



Tiesīcību ministrija

Project No.JUST/2010/KPEN/AG/1546 "Possibilities of solution of topical problems of restorative justice in the European Union"

Conference „Commensurability of human rights and conception of coercive preventive measures”
March 27 2013, Riga



Cēsis district council



Preventive work with minors in Cēsis district

Conference

*Commensurability of human rights and
conception of coercive preventive measures*

27.03.2013.

Cēsis district population structure (2010)

Number of inhabitants of the
Cēsis district: 19 851

Distribution of minors by age:

Minors under the age of 6:
1146

Minors at the age of 7-18:
2367



Operational and development strategy of Cēsis district municipal
agency „**Sociālais dienests**” (**Social service**)
for 2011 - 2013:

To see the children of Cēsis inhabitants growing up in
healthy and strong families, thus contributing to
development of wholesome society where family is
considered to be the main value.

Social service is implementing Section 58 of Protection of the Rights of
the Child Law which prescribes the ***Organisation of Work for the
Prevention of Violations of Law***



Use of substances causing addiction and deviance in Cēsis

- ▶ In 2009 a research was carried out in Cēsis to find out the main risk factors that urge the people to start using substances causing addiction.
- ▶ Participants of the research were students from Cēsis comprehensive schools, forms 9-10 (15–16 years old students – around 600 students)



Research results are not pleasing

Alcohol and tobacco:

- ▶ 82% of the respondents have tried smoking cigarettes at least once;
- ▶ 17% have tried or used snuff in the last month;
- ▶ 95% have tried spirits; (40% have used more than 40 times);
- ▶ 77% have tried hookah (waterpipe);

Illegal substances causing addiction: (marijuana, LSD etc.)

- ▶ One fifth (21.8%) have tried illegal substances causing addiction;
- ▶ (43%) have noted that some of their friends are smoking marijuana or hashish.
- ▶ 23% have used marijuana or hashish six or more times which can point to a regular use;
- ▶ 71% tried marijuana for the first time when they were 15.



Personal characterization, self-evaluation and behaviour

- ▶ 47% would justify **hitting someone** or beating up someone;
- ▶ 40% agree, that anyone **can break** several **rules**;
- ▶ 33% think that they **are ugly**, unhandsome;
- ▶ 27% have noted that they have **thought about suicide**;
- ▶ 9% have seriously thought about **committing a suicide**;
- ▶ 11% have **engaged in vandalism** – damaged property not owned by them, during the last year;
- ▶ Almost half of them admit that during the last year they have at least once **hit someone** with a fist (45%) or kicked someone (39%);
- ▶ 27% have **knocked off someone to the ground**, 36% have punched or slapped someone;
- ▶ 36% have violently **threatened someone**;
- ▶ 3% **have forced** someone in a **sexual relationship**



The research results suggest that the number of minors using various substances, wandering about and committing crimes is growing

Problems:

There are no laws and regulations in Latvia that prescribe preventive coercive measures for complex approach to work with social risk group children.

Punitive measures are used (fine or criminal punishment).

Municipalities lack of human resources and finances for preventive work with risk group minors and families.

Resources from various projects are attracted thanks to the Cēsis district municipal agency «Social service» professionals' work with risk group minors and families.



Project “Support system for prevention of minor criminals” as an opportunity

Participation of the agency in the project was natural as the **aim** of subproject is to **reduce** marginalization **risks** for children with social **behaviour problems** and **to create a safe environment** for successful development of the children.

Focus group consists of 80 minors from Cēsis district who are in the spot of attention of police, minor offenders who have been in social correctional educational institutions, released from places of imprisonment as well as 9 seniors.

As a result:

- ▶ **Support system** for prevention of offences done by minors **was created** specifically for Cēsis district;
- ▶ **Supportive** and rejuvenating, not punitive **approach has been promoted** for the work with children;
- ▶ **Inter-institutional** cooperation module has been **improved** and extended.



Important cooperation of institutions

Twice a month Social service holds a meeting of Inter-institutional cooperation attended by:

- ▶ Social worker of the agency who works with family and children – head of the case;
- ▶ Psychologist of the agency;
- ▶ Social educator of the agency;
- ▶ Methodologist of the Cēsis district municipality Education department;
- ▶ Head of the Cēsis district municipal police;
- ▶ Representative of the State police;
- ▶ Representative of the Cēsis district Orphan's court;
- ▶ Representative of the State Probation Service.

Other specialists: school social educators, teachers, narcologist, general practitioner etc.

The main things:

- ▶ **regular information exchange** between the professionals – long-term activities;
- ▶ neither child nor parents **have the option to change the information**;
- ▶ with the parents and the child present social correctional behaviour program is developed that allows the minor **to choose the main way of support** (in his/her opinion), free-time activities and necessary support.
- ▶ Wider opinion of professionals on the problem situation and possible solutions.



Difficulties

Attitude of the parents and problems with cooperation, opinion – problem is related to the child, not us.

Ashamed to ask for help.

Regularity of meetings – lack of inner motivation, external motivators, reminders needed.

Authority of inter-institutional team – correctional program may be ignored – there is no accountability for non-performance.



Suggestions (1)

Changes in the legislation are needed that would define clear responsibilities of the parents and the children

Educating parents. For example – to introduce mandatory Children emotional upbringing program for parents in all pre-school educational institutions.

To expand the authority of Orphan's court while defining particular support system measures for parents in situations when such measures are needed for defending child's rights – for example, visiting a support group;

Limitations, **child's accountability**, if the parent is ready to cooperate.

Development of mentoring movement in the work with risk group minors, families.



Suggestions (2)

Legal, effective decision of Inter-institutional commission.
Preferably in one law, not in several legal acts.

State financing is needed for ensuring preventive measures.

Educated support personnel is needed **in schools and kindergartens** – psychologist, social educator – so the help for the child would be provided as soon as the first absence, traits of aggression in the behaviour can be seen. Another problem – sometimes the schools do not involve other institutions in the problem solving process and the situation becomes even more complicated.

The right to ask for psychodiagnostics or examination by a particular specialist (psychologist) as a mandatory thing for the child and **parents**, if it is necessary for protecting child's interests.



Activities proposed during the project



Attending a swimming pool or a gym – physical activities, “discharging” the energy in a positive way



Group of art therapy for children – a way of getting to know one's feelings and inner self



3 day expedition/survival in the forest – a group of youngsters spent 3 days in the forest and on a raft, took part in physical activities and developed cooperation skills



**Creative workshops – making beautiful things –
greeting cards, presents, other practical and
useful things**



Cooking lessons – developing cooking skills as well as getting to know the traditions



Internship in the municipality during summer – youth spent two weeks doing landscaping jobs in the Cēsis district castle park and got paid for it.

Visiting “**Meža kaķis**” adventure park in Sigulda – an afternoon spent by overcoming fears and testing one’s limits;

Involving the youth in **Family day event** on May 15 – all the participants of the project group had the opportunity to participate in organizing the festivity and after that to take a walk on Children rights and obligations path together with their families.

Project writing group – the main idea was to help the youth learn how to attract financing, write projects in order to bring their dreams and ideas to life.

Support group for parents – while working with the youth during the project, we came to the conclusion that it is important to provide parents whose children are in the risk group with support and opportunities for developing their skills. Often minors become criminals because of the relationships in their families, but the parents do not know that.

Cooperation with seniors – youth acquired craft skills, got to know the job in farmsteads as well as job with high technologies, learned to decorate rooms with natural materials.



Thank you for the attention!

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