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**Violence Prevention Strategies in the
Child and Youth Services in Germany**
with Reference to Young People Aged 13 and Up

Centre for the Prevention of Youth Crime (ed.)



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1 Introduction

This is an account of the key programmes and strategies used by the *Kinder und Jugendhilfe* (child and youth services) in dealing with violence. It excludes services provided by child day-care centres and by family support services, which are described in separate contributions¹. In Germany, the child and youth services are legally defined in the German Social Code Book VIII. In the interests of a better understanding of what the child and youth services can and cannot do in terms of violence prevention, the first section of the present chapter describes the field of action. It covers the legislative framework and the structural background (► Ch. 2.1), also the fundamental principles and perspectives involved (► Ch. 2.2).² The second section provides an overview of the main strategies of violence prevention, distinguishing between those aimed globally at all children and young people (► Ch. 3.1) and those basically aimed at young persons from whom there is reason to anticipate violent behaviour (► Ch. 3.2). This last group is subdivided again. Situations are described in which there were conflicts or a “perceived” threat of violence, but also others in which violence actually occurred or continues to occur and young people have committed criminal acts. A further section is devoted to the strategies concerned with young people as victims or potential victims of violence (► Ch. 3.3). Each of the sections 3.1 to 3.3 ends with a summing-up of the main points of the strategies discussed, with due emphasis on the cross-relevant topics of gender, migration and participation. The following section (► Ch. 3.4), which may be thought of as a higher-level approach, deals with strategies for further professional development in violence prevention in the child and youth services. In view of the frequency with which current public debate on young persons and right-wing extremism mentions violence almost in the same breath, we devote an excursus (► Ch. 4) specifically to violence prevention in that context. Finally, we detail the key challenges to be confronted (► Ch. 5).

1 Further excerpts of the National Report on Strategies for Violence Prevention are available for download on: www.dji.de/youthcrime

2 In contrast to school education, the police and the justice system, the child and youth services are almost unknown outside professional circles. The services are still not infrequently confused with the “old” Jugendamt (Child and Youth Office), which had an interventionist approach.

2 The Child and Youth Services' Field of Action

2.1 The Legislative Framework and Structural Background to Violence Prevention in the Child and Youth Services

In Germany all young persons have a right to receive help in their development and to be educated towards becoming an independent and socially adjusted individual (cf. § 1 Social Code Book VIII)³. Although the bringing up of children is primarily a parental task (cf. Article 6 of the *Grundgesetz* (German Constitution)) and the central responsibility for education devolves on the school, the youth services⁴ have a duty to provide additional help for children and young people and to help avoid or reduce disadvantage. The youth services have a duty to advise and support parents and carers, to protect young people from dangers, and to contribute to the development of favourable living conditions. To these ends a wide range of assistance and support services have been developed, in particular *Jugendarbeit* (youth work), *Jugendsozialarbeit* and *Hilfen zur Erziehung* (socio-educational provision), *Kinder- and Jugendschutz* (protection of young persons), assistance provisions for schooling and for young adults, *Beistandschaft* (curatorship) and *Vormundschaft* (guardianship), and provision for intervention when the wellbeing of a child or young person is endangered.

In this context, violence is one more significant factor – children and young people may be offenders, victims, or simply witnesses of violence. Differing experiences of violence form a part – but no more than one part – of the environment they live in. Accordingly, dealing with violence is not central to the youth services' work. Violence prevention is just one concern, though an important one, among others. However, if the youth services involve themselves in violence prevention, as a consequence of a small number of spectacular incidents⁵, then, and additionally to education in conflict resolution provided at child day-care centres and the many types of assistance available to families, including assistance with upbringing, there is a need above all for provision of:

3 German Social Code Book VIII

4 Although in accordance with Social Code Book VIII the child and youth services cater for all persons not yet 27 years old, i.e. to children, *Jugendliche* (young people 14-17), *Heranwachsende* (young people 18-20) and *junge Volljährige* (young adults 21-26), the present study will be concerned mainly with youth services. The reason is that in this section the principal target group in the context of violence consists of young people 13-17.

5 These include the two instances of an armed individual running amok in a school (Erfurt 2002 and Emsdetten 2006).

- youth work (both through organizations and otherwise),
- out-of-school youth education,
- socio-educational provision,
- protection of young persons in public and, not least,
- youth services in youth court proceedings (approx. = England's Youth Offending Team service).

The youth services are basically structured on the principle of subsidiarity, which is an important principle in the German social security system. A consequence of this principle is that projects and programmes – both in violence prevention and in other areas – are primarily a matter for local development and implementation. The German State at Federal level provides only the general legal framework, by way of Social Code Book VIII (child and youth services), and it is for the individual federal states to put specific arrangements in place.⁶ For provision at local level, recognised independent providers of youth services – these are effectively NGOs – take priority over the *Jugendämter* (child and youth offices).⁷ The latter, being public-service providers and having responsibility as providers of last resort, are debarred from acting unless and until the independent providers fail, or are unable, to make provision or sufficient provision, do so. In the light of these circumstances, it is unsurprising that, in contrast to countries with a mainly centralised regulatory structure, Germany lacks a national violence-prevention programme. While nationwide programmes⁸ certainly exist, the preponderance of responsibility resting with the providers at local level has encouraged the development and deployment of a heterogeneous range of projects and programmes. Most of these are substantially influenced by local and regional circumstances and traditions, build on the particular competence areas of the providers and their professional staff, and have specific regard to the actual living circumstances and the individual capabilities of the young people involved. Most of these programmes run for a fixed term, which means that rapid adaptation to changing circumstances is possible. At the same time, however, there are associated risks of programme interruptions and of dependence on extraneous considerations. The currently

6 In addition to its legislative role, the Bund has the power to initiate developments, which in practice mainly take the form of pilot programmes. One significant and much-debated model programme in the context of violence prevention was the *Aktionsprogramm gegen Aggression und Gewalt* (Programme of Action against Aggression and Violence) implemented in the Eastern federal states from 1992 to 1996 by the then Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

7 Under Social Code Book VIII, the churches and religious groupings recognised under public law and the national associations for independent provision of welfare support are officially recognised providers of independent youth services, while other legal persons and associations of persons may become such if certain conditions are fulfilled. In addition to these independent providers, services on a lesser scale are also provided by a number of private commercial undertakings.

8 These include e.g. *Faustlos* (No Fists!), which was implemented mainly in schools, and programmes of anti-aggression training.

rather limited potential and priorities of public budgets are an overriding constraint. A further major handicap affecting violence prevention in the youth services are its high degree of exposure to random spectacular incidents and the fallout in terms of public debate. In consequence, the financing of projects – and thus the practical possibilities open to the providers of youth services – may not infrequently fall victim to “the vagaries of the market”. Once public concern has waned, even high-quality, proven projects⁹ are soon under threat because of their close association with the triggering event, and because they are fixed-term. It is only in exceptional cases that they achieve the status of long-term funded programmes. In periods of slackened public interest in violence, the child and youth services and their efforts to combat violence are at a relative disadvantage – vis-à-vis schools, police or the justice system, for example – in terms of legitimacy in the public eye. At other times, dramatic events attracting heavy media coverage will once again enable programmes labelled “violence prevention” to attract funding.

Variations in personal experience and in training of the youth services’ employees mean that not all are equally prepared for their encounter with violent behaviour by young people. A number of developments, though, have now been set in motion as a result of the recent more intensive public debate on juvenile violence. As youth services professionals consider a certain degree of juvenile violence to be “age-related”, hence calling for a primarily education-based approach, the topics of “juvenile violence” and “coping with violence” have become more and more widely adopted in training courses and in continued professional development.¹⁰

2.2 Basic Principles and Perspectives in the Child and Youth Services

The youth services have never merely reacted to impediments or harmful developments; on the contrary, it has always moved in good time to avert potential and concrete dangers. As far back as the *Achter Jugendbericht der Bundesregierung* (Eighth Youth Report issued by the Federal Government in 1990), prevention was declared to be one of the services’ structural principles. Carefully targeted and well-proven courses of action and radical new initiatives alike aim at early prevention of maldevelopment. One of the tasks being tackled is the prevention of violence.

9 As happens in other fields too, projects and programmes in violence prevention are evaluated only in exceptional circumstances. Accordingly the term “best practice” is avoided here.

10 The last twenty years have seen steady growth in this area; since 2006 there has even been a postgraduate qualification on offer, a Master’s degree at Hamburg in “Conflict Management and Violence Prevention”.

For young people, violence and personal experience of violence take place during a life phase in which they are constructing their psychosocial identity and becoming personalities with individual interests and abilities. On the road from childhood to adulthood, detours and abrupt breaks are normal, and conflicts are resolved in different ways influenced by such things as gender, age, cultural background, social status. Another important factor is the regional context; and help and support offered by parental home and family leaves a lasting imprint. Some children and young people have very little experience of violence, or find that they can cope with it; others sometimes do have problems, and a few have long-term problems. However, it is broadly speaking the case that experiences involving physical violence between individuals of the same age-group are age-related, and characteristic of young people 14-17. This applies particularly to boys, even if no one generation becomes a danger to others or is endangered itself. For those actively involved in youth work, the implications are that they must avoid opprobrium, defamation, and exclusion, and must address themselves to the positive features of young people, not their deficiencies. The youth services are there for everyone. Their proper functions are to supply individualised, well-targeted assistance on a scale commensurate with the problem and to work together with the children and young people of that age-group in a joint search for solutions. Those who have problems and create problems should be the central focus of the work. Where violence is involved, children and young people may be offenders or victims, and are often both at once. From this perspective it is clear that while violence may feature in an individual's behaviour, it still only constitutes a part of that behaviour. The focus is thus not on violence alone, but on the young persons in the round. They are accepted as individuals – which is not to say that their violent behaviour is condoned. Using this approach it is possible to build relationships, so that in the next phase work can begin on a joint basis, addressing the violence itself and both the offender experience and the victim experience. That is why outlawing violence without enquiring into the social or cultural background or the causes is not enough. The need is for intensive and frank confrontation with the underlying problems.

The youth services offer their strategies of violence prevention to all children, and to all young people 14-20. They need support, and should be able to develop into independent, socially adjusted personalities. Freedom from violence, frankness and tolerance are important principles in this process, and are listed as objectives in the guidelines and service manuals of providers of youth services.¹¹ If there is a continuing support need which may arise from (or in part from) violent behaviour, then selective use is made of other services currently available, or new services are developed and implemented. However, the youth

11 Among the qualities most regularly cited are, for instance: self-reliance, confidence, a sense of self-esteem, construction of a system of values, autonomy and initiative, communicative ability, cooperativeness, ability to cope with conflict, perceptiveness and empathy, and a sense of responsibility.

services are only one of the actors involved, and on its own would rapidly come up against its limitations. It is faced today by a contemporary society characterised by ever wider internal disparities and greater diversity of living standards, by diminishing prospects facing young people in the labour market, increasingly demanding requirements in education and training, and new and different challenges imposed by immigration and an increasingly diverse cultural milieu. Such a society poses new problems for those seeking ways to meet the phenomenon of violence, problems that can only be successfully tackled by coordinated efforts undertaken jointly with parents and carers, professionals from the youth services and other fields such as schools, police, and the justice system – and also, not least, in cooperation with politicians and the general public.

In addition to assisting in the handling of age-related conflict, in preparation for a life free of violence, the youth services professionals also contend with non-age-related violence committed by young people. This work is carried on in the services' own centres, among the wider public, and in centres run by other organisations. In recent years, cooperation with schools in particular has expanded very considerably and also generally improved, most notably in the field of violence prevention. There is also close collaboration with the police and the judicial system within the context of the youth services' role in criminal proceedings and the juvenile courts

In youth services, unlike other fields, an important strategy among those employed is the use of the voluntary principle, which is firmly established as a fundamental principle of child and youth services. Help offered by the youth services can be accepted or refused, so if the services on offer are actually to reach young people, they must be attractive. This has resulted in considerable expenditure of effort aimed at arousing young people's interest. Shared decision-making and shared designing of programmes have acquired greater importance, and the young people themselves are now expected to decide on steps to be taken, and to learn to accept a share in responsibility. To permit learning-processes and trialling to take place, they are provided with physical space and situations which – in comparison with other institutions – are not available elsewhere.

The tailoring of service provision to local needs, and open-ended adaptation in response to changing conditions, are the responsibility of youth services planning. Thus, depending on what is actually required locally, the main focus in violence prevention may vary between one district and another.

In contrast to other fields of action, the youth services are called on in Social Code Book VIII to cooperate both internally and with others. Cooperation is expected, not only with the various players in the social environment and with institutions, but also with the children and young people and their families. It is

thus clear that cooperation, voluntarism and participation are major operating principles, and the youth services see their work as a co-production with young people and with others.

3 The Strategies of Violence Prevention in the Youth Services

The strategies of violence prevention in the youth services can be categorised according to various criteria – for instance by partner agency, by age-group, by working method, or in line with the different ways in which violence is manifested. This study uses the latter approach, since the different types of violence encountered impact differently on daily life not just for the youth services but more widely. Violence prevention addresses these manifestations, whether directly and exclusively or indirectly. The following account is structured on these differences.

The youth services come face to face with children's and young people's experiences of violence in the roles of offender, victim or participant both inside and outside the institutional context – and this fact sets it apart from (for example) the schools. Their professional staff go about their duties within the services' own institutions, e.g. the leisure-centre discos or Junior Fire Brigade meetings, but also in external institutions such as schools or juvenile custodial centres. The help they can provide is also in demand in the public arena, on urban streets and open spaces. It is in these urban settings in particular that the services encounter problems of a fundamental nature. The less check there is on young people's activities, the more their lives are determined and organised according to their own ideas, the readier adults will be to perceive dangers in the way that young people are growing up, or to perceive themselves as under threat from young people. That is not the same as within the youth services' own institutions, where stimulus and free space are available but limits clearly indicated; in public areas, young people's activities are critically scrutinised and quickly pegged back.

Because the social environment is important for the growing-up process in children and young people, and yet virtually heedless of what might be in their interests, it is an important reference-point, both conceptually and in practice, for violence-preventing strategies. Providers of youth services engage in cooperative and networking activities with the aim of bundling available resources and so making more intensive use of them. For example, high-level cooperation systems are developed with child day-care centres, schools, the police, and sports clubs as partners, with a view to early identification of problematic situations. These activities are not directed solely at the most conspicuous groupings of young people, those attracting the most attention because they create the most pressing problem, but extend also to strengthening and supporting

those young people's groupings that do not call attention to themselves by the use of violence and do not cause problems. This mainly indirect strategy, intended to promote a substantial counterweight at local urban level to the "culture of violence", has so far attracted too little notice.

Children and young people grow up in different regional, social and cultural environments that do much to shape their attitudes and behaviour. Services provided by the youth services are designed to match these environments. This applies in the leisure centres, in detached youth work ("streetwork"), or in work with football fans. Young people's experiences of violence reflect their particular life's setting in problem areas of big cities with its concomitants of poverty and lack of prospects. These are environments in which physical strength and uncompromising self-assertion often make the difference between access and non-access to opportunity. For the same age-group in rural or economically prosperous districts, the experiences are different. While there is violence here too, it is less public and takes a less spectacular form. A further factor is that an appreciable number of minors have grown up in different cultural environments, including countries involved in civil war, with the associated legacy of traumatic memories. There is now increased effort to take proper account of these experiences and their relevance through targeted transmission of knowledge or through the integration of professionals from these countries or environments into the work in mixed teams. In gender-specific work too, deficiencies persist. While work with girls has developed well, corresponding work with boys, notwithstanding some early indications of progress,¹² is still under-developed. Boys have virtually no way of finding an independent and self-confident masculine role, because outside the traditional masculine role there are few role models and both stimulus and support are largely lacking. Boys still mostly learn to apply physical energy and strength to the solution of problems. While this behaviour secures their status among their male age-group, it also has the consequence outside the group of getting them punished.

The use and the effects of violence are age-specific: as age increases, more violence is to be observed, and violence used is more serious and more targeted and/or purposive. These observations influence the choice of preventive approaches.

The great diversity of its youth cultures reflects the fact that Germany is now an immigration country. It also means that youth services professionals are going to be confronted with a ever-growing range of hitherto unknown challenges, if they are to properly address the life circumstances and the interests of young people; violence prevention will require fresh educational strategies and

12 The Heimvolkshochschule Frille (a residential educational facility) is one of the few institutions with long experience in this field.

solutions. The approach will involve the young people to whom it is addressed, so that the search for solutions is in effect a co-production. This marks off out-of-school services provision as quite distinct from work done in kindergartens, day-care centres and schools on the one hand, by the police and the judiciary on the other.¹³

3.1 Non-specific Strategies with a Violence-Prevention Aspect

Generally speaking, children and young people resolve their conflicts without using violence. Scuffles and similar minor physical confrontations are part of growing up, and are in no way a reason for concern. The term violence should only be used with caution, because violence is not a dominant feature in young people's behaviour and rarely exceeds the limits of behaviour normal in a given age-range. A prevention campaign aimed indiscriminately at all violence would be excessive and in view of the associated blame-attribution issues could prove counter-productive. The youth services, however, in line with their fundamental mission to "promote development and support education", have programmes on offer which afford the opportunity to learn ways of resolving conflicts without the use of violence. The programmes available are all multi-objective in nature, and violence prevention is not necessarily a central issue. They are addressed to all children and young people; they do not distinguish between "violent individuals" and "normal individuals"; and they seek to avoid discrimination of any kind. In its broad outline the subject-matter of the programmes is aimed to connect with the interests of the given age-group, and does not address individuals. Children and young people are treated as members of one or more groups.

Certain programmes that are now being represented as violence-prevention were previously designated as out-of-school youth education, or as sport. One prominent example is night-time sport (e.g. midnight basketball): as a non-commercial activity for sport-minded young people 14-20, it may well have some violence-preventive effect as a by-product, but it is not violence-prevention in the strict sense. And yet sporting and other physical-activity programmes are constantly being presented in close association with violence prevention. This amounts to creating the impression that engaging in sport, an activity that appeals to young people's natural enthusiasm for movement, phys-

13 There are parallels here to the field of action concerned with family matters – in part because there is a common basis in Social Code Book VIII. In the case of assistance available in family issues too, the aim is to cooperate with the individuals directly affected in finding the appropriate forms of assistance, deciding on objectives, and working towards their realisation. The outcome is then the result of collaboration between all parties.

ical contests and trials of strength, and is conducted in a regulated and supervised environment (e.g. the presence of a referee), somehow automatically becomes an effective prophylactic against violence.

Youth services programmes currently available are still insufficiently gender-specific in the way they address young people. The rare exceptions include assertiveness training, which is only offered to girls, and mostly without being specifically prompted by events. Comparable programmes for boys, who tend more readily than girls to settle their differences physically, are being developed only at a slow pace. There are also deficiencies in the approaches used for young immigrants of both sexes. Courses and training sessions almost invariably rely heavily on verbal communication and are conducted in German. Even in connection with physical activities, language remains important. This automatically marginalises or even excludes all those whose knowledge of German is not adequate. Nor are the cultural contexts specific to the respective groups sufficiently recognised and catered for.

In cooperative work with schools, the youth services address a given type of programme to the school class as an existing community, not to individual children or young people described as “difficult”. The group constitutes the learning environment in which the students learn from one another. The approach excludes no-one and accepts that at this age physical confrontations are commonplace. The youth services projects offer regulation of conflicts and the chance to learn how to cope with conflicts in a non-violent, socially positive way. By addressing children’s and young people’s personal experiences, the programmes automatically involve the school context. Important reference-points for developing these approaches are supplied by the students’ experiences of violence at school. If only the school’s students participate, this is quickly appreciated; however, violence directed against students by teaching staff is hardly addressed at all. Institutional violence has likewise not yet been adequately targeted by strategies of violence-prevention. There are difficulties about expanding the programmes, as schools continue to turn a blind eye to this reality. More scope is afforded by projects that engage the whole school, including teaching staff, headteacher and janitor. Projects of this nature are directly concerned with conflicts, and play their part likewise in advisory work and continued professional development. The youth services are also much more heavily involved in projects concerned with mediation and conflict resolution, which are now running at schools all over Germany.

Even if youth services are only intermittently active in schools, they nonetheless offer school students opportunities for learning social competence that are not provided by the standard curriculum. For the students, and for interested teachers, the inflow of ideas will open up new approaches and new horizons in conflict management.

While heavily standardised programmes such as *Faustlos* (No Fists!) allow only limited scope for the young people to get involved in programme design, there are other approaches to which this reservation does not apply. For instance, *KBS – Konfliktbehandlung an Schulen* (Conflict Management at School) can be more closely tailored to actual conditions on the ground, and indeed assumes that the services provided will be adapted to suit local needs and expectations.

Although there seem to be indications of links between school refusal, truancy (persistent or occasional), and youth crime, the present study will not examine the by now numerous approaches developed by the youth services in dealing with this complex of problems. One reason is that the correlation between school problems and violence seems to be no more than weak to moderate; additionally, it is of central importance precisely to preventive strategies to identify the specifically school-engendered component in the development of “problems at school” and factor it in appropriately. And in any case the primary object of the approaches mentioned is to enable school attendance to be resumed, not to prevent violence.

Youth media protection puts forward an independent strategy for coping with violence and seeks to protect children and young people from media potentially harmful to them, i.e. in the present context from media that depict and glorify violence. While there seems to be no direct correlation between the consumption of such media and violence perpetrated by children and young people, it is believed that such consumption may in certain constellations of circumstances produce an enhancement effect. Distribution of harmful media (books, music, films, videos, computer games, internet pages etc.) is restricted by the *Jugendschutzgesetz* (Law for the Protection of the Youth); the debates on the issue flare up anew whenever a spectacular incident occurs.¹⁴ For a time it remained possible for new laws to make access to violent material in the media considerably more difficult. But since the internet and new technologies such as the ever more multifunctional mobile phone became universally available, the law on protection of minors has become relatively ineffective. One reason is that children and young people are often more adept than adults at manipulating the technology. Again, national laws are no longer adequate to cope with the international internet. For these reasons, the educational approach to protection of young people is gaining in significance. Education programmes focused on the media aim to enable children and young people to gain an understanding of the new media and of the material supplied by the new media, and encourage them to feel they can ask for help if it is needed. In this context, parents and education professionals are important. They need to be kept informed and given training on an ongoing basis, and need to have greater knowledge of both the content and the technical potential of the new media.¹⁵

14 This was clearly demonstrated after the school shootings at Erfurt and Emsdetten.

15 E.g. the web page www.jugendschutz.net

Only thus can they recognise and assess potential dangers and respond appropriately.

Non-specific strategies with a violence-prevention aspect may be summarised as follows: They tend to address younger age-groups, along with parents and carers, and are designed with the immediate social environment in mind. Methodology extends across casework, groupwork, and community work. The approaches used are mostly dependent on the resources of the children and young people themselves, and are organised as projects: that is to say, their content and duration are fixed in advance. Out-of-school youth services here cooperate principally with child day-care centres and schools.

Gender: The programmes offered are rarely gender-specific, and even if operated by both male and female professionals hardly ever reflect gender roles as they should.

Migration: Cultural and social differences among children are not consistently taken into account. Many programmes make participation strictly conditional on an adequate command of German, which virtually amounts to automatic exclusion of many immigrant children. The proportion of professionals of non-German origin with additional linguistic and cultural knowledge should be further increased.

Participation: In addition to the largely standardised programmes offered within the curriculum, numerous projects work on the basis of having children and young people actively share in project design and other work.

3.2 Youth Services Strategies for Target Groups directly linked to Violence

Violence, whether manifested or only a threat, is treated by the child and youth services as a key starting-point for violence-prevention. Even if violence and the risk of violence are important triggers, violence is still only regarded as one factor among others affecting the behaviour of children and young people. It may be an indicator of the educational input required, and that requirement in turn is what decides the choice of suitable programmes. Depending on the particular circumstances, it may be possible to undertake a factual enquiry into experiences of violence; but there is no requirement to do so. If the children and young people involved are affected by issues other than violence, such as difficult family situations, the youth services can select from the entire range of *Hilfen zur Erziehung* (socio-educational provision) available (cf. Social Code

Book VIII §§ 27ff.),¹⁶ and initiate the necessary action. If the family situation changes, violence-prevention effects can also be expected. This is why parents experiencing difficulties over the upbringing of children are offered assistance at the earliest possible point, by way of the fairly easily accessible rearing support services: these are a standard provision among the various forms of upbringing assistance, and offer parents counselling and support or refer them to other institutions. The example shows that there is a close link here between the youth services and the field of action concerned with the family.

The child and youth services also have the responsibility of acting as the official State guardian of the safety of minors. They are responsible for the protection of children and young people and has an obligation to identify potential dangers to their wellbeing at an early stage and to take what steps are necessary to avert them. Here the voluntary principle does not come into play. Where the wellbeing of children is under threat within the family, for instance, it is possible to accommodate them in a children's home or other institution. If the parents object to this, there will be no option but to involve the family courts, as they alone have the power to interfere with the parents' duty of care. Permission from the family courts is also required for placing minors in secure accommodation run by the youth services, see *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* (German Civil Code) § 1631b.

Potentially violent young people 14-17

The youth services strategies described below are directed at young people in situations which adults consider to present a serious risk of violence. The strategies are coupled with an expectation that there will be recourse to two different sets of educational measures. One should focus on eliminating disadvantageous factors. The central concern is the development of young people into independent and socially adjusted individuals. The services offered will take account of the young people's interests, and solutions will be sought jointly with the young people involved. The second strand of the educational input comes from the youth services' obligation to help to calm the situation down: in many cases, what adults want is "a quiet life", free of disturbances as far as possible,¹⁷ and to be shielded from both actual violence and the fear of vi-

16 The different types of socio-educational provision are services provided by the youth services and must be applied for by the parents or carers. In planning sessions, problems are discussed between young people, parents and professionals, development goals are agreed, and the form of assistance to be taken is decided upon. The procedure reflects the importance of participation as a fundamental principle of the youth services, and it emerges clearly that the outcome of the social welfare work is the outcome of a co-production by the persons targeted and the professionals.

17 A comparable manifestation of this aspiration to peace and quiet may be seen, for example, in the quiet hours imposed in playgrounds in response to adult demand, or the widely seen prohibitions of play on the grass of public parks. Understandably, these issues often develop into acrimonious controversy.

olence.¹⁸ The disparity of interests between adults and minors inevitably leads to conflict, not infrequently putting the youth services under severe pressure.

One of the youth services' central functions is to support young people in such conflicts and to de-escalate conflicts. In the services' institutions, and also in "detached" work, the aim is to take the young people's interests on board and offer assistance. The various types of help offered are primarily addressed to groups rather than individuals. They have a strong bias towards the social environment and leisure use. The behaviour of young people is to be seen – such at least is the aspiration – as a concomitant of their age, and should not be unthinkingly labelled as "violence", since that brings with it a risk of criminalisation. While approaches relying essentially on verbal communication are still the dominant type, there are now programmes with a more physical emphasis that cater more effectively for young people's taste for sport and adventure.

In schools, children's homes and youth groups, the services' professionals and their methodology may in various ways come up against the limits of what their methods can achieve. Changes in living circumstances, increased heterogeneity of youth cultures, and new role models¹⁹ all influence young people's behaviour. Accordingly, new programmes such as "Coolness Training" aimed at preventing or reducing violence were developed and more energetically deployed. The training sessions are carried out with young people readily capable of violence and others who have already been or are at risk of becoming victims of violence. However, those on the sidelines who may seem uninvolved are also included in the programmes, because all have to learn not to look the other way in tricky situations, but to intervene and seek to de-escalate the trouble. Programmes of this kind often work by confrontation: while the young people are accepted as individuals, they will at the same time be made to face up to their unwanted behaviour. The aim here is to stimulate the individual's social development. A further aim, pursued in the institutional context, is to develop an ethic based on mutual acceptance and openness to peaceful ways. The courses may run on a fixed-term basis (e.g. may be week-long or measured in hours), but can also run for an extended period. They can be used from third year at school upwards.

In their efforts to de-escalate conflicts, the youth services may seek support from the public, for example at neighbourhood level, through the media or through other institutions. In its contacts with the police, for example, the services often takes pains to seek understanding for characteristic age-related be-

18 An increasingly influential role here is being played by fears encouraged in the media and by the generalised fear of others generated by immigration and cultural diversity.

19 Rap music, for instance, has been propagating a relationship between young people and violence distinctly different from anything suggested by earlier musical fashions.

haviour by young people in conflict situations, and to diminish exaggerated fears relating to youth violence.

Detached Youth Work addresses young people 14-17 who are regarded from a civil order perspective as a nuisance, antisocial, and so in need of supervision. Their behaviour is assessed as risky and leads rapidly to social exclusion; they are seen as potentially violent. For these young people, the detached youth work service has individual and groupwork programmes and a contact role with groups and cliques. The aim in providing this support is to help them acquire new behaviour patterns, so that vicious spirals of escalation into violence are prevented. A new perspective on young people and their ways of forming groups needs to be made possible, one that normalises rather than stigmatises. The detached youth work service's guiding principles are acceptance and voluntarism, partiality and anonymity, obligation and flexibility. Over and above the work done with the young people, important work is carried out in the community, with obvious implications for the social environment issue.

The youth services are confronted again and again by the question of how one is to reach "difficult" target groups. The question is important because the young people do not have to take part in the programmes. Often it is a matter of (male) youngsters 14-17 associating in particular groups, cliques, "scenes", or at particular places, the groupings or places concerned having great importance for them and providing orientation. When conflicts occur within or around these groupings, it is not always possible to determine clearly which individuals have been offenders, or victims, or witnesses, respectively. Such attempts at categorisation are highly dependent on the given situation, and there is often a so-called status exchange between offender and victim: that is to say, the offender in one situation may be the victim in another, and vice versa. The concepts developed for these young people were designed to be deliverable at the places frequented by the groups. Detached work, using (for example) dual-nationality teams – perhaps a German social worker paired with one of Russian origin – visits the groups and "scenes", establishes contacts, builds trust, and is then in a position to offer help.

As many conflicts preceding massive violence and disorder tend to be sparked off at a trivial level and then gradually escalate, an approach aimed at early defusing of situations has been developed by the youth services under the title *Wir kümmern uns selbst!* (We'll sort it ourselves!). The aim behind this approach, which will be helped by local (and not necessarily professional) conflict-management potential, is to prevent matters from escalating up the conflict spiral and ultimately reaching the level of criminality.

The *Fanprojekte* (fan projects)²⁰ are a further example of strategies that link to group interests; they came into being as the result of an imperative, universally recognised safety requirement for football matches, and aim to contain violence occurring both in and around the grounds. They aim to reach not simply violent troublemakers but also those young people who tend to be fascinated by violence and are not yet active perpetrators of violence. Part of the input in these projects is devoted to extremist mindsets and the associated prejudices, hostile stereotypes and xenophobia. The fan projects seek to enhance football fans' sense of self-respect and behavioural confidence and to stabilise the same-age peer group. Through their work they are creating a climate in which other organisations can also become involved on behalf of these young people.

Over the last twenty years, apart from some initial reservations, the work with football fans and the “detached” approaches have seen the development of a viable pattern of cooperation between the youth services and the police. While public safety is the main guiding principle for police action, the youth services' concern is to enhance the interests and prospects of young people. They put on public record that even difficult young people behave generally in a manner typical of their age-group, that behaviour can be changed, and that, given support, the services are capable of opening up violence-free prospects for them.

A further strategy that has been developed, the *Ambulante Intensive Begleitung* (Detached Intensive Escort)²¹ is based on an approach used in the Netherlands. Detached Intensive Escort is directed at young people who have been in trouble because of violent behaviour and other problems (for instance records of addiction and living rough). They are regarded as “difficult”, and are not easy to approach by way of “traditional” youth services methods. In Detached Intensive Escort, a specially trained education professional – initially only on a fixed-time basis if necessary – works closely together with the young person concerned. In addition to the relationship work, building and further developing young people's personal and institutional networks is central. Detached Intensive Escort aims to stabilise young people through the changes introduced to their lived-in world and through dependable networks, and at the same time to reduce deviant behaviour and violence.

The target-group-specific and risk-specific strategies that have been described may be summarised as follows. The target groups are made up primarily of young people 14-17 rather than children, and boys rather than girls. Priority is accorded to work in groups, and the services and programmes offered do not begin by addressing violence alone, but rather, and primarily, address the lived-

20 For further details, refer to the *Koordinationsstelle Fanprojekte* (Fan Project Coordination centre) at Deutsche Sportjugend, www.kos-fanprojekte.de (English Website available)

21 Detached Intensive Escort has been trialled at five locations in the context of a model programme subsidised by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, with scientific monitoring by the German Youth Institute.

in worlds of the minors concerned. The youth services professionals cooperate mainly with the schools and the police. The projects tend to be launched in the wake of a problem becoming the subject of public discussion, and programmes are often time-limited.

Gender: Programmes offered are aimed non-specifically at young individuals or groups, are defined almost exclusively on an interest basis (e.g. football fan projects), and virtually never, consciously at least, by gender. But it is mainly boys rather than girls that are associated with violence, and so it is male-specific approaches that must be more intensively developed and implemented.

Immigration: Recent times have seen an ever-increasing range of approaches (such as “detached”, Gangway or the Drushba Boys²²) for young people with ethnic background. Professional or volunteer personnel with ethnic background are integrated into the programme to supply their cultural and intercultural skills, open up new approach paths to the target groups, and contribute skills and knowledge. If the (German) majority population is to be reached, community work is important. These strategies make it possible for differing needs to be identified, understanding achieved, and areas of common ground established.

Participation: Participation eases access to “hard to reach” young people and young people’s groups, and offers an opportunity for programmes offered and interests to meet. In work with football fans or with young late repatriates, for instance, the young people’s interests are more fully addressed and are discussed in public.

Young people 14-17 causing disruption through violent behaviour

If one were to go by the public perception and reporting, violence committed by young people 14-17 has increased dramatically. The population at large feels threatened by such violence – more accurately, by “violence committed by young males”. A further public perception is that social work appears to be reaching the limits of what it can do. For the young people, most of them male, who are picked up by the police and the justice system, special strategies and one-off measures have been developed. Most of these are directed at the individual “offender” or “suspect”, irrespective of whether the violent acts concerned were committed by individuals or by groups. Even where an act has indeed been committed in a group context, this circumstance has as a rule been given little weight. “Multiple and hardcore offenders”, who are extremely few in number, are widely regarded as beyond the reach of intervention; but even

22 The project for troublesome *Spätaussiedler* (late repatriate) boys aims to bring about their psychosocial integration by strengthening their self-esteem, with the help of compulsory afternoon activities designed to educate them in the use of leisure time.

here the child and youth services hold to their principle that educational approaches can contribute to the prevention of violent behaviour.

Responsibility with regard to young people who have committed offences rests in the first instance with the police and the justice system. These bring pressure to bear on the young people concerned by means of reprimands, imposed conditions or criminal proceedings. However, as the effectiveness of punitive strategies is known to be limited, the police and judiciary too give their backing to educative strategies. And here the main resource called on is the youth services. It develops the education programmes and integrates them into the criminal proceedings. As a result, there is now close cooperation between the youth services and the judiciary.

While the police and judiciary see the youth services' role in criminal proceedings as primarily supportive rather than initiatory, the services themselves takes a different view. They see themselves as a player employing an independent strategy,²³ though with the obligation to proceed in close consort with the other partners and to accept compromises. For the services, the compromises are sometimes difficult to accept.

One particular strategy used in cooperation between the police and the youth services come into play when the police suspect young people 14-17 of acts of violence. In Saxony-Anhalt, the youth services use their *Jugendberatungsstellen bei der Polizei* (Youth Services' Advice Points at Police Stations) to offer advice to detained young people immediately after the preliminary hearing, and in this way gains direct access to those young people who are otherwise the most difficult to reach. The services can provide a first round of consultation, and where educative input is needed they can act as an intermediary with other institutions.

The aim of bringing about better cooperation between the youth services, the police and the justice system is shared also, for example, by the *Haus des Jugendrechts* (Juvenile Law Centre) in Stuttgart. The *Jugendgerichtshilfe* (youth services in youth court proceedings), police, and public prosecutor's office are all accommodated under the one roof. The benefits are not confined to shorter case durations, as cooperation is now case-specific, sustained, and better than before. A strategic improvement of this nature to cooperation points the way forward in terms of benefit to the young people.

A further youth services strategy, likewise pursued in cooperation with the police, seek to bring about diversion at an early stage in order to avoid formal

23 The point is made clear in the new § 36a of Social Code Book VIII, for example, which emphasises the decision-making responsibility of the youth services.

sentencing of young people and thus in turn to avoid stigmatisation.²⁴ This strategy is applied by the Berlin *Büro für Diversionsberatung und -vermittlung* (Office for Diversion Counselling and Negotiation). Here too, the youth services work on police HQ premises. They urge young detainees to reflect on the act they have committed and to seek ways in which amends might be made. This may enable diversion to be ordered by the public prosecutor at the preliminary hearing, or a later diversion at the main hearing (under § 45 (3) of the *Jugendgerichtsgesetz* (Juvenile Courts Act; JGG)).

The so-called “Teen Courts” recently introduced as models also use the diversion option (see § 45 JGG). In selected cases, a panel of the same age-group as the alleged young offender will negotiate an appropriate sanction with him or her. If this process is successful, the case is dropped. In the “Teen Courts”, the youth services generally play a background role, confining themselves to organising the negotiation process and safeguarding the principles of fairness and proportionality.

The institutional response to young people 14-17 who have committed offences of violence, as to all offenders of this age-group, is governed by three fundamental principles:

- help takes precedence over punishment;
- informal proceedings precede formal proceedings;
- non-custodial measures take precedence over custodial measures.

If these principles are to be upheld in practice, there has to be effective cooperation between the youth services and the justice system, with the youth services designing the programmes. The youth services in youth court proceedings move promptly to request an informal disposal and takes responsibility for dealing with those granted bail. In its work at this important interface, the youth services do not emphasise the (violent) offence and subsequent punishment, instead drawing attention to the circumstances in which the young people concerned are living and the problems they face. The services develop and offer measures aimed at enabling them to manage their future lives without – or largely without – the use of violence.

In all youth court proceedings, the youth services adhere closely to the existing judicial structures. The relationship between the education professionals and the usually male alleged young offenders is intended to open the way to cooperative work guided by the young persons’ abilities and personal resources, not by their failings. For this to be possible, the professional worker concerned has

24 The Juvenile Courts Act (JGG) (§ 45) provides for three types of possible diversion: the case may be dropped by the public prosecutor at the preliminary hearing stage, *without* (JGG § 45 [1]) or *with* conditions (JGG § 45 [2]), and by the juvenile court at the main hearing (JGG 45 [3]). From the point of view of youth services projects, the most relevant of these is discontinuance of proceedings under JGG § 45 (2).

to be capable of self-reflection, of analysing his or her own experience of violence, his or her own gender role, cultural background and life experience generally.

When a young person is found guilty of a violent offence, it is common for the following measures to be implemented:

Social Training Courses are for offenders 14-17 and some of the 18-20 who have been found guilty of a fairly serious offence²⁵ and have been referred on the direction of a juvenile court. The intention is that the course should above all prompt them to look critically at themselves and their situation, to reflect on their relationship with violence and drugs, and on their problems in the family, at school or at work, or with partners. Social Training Courses address the lived-in world of the young people who attend them, and are now widely recognised by professionals as an alternative to community service, fines, or custodial measures. Course providers do use different methodologies, but “integration” and “confrontation” are uniformly accepted to be guiding principles. Here too the general principle applies: it is not the person that is rejected, but the violent behaviour. The idea is that the young people addressed should learn to live without violence or with the minimum possible violence. They learn to respect rules and norms, to think before they act, to improve their capacity for reflection, to take on responsibility, to develop their self-esteem, to use more ways of expressing themselves, and to resolve conflicts without using violence. The strategies by which they justify violence are exposed. Courses are limited to about ten participants; the course lasts a few weeks, and a contract is agreed between provider and course participant. Experiential education is frequently among the programmes provided. Its use with young offenders has suffered unwarranted obloquy in the public arena on grounds of allegedly “rewarding” offenders. The reality is that experiential education makes it possible to address young people who otherwise would be virtually beyond reach. As it is, they can experience success and self-esteem along with others in a group. Social Training Courses have been undergoing continuous further development over the last twenty years; and in the 1990s the *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Ambulante Massnahmen* (Federal Working Group on Non-Custodial Measures) within the *Deutsche Vereinigung für Jugendgerichte und Jugendgerichtshilfen* (German Union for Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Court Help inc.) prescribed minimum standards.

Anti-Aggression Training likewise emphasises the principles of acceptance and “confrontation”. This offence-specific, cognitive learning theory-based method for aggressive repeat offenders employs a curriculum and seeks to reduce readiness to commit violent acts. While in the “hot seat”, subjects are deliberately provoked, and confronted with their attempts to play down the act committed, their justifications, the consequences of their act – and their contradictions and

25 This term generally indicates actual bodily harm or other offences involving violence.

weaknesses. The intention is that these young men²⁶ should learn how to handle provocation, and how they can react more calmly and circumspectly. The methodology targets young people 14-20 who have been found guilty on more than one occasion of offences involving violence, who often fight and seem to relish treating violence as a solution to problems, who seek selectively to exercise power over others, and who are easily roused to anger. Anti-Aggression Training is delivered in four phases: first, confrontation with the violence and its consequences; then the “hot seat”, and later the process of reflection on responsibility and guilt, and on self-perception and perception of others; in the final phase, attention turns to the question of facing the future.

An alternative to groupwork approaches is offered by the juvenile court recommendations for social-cognitive individual training. A manual has been developed for this training system, and the trainers themselves are being specially trained for their role.²⁷

A further interface between the youth services and the justice system always becomes apparent when the issue arises of avoiding or reducing periods spent in custody awaiting trial. No matter how serious the allegations, detention on remand is only to be used as a last resort, as it is thought to be the most harmful of all forms of imprisonment. The Juvenile Courts Act explicitly provides for the possibility of accommodating alleged young offenders in suitable institutions run by the youth services. The advantages of doing so are many: the young people concerned are spared the negative experiences associated with custody; they are not removed from their everyday life and can continue to attend school or training courses, or to work. In the institutions provided as a means of avoiding remand, professional counsellors can work with the young people on their conflict-situation behaviour, seek a mediation with the victim, or make contact with networks in which the parents or the young people can find support. Guidance in making structured use of time prepares the young people for the future requirements of training courses and employment. Any incipient positive developments observed during time spent at these institutions may be taken into account by the juvenile court. Thus even after serious acts of violence have been committed there remains some prospect that custodial youth sentences – which have been shown to have high recidivism rates – may be avoided. In this way, avoidance of imprisonment comes to have a preventive function. It is therefore important that this strategy should continue in future to be used and further developed, even in face of the fact that debate on funding and on the design of the institutions (the issue of whether they should be open, semi-open or closed) has to date precluded expansion of the existing provision.

26 These programmes operate almost exclusively with young males. Only a few courses cater for girls.

27 Cf. www.denkzeit.com; cf. also Körner 2006 and Drewniak/Peterich 2006.

In its work with these young people, the youth services partially relinquish their voluntary principle for the sake of cooperation with the sanctioning system. Participation by the young people is at best only semi-voluntary, as the alternative threatens worse things. The youth services are aware of this, and whenever they use this “additional motivation” they have to balance a complicated set of tensions.

The *Jugendgerichtshilfe* (youth services in youth court proceedings) is a part of juvenile court procedure. The services provide the court with an account of the young accused’s personality and development, and introduce educational perspectives into the proceedings; in this way they influence the juvenile court’s decisions. These opportunities are used variously, differing by region and responsible organisation, and/or by the gender or ethnic affiliation of the young person(s) concerned. In addition, the youth services’ role in relation to criminal proceedings includes important responsibilities during any period of custody: they have to prepare for re-integration.²⁸ Once sentences are being served, however, such opportunities are considerably more limited. Then, finally, there is the services’ responsibility after completion of a sentence. If strategies aimed at resocialisation are to have any serious prospect of success, they must be initiated early in the period of custody, and the transitions from “inside” to the outer world have to be managed on a step-by-step basis: the measures required range from relaxations in the regime – for instance an open detention centre and outside work – to (re-)building of social networks and the resolution of everyday practical issues. In all these matters, cooperation between the youth services and the youth penal institutions is of central importance.

The strategies relating to young persons 14-17 who have called attention to themselves by acts of violence may be summarised as follows. Most of them are highly case-specific and concerned with actual violent behaviour. Accordingly they tend to focus on individuals’ failings rather more than on their strengths. The youth services’ principal partner agency is the justice system, which now accepts the youth services’ education programmes even for difficult cases. Both services accept that educational help takes priority over punitive sanctions.²⁹

Gender: The available programmes in most cases address young people 14-17 in general, all but a few of them disregarding gender-specific considerations.³⁰ Yet this aspect urgently needs attention, since in relation to acts of violence it

28 Berlin and Hamburg have a special service known as the *Jugendbewährungshilfe* (youth probation service) dedicated to this task and likewise accommodated in the same premises as the child and youth services.

29 However, this long-term development trend may be slowed as a consequence of the current debate about the new § 36a in Social Code Book VIII.

30 Among the few exceptions is the Girls’ social Training Course.

is very largely young males that come under suspicion, are prosecuted, and are sentenced.

Immigration: There are now special programmes available (both long-running programmes and one-offs) for young people with ethnic background. Those most deeply committed to this area are the Independent Providers, who are often called upon to specialise. However, there continues to be a need for further development in this area too.

Participation: As a rule, active participation by minors in the design of programmes offered declines both with the intensity of the violence and with the degree to which specific measures address violence. It continues to be a challenge to bring about participation even in difficult situations. Experience from other areas of youth services shows that programmes strong on participation usually work better than others.

3.3 Strategies of Victim Protection

To date, potential and actual young victims of violence have virtually never been regarded in the youth services as a target group. Victim-focused strategies cannot be said to have amounted to more than some embryonic beginnings. Also, there are difficulties in demarcating between this area and the two preceding, “offender-focused” sections, because of the status exchange between offender and victim that was mentioned there. Strategies like victim-offender mediation could be covered in either section. However, separate treatment was preferred, because this perspective has hitherto received little academic attention.

Victim-focused prevention of violence represents a challenge in a number of ways for the youth services. To begin with, the “deficit” role that is ascribed to the victim during the education process continues to suggest negativity. For young males in particular, the victim is a weakling, virtually becoming a taboo figure. Among young people, the term “Opfer” (victim) is currently a serious insult: no-one wants to be the victim, neither boys nor girls. Professional and academic discourse on the topic is responding with a switch of terminology: a number of contributors are now referring to “injured parties”. While the terminological debate is not an irrelevance, the central point remains that almost all young offenders have also been the victims of violence. It is thus important strategically to relate the victim-offender status exchange to current scientific knowledge and to see young people 14-17 holistically. In many individual cases, reduction to victim or offender is simply inadequate.

A new strategy of victim-focused violence prevention was developed in the course of work aimed at combating right-wing extremism. It starts from a loca-

tion-linked observation and targets young people who fear becoming the victim of attack at certain places and consequently avoid these places. A local study identifies these “fear zones” (which may be districts, urban open spaces, times of day, situations, types of violence threatened, or actual experience of violence, etc.), in order to heighten awareness of the phenomenon and open it up for public discussion. The next step, undertaken jointly with the young person (for purposes of empowerment), is to alter the fear zones. Group-focused types of work such as workshops and “future workshops” are used for the purpose. Other approaches that can be integrated into the methodology are constructive conflict-resolution techniques, or self-assertion and self-defence courses for specific target groups (e.g. girls).

Work to combat right-wing extremism also includes programmes of individual help for victims of violence where the violence involved is of racist or right-wing extremist origin (► Ch. 4). However, it remains a challenging undertaking to provide low-threshold programmes for young victims of violence to enable them to come to terms with their experience of violence.

Mediation between Victim and Offender, being a form of restorative justice, is right at the interface with the justice system, and could thus have been mentioned earlier in the context of offender-focused approaches. Although TOA in Germany tends to be deployed mainly in educational work with offenders, it is important that its links to the victim, in particular, should be clearly shown. And it is just here that a conscious effort should be made to emphasise the victim aspect. It is interesting that those German federal states that place relatively strong emphasis on “restorative justice” are also those that, at least linguistically, in the term “victim-offender mediation”, put the victim first. For victim and offender alike (both usually male, young, and possessing experience in both roles), this strategy is helpful. It is made easier for the victim to come to terms psychologically with the act committed and can reduce fear, while for the offender the confrontation with the consequences of his offence does not permit any strategies of neutralisation. It is possible to learn. The (symbolic) act of restitution shows that alternatives to punishment are possible. From the point of view of the youth services and the justice system, victim-offender mediation needs to be further developed, even if funding currently remains contentious.

The few existing strategies for victim protection are addressed to individual young people, not to groups. Access to them is difficult; working with the “victim” is still taboo – sometimes, indeed, associated with attempts to pin the blame on the victim. Additionally, use of the victim concept brings with it a risk of stigmatisation. In this area, the youth services cooperate primarily with the judiciary and the police, and the programmes are usually initiated in response to a problem becoming a matter of public interest. They are often of a fixed-term nature.

Gender: It is essential that gender-specific considerations should be taken into account, because the process of coping with the victim experience and the fear of violence are not the same for boys and for girls. Boys, prevented from showing weakness among their peer group, tend to repress feelings, while girls are in general likely to be receptive to single-sex group programmes.

Immigration: In the process of coping with the victim experience, cultural background plays an important role. Problematic forms of coping, such as the restoration of honour, have gained in significance. Insults are perceived by children and young people as a form of verbal violence; they may hit harder than physical violence and can provoke escalation. Relevant intercultural expertise and sensitivities are essential.

Participation: Participation is perhaps the most promising way forward in dealing with the taboo topic of victimhood. The experiences and judgments of young people themselves can open up new approach routes and make it possible to proceed with clear aims in mind. They are then no longer passive, isolated victims, but have become active subjects, helping to shape their lived-in world, and the topic has become a public one.

3.4 Violence Prevention through Information, Qualification, Counselling, Training, Advanced Training and Continuing Education, Coordination and Research

The strategy of violence prevention through information, qualification, counselling, coordination and research operates so to speak on a higher level. The plethora of specialised approaches operating at the local level and the difficulty of achieving an overview have led to a situation in which structural arrangements have increasing importance for the exchange of ideas.³¹ The first essentials are to secure an overview of local projects, programmes and working approaches and make it accessible. The next priority is to arrange for informed debate to take place. At present this task is being undertaken by institutions at regional (level of the different federal states) and national level. At regional level the institutions most directly involved are the *Jugendschutzstellen* (youth protection agencies); at national level they include, for instance, the *Koordinationsstelle Fanprojekte* (Fan Project Coordination centre)³², the *Deutscher Präventionstag* (German Congress on Crime Prevention), and the *Arbeitsstelle Kinder-*

31 On more than a few occasions, problem-solving endeavours at different locations could be seen to have led to the proverbial reinvention of the wheel.

32 For further details, refer to the *Koordinationsstelle Fanprojekte* (Fan Project Coordination centre) at Deutsche Sportjugend, www.kos-fanprojekte.de (English Website available)

und *Jugendkriminalitätsprävention* (Centre for the Prevention of Youth Crime) of the *Deutsches Jugendinstitut* (German Youth Institute). Then, providing information exchange, some at institutional level, and relevant education, there are the crime prevention councils at local and regional level, the *Deutsches Forum für Kriminalprävention* (German Forum for Crime Prevention), various professionals' organisations (e.g. the German Union for Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Court Help inc.), further education institutions and universities.³³

The provision of information, qualification, counselling and advanced training needs to be supplemented by more evaluation than at present. Here practice-oriented research can make a contribution.

4 Excursus: Violence Prevention in the Context of “Right-Wing Extremism and Young People”

Within the wide range of out-of-school programmes offered by the child and youth services, a role that is special in a number of ways is played by the projects and strategies targeting right-wing extremist, general xenophobic and anti-Semitic perpetrators of violence.

The first point is that these offenders are regularly in the spotlight of public and political attention. Particularly in the aftermath of outbreaks of violence – mainly of xenophobic character – involving young people, or of *NPD* (right-wing nationalist party) election successes, as for example after the autumn 2006 parliamentary elections in the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, or of campaigns by right-wing comrade associations and other groupings, the debate on appropriate countermeasures predictably revives. From the point of view of the programmes and projects, and of the professionals engaged in running them, the surge of attention has effects that cut both ways. While they indicate that the work being done enjoys a certain measure of esteem – though this tends to fade after a time – they also often have the negative effect of generating a welter of generally unfulfillable expectations from outside and also within the projects themselves.

Secondly, these projects occupy a special category. More transparently than others in the same field, they refer to a single central phenomenon as the reason and starting-point for their work, namely right-wing extremist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic attitudes and the concomitant ideas regarding superiority and inferiority, masculine stereotypes, and an acquiescent attitude to violence. This focus in their work is confirmed by empirical studies that have repeatedly do-

33 Cf. e.g. www.praeventionstag.de, www.dji.de/jugendkriminalitaet, www.dji.de/youthcrime, www.kriminalpraevention.de, www.dvji.de.

cumented a strong correlation between xenophobic attitudes, specific stereotypes of masculinity, and the propensity for violence.

At the same time, however, these studies also confirm that simplistic assumptions of the type “right-wing extremist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic equals violent” are invalid. From the case histories analysed in the studies concerned, involving alleged offenders, those found guilty of xenophobic violence, and xenophobically inclined young people 14-17, it emerged that apart from the (generally rather diffuse) ideological background certain factors recurred:

- specific situational constellations, characterised principally by large quantities of alcohol and a high potential for escalation;
- the quality of intrafamilial relationships and the associated emotional experiences acquired in childhood;
- a history of aggression, starting early in life and acquiring subsequent ideological reinforcement through the individual’s absorption into juvenile cliques.

In other words, right-wing and extreme right-wing attitudes, ethnocentricity, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in young people, for all their inherent emphasis on inequality and on acceptance of violence, do not of their own accord necessarily lead to violent acts. This is demonstrated by, among other things, the fact that endorsement of extreme right-wing positions far exceeds the number of young persons 14-20 and young adults with a propensity to violence.

These now heavily documented interweaving influences from family socialisation experience, personality development, schooling experience, out-of-school opportunity structures, adolescence-related crises, insidiously developing careers in delinquency and violence, diffuse ideological indoctrinations, all leading up to fragile employment careers, are the background to the dearth in this field of projects and strategies that primarily and rigorously address the violence-prevention aspect as such. The approaches that come nearest to meeting this specification are those that operate in the area of supervision and care in the context of diversion measures and/or during and after custody periods in the form of intensive educational or therapeutic measures pursued with violent extreme right-wing and/or xenophobic young people.

What one finds instead is a broad spectrum of strategies that are violence-preventive in intention in so far as they seek to prevent or reduce violence motivated by extreme right-wing, xenophobic or anti-Semitic attitudes, whether they do so indirectly – e.g. through reinforcing the underlying structures of democracy and civil society – or directly, through close engagement with young

people representing the attitudes in question. Currently the following predominant strategy types may be identified:³⁴

- **Counselling:** The emphasis here, apart from person-centred individual case counselling for parents and relatives of young people who identify themselves with the extreme right-wing scene or show such tendencies, is on preventive and interventionist counselling in communities (“Community Coaching”). There is also counselling support for the processes of self-organisation: the setting up of parental self-help groups and the building of networks to enable professional social workers to consult with colleagues on individual cases.
- **Encounters:** The aim behind this strategy is the use of one’s personal experiences to build up a detailed, well-founded picture of the current life situation and/or life history of other people. Conceptually this strategy relies heavily on face-to-face experiences as exemplars, looking to these to become the departure point from which further-reaching learning experiences will develop. The main thrust is in encounters in groups of young people brought together on an intercultural and multi-religion basis with professional workers, of whom some are of Muslim or Jewish background. In addition, contemporary witness is sought from e.g. Holocaust survivors or wartime Resistance members, and dialogues are conducted involving young people and others (for instance by interviewing passers-by who differ from the participants in origin, religion, age, sexual orientation and the like).
- **Education and Sensitisation:** Although this is at first glance perhaps an unusual way of categorising project strategies, it follows from the fact that education-centred projects are now increasingly not simply aimed at reflective activity and emancipation, but seek at the same time to address all the participants’ senses. The aim is to avoid relying on the cognitive level, and to appeal to the emotional and action levels in particular. Initiatives in education and sensitisation are attempted in varying degrees in all fields of practice concerned with the underpinning of civil society and democracy on the one hand and with confronting right-wing extremism, xenophobia

34 The following categorisation and some of the formulations are based on the results of the scientific studies undertaken in parallel with the nationwide *Entimon* and *Civitas* programmes, and have been supplemented merely by addition of the strategy of working with right-wing youth groups, which did not form part of those programmes. Important findings relating to this field have been published in 2007 in the final Reports of the scientific studies accompanying the *Civitas* and *Entimon* programmes. The overview given here of the current principal strategies in this field needs to be supplemented by reference to the work of the *Verfassungsschutz* (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), the police, and the judiciary in this field. Apart from surveillance carried out by the Federal Office and criminal proceedings against the extremist Right (the scene), the so-called drop-out programmes deserve mention as a major strategy.

and anti-Semitism on the other. This strategy includes a thematically structured educational package which promotes non-violent, democratic conflict management, delivers gender-sensitive, anti-racist teaching, brings about intercultural and inter-religious learning and seeks to support learning formats in the context of the prevention of anti-Semitism. Forms of qualification (continuing and extended education) as preparatory stages for changes in institutional structures and educational scenarios belong to the spectrum of educational work, as does the development of educational material for the methodological and didactic task of activating the processes of cultural formation and learning. Continuing and extended education go beyond the traditional range of education of the young, because in professionalising the recipients they work towards the goal of multiplying knowledge and thus potentially addressing a wider target population.

- **Networks:** These strategies aim to create dependable cooperation structures where they are needed for the underpinning of commitment to civil society and of intellectual confrontation with right-wing extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In addition to networks within society in which local initiatives combine, mention may be made of: professional networks facilitating inter-colleague consultation and exchange, and topic-specific continuing and extended education; and virtual networks creating information, communication and presentation platforms for purposes of linking up young people and multipliers, also projects. In this context, finally, an increasingly important role is being played by the Local Action Plans, an instrument originally developed in connection with a programme entitled *Entwicklung und Chancen junger Menschen in sozialen Brennpunkten* (Development and Opportunities for Young People in Deprived Urban Areas), extended in scope in the *Lokales Kapital für soziale Zwecke* (Local Capital for Social Benefit) programme, and used in the programmes directed against right-wing extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Local Action Plans are instruments which facilitate the convening in local areas, and with due regard to the prevailing wider circumstances and to differing interests and viewpoints, of talks to be held on a cooperative basis, i.e. actively involving the relevant local players, with a view to reaching agreement on realisable goals and intermediate work targets – on such issues as the stance to be adopted vis-à-vis extreme right-wing groupings.
- **Working with right-wing youth “scenes” and youth groups:** In the early 1990s, the central strategy in issues of youth and right-wing extremism was still to aim the social work effort directly at right-wing young people with a view to changing their attitudes and behaviour patterns. As shown above, the emphasis has now shifted. Right-wing extremism is now seen as a political and social problem which is best combated by political and social strategies. The shift in emphasis has reduced the pressure of expectation on

those engaged in social work with young people. Nevertheless, they still face the challenge of finding out how best to work with young right-wingers. In order to reach young people who are in danger of drifting into the extreme right-wing “scene”, youth workers still have to use “detached” and “outreach” approaches. The basic philosophy is to start off from the problems they have and leave it until later to tackle the problems they cause. So that a relationship with them can be developed, they are accepted as an individual, even if their (violent) behaviour and their (extreme right-wing) attitudes are not accepted. This type of youth work is demanding and difficult, and as experience during the 1990s has already shown, success is far from certain.³⁵ Thus, for example, it makes a lot of difference whether right-wing youth “scenes” exist on the fringes, or whether in a given community the dominant mainstream is right-wing, with the consequence that youth work aimed at right-wing young people if anything tends to stabilise this “scene”. Provided that the methodology and the content have been carefully planned, youth work with young right-wing sympathisers is an important strategy for reaching out to young people who are at risk of drifting into extreme right-wing “scenes”, and avoiding simply leaving them to be approached by right-wing organisations. These strategies, like the other strategies enumerated above, need to be further developed using the same principles, and should be deployed wherever their use is justified.

- Victim Counselling: This approach, which was trialled and implemented very recently in the context of the *Civitas* programme (Initiative against Right-Wing Extremism in the Eastern German States), seeks to support individuals who have been the victim of a violent act of right-wing extremist, xenophobic or anti-Semitic origin, and where necessary to help them come to terms with their often traumatic experiences. There are also many projects whose business is to offer counselling, in the context of the victims’ experiences, to members of ethnic, cultural and social minorities who could potentially become victims of extreme right-wing violence or are indirectly affected by it.³⁶
- In their examination of these preventively conceived strategies for young people, a number of the authors cited above have contended that in view of the empirically confirmed great importance of early socialisation in this field the strategies for young people taken alone would not be adequate for purpose. Two points are advanced in support of this contention. First, it is argued that the offenders’ observable “emotional hardening” would have

³⁵ Detailed discussion of the issue is not possible here, but the reader is referred to the debate on “accepting youth work”, which was conducted at times with high passion and could take on a highly ideological flavour – and still continues even today.

³⁶ Cf. published material from the academic study conducted in parallel with *Civitas* (Initiative against Right-Wing Extremism in the Eastern German States), www.jugendstiftung-civitas.org.

necessitated their getting early and individual attention and appropriate action. Second, it is clear from observation of the central importance of the emotions – in the form of aggressive feelings and fears of all kinds – that many of the educational schemas in this field were and are too cerebral, too focused on cognitive approaches.

5 Conclusion and Challenges

In the report of the Violence Commission of 1990³⁷, the violence-prevention programmes offered by the youth services were accorded little more than marginal significance. One reason for this may have lain in the terms of reference laid down for the report and the way it was structured in consequence: the youth services are mentioned under “Violence on the Streets” and “Violence at Stadiums”, but unlike schools, the family, or the media, are not accorded a chapter of their own. However, the report did call for a general stepping up of youth work, and to this end made four recommendations for prevention of violence on the streets and urban open spaces. What this implied, even then, was an extension of programmes already available, especially for target groups that were at risk. Notably, it was already being suggested that young people should be given a greater role in shaping their living environment. Another point clearly brought out at the time was the importance of cooperation between prosecuting authorities and welfare organisations – though only in the context of violence within the family. On the issue of the law relating to young offenders, the recommendation was for increased provision of non-custodial social education measures and for victim-offender mediation. In the case of football violence it was suggested that all major clubs should appoint a pedagogically qualified commissioner for fans.

This brief review of the report’s recommendations illustrates the impressive development in violence prevention in the child and youth services. Strategies and approaches have increased appreciably in number and have become more finely attuned to needs. Football fans projects, for instance, are now firmly established and have created their own independent structures. Schools, police and judiciary have accepted the youth services in the area of violence prevention (and in other areas) as a natural – if not always easy – partner agencies. Youth services work is indeed “not always easy”, mainly because it regards violence at the growing-up stage for both children and young people as an indicator of difficulties. This distinguishes its approach from the public portrayal and reception of the issue, in which, particularly after spectacular incidents, the deed and the minor’s development are separated, and the environment and conditions in which the offender has grown up remain largely unexamined. But if violence prevention is to succeed, it will be important in fu-

³⁷ cf. Schwind/Baumann 1990

ture to avoid separating the parts in this way: they need to be brought together in the person concerned. Greater attention than in the past needs to be paid to circumstances that are currently still treated as peripheral: gender, and cultural background. It will be necessary in future to operate on two levels when pushing development forward and marshalling resources. On the one hand, the discontinuities associated with project-linked funding must wherever possible be avoided, and structures designed for the longer term put in place; at the same time, however, there has to be support too for approaching the problems by way of specific projects and programmes because of these formats' potential for fostering innovation. Participation by young people in difficult constellations of circumstances remains a major challenge – not only for the young people concerned. While many organisations in Germany, representing many different interests and life philosophies, from the Catholic Rural Youth Movement to the trade unions' youth sections, from *Caritas*, a Catholic charity, and its protestant counterpart in Germany, the *Diakonie*, to the *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (an independent charity based on the workers' movement), are full participants in the prevention strategies, the organisations representing immigrants are still largely uninvolved.

A further area of shortfall is in victim-centred strategies. Like the actual victims of violence, young people who fear becoming victims and consequently avoid particular zones need support in overcoming their victim experiences and “re-occupying” the avoided ground. Victims must not suffer secondary, individualised victimisation imposed by implicit blame for what happened.

A different type of challenge is posed by the further development and due qualification of cooperative partnership structures, whether within the youth services or involving external partners. While progress has certainly been made over the last two decades, cooperation has not ceased to be a challenge; it presupposes considerable familiarity with the rationales underlying the partners' action policies. Structurally and in personnel terms, cooperation needs to be more securely founded. This applies particularly to “difficult” cases, where several institutions are involved and the tendency to offload responsibility can be frequently observed.

Lastly, evaluation too is on the work agenda for the youth services. As violence prevention within the services is organised on a local basis and also evolves continuously, and as nationwide programmes are few and far between, a first step must be to clarify the broad premisses under which violence prevention operates, its concepts, project aims, and programme rationales. With the help of feedback from evaluation studies and interaction between the participants, working practice can be proactively developed in a continuous planning process. The object must be to ensure that knowledge gained in this way from individual project experience can be disseminated throughout professional practice at large. There is little prospect at present that the numerous assur-

ances regarding documentation of effects can be honoured. One of the reasons why such documentation is peculiarly demanding methodologically in the area of social services in particular is that effects result from co-production by recipients and youth services professionals. A further problematic factor is that measures undertaken by the youth services usually address only a part of the lived-in world of the young people addressed. While this is not the place for a detailed discussion of the methods or potential benefit of evaluation, it needs to be said clearly that it is not going to be possible to fulfil expectations that rapid-effect programmes can be identified.

6 Literature

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Notes

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