

## EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

### A Community Free from Violence – En Kommun Fri Från Våld

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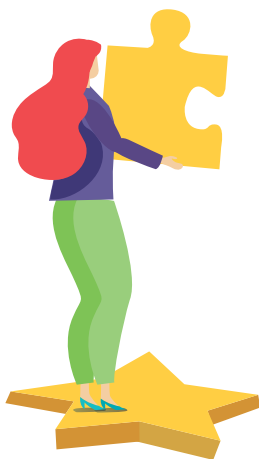
#### PROJECT DISCUSSED

The inspiration for this project came from an early success story regarding child mortality. Around 1954, a group of stakeholders met and decided to try to decrease the child mortality rate through systematic preventive work. Through this cooperation between institutions, which successfully created a wide spreading of information about of preventative measures, the rate of accidental child deaths dropped by 90 % over a 35-year period.

What made the difference was the systematic preventive work where many actors from different parts of society, both governmental and civic organisations, joined forces and attacked the problem using the same principles.

The aim of the current project is to try to achieve similar results in the area of violence.

#### METHODOLOGY



The workshop consisted of a theoretical and a practical part. 16 participants took part in the workshop. We started with a round of getting to know each other, our fields of work and countries. After this round, we established some rules to create a “safe space”, since the topic of violence could be very difficult and sensitive to talk about.

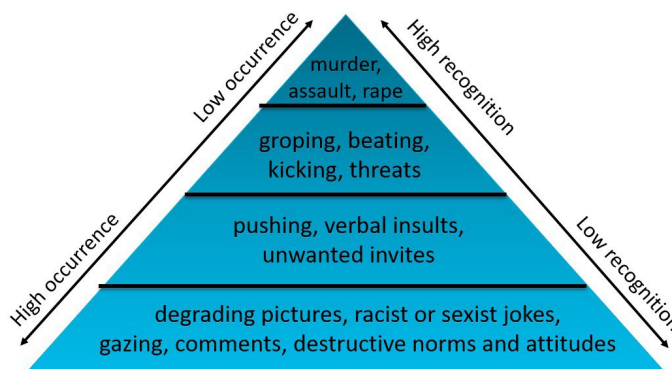
The first, theoretical part was more informative: the project was presented, how the idea of this project was born, how it was built up, who were the actors, and what is the impact. A part of the presentation showed our “list of actions” and explained how this project structure could be implemented in youth work and also on other topics.

The second, practical part focused on the outcomes of the project: card games that have specific topics for discussion, different strategies on how to be an active bystander and how to recognise “light violence”.

During the project, three different decks of cards were developed. The green deck of cards focuses on how to recognise and raise awareness of light violence. One of the main tasks of the green deck of cards is to place different kinds of situations of violence onto the pyramid of violence (below) and to discuss our reasons for placing them there.

# I. First principle for change

Awareness of "light violence"



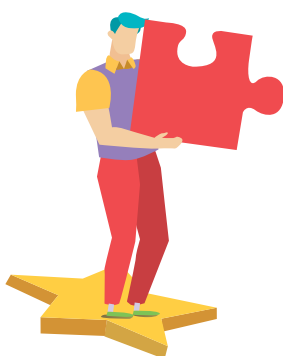
The purple deck of cards focuses on discussing different kinds of social norms, destructive macho norms and many other topics, which are mostly connected to gender based violence. The task of this deck of cards is to raise awareness of how our normative way of thinking influences violence and to reflect if this kind of thinking is one of the reasons for violence.

The red deck of cards focuses on teaching and trying out different kinds of strategies on how to be an active bystander. It functions like a little role play, where the audience is able to suggest solutions in a situation of violence.

Due to time restrictions, we couldn't try out all three decks, but we did go over the examples and tried out the green cards.

## KEY ISSUES RAISED, SUCH AS CHALLENGES

1. Participants discussed whether the term "light violence" was correct and necessary. One of the responses was that the term "micro-aggression" might be used instead, but during the discussion, it was also mentioned that the term should be adapted according to our target group. Since this project was also targeting youth (10-18), using terms such as "micro-aggression" could be confusing. In educational activities with "older" teens, on the other hand, more official terms could be used.
2. This project also focuses on being critical of norms and fighting gender destructive norms. This was also brought up in the workshop as a sensitive topic that is not easily talked about with youth. There were some concerns regarding legal age limits when it comes to talking about sex, sexuality and similar topics. Every country has its own legal guidelines. Moreover, if we want to talk about toxic masculinity, for instance, we need to be aware that this topic might not be easy to understand for 10-year old youth. A key point of this discussion was that topics such as gender and sexuality need to be adapted to our target groups.
3. Some workshop participants had work experience with projects specifically targeting bullying in general, not just among youth. In conclusion, it was suggested that maybe, the next project should focus specifically on an issue like bullying, or how to answer children seeking for help when they have been bullied.



## INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES

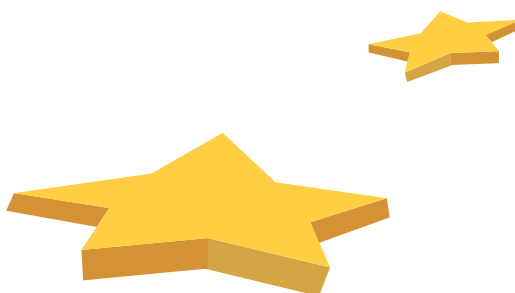
1. From an educational perspective, it would be important to target parents, because children's behaviour is strongly influenced by their parents or guardians. If the project had had parents as one of its target groups, the outcomes of the project might be different.
2. Besides the point of targeting parents, targeting schools is maybe not so innovative but effective. Most of the "light violence" happens to young people in schools, universities etc. If we had some kind of educational classes or courses with some systematic preventive plan, we could be a bit more effective. It feels that all the work that is being done in youth centres to prevent and stop violence goes nowhere, if the school isn't on the board as well.
3. The cards we have developed could be adapted according to the environment we are working in. In addition, besides cards, it would be useful to use materials developed in different organisations and to compare different perspectives.

VIOLENCE, MOSTLY "LIGHT VIOLENCE", IS RISING IN SCALE. THIS IS NOT A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, BUT THE POSITIVE TREND IS THAT ALL THE MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGIES WE HAVE DEVELOPED COULD BE USEFUL WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO STOP THIS DEVELOPMENT.

## KEY TRENDS IDENTIFIED (COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COMMENTS/ PARTICIPANTS)

One of the key trends that were identified was that violence, mostly "light violence", is rising in scale. This is not a positive development, but the positive trend is that all the materials and methodologies we have developed could be useful when we are trying to stop this development. All workshop participants agreed that bullying was the most present in schools and that it was very hard to fight it. As an outcome of the workshop and the participants' comments, it was concluded that a systematic approach might be a solution for bullying in schools. If every actor in our society decided to take action and be an active bystander, maybe the level of bullying in schools wouldn't be so high.

Finally, participants identified the penalties for different acts of violence to be mostly the same in every country. Murder, rape and other kinds of hard crimes are usually sentenced with prison or some other heavy penalty, while "minor" kinds of violence, such as bullying, sexist or racist jokes, are usually neither recognised nor punished.



## FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

- *"Very interesting presentation, giving an overview and concrete examples. Thank you!"*
- *"Very interesting presentation. However, lacks a bit of self-reflection, reflection of the method and language used. Otherwise a nice workshop. Well done!"*
- *"Thank you. Thanks for the safe space idea, the importance of inclusion of the entire community, low threshold preventive approach and the way to enhance participation and dialogue. Kiitos, Tack, Hvala!"*
- *"Great and relevant workshop. Thanks for sharing your practice with us."*

## LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT AVAILABLE ONLINE



- <https://www.boras.se/upplevaochgora/kvalitetresultatochjamforelse/utveckling-sarbetenochprojekt/enkommunfrifranvald.4.5b67f28d1584e5b72784e59.html>
- <https://www.facebook.com/enkommunfrifranvaldboras/>  
(mostly in Swedish)



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*Published by MOVIT, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
October 2019*

*Design and layout: AIKO, Maja Cerjak s.p.*

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