJI youth survey.

Table 6: Characteristics of active involvement by female and male young people

	1999		2004	
	female	male	female	male
Base: young people overall				
Activity and involvement				
Not active	28	24	26	22
Membership (without active involvement)	39	35	41	40
Active involvement	33	41	33	38
Potential involvement				
Not involved, but willing to be	43	36	48	38
Base: young people with active involvement				
Expansion of involvement conceivable	60	56	72	62
Fields of activity				
Sport and exercise	35	43	31	45
Culture and music	13	14	17	13
School	20	13	24	16
Religion and church	17	10	21	14
Voluntary fire brigade and rescue services	3	17	8	16
Politics	4	8	3	7
Social and health sector	11	10	5	5
Holding office on committee	28	27	24	32
Elected to office	20	27	20	27
Characteristics strongly encouraged				
Leadership qualities	19	30	24	32
Being able to deal with people	75	66	72	69
Specialist knowledge	20	32	29	35
Ability to cope with pressure	42	39	37	38

Details in percentages and average values/selected characteristics or responses.

Source: BMFSFJ 2006, p. 241.

Only 2% of male and female young people are active in *informal political groups*. In fact, only a small proportion of young people are aware that such groups exist. One-third of 12–15-year-olds are not familiar with human rights groups, third world groups, or regional, city district, or neighborhood groups. Young women aged 16–18 have a more positive attitude to environmental groups, peace groups, self-help groups, anti-nuclear power groups, and women's or men's groups than young men, but are only rarely actively involved in them.

Young women reject extreme political groups more often than young men do. In general, young people reject right-wing groups more frequently than they reject left-wing ones: 87% of girls and 84% of boys distance themselves from fascists, neo-Nazis, and skinheads; 42% of female and 27% of male young people reject 'autonomous' and anarchist groups.⁶⁹

Gender-related differences are also seen in *pro-social activities*: young women are more often actively involved in the fields of ecology and in assistance for people in poorer countries

⁶⁹ Cf. Gaiser and Rijke 2006: 235–6; for 16–18-year-olds, calculations by Sabine Sardei-Biermann from the DJI youth survey.

and for older and socially disadvantaged people, as well as the handicapped, while male respondents tended to be involved in activities related to their place of residence, in the areas of culture and tradition, and for social and political changes in Germany.⁷⁰

Young people's interest in politics is relatively low overall. A total of 70% of young women aged 12–25 stated that they were not particularly interested or not at all interested in politics; the same was true of 60% of young men. Only 16% of young females regularly watch political information programmes on television. However, the level of interest increases slightly with increasing age. In general, better educated young people are more often interested in politics, particularly if their parents are also interested in politics.⁷¹

Among young women with an immigrant background, a similar picture is seen to that among local young women. For immigrant women, it is also true that the higher their educational level, the more often they are actively involved in politics or society. The latter in turn represents a central aspect of social integration.⁷²

In view of the fact that girls are involved in school life to an above-average extent, the question of why young women outside of school are still not participating to the same extent as young men needs to be addressed.

1.7 Media

During childhood and particularly during adolescence, the media are very important for girls and young women. Of the approximately 6¼ hours of leisure time per day that young women aged 14–18 have available during the week, they spend more than 40% using the media.⁷³ Depending on the type of media use, this can have a positive or negative effect on their development.

Among girls aged 0–6, picture books, television, and drama or music cassettes are the focus of attention. During this phase, girls prefer imaginative media such as picture books and drama cassettes.⁷⁴

For girls aged 6–13, *television* is clearly the most important medium. More than three-quarters of children in Germany watch television every day and would be least willing to dispense with TV among all the available media. German girls, at 1 hour 20 minutes per day, watch less television than boys, at 1½ hours. In comparison with German girls, foreign girls watch much more TV, at just over 2 hours per day. Foreign boys spend 2½ hours a day in

⁷⁰ Cf. Gaiser and Rijke 2006: 215–16.

⁷¹ Cf. Schneekloth 2006: 107.

⁷² Cf. Gaiser and Rijke 2006: 264–275.

⁷³ Cf. Cornelissen and Blanke 2004: 2.

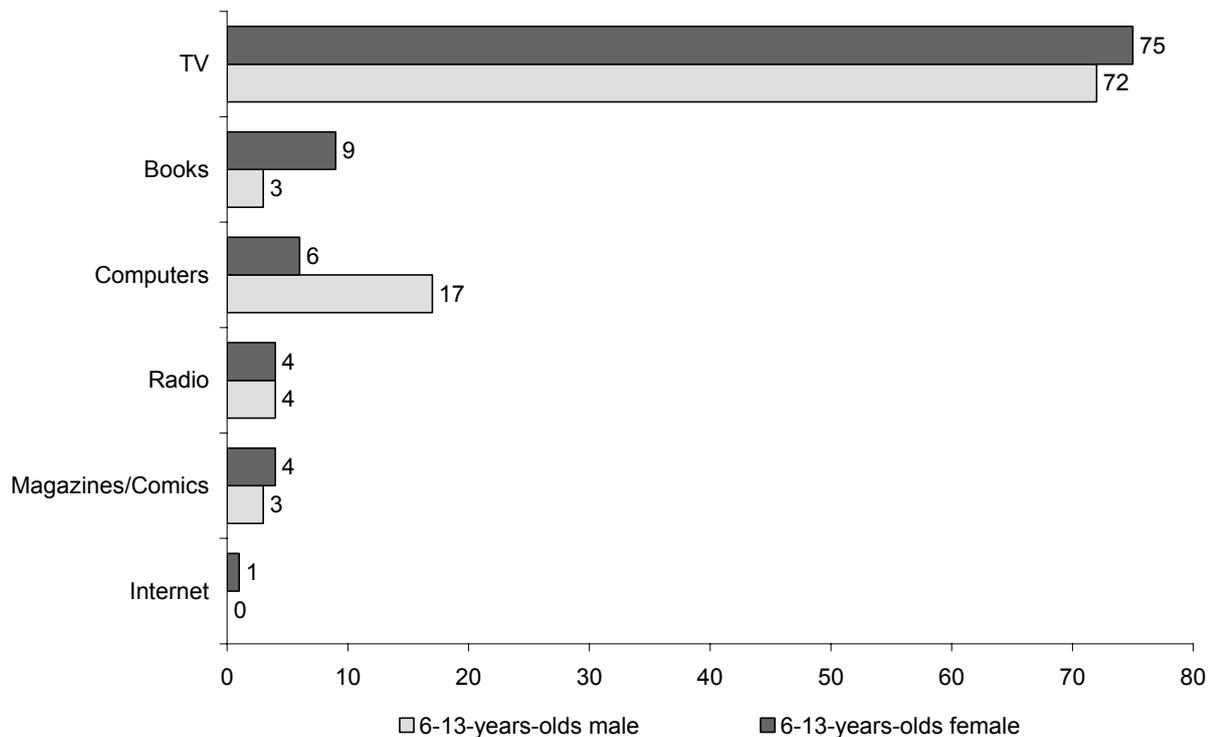
⁷⁴ Cf. Theunert 2005: 228–232.

front of the TV. Children’s TV consumption generally increases if they have a TV in their own room, which is true of nearly half of children in this age group.⁷⁵

It has been shown that children who have a TV and a game console in their own room are more frequently recommended to go to secondary modern school [Hauptschule] following primary school. The opposite applies with regard to recommendations for the grammar school [Gymnasium].⁷⁶ However, this does not yet explain whether it is uncontrolled media use that causes poor school performance or whether poorly educated parents provide insufficient support for their children’s school performance, on the one hand, while on the other they control their children’s use of the media less. TV is the also most used medium in the 12–19 age group.⁷⁷ Overall, young women prefer daily soap operas, crime and mystery programmes, and series.⁷⁸

Figure 7: Media loyalty 2005 (6–13-year-olds, by sex, in percentages)

I am least able to do without



Source: Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest 2005, p. 17.

The *computer* is nowadays becoming more important even for primary-school children. High-income households are almost all equipped with computers, compared with only around half of low-income households. Children initially learn how to use the computer from their father, mother, or friends, and rarely through school. Girls are less confident in using the computer than boys. This suggests inadequate communication of media competence at school. Girls

⁷⁵ Cf. MPFS 2005: 19–20.

⁷⁶ Cf. KFN 2006: 26.

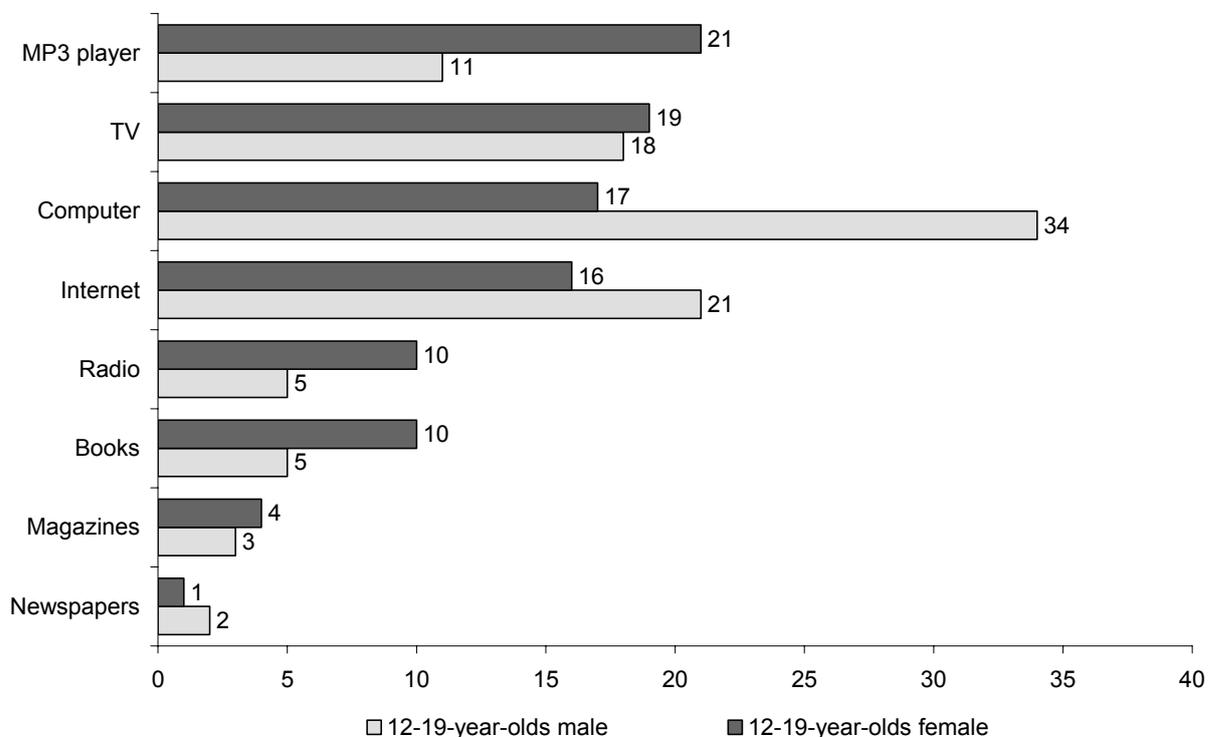
⁷⁷ Cf. MPFS 2006: 12.

⁷⁸ Cf. MPFS 2006: 25.

are generally more poorly equipped with media devices than boys. Seventy-four per cent of girls use the computer at least occasionally, with the amount of time using it rising with increasing age. Computer usage by girls and boys differs above all in relation to computer games: girls play much less and less regularly, and only half as many girls as boys have a computer game that they own. Girls tend to use creative programs for painting, drawing, and working on texts more than boys. Only half as many girls as boys count the computer among their favourite leisure-time occupations. Girls are generally much less enthusiastic about the medium than boys.⁷⁹ As Figure 8 shows, MP3 players for listening to music have become particularly important for young women and are now actually even more important than TV.

Figure 8: Media loyalty 2006 (12–19-year-olds, by sex, in percentages)

I am least able to do without



Source: Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest 2005, p. 17.

Girls aged 12–19 and young women own their own computer less often than young men. Clear differences in usage of the computer are also seen in this age group. Young women mainly use the PC for text processing, while young men mainly use it for games.⁸⁰ Pupils at secondary modern schools have their own computer less often than those at grammar schools. In this age group as well, young women have much less interest in using computers than young men. They accordingly use the computer more rarely and for shorter periods. The same also applies to pupils at secondary modern schools in comparison with those at gram-

⁷⁹ Cf. MPFS 2005: 26–38.

⁸⁰ Cf. MPFS 2005a: 28–34.

mar schools. Overall, the computer is the fourth most important medium for girls, ranking after TV, radio, and books.

Initial experience in dealing with the *Internet* is now being gained at primary-school age. There are hardly any differences in Internet competence between girls and boys, but there are differences in Internet usage. Girls prefer the communicative side of the Internet and children's web pages.⁸¹ Internet usage increases substantially in the 12–19 age group. Gender-specific and educational level-specific differences appear here; girls generally have access to the Internet less often, and pupils at secondary modern schools less often than those at grammar schools. The proportion of intensive users is much higher among grammar-school pupils, who mainly use their own PC at home, than among pupils at secondary modern schools, who are usually dependent on computers provided at school. Girls are underrepresented among intensive users, particularly in relation to network or multi-user games. Pupils at secondary modern schools use chat rooms more often than those at grammar schools, and use the Internet less often for school and work. Pupils at secondary modern schools e-mail less often and have their own e-mail address less often than those at grammar schools.⁸²

At the age of 6–13, almost half of children have a *mobile phone*. Ownership increases with increasing age.⁸³ Most young people have their own mobile phone, which they use to send text messages and to phone with. Girls (at 94%) are slightly better equipped with mobile phones than boys (90%).⁸⁴ According to expert assessments, approximately 11% of 13–24-year-olds in Germany have debts averaging € 2000 principally because they are unable to pay the high charges for their mobile phone contract and additional functions (ring tones, games, logos, etc.).⁸⁵ In comparison with boys, girls have problems in paying their mobile phone bills slightly more often and order expensive ring tones and logos, which are advertised on TV and music channels, slightly more often for their mobiles. The latter applies particularly to pupils at secondary modern schools.⁸⁶

Girls and young women from poorly educated and low-income classes have access to computers and the Internet particularly rarely. Both inside and outside of school, these girls should be given an opportunity to expand their familiarity with computers.

⁸¹ Cf. MPFS 2005: 39–45.

⁸² Cf. MPFS 2005a: 35–47.

⁸³ Cf. MPFS 2005: 46–7.

⁸⁴ Cf. MPFS 2005a: 48–9.

⁸⁵ Cf. IJF 2004: 237.

⁸⁶ Cf. MPFS 2005a: 49–50.

1.8 Violence and crime

Children and young people are in many ways more at risk of becoming the victims of violence than adults. According to a study in the USA, for example, girls have four times the risk of becoming the victim of a sexual attack than adult women.⁸⁷

It is not possible to give precise data for the numbers and gender specificity of *neglect* and psychological *maltreatment* of girls and boys in Germany. Estimates vary between 50,000 and 500,000 affected children. Overall, parents nowadays use *corporal punishment during upbringing* less often than 15 years ago. Despite this, only 43.3% of children under the age of 12 and 58% of young people classify themselves as not being victims of parental violence; 17.1% of younger and 8.1% of older adolescents state that they regularly suffer severe corporal punishment from their parents. There is a tendency for children from lower socio-economic classes to be affected by parental violence more often than children from higher social classes.⁸⁸

Girls and boys who become victims of corporal maltreatment or domestic violence observe violence between their parents more often than children who are not themselves the victims of violence. In addition to the immediate effects of injuries due to physical violence, violence by the husband against the mother that is 'only' observed among adults by children also has severe consequences. A questionnaire commissioned in 2004 by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, including 10,000 women, confirmed previous findings from research and practical work on the topic of the presence of children in situations of violence and the way in which they are affected by it. Fifty-seven per cent of those asked stated that the children had heard such situations, and 50% that they had seen them. Some 21–25% stated that the children had become caught up in the situations or had tried to defend the questionnaire respondent. One in ten of the children were then physically attacked themselves. The questionnaire also showed that girls who experience physical arguments between their parents while they are children themselves suffer violence from their (ex-)partners as adults more than twice as often as women who do not witness parental violence while they are children. Girls who have themselves been victims of physical violence from those bringing them up while they were children or adolescents were as adults affected by violence from their partners three times more often than other women. Girls who were the victims of sexual abuse before the age of 16 became victims of domestic violence from their partners twice as often as other women and were the victims of sexual violence four times as often.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Cf. Hashima and Finkelohr 1999, cited after Heiliger *et al.* 2005: 636.

⁸⁸ Cf. Deegener 2006: 30.

⁸⁹ Cf. BMFSFJ 2004a.

Children are often affected by different forms of violence simultaneously. For example, girls and boys who have experienced *sexual abuse* also report more physical violence from their parents, and conversely, the probability of sexual abuse by parents increases when there is frequent physical abuse. Experts estimate that approximately one in six young women has been the victim of violence in the form of severe physical violence or sexual abuse at least once.⁹⁰

Boys are more affected by severe physical violence and girls are more affected by sexual abuse. It is estimated that some 10–15% of girls up to the age of 16 have experienced unwanted sexual physical contact at least once under compulsion from a much older person and/or through violence (see table 9).⁹¹ Girls and young women with handicaps who are dependent on help from other people in everyday life are particularly at risk. Young immigrant girls suffer additional violence in the public sphere as a result of extreme right-wing offences directed against foreigners.⁹² They are also more often threatened by violence in their families of origin.⁹³

Table 9: Extent of sexual abuse among girls affected by violence

<i>Extremely intense sexual abuse</i> Attempted or enacted vaginal, anal, or oral rape; victim had to satisfy the perpetrator orally or was penetrated anally	15%
<i>Intense sexual abuse</i> The victim had to masturbate in front of the perpetrator; the perpetrator masturbated in front of the victim; the perpetrator touched the victim's genitals; the victim had to touch the perpetrator's genitals; the victim had to show the perpetrator his or her genitals	35%
<i>Less intense sexual abuse</i> The perpetrator attempted to touch the victim's genitals; the perpetrator touched the victim's breast; sexualized kissing, French kissing	35%
<i>Sexual abuse without physical contact</i> Exhibitionism; victim had to watch pornography; perpetrator watched victim having a bath	15%

Source: cited after Deegener 2006, p. 34

In the public sphere, *young lesbian women* are also often subject to verbal and psychological discrimination. For example, 94.7% report experiencing denigrating remarks from strangers. These are aimed at their sexual orientation as something 'deviant'; in two-thirds of cases it is insinuated that they turned to their own sex due to bad experiences in heterosexual partnerships or that their homosexual orientation is only a passing phase. They are also particularly

⁹⁰ Cf. BMFSFJ 2004a.

⁹¹ Cf. Deegener 2006: 34.

⁹² Cf. Heiliger *et al.* 2005: 604.

⁹³ Cf. Pfeiffer, Wetzels and Enzmann 1999.

often affected by sexual molestation or sexual attacks, often associated with physical violence.⁹⁴

Violence and prostitution are also connected with each other in various ways. Prostitutes report having experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 from a perpetrator inside or outside their own family around ten times more frequently than women not involved in prostitution. An additional questionnaire survey of 110 prostitutes commissioned by the Federal Ministry for the Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, in connection with the survey mentioned earlier, showed that the prostitutes who were questioned represent a group that is at very high risk of violence and is particularly affected by abuse experienced during childhood and adolescence. Forty-three per cent had experienced sexual abuse during childhood, and 52% had undergone frequent or occasional corporal punishment by their parents. Approximately half of the prostitutes experience violence from clients and/or pimps in connection with their work. The earlier prostitutes enter the occupation, the more frequently this is the case. The numbers of prostitutes in Germany are estimated as totalling 50,000 to 400,000 women. Estimates on the *prostitution of minors* are even more imprecise, as it often occurs in concealment due to its illegality. According to data provided by advice services, the numbers of underaged prostitutes are growing in connection with human trafficking and forced prostitution. Young female immigrants are at particular risk.⁹⁵ Underaged prostitutes are usually involved in the scene associated with drugs, railway station forecourts, and run-aways. The prostitution of girls and young women is most noticeable in the context of drug dependency. Due to the pressures of procurement, these girls are often particularly exposed to violence and to health risks due to dangerous sexual practices. The same also applies to homeless girls and young women, who often become prostitutes for reasons of economic necessity.⁹⁶

Violence among young people is primarily male violence. For example, the proportion of young women among suspects connected with offences involving bodily harm in 2005 was 17%, while for young men the figure was 83%. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the propensity to violence among young women, particularly among 14–18-year-olds, has increased during the last 10 years.⁹⁷

According to the police criminal statistics, *juvenile delinquency* is also mainly committed by young men; accordingly, only just under one-quarter of 8–21-year-old suspects are female. In offences involving theft and non-payment (mainly fare-dodging on public transport), the proportion of young women is above average. In cases of severe and dangerous bodily harm, the proportion of young women involved is 12%, while for premeditated minor bodily harm

⁹⁴ Cf. Soine and Zinn 2006: 348–352.

⁹⁵ Cf. Heiliger *et al.* 2005: 592.

⁹⁶ Cf. Leopold and Grieger 2004: 19–26.

⁹⁷ Cf. Bruhns and Wittman 2006: 5.

the figure is 16%. Female suspects are mainly registered as first-time offenders, and more than half of them do not re-offend. Girls mainly carry out more minor offences. Although girls generally become offenders less often than boys, the figures for young female offenders are rising.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Cf. Bruhns and Wittmann 2003: 41–2.

2. Theoretical aspects of growing up as a girl

Even before children themselves become aware that physical sexual differences can be a reason for describing them as female or male, and before they understand that this initial categorization will usually stay with them throughout their lives, children are already embedded in the everyday practice of differentiation: girls receive different names from boys, they are dressed differently and have their hair done differently, they are spoken to differently, they are reprimanded for different behaviour patterns, and they receive different toys, for example. Usually a single glance at a child's room is sufficient to be able to decide on the basis of the bed linen and toys whether it is a girl's or a boy's room. Parents, neighbours, kindergarten teachers, and later on children of the same age and also teachers expect different things from girls and from boys – often unconsciously. In various ways, they also provide them with access to different worlds of experience. A few decades ago, researchers on women's issues were convinced that coherent systems of female and male socialization develop in this way that decisively shape the identities of girls and boys.⁹⁹

More cautious arguments are now used. Parents and figures involved in socialization in general 'are unable to avoid behaviour relative to the physical difference'.¹⁰⁰ However, parents and teachers can consciously make an effort to treat girls and boys equally. Nevertheless, like other social agents, they will tend to make distinctions between the genders in an unreflected way – and often distinctions that are also unconsciously associated with evaluations. Evaluations of this type and the corresponding reward systems are anchored in many organizations and in the procedures they use.¹⁰¹ In their environment – for example, in the family and at school – girls thus experience gender hierarchies in which men 'have the final say'.¹⁰² With increasing age, girls also notice that what is thought to be worth reporting in today's media-dominated society is mainly caused by men and represented by men. This type of experience of being of lesser public importance, and of the predominant actual subordination of women, can lead to girls' equal level of self-confidence declining during puberty, while that of boys increases.¹⁰³ This development is associated with the fact that boys usually con-

⁹⁹ Female socialization was particularly stringently described in Scheu 1977. Bilden's handbook articles (cf. Bilden 1980 and 1991) later provided an important basis for debate regarding gender-specific socialization.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hagemann-White 2006: 77.

¹⁰¹ For example, one usually only acquires political influence after going through the so-called hard slog – i.e., carrying out lower-level duties for many years that only slowly bring greater responsibilities (Hoecker 1987). Professional success and a high income are mainly obtained by those who are continuously employed, have no private commitments, and are able to rely on the 'career resource of the wife' (Böhnisch 2003), with their children being looked after by the other parent (Dressel, Cornelissen and Wolf 2005: 291). Reward systems of this type are evidently designed for the normal biographies of males.

¹⁰² In western Germany, the proportion of male school heads is estimated at approximately 75%, although most members of the teaching staff are female (cf. Roisch 2003: 23 and 40).

¹⁰³ Cf. Hähne and Zubrägel 2004.

sider themselves to be more intelligent than girls,¹⁰⁴ although this is not justified on the basis of either intelligence measurements or school performance.

However, gender is nowadays interpreted inconsistently in various contexts. Boys are not always tacitly expected to be higher achievers or more self-assertive, and are not assumed to be more aggressive. The evaluation of their capacity for self-assertion (possibly typical for boys) in turn depends on the context and the way in which it is demonstrated. Equally, it is now no longer thought to be obvious that girls are modest and considerate. People who are oriented towards a role model of partnership-based gender relationships and equality in working life will also not necessarily regard these characteristics that are attributed to girls in a positive way. They will also expect girls and women to be able to assert themselves in competitive situations. The variability of the imputed attributes and evaluations leads to girls and boys having sometimes contradictory experiences of acceptance and rejection in the course of their lives. In many girls' everyday lives, different images of positively evaluated femininity thus compete with each other. Girls therefore often develop various facets of female identity and know how to stage different aspects of femininity or to avoid presenting them. What 'establishes' masculinity or femininity is nowadays no longer naturally obvious. In many situations, masculinity and femininity are now disputed categories that need to be re-negotiated.

The younger generation is also involved in this conflict, since socialization is 'not a one-way street'.¹⁰⁵ Girls and boys *actively* assimilate their world and they also *influence* their environment. They also create their *own worlds*, to which adults have only limited access. What their best friend says is extremely important to girls.¹⁰⁶

The concepts of gender-specific socialization that were predominant in the 1970s and 1980s underestimated the contradictory quality of girls' and boys' experience as described above, the complexity of children's developmental potential, and the strength of their own ability to guide themselves.

Social changes in recent decades have provided girls and boys with early opportunities to create their own learning worlds.¹⁰⁷ They force young people nowadays at a relatively early stage to develop a forward-looking plan for their lives for which they themselves are responsible.¹⁰⁸ For some young people, the personal prerequisites for this are unfavourable, however, or their knowledge about the future conditions in their own lives is limited. Institutional requirements such as minimum leaving qualifications and minimum average marks can represent genuine barriers. In view of the tremendous competition for scarce training positions

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Millhoffer 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Kelle 2006: 131.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. section 1.2.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Wahler, Tully and Preiss, 2004.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Fend 2001: 157.

and jobs, many have to resign themselves to accepting offers that are unsatisfactory for them.¹⁰⁹

The same also applies to the often-lamented shortage of training places. In some social situations, adequately constructing a forward-looking conception of oneself is very difficult. This applies both to girls and boys.

In today's debate regarding girls' development, more account is being taken than was the case a few decades ago of the fact that girls have not only a gender, but also different intellectual and physical talents, different backgrounds, and different lifestyles. It is now also taken into account that as children with or without an immigrant background, or as pupils in specific types of school, they face different requirements, have varying scope for action and encounter different opportunities and barriers, and consequently that they undoubtedly need different types of support.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Reissig et al. 2006.

¹¹⁰ This refers to the concept of intersectionality (cf. Knapp 2005).

3. Problem areas and measures needed

In what follows, the problem areas specified in section 1 are taken up and measures are described that are intended to help manage these problems. The presentation is exemplary in nature and is not restricted to projects specifically aimed at girls.

3.1 Assistance for girls in promoting their own health

Many children in Germany are already overweight when they first start school. There is a high probability that these children will develop high-risk excess weight, with the associated resulting diseases, when they are adults. To promote conscious ways of dealing with nutrition and exercise in children and young people early on, the Federal Government has initiated a prevention campaign entitled 'Eating Better, Doing More Exercise, Easy as Child's Play'¹¹¹ and established a Platform for Nutrition and Exercise.¹¹² A youth campaign called 'Feeling Good – Promoting Health with Exercise and Stress Management'¹¹³ offers courses for 14–18-year-olds.

During puberty, there is increasing dissatisfaction with their own bodies among girls. They suffer more frequently from eating disturbances than young men and often take laxatives and other weight-reducing medications. A prevention project called 'Youth with a Bite'¹¹⁴ is aimed at schools and youth-welfare institutions and offers comprehensive information on the topics of eating disturbances and food craving. On the Internet, 'www.bzga-essstoerungen.de' and 'www.hungrig-online.de' provide information for those affected, relatives, specialists, and anyone with a general interest in the subject.

There are hardly any gender-specific differences among young people with regard to alcohol consumption or the consumption of illegal drugs. There is a tendency for girls to consume less alcohol and illegal drugs, and to do so more cautiously, than boys. Although more boys than girls still smoke, the number of young female smokers is increasing. Educational work on the health risks of alcohol, illegal drugs and nicotine is being carried out by the BZgA with youth campaigns entitled 'Are You Stronger than Alcohol?',¹¹⁵ 'drugcom',¹¹⁶ and 'Smoke-

¹¹¹ [*Besser essen, mehr bewegen, kinderleicht*]; supported by the Federal Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (*Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz*, BELV) since 2003; managed by the Centre for Agricultural Documentation and Information (*Zentralstelle für Agrardokumentation und -information*, ZADI).

¹¹² [*Plattform Ernährung und Bewegung*, PEB], supported by the BELV since 2004, managed by the German Society for Paediatric Medicine and others.

¹¹³ [*Gut drauf – Gesundheitsförderung durch Bewegungsverhalten und Stressbewältigung*]; supported by the BMGS and BZgA since 2003.

¹¹⁴ [*Jugend mit Biss*], 2000–2006 (supported by the BMFSFJ during the pilot phase from 2000 to 2002), managed by the Frankfurt Centre for Eating Disturbances.

¹¹⁵ Since 2002.

¹¹⁶ Since 2002.

Free'.¹¹⁷ In the anti-nicotine campaign, a brochure entitled 'Stop Smoking Girls' is aimed specifically at girls and young women.

The number of teenage pregnancies in Germany is relatively low in comparison with international figures. There has been a continuing decline in the numbers of teenage abortions. According to the federal statistics on abortions provided by the Federal Office of Statistics, the number of abortions in 2005 in minors under the age of 15 was 659, while in minors aged 15–18 the figure was 6,588 (for comparison, the total for all abortions in 2005 was 124,023). The birth rate among very young women has remained relatively constant since 1996. The numbers of live births to underaged mothers have remained unchanged at 0.7% of all live births since 2003. Early and age-appropriate education and sex education provision are important contributions to the prevention of unwanted pregnancies in minors. Offers suitable for the target group are available from the BzG A, such as the Internet site 'www.loveline.de' for girls and boys. A brochure entitled 'Exciting Years – Jule's Diary' is designed specifically for girls. It informs girls aged 10–15 about puberty. Media packages on 'Youth Sexuality' and 'Preventing Pregnancy in Minors'¹¹⁸ provide comprehensive information for counsellors and specialists.

3.2 Assistance in career guidance, school, and in the transition to further training

Young people without school-leaving qualifications are particularly disadvantaged in Germany. Poor school performance, sometimes associated with hidden or active refusal of school, can lead to young people dropping out of school. Refusal of school is generally increasing and is clearly seen following the transition to secondary school. Girls often refuse school passively, remaining in class but without involving themselves in it. The 'Girls Set a Precedent'¹¹⁹ project developed structures and general conditions within the institution of the school that will make it possible to diagnose tendencies to drop out of school at an early stage. The aim was to reintegrate girls who refuse school back into the standard school system.

The German Association for Public and Private Welfare, which previously carried out the 'Cool School' project, has now started a program entitled 'School Refusal – the Second Chance'.¹²⁰ The 'Network for Preventing School Fatigue and School Refusal'¹²¹ project is collecting and distributing practical examples of ways of preventing girls and boys from dropping out of school.

¹¹⁷ Since 2003.

¹¹⁸ Published by the BZG A in 2005.

¹¹⁹ Carried out in the framework of the 'Working World-Related Social Work for Young People' pilot programme (part of the BMFSFJ's Child and Youth Plan), supported from 1998 to 2002.

¹²⁰ Supported by the BMFSFJ and ESF for 2006–2007, managed by the German Association for Public and Private Welfare.

¹²¹ Supported by the BMBF and ESF in 2002–2006, managed by the DJI.

In addition to projects aimed at motivating girls to attend school in an effective way, there have been and still are other projects concerned with promoting girls' interest in mathematics and science. These include a project entitled 'Introducing Primary-School Girls to Physics and Technology'.¹²² This project developed gender-appropriate and practical approaches to providing schools with educational services that introduce girls to gender-atypical topics and are intended to influence their choice of career. A reference programme entitled 'SINUS – Enhancing Maths and Science Teaching'¹²³ also promotes access to these areas for girls.

To stimulate interest among girls in occupations in the fields of technology, information technology, science, and trades, 'Girls' Days'¹²⁴ have been organized throughout Germany since 2001. The 'Girls' Day – Day for Girls for the Future' is a campaign by the Federal Government¹²⁵ that takes place once a year and attracts a high degree of public attention. At these try-out days, girls can get to know promising areas for the future in the range of possible careers in companies and institutions, such as scientific and technological professions. The aim is to motivate girls and young women to decide in favour of occupational areas that are 'untypical for women'. The tremendous success of this project is reflected in the annual growth in the numbers of participants. Since 2001, companies, official bodies and research institutions have offered more than 500,000 places for girls in nearly 25,000 events. The Girls' Day enables the world of employment to tap into important personnel resources for the future.

The 'ROBERTA – Girls Conquer Robots'¹²⁶ project is a campaign for girls to expand the information they have about the science, technology, and information technology field. A training programme for teachers was developed in order to implement the campaign.

The multimedia computer game 'JOBLAB'¹²⁷ is intended to provide support for careers guidance for girls in science and technology occupations.

The transition from school to vocational training is problematic, as the demand for training positions in companies is far greater than the supply of such positions. To provide support during the transition from secondary school and middle school to vocational training, the 'Girls Get Ready for Life and Work'¹²⁸ programme, for example, provides services for career guidance and arranges industrial training places for young women.

¹²² 2004–2005, Bildungsnetz Berlin e.V.

¹²³ 'SINUS – Steigerung des mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlichen Unterrichts', supported by the Federal Government since 1998.

¹²⁴ Supported by the BMBF, BMFSFJ and ESF for 2001–2007.

¹²⁵ Supported by the BMBF/BMFSFJ and the European Social Fund; partners involved in the campaign include Initiative D 21, the German Federation of Trades Unions, the Federal Association of German Industry, the Federal Association of German Employers' Associations, the Central Association of German Trades, and the Federal Employment Agency.

¹²⁶ Supported by the BMBF for 2003–2006; the Fraunhofer Institute and various educational institutions and universities are involved.

¹²⁷ Supported by the BMBF, developed by Joblab & Diversity, Langen.

¹²⁸ [*Mädchen machen sich fit für Leben and Arbeit*]; supported by the BMFSFJ in 2002.

The 'idee-it'¹²⁹ initiative is trying to use campaigns to get young women interested in IT occupations and encourage them to remain in training and employment for longer. In addition, a home page has been established to provide information, tailored to the target-group, all about the new IT training occupations, as well as a database of training opportunities for young women.

The 'Join In: Computing Days for Girls'¹³⁰ event was an important format in the context of the Science Year 2006. The events explicitly appeal to young women and draw schoolgirls' attention to training and occupational opportunities in the IT field.

The EQUAL joint initiative of the European Social Fund is aimed at testing new ways of combating discrimination and inequality among employees and job-seekers. Extracurricular educational measures, entitled 'M@dchen M-IT'¹³¹ and 'More Girls and Women in IT',¹³² as well as the 'Taste for Girls'¹³³ assessment centre procedure, were set up to provide careers guidance within this framework.

3.3 Promoting political participation by girls

In Germany, social and political involvement in the school field is more or less equivalent among girls and boys. Outside school and after school, however, differences appear. In the field of social and political involvement in parties, clubs and associations, girls and young women are still markedly underrepresented.¹³⁴ This applies particularly to girls with a low educational level.

A project entitled 'Participation and Sustainable Development'¹³⁵ investigated the involvement of girls and young women in the fields of politics, environmental protection and natural sciences in Germany, Italy and Austria. The project's recommendations for improving equal participation by girls and young women in these fields were incorporated into the 'Campaign Plan for Girls' Involvement/Girls' Action Plan Europe'. Projects for political participation by girls were specifically organized in the context of this campaign – for example, a campaign

¹²⁹ Supported by the BMFSFJ in 2000–2005.

¹³⁰ [*Mach MIT: Mädchen Informatik Tage*]; supported by the BMBF for 2005–2007.

¹³¹ Supported by the BMWa and ESF in 2002–2005.

¹³² Supported by the BMWa and ESF in 2002–2005.

¹³³ Supported by the BMBF and ESF in 2001–2005.

¹³⁴ In the organizations supported through the federal Children and Youth Plan, the low level of social and political participation by girls, particularly in the context of implementing gender mainstreaming, is being made visible and addressed as a problem. According to the results of the accompanying research on the implementation process in child and youth welfare services, 75% of 140 organizations questioned regard improvements in the level of participation by girls and young women as being a major goal of gender mainstreaming (cf. Helming and Schäfer 2004).

¹³⁵ Supported by the BMFSFJ and ESF in 2002–2003.

called 'I'm Speaking Out and Joining In – Girls and Young Women Get Involved in Politics and Public Affairs in North Rhine–Westphalia'.¹³⁶

The aim of the project entitled 'EUYOU PART – Political Participation by Young People in Europe – Development of Indicators for Comparative Research in the European Union'¹³⁷ is to develop a common indicator system for empirical research on political participation by young people in Europe.

Within the framework of the 'National Action Plan for a Germany Suitable for Children' (2005–2010), a project called 'Project P – Get Involved'¹³⁸ is initiating programmes, projects, measures and initiatives to enhance participation by girls and boys. For girls, a seminar on 'Politics – a Dream/Nightmare for Girls' and a meeting on 'Girls' Rooms, Girls' Dreams' were organized, among other events. In addition, special services are available on political issues for girls with an immigrant background and girls with handicaps.

3.4 Assistance for girls in obtaining access to computers and dealing with the new media

Computer skills and access to the Internet are becoming more and more important for participation by women and men in politics, business, and society. It is therefore important to provide all girls with age-appropriate access to the Internet and to provide them with computer skills.

The proportion of girls who have their own computer is much lower, at 51%, than that for boys, at 69%.¹³⁹ It is therefore even more important for girls than for boys that the school should provide them with access to computers and PC skills. However, in level I and II secondary schools, only one PC was available in 2004 for every 13 school students.¹⁴⁰ For school students who are not able to gain computer experience at home and who receive no instruction on how to use computers, this means that the school is unable to provide them with adequate skills.

Children at secondary modern schools [*Hauptschulen*] more rarely own their own computer than children at high schools [*Gymnasien*]. Particular attention therefore ought to be given to equipping secondary modern schools with PCs. However, having access to a PC does not in itself ensure competence in dealing with the new technologies. The risks of too one-sided an approach to computers – focusing only on games, for example – are becoming an increas-

¹³⁶ [*Ich pack aus und mach mit – Mädchen und junge Frauen mischen sich ein in Politik und Öffentlichkeit in NRW*]; organized by FUMA – Fachstelle Mädchenarbeit NRW.

¹³⁷ Supported in 2003–2005 in the framework of the EU's Fifth Framework Programme.

¹³⁸ Supported by the BMFSFJ, BMBF and DBJR since 2004.

¹³⁹ Cf. mpfs 2006: 31.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. BMBF 2005: 35.

ingly important subject. Due to the availability of Internet content that is harmful to young people, uncontrolled access to the Internet cannot be regarded as purely positive.

According to expert assessments, one-fifth of German 15-year-olds lack technical skills and computer-related learning strategies sufficient to allow them to use the new media adequately.¹⁴¹ During the last 10 years, the ‘Schools on the Net’¹⁴² initiative has therefore provided support for establishing Internet access in German schools. In addition, it provides courses on teaching and learning with digital media. The federal initiative entitled ‘Young People on the Net’¹⁴³ supports improved media equipment for youth-welfare institutions. In addition, young people from all over Germany are able to exchange views on the ‘www.netzcheckers.de’ portal for young people. To reduce the disadvantaging of girls in relation to access to the new information technologies, a platform for providing information, communication, collaboration and learning called ‘LizzyNet’¹⁴⁴ has been established for girls and young women from the age of 12 upwards. This enables them to learn how to deal with computers and the Internet and share experience with other girls.

Recommendations on dealing with television and tips on suitable TV-watching behaviour for children are provided by the action group ‘Look! What your Children Are Doing’.¹⁴⁵ It is mainly aimed at parents.

3.5 Assistance for girls with experience of violence

Violence against girls and women is a grave infringement of human rights. In Germany, it is estimated that one in every four or five girls and one in 12 boys are affected by *sexual violence*. In the context of the ‘Action Plan of the Federal Government to Protect Children and Young People from Sexual Violence and Exploitation’ (2003), a wide variety of preventative measures have been initiated – for example, telephone help lines and the Internet site ‘www.youngavenue.de’¹⁴⁶ give girls and boys an opportunity to obtain comprehensive information and to contact child protection centres directly in crisis situations. A brochure prepared for parents, ‘Asking with Courage – Act Calmly’¹⁴⁷ is aimed at enhancing sensitivity to possible sexual attacks.

Specialist debates on topics involving children and domestic violence have received visible momentum and have been further advanced thanks to the wide range of measures taken in the ‘Action Plan of the Federal Government for Combating Violence against Women’ (1999),

¹⁴¹ Cf. PISA-Konsortium Deutschland 2004: 189.

¹⁴² Supported by the BMBF; run by Schulen ans Netz e.V.

¹⁴³ Supported by the BMFSFJ in 2002–2006.

¹⁴⁴ Supported by the BMBF and ESF since 2000.

¹⁴⁵ Supported by the BMFSFJ and other bodies since 2004.

¹⁴⁶ Supported by the BMFSFJ since 2003, managed by Kinderschutzzentren e.V.

¹⁴⁷ *Mutig fragen – besonnen handeln*, published by the BMFSFJ in 2003.

including the Law on Freedom from Violence during Upbringing (2000), the Law on Protection against Violence (2002) and cooperative and interventional projects.

It is now known that there is a close connection between violence directed against women and violence directed against girls and boys. In the context of domestic violence, the partner's violence is often directed against his own wife and children. The Law on Protection against Violence, which came into force in January 2002, markedly improves legal protection for the victims of domestic violence and extends sanctions against the perpetrators. The federally implemented interventional and cooperative projects, based on two federal models, against domestic violence represent projects that actively seek out women and their children who are affected by violence and connect up doctors, the police, and advisory services, for example. The research accompanying this type of project has shown that the cooperative work that develops with the advisory and protection institutions for children also improves assistance structures for girls with experience of violence.

To achieve effective prevention, specialist services need to start in the pre-school area and in the area of the school and children's and youth welfare organizations. For the target group of children who are (also) affected by domestic violence, the Federal Government is planning to carry out appropriate measures for prevention, intervention, assistance, and support starting in 2007, within the framework of the Second Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women.

The Federal Ministry for the Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is supporting the research accompanying the 'BIG – Prevention Project – Cooperation between School and Youth Welfare Services in Domestic Violence'¹⁴⁸ run by the Berlin Intervention Centre for Domestic Violence. The aim is to communicate and expand information on the topic of 'domestic violence' for teachers, to strengthen girls and boys in resisting violence, to provide parents with information and support, and to create opportunities for early intervention for affected women/mothers and children. In addition, a brochure for children entitled 'More Courage to Talk: about Abused Women and their Children' is available.¹⁴⁹

In connection with drug addiction, girls often become homeless and *enter prostitution for reasons of economic and social necessity*. In many cases, girls become prostitutes before they have turned 18. Since supporting the prostitution of minors is a criminal offence, the girls often work in concealment. This makes access to the girls and young women concerned more difficult. Their situation is often marked by the experience of violence, which is repeated in various locations: on the drug scene, in the context of prostitution, and with their partners.

¹⁴⁸ Supported by the Stiftung Jugendmarke, organized by BIG – Berliner Zentrale gegen häusliche Gewalt.

¹⁴⁹ Published by the BMFSFJ in 2005.

The pilot project for legalized street prostitution¹⁵⁰ showed that it was possible to reduce the numbers of violent attacks on prostitutes as a result of legalization and that health-promoting services and social assistance were better accepted by the young women. The 'Underaged Prostitution' project¹⁵¹ developed a system of assistance and support for girls to enable them to leave prostitution.

According to several advice institutions in Germany, *forced prostitution of underaged girls* is increasing in the context of human trafficking. New penal laws came into force in February 2006, making it possible to combat human trafficking more effectively. Among other things, the law has improved and simplified the already existing penal regulations relating to human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. For example, it is now easier for the victims of human trafficking to bring charges. The coalition agreement specifies that it will be made possible to prosecute the clients of forced prostitutes.¹⁵² During the Football World Cup in 2006, educational and sensitization campaigns were carried out for (potential) clients of prostitutes, including the 'Final Whistle – Stop Forced Prostitution'¹⁵³ initiative and the 'In, Out? – Say No to Forced Prostitution'¹⁵⁴ campaign. The 'ProFridA – Prostitutes and Women Affected by Violence in the Employment Market' project¹⁵⁵ is intended to improve the structure of services offered to the target groups mentioned. For example, the requirements for occupation-supporting measures for prostitutes and for women affected by violence are to be systematically recorded and reviewed.

Young women are not only the victims of violence. They may also be perpetrators, although violence against young people is primarily male violence. The numbers of *female perpetrators of violence* have been increasing in recent years. This is seen particularly among radical right-wing youth groups. The 'Strong Girls against the Right'¹⁵⁶ project has developed and tested specific services for girls so as to be able to give youth-welfare workers ideas for working with violent girls.

In connection with *child sexual abuse*, the numbers of suspects under the age of 21 are increasing. The aim of the 'Sexually Deviant Young Offenders'¹⁵⁷ intervention project is to provide tips on ways of dealing with sexually abnormal young people, usually young men, and to improve cooperation between the institutions involved, such as the police, judicial system, and youth-welfare services.

¹⁵⁰ The 'Geestemünderstrasse' project in Cologne, run by the Catholic Women's Social Services (*Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen*, SKF).

¹⁵¹ 2001–2003, run by the Dortmund Mitternachtsmission.

¹⁵² Coalition agreement of 11 November 2005: 120.

¹⁵³ Initiated by the German Women's League [*Deutscher Frauenbund*].

¹⁵⁴ Initiated by the Women's Rights are Human Rights [*Frauenrecht ist Menschenrecht*] group.

¹⁵⁵ Supported with funds from the states of North Rhine–Westphalia and by the ESF in 2006–2007.

¹⁵⁶ Supported by the Equal Opportunities Ministry of North Rhine–Westphalia in 1994–1996; carried out by the Protestant Applied Sciences College [Fachhochschule] of Rhineland–Westphalia–Lippe.

¹⁵⁷ Supported by the BMFSFJ since 2005.

3.6 Girls in precarious life situations

For various reasons, girls' development may be at particular risk. This applies in particular to girls with handicaps and to some extent also to those with an immigrant background. These two groups in particular are therefore considered in detail below.

Handicapped girls and young women in Germany in principle have the same interests and wishes as non-handicapped girls. To be able to lead lives that are as free of barriers as possible, they need different types of support depending on their impairments. It is evident both from what is offered by the institutions involved in youth welfare, leisure and advisory services, and from educational and further training provisions, that the integration of handicapped girls into society has not yet been adequately achieved.¹⁵⁸

Of the approximately 488,000 pupils with remedial education needs in the 2004–05 school year, only 12% were taught in the general school system.¹⁵⁹ Most handicapped girls thus attended special schools (the hidden fourth sector in the 'three-sector school system'). Although these schools provide special support, they make social integration more difficult, and this can ultimately have a negative effect on self-esteem for handicapped girls and young women. In addition, only a small proportion of pupils attending special schools obtain a school-leaving certificate; in 2004, for example, 79.1% of the pupils left special schools without a secondary modern school leaving certificate. This quota has remained fairly constant since 1996. Overall, the number of special-school pupils has been increasing, from 32,751 in 1996 to 39,585 in 2004. Almost half of the pupils who leave school without a secondary modern school leaving certificate today are special-school pupils.¹⁶⁰

Due to their often low educational qualifications and other obstacles to access, it is often difficult for handicapped young women to find a suitable further training position. Some handicapped girls complete their initial vocational training in a vocational training institute (*Berufsbildungswerk*). A study¹⁶¹ conducted by the Federal Organizational Unit for Handicapped Women (*bundesorganisationsstelle behinderte frauen*) showed that young women are severely underrepresented in these institutes for initial training: the proportion of female course participants was 35–37%. In addition, the range of vocations provided by such institutes is strongly oriented toward the needs of men, and handicapped girls thus have far fewer vocations open to them than their male colleagues. The study also showed that full-time training courses involving boarding accommodation are not adjusted to the needs of handicapped mothers or young women with family duties.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Cf. for example Bretländer/Schildmann 2004: 276–7.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006: 52.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006: 254, Table D7-3A.

¹⁶¹ Commissioned by the BMFSFJ.

¹⁶² Cf. BMFSFJ 201, prepared by Gisela Hermes.

There is thus a need for action in the provision of support for severely handicapped school-leavers to help them obtain educational qualifications and be able to take part in working life. This is taken into account both in Social Security Statute Book IX (*Sozialgesetzbuch, SGB IX*) since summer 2001 and in the 'Law for the Promotion of Education and Employment of Severely Handicapped Persons' of 23 April 2004. The education of handicapped young people and young adults, and of those at risk of handicap, is promoted by employers who provide training receiving subsidies for the purpose. In addition, it is one of the essential duties of the specialist integration services to support these target groups and thus to advise them and attend to their needs when they are looking for training positions.

Structural conditions in residential institutions often favour violence against girls and women who have handicaps, as well as providing protection for the perpetrators; handicapped girls and women have often had the experience since childhood that their private sphere is not respected or protected. From 1999 to 2004, the BMFSFJ supported a pilot project on 'Dealing with Sexual Self-Determination and Sexual Violence in Residential Institutions for Young People with Intellectual Disabilities'. The research results showed that experiences of sexualized violence accompany the lives of the residents and are closely related to structurally conditioned dependencies. It also became clear that poor competence in self-assertion increases the individual risk of becoming the victim of a sexual crime. As a consequence of the report, a requirement for the following actions was formulated: enhancement of self-esteem and the ability to draw lines, assistance in overcoming taboos, and a demand for outpatient prevention and intervention services and further training for staff. The most important result of the project was the establishment of a collection of materials aimed at promoting sexual self-determination and preventing violence, which is particularly aimed at residents of institutions for the handicapped.

Handicapped women and those representing their interests protested for a long time against what they called a 'two-class criminal law' in the punishment of sex offenders. The change in the law governing sexual offences that has been in force since the end of 2003 largely met their demands: rape is now punished by a prison sentence of at least two years, independently of whether the victim is described as being 'in a state of helplessness' or 'incapable of resistance'.¹⁶³ Previously, a lesser range of penalties applied to sex offences against victims who were 'incapable of resistance'. At the same time, punishability in the case of sex abuse while taking advantage of a relationship of consultation, treatment, or care was extended, so that in addition to people with intellectual or psychological diseases or handicaps, those who are physically ill or handicapped can also be included and thus protected. Along with the re-

¹⁶³ According to the Federal High Court (*Bundesgerichtshof, BGH*), a victim counts as being 'incapable of resistance' if she 'cannot form a volition opposed to the fact' – e.g., a woman who is unconscious. Women with so-called intellectual handicaps are often incorrectly classed as 'incapable of resistance' during trials.

form of criminal law, the Code of Criminal Procedure was also changed to allow lawyers to support co-plaintiffs who – due to a handicap, for example – are not in a position to represent their own interests.¹⁶⁴ In 2002, a change in the Constitution of the Courts Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz*, VVG) already improved the situation for court witnesses with handicaps involving hearing, speech, sight and those who are deaf or blind: individuals can be called in at public expense to act as interpreters or for technical assistance in communication. People who are blind can require that documents should be presented to them in a form they are capable of perceiving. In the view of the women concerned, these changes must be regarded as representing substantial progress.

To strengthen their self-confidence, girls and women with handicaps or those at risk of handicaps can be prescribed special exercises in the context of competitive sport for rehabilitation, in accordance with the Ninth Social Security Statute Book. The training courses are carried out as supplementary measures to medical rehabilitation or to participating in working life, and are intended to counter 'gender-specific stress situations' for handicapped girls and women. The project 'SELBST – Self-Awareness for Handicapped Women and Girls'¹⁶⁵ is developing guidelines and quality standards for exercises aimed at strengthening self-confidence and also includes a hotline that women and girls can phone to apply for the new rehabilitation service and obtain information and advice about it.

Measures for handicapped young women are being developed in a federal pilot project entitled 'In the Middle of It – Life-Worlds of Handicapped Girls and Young Women'.¹⁶⁶ For example, a regular conference for girls was established, which has been meeting every two years since 1998 in various cities.¹⁶⁷ Handicapped girls and women from all over Germany have an opportunity at these meetings to exchange information and take part in workshops. A magazine called '*MIMMI – Mitmach-Mädchen-Magazin-Mittendrin*' [Joining In/Girls' Magazine/Right in the Middle] also helps handicapped girls and young women in Germany to exchange views and make contacts with each other. The evaluation of the pilot project showed that the life situation for girls and young women with disabilities is characterized by heteronomy, social dependency and restrictions, and that a lack of leisure facilities exacerbates social exclusion.¹⁶⁸ Handicapped girls should be taken into account explicitly as a target group in youth-welfare services, and youth-welfare services should collaborate more closely with handicapped welfare services.

¹⁶⁴ Response of the Federal Government to a minor parliamentary question from Bundestag member Antje Blumenthal and others and the CDU/CSU parliamentary group on 'Sexual Violence against People with Handicaps'. *Drucksache* 15/3154 (18 May 2004).

¹⁶⁵ Supported by the BMFSJ in 2003–2006.

¹⁶⁶ [*Mittendrin – Lebenswelten behinderter Mädchen und junger Frauen*]; supported by the BMFSFJ from 1998 to 2001; after 2002, 'Aktion Mensch' took over the main financial support. Implemented by the Federal Association for the Physical and Multiple Handicap.

¹⁶⁷ The Fifth Girls' Conference, 'Living Out Dreams – Daring Something New!' was held in Munich from 27th to 29th October, 2006.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Adam-Blaneck 2002: 5.

Girls and young women with an immigrant background are subject to discrimination in Germany in several respects. The fact that social integration is difficult for this group is evident particularly in the fields of education and leisure.

Formally, children and young people of German and non-German origins have equal status in relation to access to educational institutions. In reality, however, there is a substantial differential between them in education and training. While the great majority of schoolchildren with an immigrant background attend secondary modern school, a substantial majority of German schoolchildren attend middle school or grammar school. Girls with an immigrant background finish school with lower qualifications than German girls. In addition, 22.6% of young men and 15.4% of young women with immigrant backgrounds left secondary modern school without any qualifications in 2003. The rate of participation in training courses by young people with an immigrant background is declining, and they drop out of the dual training system at an above-average rate. The low employment rate among women with an immigrant background shows that against the backdrop of professional exclusion and early family involvement, with a gender-specific duty to carry out caring tasks, they are very rarely in a position to establish an economically independent existence.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, attitudes oriented towards improving one's status are sometimes very marked among women and girls with an immigrant background, in comparison with German girls and young women. In addition, they often adopt the role models of Germans of the same age, particularly with regard to employment – i.e., they want to be able to combine family and work. This means that more services need to be created in order to open up access to educational and occupational careers for this target group.

The 'Occupational Choice as Opportunity – Young Turkish Girls and Women Get Qualifications'¹⁷⁰ project offered Turkish girls and young women under the age of 25, who did not have a training place or job, support during the transition from school to work. The project was able to place a large proportion of the participants in jobs. In discussions with the parents, the staff involved were able to help break down interculturally contradictory views of the role of women in the family and at work. The participants' identity development and their ability to become integrated into the working world and society were also stabilized.

In addition, an occupational preparation course was developed for young women with an immigrant background¹⁷¹ who were aiming for civil service training after school-leaving qualifications in secondary modern or middle schools. The 'Xenos Initiative – Intercultural Sensitization and Qualification in Work-Related Social Work among Young People'¹⁷² project pro-

¹⁶⁹ Cf. BMBF 2006a: 137–8.

¹⁷⁰ Financed from 1999 to 2003 in the framework of the Federal Government's Crash Programme to Reduce Youth Unemployment.

¹⁷¹ Supported by the BMBF and ESF in 2004–2006.

¹⁷² Supported by the BMAS, ESF, and BMFSFJ in 2003–2006.

vides further support for breaking down gender-specific disadvantaging of women. For example, a database featuring tried-and-tested methods and instruments has been established to provide aids for social work among young people.

The leisure-time behaviour of girls is an important indicator of the degree to which they are socially integrated. The 'Many Worlds Are Alive'¹⁷³ study shows that the majority of girls with an immigrant background have their best friends in the group with the same origins and that they spend their free time more often in private apartments rather than in public. They hardly ever make use of organized or institutional leisure facilities. Girls with an immigrant background often have rather a distanced attitude to advice services, as there are reservations with regard to German advice institutions.

The 'MiA'¹⁷⁴ pilot project is based on collaboration between school and the youth-welfare service and is aimed at schoolgirls with an immigrant background at secondary modern schools in years 5 to 9. It provides services related to career guidance, leisure time, and career planning.

The 'Merhaba'¹⁷⁵ service is aimed at Turkish students attending grammar school and university. Seminars on occupational and career guidance also deal with the experience and biographies of successful Turkish women. Overall, the aim is to provide support for integrating Turkish women into German society.

The 'Strengthening Girls'¹⁷⁶ project is generally aimed at underprivileged girls and young women between the ages of 4 and 16. Youth-oriented types of sport are intended to promote self-confidence and self-assertiveness.

The Internet platform LIFT¹⁷⁷ is a protected learning and working area for the school and extracurricular youth education. Girls and boys with an immigrant background from the age of 12 are introduced to independent learning with the help of the computer and Internet.

The Berlin Women's Computer Centre started a project on 13 November 2006 for identifying occupations for young women with an immigrant background. The participants are intended to become clear about where their interests and strengths lie and to find out how they can find an appropriate training place. In addition to career guidance, skill identification and profile development, the service also provides information about the computer and the Internet. It is aimed at immigrant women up to the age of 25. The range of occupations covered by the guidance service includes above all media and design occupations, IT occupations, and retail and administrative occupations.

¹⁷³ [*Viele Welten leben*]; published by the BMFSFJ in 2004.

¹⁷⁴ Supported by the BMFSFJ in 1998–2000 (in the framework of the pilot programme on 'Girls in Social Work for Young People'); regular service at one school since 2001.

¹⁷⁵ Supported by the BMFSFJ and run by the Thomas More Academy.

¹⁷⁶ Since 2005, coordinated the German Children and Youth Foundation.

¹⁷⁷ Supported by the BMBF since 2006.

The 'Pro Qualification'¹⁷⁸ information and advice network for women and men with an immigrant background presents the careers of immigrants who have successfully passed through further occupational training in the form of a series of portraits. This is intended to encourage other immigrants also to take advantage of opportunities for further training. At the same time, people in charge of staff recruitment can be made aware of the potential that people with an immigrant background have.

'Variety wins' [*Vielfalt gewinnt*] is a continually updated Internet service provided on the BMFSFJ gateway 'www.frauenmachenkarriere.de', the aim of which is to allow targeted and time-saving location of relevant information for women with an immigrant background and ethnic German immigrant women when they start work and move up in their careers.

3.7 Need for action

While girls in Germany are not in a poorer position than boys in many areas, there are several areas in which measures specially designed for girls are necessary in order to offer them the opportunity to shape their lives in an independent way and free of discrimination.

Health

Health is an important prerequisite for an active and independent life. Supporting girls' sense of well-being and promoting health-conscious behaviour among them therefore continues to be an urgent task, for example for the Federal Centre for Health Education and also for health-insurance companies and for schools and local youth institutions. Although this need for action to promote health is also in principle present for boys, it requires special attention among girls, as they have greater difficulties in accepting their own bodies. For example, it ought to be possible to prevent the increasing cases of eating disturbances among girls. Providing information about contraception and protection against AIDS is also important.

Significant relationships

It is extremely important for girls' development that they should feel protected within their close environment during childhood and that they should gradually have opportunities to explore their surroundings independently as well in order to slowly separate themselves from their home. During this process, educationally supervised leisure institutions that are free of charge play a very important role alongside the school. It is important that these should offer facilities that are also attractive to girls and that they should be easily accessible, so that girls are not left just to the media and to the more or less accidental encounters and opportunities for activity available in the public sphere. For most girls, their development is supported for many years by their trusting relationship with their mother. The fact that fathers do not yet

¹⁷⁸ Supported by the BMFSFJ.

have the same significance for their children has previously only been addressed as a problem in relation to boys. In fact, girls would also benefit if their fathers were able to accompany their development sympathetically with a few suggestions and offer stronger support. A more family-friendly company culture would also be necessary in many cases to enable fathers to make better use of their potential for bringing up their children.

School and career guidance

Although girls are generally more successful at school than boys, there are aspects that require constant attention to be given to girls within schools. Schools have not so far succeeded in providing support for girls' self-confidence, which is particularly weak in mathematical and scientific subjects. A considered way of dealing with gender stereotypes in everyday school life and in the teaching materials provided ought to make it possible to question one-sided performance expectations and roles attributed to girls. The aim of the school, youth-welfare services and careers advisors should be to expand the range of occupational choices available to girls. In this context, cooperation with companies, social-services institutions and clubs needs to be expanded in a targeted way. It would be possible for them to make it clear to girls even during their schooling that they have more abilities than those that are traditionally ascribed to them.

Life planning

A wide range of prospects for the future are opening up for girls nowadays. They often seek to achieve a balance between family and job. Support for this search can be offered at an early stage by providing information on working conditions in various occupations and about the state support for parents and their children that is available. However, it is also important that girls should be given an opportunity – at home, at school, and in church and club institutions – to reflect about their own ideas for the future. They should be encouraged to consider new models for the division of labour within the family and to negotiate these with a partner later on. Further development of maternity-leave regulations and a better family orientation among companies could provide support for couples in their joint search for solutions to the problem of combining family and work.

Social involvement and political articulacy

The early and equal involvement on the part of girls that is seen – in school councils, for example – is promising. However, it is by no means certain whether it will be possible in the foreseeable future to abolish the gender discrepancies that exist in relation to the political representation of girls and boys and later of adult women and men. A reorientation of political education, a change in the political culture of the parties' youth associations, and more mentoring programmes might be able to motivate girls more strongly than before to become in-

volved in political work. The services offered should be designed in such a way that they should also reach young women from social strata with poor access to education.

Media competence and youth media protection

Girls nowadays spend a great deal of time using the media. It is therefore extremely important to promote media competence and media protection for young people. To be able to keep pace with the information society, girls are dependent on what is offered at school more than boys are. Specifically in the interest of girls, secondary modern schools in particular need to be better equipped with computers for pupils. More courses on using the computer should be provided both inside and outside of school that will appeal particularly to girls from backgrounds with poor access to education. It would be favourable in this context for there to be cooperation between schools and youth-welfare institutions.

Violence and crime

The experience of violence is not only difficult to bear in the situation itself. Experiences of violence also have grave consequence for girls' self-esteem and their ability to build trusting relationships in the future. For this reason, even greater attention needs to be given to the prevention of violence. In particular, *sexual* attacks on girls are often based on a generalized devaluation of women and a failure to recognize equal rights to sexual self-determination. Work on changing this attitude among boys and men could be carried out in school, among parents and pupils, and in youth-welfare services. Self-defence courses provided to improve girls' ability to defend themselves should also be maintained at current levels.

Assistance for girls in precarious life situations

There are groups of girls whose development is endangered by special conditions. These girls are often also affected by discrimination. This applies in particular to girls with handicaps. To promote equality of opportunity for girls and enable them to take part in society, these target groups for youth-welfare services ought to be taken into account explicitly through more integrational services, for example, and youth-welfare services should cooperate to a greater extent with the assistance services provided for the handicapped. Another group that is subject to discrimination is represented by girls with an immigrant background. In these cases, youth-welfare services need to have more facilities on offer that are based on these girls' social living conditions and attitudes. At the same time, they need to promote constructive ways of dealing with cultural differences and should offer more opportunities for intercultural encounters. There is a need for better training and qualification for these purposes among staff members in relation to intercultural and gender-related skills. A corresponding approach on the part of social education services is also necessary. This reorientation would have to be based on identifying the specific needs and obstacles faced by girls of different ethnic origins. Another group of young women with a special need for support are

those who have their own children when they are very young. Without completing their occupational training and often living in unstable partnerships, they are particularly threatened by poverty and social exclusion.

Although a great deal is being done in Germany to improve the situation for girls, further efforts are required. The orientation of youth policy towards the concept of gender mainstreaming will have sensitized those responsible in youth-welfare work in many fields towards gender-specific requirements for support. However, the orientation towards gender mainstreaming has at the same time had the effect that at the federal level, there are still only very few programmes explicitly aimed at girls. Instead, the expectation is that institutions that receive federal funds for their youth programmes will develop measures for girls and boys in the context of implementing these programmes, and will take their specific concerns into account in the process. They are receiving support for this through the project 'Gender Mainstreaming in Child and Youth Welfare', which is supported by the BMFSFJ. The examples of measures being taken given in this report may have illustrated the fact that there are many good approaches to providing support for girls available in the Federal Republic of Germany. However, it remains an open question whether the mainstream of youth policy and youth-welfare work has succeeded overall in always identifying and taking into account the different problem situations facing girls and boys. Answering this question would require more detailed research.

Many measures have been tested in pilot projects. However, further distribution of such measures and the state of the projects beyond the end of the pilot phase are not secure. To assimilate the long-term opportunities for girls to those for boys, equality-oriented checking and adjustment would be necessary both in the fields of careers advice and in occupational training structures. The corresponding changes might be able to improve opportunities for girls during training and working life and thus their long-term income opportunities in Germany. Without further extension of child-care facilities and without stronger involvement of fathers in parental tasks, however, it will not be possible to achieve these goals.

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