ALTER NATIVE FUTURE

**Transnational
Good Practice Catalogue**

Index

1. Introduction

This catalogue was prepared as part of "Alternative Future: Towards the empowerment of children victims of violence in alternative care through a gender-sensitive and child-centred capacity building programme for professionals" funded by European Union (Grant Agreement no: JUST/2014/SPOB/AG/VICT/7405).

The Alternative Future project focuses on a highly vulnerable group of young people – youngsters living in residential care facilities, a group often neglected and left behind, but that needs much targeted efforts and support to overcome their traumas and realise their full potential. Organisations from six European countries combined their forces to work in partnership on this project: Fundació Surt (Barcelona, Catalonia), Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (Graz, Austria), Children in Scotland (Edinburgh, Scotland), Dissens (Berlin, Germany), Istituto degli Innocenti (Florence, Italy) and Animus Association Foundation (Sofia, Bulgaria).

The catalogue presents a set of successful practices that were applied and tested by the partners on the project for working with young people in residential care. It has the goal of providing professionals in such institutions with specific means to help young people in their care feel safer and more empowered while also applying a child-centered and gender-sensitive approach.

The target audience of the catalogue are mostly professionals who are currently working with such youth or are generally interested in the topic, as well researchers, other professionals working with children in group format or in general interested in group work and interactive activities.

Though placement in residential care is considered a last resort in today's child care practices, still many children throughout Europe live in residential care facilities (RCF). As a group they are highly vulnerable – usually with a history of personal trauma, abandonment, abuse or neglect; and according to the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, children belonging to vulnerable groups face particular risks and are exposed to discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. This makes them a group with many specific needs and quite challenging to work with.

The professionals working with these children have a key role in helping them overcoming the trauma and become more empowered and able to assert their rights and prevent future situations of violence. Therefore, the Alternative Future project aimed first to assess the needs of both children and professionals and on this basis develop and carry out a series of support actions for young people

in RCF and then choose the most effective of them so that they can be used again in different situations.

The project is realized in six European regions: Catalunya, Styria (Austria), Berlin (Germany), Edinburgh (Scotland), Florence (Italy) and Sofia (Bulgaria). In its first stage the needs and current situation of children and professionals in RCF in all these regions were assessed through focus groups, discussions and questionnaires addressed both to children and young people and the results were summarized in a transnational report. These results show that in all regions residential care still exists, but as a part of general deinstitutionalisation processes the facilities are becoming smaller and better adjusted to children's needs. Young people need safe environments that provide reliable and non-violent relationships, as well as rest and distraction, caring environments that show respect and help developing a sense of belonging, spaces of empowerment which recognize young people as bearers of rights, and instructive spaces that teach young people skills, assertiveness and ways to deal with trauma.

Yet, in many instances, due to lack of training, experience and resources, some of children's rights and needs are neglected – like the right to participation, the rights to privacy etc. There is still the risk of planning and carrying out the care in RCF according to how adults envision it and see it fitting the children's needs.

So, one of the questions this project raises is: What are the main challenges professionals meet and how can their capacity be enhanced?

Helping young people who have experienced violence has been identified in all regions as a major challenge that needs further capacity building amongst professionals. In order to help young people, they need to learn how to create those safe and supportive environments, which does not just include physical safety and comfort, but also understanding the underlying causes and dynamics of trauma and violence, their short-term and long-term effects.

Another key aspect with which many professionals showed to have some difficulties is reflecting upon and understanding the notions of gender and gender roles and how they impact the young people's experiences of violence and the way they try to cope. A better understanding of this aspect requires professionals to explore their own ideas of gender and the way these influence, overtly or subtly, their caring relationships with young people.

The assessment of the needs of the professionals in all regions of the project showed that they are very much interested in building their capacity for working with children who have experienced violence and trauma. Gender, diversity and children's rights are also issues that professionals are interested in. So, on the basis of the initial assessment a capacity building programme was prepared for professionals from RCF in all six partnering countries focusing on gender norms and stereotypes, the introduction of a gender and intersectional perspective in the RCF, the creation of a safe space for young people, the implementation of children's rights in the RCF and the prevention of gender-based violence.

Of course, the capacity building programme as one-time event is not enough, that's why the following stage of the project was about preparing and trying out specific support actions (SA) for children in various RCF, to then use these SA as a model that can be applied time and again with other groups and in different settings by other professionals.

These practices can serve as ready applicable instruments to professionals in their work with young people so that they can help them better to manage their emotions, feel safer, develop constructive coping strategies, better understand violence and its effects as well as the effects of gender norms and roles on their own experiences and behaviour.

The most effective of these support actions are presented in this catalogue, which includes the selection criteria applied for the selection of the support actions as best practices and then presents each specific support action in a way that gives the reader the context in which it was carried out and the description of how it can be replicated.

Support actions are listed according to three categories: 1) gender and intersectionality 2) safety from violence online and offline 3) child participation. emotional education and empowerment: valuing young people's thoughts, feelings and voices. Clearly some areas overlap, in particular the promotion of gender equality goes hand in hand with the prevention of violence. Moreover, the three areas are inter-related and the support actions are best conducted in conjunction. Additional resources, contacts and comments on the evaluation of the support actions are also included.

We hope this catalogue can be used as a set of good practices and be of help to professionals trying to provide the highest quality of care for young people in residential care.

2. Criteria for identifying good practice

Premise: Best practices should respond to the needs analysis carried out in the first phase of the project (WS1 needs assessment) as described in the Guidelines for support actions. This should be regarded as a precondition in order to identify best practices in the Alternative Future project.

Good practice definition: A good practice is a specific action that fulfils a set of criteria (see below) and is therefore recommended as a model. It is an intervention which has been piloted, and that based on its internal quality, its effectiveness - meant as its capacity to respond to the identified needs/problems - and its general capacity to respond to complex expectations, can be considered a successful experience, which

deserves to be shared and replicated so that a greater number of people can benefit from it.

Good practice criteria: The following criteria needs to be considered in order to determine whether an intervention can be defined as a "good practice":

• **Effectiveness:** A "good practice" has proven its strategic relevance as a (if not the most effective) way in achieving the specific objective/need/ problem, i.e. to empower girls and boys who have suffered violence; it has been successfully adopted and has had a positive impact on the children. Comparing achieved results with expectations implies

ex post evaluation (evaluation conducted either on or after completion of an intervention) through evaluation tools (e.g. an evaluation questionnaire) submitted to the concerned persons. The concerned ones include certainly the children who received the intervention, but also the surrounding persons, and primarily the staff of the residential care facility (caregivers etc).

• **Gender sensitive:** The action should promote a gender sensitive approach and a reflection on gender stereotypes with the aim of promoting gender equality as well as non discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity within and outside the RS. The action should also be aimed at preventing the occurring of gender based violence by supporting the promotion of gender equality. (see the "Guidelines for support actions")

• **Children's rights approach/ Participation:** The action must respond to children's rights, in particular promoting the principles of the best interest of the child, children's participation and non discrimination. (see the "Guidelines for support actions") Participatory approaches are essential as they support a joint sense of ownership of decisions and action. The action should show how it was developed and implemented through a participatory process, in which the final beneficiaries, i.e. the girls and the boys receiving it, were consulted beforehand and involved, also to the aim of improving it. Besides the girls and the boys also other relevant persons for the kids could be involved, in particular their parents, where the circumstances allow for it (notably where the parents were not the perpetrators of violence and where relationships with parents are not regarded as risky for children placed in the RS), other important family members, the teachers, the leaders of youth organisations attended by the kids etc. (E.g. education and recreational activities on the value of sport can be identified and implemented with the participation of the school and sport organisations, so to ensure a coherent approach in different environments.)

• **Enhancement of resilience:** A "good practice" should contribute to reduce the risk of future violence and connected risks (as self-harm or substance abuse), by reducing the risk factors and enhancing the protective factors (self-esteem, knowledge, awareness, sense of belonging, a protective network

etc – see also the "Guidelines for support actions"), hence the resilience.

• **Innovation:** An action can be considered innovative when it has an innovative content in regard to either the objectives (for instance tackling sensitive issues such as the promotion of non discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, the prevention of gender based violence, the right to privacy of girls/boys in the RS etc), or the process and methodology or strategies (for instance the use of participatory tools), or the context.

• **Availability of information:** The available information describing the specific action is provided in a clear, logic, complete, homogenous, trustworthy and synthetic form as a pre-requisite for the replication and transfer of the project experiences elsewhere and for a wide involvement of the actors operating in the same field.

• **Replicability and transferability:** A good practice should have the potential for replication and should therefore be adaptable to similar objectives in varying situations, in particular in different geographical territories. Moreover ideally the practice should be replicable with minimum adaptation with adolescents in the RS presenting different characteristics (migratory background, disabilities, learning difficulties, behavioural problems, different social and economic backgrounds, nationally and internationally adopted children etc). Hence replicability implies the potential horizontal and vertical mainstreaming of the action's main features.

• **Sustainability:** Sustainability means (a) compatibility with resources available, possibly supported by a comparative costs analysis with other similar initiatives, as well as the potential to recruit new funds; hence it should foresee its financial resources after the EC funded project completion, and (b) compatibility with the social and political structures and context.

3. Selected Good Practice

3.1 Gender and Intersectionality

3.1.1 Embrace Gender Equality and Stand against Gender Based Violence

Organisation: ANIMUS

Context The support action was implemented at SOS Children's Villages which operates two facilities in Sofia. Each accommodates about 10 boys and girls aged 14 to 18. The residents in one, 'Friends', took part in the SA.

The residents of the centre are teenagers, when questions of identity in general, and gender identity in particular, are central to their development. They have, in addition, experienced violence and trauma and may accept some forms of violence, including gender-based violence, as normal. They may also have encountered examples of negative gender stereotyping. It was, therefore, decided that exploring the topics of gender roles and gender equality could be very useful to them.

Justification Focus groups with both children and professionals were carried out in the same facility at the previous stage of the project. These groups had identified some of the issues for, and needs of, the residents and staff; these were mainly related to personal safety, boundaries, recognising violence,   gender-based violence and gender inequality. The topics were finalised in consultation with the head of the facility, who provided information on previous activities in which the children had been involved, and the nature of their current needs.

Practical organisation The support action was carried out in the facility over a whole morning, on a day convenient for the children.

Duration: 2 hours

Materials: flipchart, paper, markers, pens, scissors.

Participants 7 participants, 5 boys and 2 girls aged 15 to 18.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations) Preparation of the setting and the materials. The participants sit in a circle or a semicircle.

Getting to know each other – everyone introduces themselves briefly. The trainer gives information about the project and the topics.

A discussion on: *What is gender? What is gender equality? Can you give examples of equality and inequality from your own experience?*

Exercise 'Gender role boxes':

On 2 sheets from the flipchart the trainer draws two boxes and writes 'Act like a lady' on the first and 'Act like a man' on the second.

The group is asked if they have heard often such phrases as 'act like a lady' and 'act like a man'. They are encouraged to brainstorm what these phrases mean and articulate what their expectations are of 'acting like a man' or 'acting like a lady'.

The contents of the two boxes are compared and differences and similarities discussed

Outside the box' – the group is asked to think about what kind of behaviours are considered by society not to fit in to these boxes, what happens to people who act 'outside the box', what they are called and how they are treated by others.

A discussion on whether people always act 'in the box', whether it is necessary to do so, how expectations of gender roles have developed and in what way gender inequality is a problem for everyone. Introducing the topic of gender-based violence, with definitions provided by the trainer. Participants are asked to give examples of such violence.

The group then discusses possible solutions to these situations.

Close: sharing of final comments, conclusions by the trainer, feedback.

The 'Gender Boxes' exercise was originally created by the Oakland Men's Project. It was slightly modified for the purposes of the support action here. There is a hyperlink to it in the resources section below.

Best practices criteria We believe that the support action was:

Effective – it made young people think about gender roles and stereotypes in a deeper manner;

Gender sensitive – gender expectations and gender based violence were the focus of discussion. Exercises were aimed at illustrating how some such expectations can be dangerous and restrictive.

Encouraging participation – enabling children to give their own ideas about gender roles and stereotypes and on how to challenge them

Enhancing resilience – by making participants more aware of gender-based violence and giving them some ideas and strategies on how to identify and cope with it;

Educational – through providing factual information

Replicable – can be implemented again with a different group

Sustainable – can be implemented again by other professionals involved in the project in the future without requiring some specific resources

Challenges in the implementation Not all of the children at the facility were able to participate and the group consisted of a higher number of boys than girls.

Initially some of the boys were fooling around and not taking the exercise seriously, though they settled to the task in the course of the SA. This may have been a manifestation of embarrassment or discomfort with the topic. Issues of gender are not often discussed openly and this may have created some anxiety. The interactivity of the approach was useful in this respect.

Achieved results Better understanding of gender based violence and gender roles/

expectations and how they have affected the participants' lives. Some ideas about, and coping strategies for, gender-based violence.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) Evaluation was based on feedback questionnaires from participants. These were developed specifically for the project and appropriately adapted to the support action. The questionnaires were complemented by the observations of the trainer and his interaction with the participants. The support action was evaluated as helpful by both the participants and the trainer. The young people found the topics and even those who were initially reluctant became actively engaged in the course of the event. The interactive format was especially beneficial in that respect. The children related to the topics and generated examples of their own in the discussions.

Sustainability of the action We believe the support action is sustainable as it gave the participants new ways of reflecting on and understanding some of their views and experiences. Issues of gender and identity are always of great importance in adolescence. The support action, and elements thereof, can easily be replicated with a different group as it requires few resources and the time commitment is not substantial.

Conclusions From our perspective the support action met its objectives. We may use it again in our work with young people.

Contacts
http://sosbg.org/
marin.zarkov@sosbg.org
animus@animusassociation.org
http://animusassociation.org/

Resources
https://www.pcc.edu/resources/illumination/documents/gender-role-boxes-glbtq-and-sexism-exercise.pdf

3.1.2.Gender Month

Organisation: DISSENS

Context Therapeutic group home for young people aged 14-18 who have been diagnosed with a psychological disorder, such as depression, anxiety, addiction or personality disorder. 14 young people live in this home (in two groups), looked after and cared for by educators, social workers, psychologists and child & youth therapists.

Justification The AIF needs assessment found that young people living in residential care partly follow   gender stereotypes that they are confronted with by media, peers and adults. While agreeing with this, staff from this facility also felt a need for more gender-specific offers. In particular, they were worried about the boys not getting enough attention as the girls were much more present in the facility while the boys much more hid in their rooms. After analysing this, it turned out that the boys and the girls were not homogeneous groups, e.g. some boys were indeed taking up offers and only some girls were dominant in group settings while other girls were in the background. Hence, the idea was to establish a range of activities related to gender that raise awareness about gender issues, interrogate prejudices and norms that don't reproduce images of 'all boys are like this' & 'all girls are like that'. We planned a number of activities that should be implemented in various settings within one month which would be called the Gender Month

Practical organisation The support action was implemented at the facility on varying occasions (regular group evenings and special events). This way, it would be fitted into the daily life at the facility.

Participants 14 children aged 14-18 and of mixed gender.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

Showing and discussing short videos

The staff collected a number of short films from the internet (1-5 mins) that relate to gender. Mostly, they were films created by a youth media project in which young people put gender issues on the agenda: norms of masculinity, violence amongst girls, portrait of transgender children. Furthermore, a music video on homophobia and film explaining the term 'gender' were included. The staff showed these films and discussed them with the young people.

Doing gendered activities with everyone

After realising the differences that exist amongst boys and amongst girls, the professionals decided not to create specific offers for the girls and the boys, but rather to create offers that may be culturally constructed as feminine or masculine, but to offer them to all young people. This included a 'beauty evening' during which everyone would put on a cream face mask, there would be talk about nail care and tips for shaving. A second evening included a soccer play. By offering this to all young people, the professionals showed that everyone is allowed to do these activities and they could start a discussion about what activity is seen as a girls' or a boys' thing and why that is the case. Thus, gender norms amongst the young people could be questioned and gender-non-conforming behaviour was empowered. Participation in this was voluntary.

Best practices criteria Gender-sensitive: challenging gender norms and allowing for non-stereotypical behaviour

Child-participation: the young people were involved in planning the 'gendered activities for everyone', so that these events would be attractive for everyone

Effectiveness: the young people reflected on gender norms and tried out activities that they hadn't so far, due to gender norms.

Enhancement of resilience: the young people are encouraged to choose activities according to their own preferences and not according to what others say is right Innovation: the concept of a gender month in a residential care facility, which could be conducted once a year and could inspire other actions throughout the year, is new.

Challenges in the implementation There were no challenges reported. Everyone loved the activity! For the professionals,

a general knowledge on gender issues is necessary to do this action – the young people will ask questions or they will pose challenges that the pedagogues need to be able to respond to. Doing training on gender-reflective pedagogy before running this activity is highly recommended.

Achieved results The young people reflected on gender norms, they learnt new things through the videos and they tried out new activities.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) The young people enjoyed participating in the activities during this month. After watching the videos, they would ask question and would discuss gender issues amongst each other and with the professionals. During the activities, they had a lot of fun and they fed back that they would like to do this again. Evaluation was done verbally and it confirmed the impression that the young people enjoyed and benefitted from the activity both in

terms of their personal experience and the pedagogic goals.

Sustainability of the action Doing a number of activities within one month enhances effectiveness and sustainability because the topic of gender is brought up repetitively and not only once. Done at least once a year, this action will demonstrate to the young people that they can talk to the staff about gender issues and that the facility is a space in which gender-non-conforming behaviour is not discriminated against.

Conclusions The action is a good idea because it involves more than just one activity and at the same time is restricted to a certain time frame so that staff who are not experienced in gender-sensitive education, can do it, reflect on it and improve it for the next run.

Contacts
alternative-future@dissens.de
http://www.dissens.de

> **" After realising the differences that exist amongst boys and amongst girls, the professionals decided not to create specific offers for the girls and the boys... "**

3.1.3 Role-game 'as real life'

Organisation: Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark

Context This method was piloted in a full-time RCF facility for 40 boys and girls aged 11 to 18. They live in family-like residential communities (where eight youth live in each social pedagogical living community, some only girls, one only boys, others mixed). Young people also work there as apprenticeship centres are located nearby the living communities. The RCF additionally offers a school class and job coaching. It has a multi-professional staff and is run by the local authority.
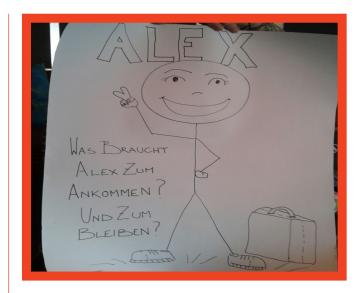
Justification The method was chosen because, over all countries in the partnership, further training in diversity/ intersectionality and children's rights was wanted by about 1/3 of all interviewed professionals (see *Alternative Future's* transnational Needs Assessment Report, 2016). In Austria this topic was therefore part of the capacity building programme. An adult version of the role game As real life was part of this programme, and professionals became more aware of the diversity of youth in their RCF. Subsequently the youth version of this role-game was piloted in the RCF. It enables youth slipping into a role, get a feeling for the character and understand what it means to be advantaged or disadvantaged in society

Practical organisation The support action *As real life* was piloted as support action in a girls' community. It lasted one hour. The fact that it was piloted in a girls only living community was random. The method can be used in different gender settings, not only for girls only groups.

Duration: approx. one hour

Materials: box with role cards (see enclosed German version of the role cards)

Social pedagogues chose the time after dinner, because that is the daily time in this RCF where they are able talking with the children and young people in a relaxed atmosphere. Duration of one hour fitted well with this after-dinner-community time.
Participants Piloted with eight girls aged 12 – 19 years, but result of the evaluation was that age should be 14 – 19 years (see

implementation), one professional.

The fact that it was piloted in a girls only living community was random. The method can be used in different gender settings.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

Description and structure of the method in Peer Think Manual (2009), pp. 103 – 109 (see enclosed).

Comments, observations/ experiences in the pilot phase:

In the pilot phase some too young people had difficulties in combining their chosen action role-card with the questions/ situations asked during the method, it was very difficult for them to slip into another social role than their own actual social role. The method should therefore be used with young people aged 14 or over. Social pedagogues should adapt roles, vocabulary and role description to the experience and social competence of the participants.

Comments on structure:

Professional explained the process of this support action.

" **Some participants had problems in identifying with the role, which may have meant that the participant had problems in general with participating in role play. The method offers the possibility of improving ability in this respect. "**

Action roles were distributed, each participant took a role-card from a box.

Participants kept chosen role secret (except to the professional) until the debriefing phase.

Participants could ask the professional, in confidence, comprehension questions due to the described situations. Some participants had questions about their chosen role (wording, type of role). The professional explained it, e.g. particular words, further needed information about the chosen role, so that the participant could slip into the selected role.

Some participants had problems in identifying with the role, which may have meant that the participant had problems in general with participating in role play. The method offers the possibility of improving ability in this respect.

Debriefing phase and discussion about the young people's experiences during the role phase is a very important part of this support action: when piloting this method youth said that they had a confusing and curious feeling about their position during the role game. In the debriefing phase talk about the experience when a young person is not able taking a step forward and therefore loses connection with the others (what does it mean for peer groups? in school? in society as a whole?).

One source of this method is called 'privilege

test' (Barbara Lesch McCaffry – see references). Avoid the word 'privilege test' in this method. Though it was used in the pilot phase, 'test' sounded like school exam to some young people and deterred them. The term 'privilege' was not one they would normally use and they associated it with 'something very difficult'. '*As real life – role game*' seems to be an attractive title.

Best practices criteria Gender sensitive: reflection on gender stereotypes and intersectional privileges and disadvantages. Through exploring gender roles, the topics 'gender orientation' and 'gender identity' were internalised by the young people. In the pilot phase this method happened to be used only with girls but the support action could be used with all genders.

Children's rights approach/ participation: participants became aware of the rights and possibilities of different roles. They got involved by playing a role different from that of their own persona, and by comparing the privileges and rights of this role with others. Participants talked about their feelings and experiences and about the rights and opportunities of the role they played.

Innovation: though the method is used in training with other task groups (such as adults in gender sensitive training), this kind of social role game was a new method for the piloting RCF.

Challenges in the implementation In the

pilot phase some too young people had difficulties in combining their chosen action role-card with the questions/ situations asked during the method, it was very difficult for them to slip into another social role than their own actual social role. The method should therefore be used with young people aged 14 or over. Social pedagogues should adapt roles, vocabulary and role description to the experience and social competence of the participants.

This method should be used in a relaxed atmosphere and should allow enough time for debriefing roles, reflect and discuss after playing the role game.

Achieved results Participants trained to slip into different roles, experienced different gender roles, privileges and feelings that arose in different phases of the role game, when having similar possibilities like other participants or having much more or much less possibilities than others. Every participant had the possibility to talk about her opinion and point of view. In the ex-post-evaluation (questionnaire) the pedagogue said that the method was suitable to discuss social norms, origin, sexual orientation, which are always important and current topics in youth work and violence prevention.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) Results of the ex-post questionnaire filled in by the trainer:

Participants were assessed as being highly involved with the exercise. With regard to the methodology, the social pedagogues had the impression that participants did not understand the topic. It would therefore be very important, before using this method with the group, to adapt the wording and roles to suit the cognitive and social competence level of the participants. In the pilot phase participants discussed these virtual roles more than their own rights and opportunities.

Sustainability of the action In the ex-post evaluation the conducting professional regarded this support action as an interesting approach. To achieve sustainability this method should be recognised as one tool of the pedagogical work in the RCF to foster children's rights and awareness of diversity.

Conclusions Adapt roles and vocabulary to age, experience and cognition of the participants before playing the role game. The method can be regarded as one module in the work of the RCF raising the resilience of children and youth who have experienced violence.

Contacts
Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark, http://www.vmg-steiermark.at/ scambore@genderforschung.at www.genderforschung.at

Resources
'Peerthink – tools and resources for an intersectional prevention of peer violence', Scambor C. et al (2009), pp.

103 – 109, http://www.peerthink.eu/ peerthink/images/stories/090709-manual-english-sb.pdf

3.2 Safety From Violence Online And Offline

3.2.1 Safe Everywhere
Organisation: Animus

Context The support action took place at SUPC (Social Learning and Professional Centre) 'Knyaz Boris I'. Facilities of this type provide residential care and skills development opportunities to prepare residents for the job market. They accommodate both girls and boys some of whom have physical or learning disabilities. The residents are aged 16 to 19 and the services offered are educational (they go to school but also receive professional training in the institution), residential care (the staff are mainly trained pedagogues) and social work (through social workers from the child protection units who follow the cases). Some of the residents are under 18 and some have reached adulthood.

The Animus Association Foundation has been working for more than a year with the facility, offering a range training courses and seminars to the young people. These have mostly been related to the prevention of violence and exploitation. We therefore selected this facility for one of the support actions, so we could build on our previous work and achieve continuity and sustainability.

Justification The assessment stage of the project showed that issues of violence, safety and personal boundaries often feature in the lives of young people who have may have spent much of their lives in residential care. This provided another reason to focus on the topic.

The topic of safety and identifying safe and secure was chosen for its particular relevance to the young people as they move into the labour market. Young people who have suffered adversity and trauma are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They may form inappropriate relationships, either because they trust people indiscriminately or are unable to form trusting connections with others. They often see the world as threatening or risky, thus the focus on safety is important.

Practical organisation The support action was carried out in the facility in the early evening, after the participants' evening meal. The time was chosen as they were so that they can be at the facility and finished with their daily activities.

Duration: 2.5 hours

Materials: coloured ink markers, paper sheet of different sizes, scissors, flipchart, sticky paper, post-it notes

Participants
11 participants, 4 boys and 7 girls aged 16 to 19

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

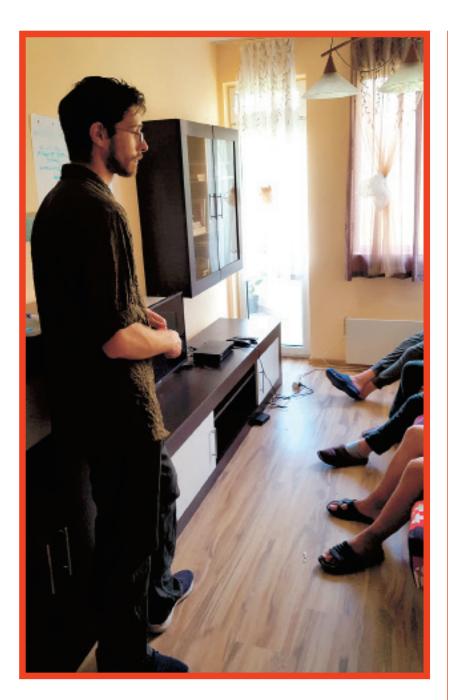Preparation of the setting and materials

Getting to know each other briefly – in a circle the participants introduce themselves and the trainer presents the project.

Discussion on: *What is safety? What are safe spaces? How do we recognise the spaces that are safe? How do we keep them safe?*

Interactive exercise 'The secret'. Participants are asked to write a secret about themselves on a piece of paper. They then put the piece of paper in an envelope and hand it to the trainers. The trainers take the envelopes and start a discussion with the participants on how they feel, now that somebody is holding their secret. This is a pathway to discussing how sharing can make people vulnerable.

After that the trainers tear up the pieces of paper. Nobody's secret is revealed or compromised, which is a relief for the participants. This leads to another discussion on the people with whom they are likely to share personal information and secrets, how they judge people as reliable or unreliable and an example, personal to them, of people and situations that felt safe.

This provided an opportunity to raise the issue of risk and consider when sharing personal information would be unsafe. The gender perspective is discussed – whether there are differences in what people of different genders consider safe, whether members of a specific gender are more vulnerable and in which situations this might be the case.

> **Evaluation was carried based on feedback questionnaires, developed for the project and adapted to the topic of the support action and on the observations of the trainer and his interaction with the participants.**

Safe and unsafe environments. The participants are split into two groups of equal size – ideally balanced by gender. One has to describe their idea of a safe and protected environment and the other their idea of an unsafe and dangerous environment. Both groups then present their ideas. The two are contrasted and common features of safety/themes identified.

Help and protection – a brief discussion on where they can find help if they feel unsafe. Information on their rights, related to safety.

On the basis of all the exercise and discussions the children offer their recommendations on how the safety and reliability of the facility can be improved. They are written down, to be presented to the staff. A brief discussion on the sense of belonging and how it can be improved if they have more say in what is happening at the facility.

Close, final remarks from the participants and feedback.

The structure and exercises are based on other training activities implemented by the same trainer which were modified and adapted for this project.

Best practices criteria We believe that the support action was:

Effective – made young people think of safety, risks, their definitions of them, their boundaries and how they can better protect themselves and also improve the safety of their environment;

Gender sensitive – gender differences were in the focus of discussion

Encouraging participation – children give their own ideas and suggestion about how to improve the facility in regard to safer spaces

Replicable – can be implemented again with a different group

Sustainable – can be implemented again by other professionals involved in the project in the future without requiring specialised resources

Challenges in the implementation The participants wanted to share their ideas about how the facility can be improved. They were, however, worried when the trainers offered to share their ideas with the facility's management. After some discussion they agreed that it would be constructive at least to open a discussion with the staff on their suggestions.

A serious difficulty for most were the feedback forms, as writing is a challenge to many of them. The trainer collected a lot of feedback by observation and through discussions.

Achieved results The participants analysed their perceptions of safety and of risk, shared experiences among themselves and with the trainer and were able to better identify some risks to which they have been subject in the past and how to avoid them in the future in their relationships or when seeking work. They also identified what creates a safe space and how they can work to make their living space safer for themselves and others. By sharing experiences, they managed to learn new things about each other as they do not often have to talk to each other openly, and this can help them develop a feeling of belonging and community.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) Evaluation was carried based on feedback questionnaires, developed for the project and adapted to the topic of the support action and on the observations of the trainer and his interaction with the participants. The support action was evaluated as helpful by both the participants and the trainer. The topics were interesting to

the young people and they explained that in the facility they rarely get the opportunity to talk about themselves and their issues and this has been a valuable opportunity for them to do so and feel closer.

Sustainability of the action We believe it is sustainable as it covers a topic which is of importance and interest to young people. They have experienced lack of safety and trust which makes them a group at risk of abuse of trust and exploitation. The exercises can be easily replicated or adapted to a similar group and setting.

Conclusions We think that the support action met its objectives and we may consider using it again in our work with young people.

Contacts
kapka_georgieva@gbg.bg
animus@animusassociation.org
http://animusassociation.org/

3.2.2 Preventing Cyberbullying and Online Grooming Through Cartoons Clips

Organisation: Istituto degli Innocenti

Context The Gould Institute runs 2 residential care facilities: 'Arco' currently hosting 9 boys and girls from 13 to 20 and 'Colonna', currently hosting 7 boys and girls from 12 to 20 years. The support actions were carried out based on an existent activity called 'The Circle', namely a space in which young people can freely discuss issues and activities relating to life in the residential facilities with their educators.

Justification The topic of cyberbullying and online grooming was chosen because, from the needs assessment phase (both from the focus group with professionals and those with children), it emerged that, while the young people were regularly and frequently exposed to these kind of risks, they usually did not know how to recognise and manage them.

Practical organisation The support action took place in the living rooms of the two RCFs Arco and Colonna and lasted about an hour. The format was therefore familiar to the young people as it mirrors the approach used in 'the circle' activity referred to above. Materials: chairs, video clips on cyberbullying and online grooming.

The chairs are placed in a circle in order to create the sensation of a closed space where the children could feel confident and safe enough to express themselves.

Participants About 8 young people in each of the two RCF; two/three educators and a volunteer.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

Circle about cyber-bullying

Introduction to the topic:
The facilitators asked young people to define cyberbullying from their own perspective. Some of the young people had already been informed about the topic at school, while others had had less information.

Watching and group discussion about the clip on cyber-bullying:
The facilitators showed the young people video clips that tell the story of a boy, Gaetano. His classmates arrange a fake appointment with a girl he likes and intend to show up to ruin the appointment. The clip suggests a number of more positive behaviours that his classmates could choose, such as not going to the fake appointment, telling Gaetano what was planned or letting an adult know what is going on. The facilitators asked the young people for their views of the possible solutions and how they would have behaved in a similar situation. Most of them said that they would have decided not to go to the appointment. In the RCF Colonna nobody would have opted to speak to Gaetano because of the fear of reprisals from other classmates. In the RCF Arco the young people chose the option of speaking with Gaetano, but only after the group discussion.

The discussion also addressed the issue of Gaetano's feelings and his possible reactions. Some of the young people felt that, in order to be respected, the only possible action he could take would be to resort to violence. The possibility of talking with an adult was not considered to be a realistic option.

Conclusion of the activity
The facilitators concluded the group discussion by summing up the main concepts addressed and by emphasising the importance of telling adults about instances of bullying and cyberbullying.

Circle about online grooming

Introduction to the topic:
Facilitators introduced the young people to the topic

Watching and discussion of the video-clip:
The video-clip told the story of a 13 year old girl who has an online relationship with a 33 year old man.

Because of this she falls out with her friend and becomes socially isolated. The clip suggests various ways in which her friend might help her.

During the discussion, it emerged that, in the Colonna RCF, none of the young people seemed to be aware of online grooming. and they were perturbed by the request of the adult in the relationship to send naked photos and by the age gap between the girl and the guy. Most of them recognised the importance of friendship groups and keeping contact with the real world. When asked if they would share their password with anyone, some stated they would be willing to give it to friends.

In the RCF Arco, the group seemed to know what online grooming was and to recognise the potential danger in the situation. They knew that in such cases they should ask for adult help and should not trust people with whom they have had only internet contact. Some of them had had experiences similar to those presented.

Conclusion of the activity
The facilitators recapped the main concepts that had emerged during the discussion and emphasised the importance of asking adults for help.

Best practices criteria Both support actions have a children's rights basis and a participative approach. This allows children to feel safe enough within the circle to share how they related to and identified with the characters in the clips shown. The support actions also enhanced resilience. Young people became more aware of online grooming and cyberbullying and of options available to them to cope effectively with the situation, thus reducing risk.

Challenges in the implementation Implementation (structure, activities, observations) The main challenge related to the young people's initial reluctance to take part in the discussion. They were, however, curious about the topics being discussed. Another difficulty related to the age-related variation in the nature and extent of knowledge of this issue.heterogeneity of the groups in relation to age The presence in one group of children with learning disabilities who had some difficulties in participating was particularly challenging.

Achieved results Notwithstanding the initial difficulty, the young people were, in general, able to participate actively in the group discussion, to express their opinions freely and to challenge their peers and facilitators.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) Evaluation was based on questionnaires completed by

" **During the discussion, it emerged that, in the Colonna RCF, none of the young people seemed to be aware of online grooming.** "

both children and professionals. The young people seem to have enjoyed the activities and some of them also found them fun. In general, they helped the young people to feel more relaxed and accepted in the group. For some, the exercises also improved the relationship with their caregivers.

The professionals saw the activities about cyber-bullying and on-line grooming as providing useful tools that would enable the young people to deal with these risks more effectively. They felt, however, that the young people would need some time to reflect on and internalise this new knowledge.

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Sustainability of the action The actions proved to be sustainable as the methodology can be easily replicated through the use of video-clips available on-line. It is adaptable for other groups of young people, who may be of different ages and genders, bearing in mind the need to use materials that are appropriate to the specific characteristics of each group.

Conclusions The actions proved helpful in addressing topics that are very relevant to the everyday life of the young people involved. The methodology based on watching the videos proved to be effective as tools with which that the young people are familiar were used. This contributed to achieving more meaningful and effective discussion.

Contacts
Istituto degli Innocenti,
www.istitutodeglinnocenti.it
international@istitutodeglinnocenti.it

Resources
Video clips (in Italian) About cyber-bullying: ttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbJ7V6iKurE

About on-line grooming:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwIb22Ydguk

3.2.3 It is not only battering that hurts

Organisation: SURT

Context CRAE Sant Josep de la Muntanya is a residential care facility divided in 6 cohabitational units. In each unit care is provided to around 10 boys and girls aged 3-18.

Justification The prevalence of gender-based violence among adolescents does not differ significantly from that in the adult population. On the contrary, according to the results of the Needs Assessment, intimate relationships based on possessiveness, jealousy and control are generally seen as acceptable among boys and girls living in RCFs. This normalisation contributes to the perpetration of other types of gender-based violence. In this respect, the objectives of this action are:

Raising awareness among adolescents of the issue of gender-based violence.

Prevention and recognition of the signs of abusive relationships.

Promotion of healthy and equal relationships among boys and girls.

Practical organisation The action was carried out within the facility on a weekday after school.

The action lasted around 1h 30 min.

The material used was: a computer, pieces of cardboard and markers.

Participants There were 24 participants in the action: 11 boys and 13 girls aged 13 – 18.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

Introduction to gender perspective: concepts such as gender roles and gender stereotypes were presented and discussed among professionals and participants.

Monologue watching: participants watched the monologue '*It is not only battering that hurts*' by Pamela Palenciano. The monologue is performed by a survivor of gender-based violence and aims at raising awareness on the prevalence of this type of violence among young people, stressing the relevance of psychological and emotional violence. She does so by means of a straightforward and humorous speech.

Reflection and discussion on the video: after the monologue a discussion took place in which boys and girls exchanged their impressions and opinions on gender-based violence, gender roles and stereotypes (what it means to be a girl/boy in an intimate relationship; how she/he is expected to behave/react etc.) and what can be considered an abuse in intimate partner relationships.

Closing activity: participants shared the activity with the rest of the children living in the facility. Each of them wrote down the main conclusions of the action on post-it notes, which were then placed on a drawing of a large pair of purple glasses on the wall.

Best practices criteria This action promotes a gender sensitive approach and a reflection on gender roles and stereotypes through a participative approach. The action was also very innovative for that facility. Specifically, it addresses gender-based violence among young people by encouraging gender equality within intimate partner relationships. Furthermore, the action enhances resilience and reduces the risk of future violent episodes, as it is based on the narrative of a survivor of gender-based violence and it aims to enable better recognition of signs of abusive relationships. Both staff and children evaluated the action positively and saw it as effective.

Challenges in the implementation

Heterogeneity of the group: the needs and interests of the boys and girls varied significantly due to their characteristics, experiences and circumstances. Younger participants were less familiar with certain concepts and aspects of the topic, so they could contribute less to the discussion than the older ones.

Encouraging participation: in some cases, facilitating the discussion was challenging because some boys and girls were reluctant to participate.

Achieved results There were boys and girls with a proactive role during the whole activity, which contributed to generate an interesting discussion after the monologue. Some young people were more confident and contributed more readily but this did not appear to affect the overall impact for all those who participated.

- In general, most of boys and girls were able to express their opinions and experiences freely.

- The activity improved boys' and girls' capacity to recognise and prevent signs of violence in an intimate partner relationship more effectively.

- A few participants claimed that they were already aware of gender-based violence and how to prevent it before the action. They therefore felt that they already knew enough about the issue to protect themselves from abusive relationships.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation). At the end of the activity the participants (boys and girls) and professionals were asked to answer short evaluation questionnaires.

The main results are summed up below:

- Boys and girls assessed the monologue very positively. The monologuist was able to raise awareness among the young people of the nature and impact of intimate partner violence through a clear and entertaining speech.

- Professionals emphasised the need to continue working on this topic. Further actions should be implemented in order to deepen the understanding of this issue among young people.

Sustainability of the action The action is sustainable and easily replicable, as its implementation does not require special material and the monologue is available on the internet https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjZ_127Iluk&t=1043s. The main obstacle for its replication in other countries might be the language barrier (the monologue is only in Spanish).

Conclusions The implementation of the action not only promoted a reflection on gender norms and abusive relationships among boys and girls, but also among professionals.

Challenging gender stereotypes and roles in intimate partner relationships is indispensable for the prevention of gender-based violence. The use of humorous and colloquial language facilitates young people to be attentive and to connect with the story of a survivor of gender based-violence.

Contacts
Fundació SURT, www.surt.org, surt@surt.org
Centre Residencial d'Acció Educativa (CRAE)
Sant Josep de la Muntanya - Barcelona, Catalonia (Catalonia)

Email addresses:
llarmpetra@santjosepmuntanya.org;
llarvnina@santjosepmuntanya.org;
llarsrafael@santjosepmuntanya.org;
llarsjose@santjosepmuntanya.org;
llarinmaculada@santjosepmuntanya.org.

Resources
Monologue '*It is not only battering that hurts*' by Pamela Palenciano

3.2.4 How are we exposed to internet risks?

Organisation: SURT

Context CRAE Elima is a residential foster care facility that provides care to 18 girls from 14-18 years old. The facility is located in Sabadell, a city nearby Barcelona of more than 200.000 inhabitants.

Justification Young people share a lot of personal information through the internet, such as their personal details, interests, photos, videos and other sensitive data. This sharing of information can be dangerous in respect of user privacy issues and can facilitate the perpetration of diverse forms of abuse. In this sense, and on the basis of the results of the Needs Assessment, dealing with violence occurring in social networks is one of the challenges faced by professionals working in RCFs.

In order to contribute to build safe and trustworthy spaces for young people it is important to ensure their privacy and confidentiality within and outside the facility. This action aims at providing the girls with knowledge and tools in order to foster their self-protection and empowerment when accessing social networking, as well as preventing episodes of violence occurring in social networks.

Practical organisation The action was divided into four different activities which took place within the facility, some on weekdays and others at the weekend.

The duration of each of the activities was between 1h 30min and 2h.

The material used was a video camera, a computer, a projector, pieces of cardboard, markers and stickers.

Participants There were 18 participants in the action. All of them were girls aged 14-18. Not all girls living in the facility could participate in all the activities, as not all of them stay at the facility every day.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

The action consisted of 2 individual sessions and 5 group sessions. The sessions had the following structure and contents:

Individual interviews with the objective of reflecting on the inconsistency between the way we act in real life and in virtual life (online). Professionals recorded the girls while asking them questions (based on the short film 'Children and internet risks'1) such as:

Would you leave Elima's door open?

Would you speak to someone you had just met as if he/she were your best friend?

Do you have some pictures on your internet profiles you wouldn't let your family see?

Can anyone see your Facebook pictures?

Activity: How would you do it better? (group session)

Participants were shown pictures of different posts on the internet. Girls were asked to categorise them according to safety and to discuss how they could make them safer.

Video watching and discussion (group session)

Participants watched the episode 1x03 'The Entire History of You' of the science fiction TV serial Black Mirror which opened up a discussion on relationships based on control, possessiveness and jealousy.

> "*In the near future, everyone has access to a memory implant that records everything they do, see and hear - a sort of Sky Plus for the brain. You will never forget a face again - but is that always a good thing?*"

Role playing (group session)

Two girls performed a situation: *one girl meets a boy through Facebook and starts talking to him. They decide to meet in a park. When she gets there another boy is waiting. He introduces himself as his brother and takes her to another place…*

After the performance, participants were asked to make up the end of the story according to their own preferences and to act it out.

Closing session: the girls watched the short

film "*Los niños y los riesgos en Internet*" (Children and internet risks) and held a final discussion and reflection.

Individual feedback (individual session)

Professionals gave feedback to the girls, on the basis of what the girl had answered in the initial interview and how was she was actually using social media in daily life. The girls also assessed the action through an evaluation questionnaire.

Best practices criteria This action has a children's rights, gender-sensitive, participatory and innovative approach and contributes to the enhancement of resilience and the prevention of violence. Furthermore, it can be easily replicated and transferred to other facilities.

Challenges in the implementation

While implementing the action some challenges were encountered:

How to deal with the discrepancy between the views a girl articulates and her actual behaviour. Girls tend to present a 'politically correct' perspective when talking about self-protection and privacy, though the way they act in reality is not consistent with these principles.

The girls who participated more actively in the discussions were largely those who already used the internet more safely.

The use of social media frequently involves teen peer pressure. Issues such as self-esteem, competitiveness and popularity are therefore key aspects to be taken into account.

Gender perspective should have a central focus during the implementation of all activities.

Achieved results Participants were motivated to participate and share their personal experiences. They had the chance to talk about internet risks, privacy and relationships based on control and jealousy.

Most of the girls said that they already knew most of the internet risks mentioned before the action. Some girls thought they already used the internet safely and were reluctant to make any changes. Others said the action had given them tools for better and safer internet use. Some girls indicated that they had taken steps to make their personal accounts safer after the action.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) The participants and professionals were asked to complete short evaluation questionnaires after the action. The main results are summed up below:

Participants assessed the action positively, as the topic was considered to be very relevant to their daily life and not usually openly addressed.

Professionals were satisfied with the implementation of the action because it

> **Girls tend to present a 'politically correct' perspective when talking about self-protection and privacy, though the way they act in reality is not consistent with these principles.**

contributed to encouraging critical thinking on common and normalised behaviours and attitudes.

Sustainability of the action The action is sustainable and easily replicable, as its implementation does not require expensive and specialised material.

The short film "*Los niños y los riesgos en Internet*" (Children and internet risks) might not be translated to other European languages and only be available in English and Spanish language. Its replication may therefore be limited to groups who understand English or Spanish.

The impact of the action can be maximised through ongoing individual support from the residential unit staff.

Conclusions The action has contributed to sensitising girls to internet risks and abusive relationships. Continued work is, however, required to promote a real change in behaviour and attitude among them.

- This topic is of great relevance, not only for young people, but for the whole of society.

- Gender perspective is fundamental when addressing these topics, as girls are especially vulnerable to violence through social media.

- While recording professionals should ensure the protection of image rights. To do so, it is recommended to make photos or videos in which children and young people are not be identifiable.

Contacts
Fundació SURT, www.surt.org, surt@surt.org
Centre Residencial d'Acció Educativa (CRAE)
Elima - Sabadell, Catalonia.
E-mail address: elima@intress.org

Resourrces
Short film from Child Protection and Operational Centre (CEOP).
"*Internet safety*: Jigsaw CEOP Video" (English)
"*Los niños y los riesgos en internet*" (Spanish)
Black Mirror episode 3: "*The Entire History Of You*" (English)

3.2.5 Discussion forum on bullying and cyber-bullying

Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark

Context This method was piloted in a full-time RCF facility caring for 40 boys and girls aged 11 to 18. They live in family-like residential communities (where eight youth live in each social pedagogical living community, some only girls, one only boys, others mixed). Young people also work there, as apprenticeship centres are located in close proximity to the living communities. The RCF additionally offers a school class and job coaching. It has a multi-disciplinary staff group and is run by the local authority.

Justification The needs assessment showed that most young people living in RCFs have experienced bullying, especially in school. In the needs assessment workshops both young people and professionals said that young people in residential care frequently use social media and electronic devices, which are very important to them. Cyber-bullying is therefore a relevant topic for them. Young people living in RCF come into touch with and are confronted with such cases (video sequences, posts). These cases are intensively shared and discussed on these platforms. For many professionals, it is difficult to keep up to date with the nature of social media abuse and with cases youth actually are confronted with in social networks.

Reason for choosing the topic: High social media use of the young people in the RCF, many young people having experienced bullying, exposure to cyber-bullying, some young people having experience as a perpetrator of cyberbullying.

The discussion forum is regarded as a support action for young people and professionals to share knowledge and experiences of the residents about this topic and to support children to access any help needed.

Practical organisation The method was implemented in a living-community in the RCF and lasted one hour. Materials: chair circle around the computer screen.

Participants Five boys of a boys-only living community aged 15 – 18 years with one professional (social pedagogue) and one assistant, which volunteered for one year in this RCF. Similar methods were trained in other living communities in this RCF as well.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations) Aim of the discussion forum was raising participants' awareness of bullying. Topics: definition of bullying and of cyber-bullying, legal context, participants' personal experiences, possible solutions

The discussion forum was implemented in a relaxed, focused and interested atmosphere First young people discussed an image showing an incident of bullying (one bullied youth in the middle who becomes smaller and smaller while the others around him are very big and shout at the bullied person).

Then discussion of the following short video sequences:

'Bullying Brockhaus': sequences of the film 'In Sachen Kaminski': Bullying scene „Du weißt nicht, was ein Brockhaus ist' („You don't know what a Brockhaus is." Brockhaus was a famous German encyclopedia.) A very young girl was bullied. After the video, group discussion about relevance of the age of the bullied person.

'Cyber-bullying girls': https://www.medienprojekt-wuppertal.de/. Followed by discussion of physical and emotional violence by girls.

'Comic strip cybermobbing'. Source: handysektor.de **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idDgeMkJqH4**

After each picture and video young people and professionals reflected and discussed what they had seen. Participants shared their views and their own experiences as possible perpetrators or as persons affected by (cyber)bullying. Discussion on basic legal information. In the group discussion they tried finding solutions to the problem and ways to support people who are being bullied such as "What can you do if your friend experiences (cyber)bullying?". Finally, they discussed how participants identify bullying in RCF, how safe they feel in the RCF and what help is offered.

Variation: in another living community the professional only showed one video (video about cyber-bullying, see above). Additionally the young people themselves showed videos and stories currently available on social media e.g. an interview with a girl who had been beaten, and a video about this deed actually shared in social networks: 'Prügel-Opfer' ('beaten victim'): **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qc82EbTexbw**.

Additional activities like trust exercises or common outdoor excercises could help fostering social cohesion in the living community.

Best practices criteria Gender and age sensitive: this living community is boys-only. The videos, especially the cyber-bullying video where girls were also perpetrators and a girl was the victim evoked discussion about gender influences on cyber-bullying. Discussion about the role of age.

Children's rights approach and participation (talk about personal experiences, bring own examples, videos e.g.)

Four of five participants were bullied, most of the young people who had been bullied had never perpetrated bullying.

Challenges in the implementation Young people resident in the RCF have a busy schedule (work, school, need for leisure time and time for visiting family and friends at weekends). It was therefore a challenge finding enough free time in their weekly schedules when they were all available at the same time carrying out the activity. We found the best time to be evenings after dinner.

(Cyber)bullying is also covered in the school curriculum, so at first young people appeared being over-exposed to the topic. Because of the relaxed atmosphere, however, young people were happy to discuss the topic within the RCF as well. Finally, it was a good exchange of knowledge, experience and opinions for both RCF staff and youth.

Achieved results Participants talked about many current and personal examples from their own lives and those of close relatives and friends. Topics discussed: gender, social attributes of violence, legal position, challenging and protecting against bullying and cyber-bullying. Solutions and ways getting support were communicated.

" Young people resident in the RCF have a busy schedule (work, school, need for leisure time and time for visiting family and friends at weekends). It was therefore a challenge finding enough free time in their weekly schedules... "

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) Evaluation was by qualitative reflections written by the professional. Results: participants fed back that their knowledge of possibilities for help or where to find help had increased. They were highly involved during the activity.

With this support action young people feel better prepared for helping effectively, if a person affected by (cyber)bullying confides in them or if they observe (cyber)bullying.

The professional regarded the tool as useful and sustainable method to discuss and reflect bullying and cyberbullying experiences with their youth. The professional felt that the method could fit well in workshops about violence/ bullying.

Sustainability of the action After piloting professionals fed back that they would like this type of open discussion on (cyber) bullying regularly, particularly if a new child/ youth joins the RCF living community, and eventually in combination with the topic of violence in general.

In future discussion forums, or individual talks with children, professionals can refer to the results achieved by the piloted support action.

The method was later used in two of the other living communities in the RCF.

Conclusions Professionals learned that while bullying and cyber-bullying are part of the school curriculum, young people are not aware of the laws that relate to it. It was regarded as a good opportunity for professionals to get involved in the actual experiences of the young people with social media. Discussion forums in a relaxed atmosphere are an unthreatening but very effective method of approaching different topics.

Contacts
Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark, http://www.vmg-steiermark. at/, contact: Elli Scambor,scambore@ genderforschung.at, Anna Kirchengast, kirchengast@genderforschung.at

Concerned RCF: *Aufwind*, www.aufwind. steiermark.at, contact: Simone Taferner, simone.taferner@stmk.gv.atsimone.taferner@ stmk.gv.at

> **" Professionals learned that while bullying and cyber-bullying are part of the school curriculum, young people are not aware of the laws that relate to it. ,,**

3.3. Child Participation, Emotional Education and Empowerment: Valuing young people's thoughts, feelings and voices

3.3.1 The emotions circle

Organisation: Istituto degli Innocenti

Context The Gould Institute runs 2 residential care facilities: 'Arco' currently hosting 9 boys and girls from 13 to 20 and 'Colonna', currently hosting 7 boys and girls from 12 to 20 years. The support actions were carried out based on an existing activity called 'The Circle', a space in which young people can discuss freely issues and activities relating to life in the residential facilities with their educators.

Justification The topic of emotional education was chosen because, during the needs assessment phase, it emerged both from the focus groups with the professionals and the young people that the latter have difficulty in identifying and addressing the multiple emotions they face in their everyday life. Often the young people deny or underestimate the importance of emotions. This was therefore identified as a priority area to address, with a focus on prevention, before tackling other subjects.

Practical organisation The support action took place in the living room of the two RCFs and lasted for one hour.

Materials: chairs, emoticons, video 'Inside Out'.

The chairs were placed in a circle with the purpose of creating the sensation of a closed space, where the children can feel confident and safe enough to express themselves.

Participants About 8 young people in each of the two RCFs; two/three educators and a volunteer.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations) The support action consisted of the following practical exercises:

Practical exercise 1:
The group divided itself into two lines of equal size. The first remained still while the people in the second line approached them until the person opposite them in the first line told them to stop. They subsequently changed places, so both lines had a chance to play both roles. Afterwards the participants reflected on how the exercise made them feel.

The young people of both groups had different reactions. Some wanted to have been stopped before and some felt the frustration of being stopped too soon. For some others the exercise felt great and they had no problems in coming really close one to another.

Practical exercise 2:
The group was divided in two subgroups. In each group participants shared the emotions that they felt after reading to them some statements such as 'a friend comes in to the class and doesn't speak to me'.

Practical exercise 3:
The group discussed statements such as "when I'm happy, I say this to…", "if I have problems, I speak to…", "I feel alone when…", "I get angry when…"

Practical exercise 4:
Some clips of the movie 'Inside Out' were shown, in particular those that present different emotions. In general, the young people were able to recognise the emotions portrayed and some identified with some of scenes shown in the movie. Particular attention was given to sadness. The discussion focused on how people too often hide their pain because they are scared that other people will not accept them if they are sad. Most of the children seemed touched by this concept. They seemed to understand that sometimes sadness is necessary to experience other emotions fully.

Observations:
Using these practical activities enabled the younger boys and girls to be more fully involved. It also gave them the opportunity to speak more freely and fully about their emotions than is possible when they are asked, in an open setting, about how they feel. Young people in residential care often experience highly sensitive and challenging emotions. They often have to deal with feelings arising from previous distressing experiences, with those generated by being separated from their families and with the complex and often turbulent emotions that are characteristic of many adolescents. Despite this, the majority of the young

people talked openly about emotional matters.

Best practices criteria All the exercises are underpinned by children's rights and use a participative methodology. The specific emotional developments occurring in adolescence were taken into account and the exercises thus developed to facilitate openness for both boys and girls. The support action was also shown to enhance resilience. The young people gained greater knowledge of the importance of being aware of their own feelings, how to express them effectively and how to respect other people's   feelings. This enables them to cope more readily with the different kinds of situations they may experience.

Challenges in the implementation Working with emotions inside a RCF is always a challenge even if the staff deal with the issue every day. Young people who had the greatest degree of difficulty in dealing with emotions generally found the exercises more challenging. The setting and the involvement of external professionals helped in making the young people open and being participative.

Most of the group of young people appeared to engage well with the activities. One boy was resistant to discussing emotional issues from the outset who did not seem to accept the work about emotions from the very beginning. Two boys had learning disabilities; their attention span was more limited than the others and they found it difficult to follow the discussion at times.

Achieved results The activities with the emotions have achieved the expected results as they supported the young people in being more aware about their emotions and their importance in their everyday life. The children have appreciated this work and gained new tools about the topics that were discussed.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) Evaluation was based on the completion of questionnaires by both children and professionals.

The young people seem to have appreciated the activities and some of them also found them fun. The activities helped them to feel more relaxed and more accepted within the group of young people.

❝ For the professionals, the support actions have achieved the results for the most part and the topic of emotions was regarded as particularly relevant for the everyday life of the young people. ❞

For some of them the exercises also improved their relationship with their caregivers.

For the professionals, the support actions have achieved the results for the most part and the topic of emotions was regarded as particularly relevant for the everyday life of the young people.

Sustainability of the action The actions proved to be sustainable thanks to a methodology that can be easily replicated with other similar groups composed of boys and girls of different ages, of course bearing in mind the specific characteristics of each group.

Conclusions The used methodology (circle of chairs, emoticons, video) proved to be effective as it was based on the use of tools which the young people are used to and which helped to address the proposed topics.

In particular the exercises involving physical activity and watching video clips proved to be most successful in actively involving the young people.

Contacts
Istituto degli Innocenti,
www.istitutodeglinnocenti.it
international@istitutodeglinnocenti.it
Istituto Gould, http://www.istitutogould.it/
gouldresidenziali@diaconiavaldese.org

Resources
Video '*Inside Out*'
In Italian:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p
I1PY1dxdYs&list=PLazzCijpTCVqbCQh-
r4oejH5B0wYWH9Oi
In English
https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=7PAxm9vHB6U

3.3.2 Youth friendly participatory methods
Organisation: Dissens

Context A facility for LGBT* youth (aged 16 - 21) that offers semi-residential/assisted living services and one fulltime residential care facility for young people with addictions or at risk of addiction (aged 12 - 21).

Justification The AIF needs assessment showed that (critical) acceptance, knowledge about rights and participation were amongst the needs of young people in residential care facilities. Participation in particular was found to be one form of accepting and understanding the needs of the young people and respect their rights. The staff in both facilities emphasized the need for participation of the young people as well, but expressed concern, that the existing tools were not well received by the young people. There was a lack of participatory methods that were youth friendly and accessible.

Practical organisation The support action was set in the timeframe of the weekly meetings of the group, so the activity would not add extra time to the weekly schedule. The material that was used was already existing – chairs, a box, the cameras on the participants' mobiles.

Participants Two groups of six and ten young people between the age of 12 – 21

Implementation (structure, activities, observations) As a low-barrier method for participation a 'grumble-box' was set up in the group to allow anonymous complaints that the inhabitants could talk about in the group meetings. The concerns would be taken seriously and the young people were encouraged to use the box.

As a more advanced version of the 'grumble-box', the 'wish-and-grumble-chairs' were introduced. Two chairs would be declared as one 'grumble-chair' and one 'wish-chair', accordingly decorated with signs. Each inhabitant would sit down on each chair and express their 'grumble' and a 'wish' for the group. The carers encouraged the young people by going first and giving examples.

An exercise that focussed on the space the young people lived in was the 'comfort spaces' exercise. The young people were asked to walk around the facility and take pictures of their favourite spot in the facility but also of the least favourite spot. They would present their pictures in the group and discussed how to improve the space.

In one of the two facilities, the carers moved away from deciding on group activities for the group by giving them the budget for the whole month, letting them decide and plan activities. The carers would still be there to participate the activity but not interfere in the decision-making process.

> **" As a more advanced version of the 'grumble-box', the 'wish-and-grumble-chairs' were introduced. Two chairs would be declared as one 'grumble-chair' and one 'wish-chair', accordingly decorated with signs. "**

Best practices criteria Gender-sensitive: The set of participatory methods needs to be pointed in a gender-sensitive direction (e.g. in the 'comfort-spaces' it was asked, if the spaces were similarly un-/comfortable for all genders). In the presented methods, a gender-aware guidance is necessary.

Child-participation: All methods are focused on improvement of participation. For younger

children who cannot write yet, the 'grumble-and-wish-chair' exercise is an accessible method.

Effectiveness: The young people were given space to experiment with methods of participation and they were able to decide themselves which method they liked best. They were also encouraged to develop their own ideas.

Enhancement of resilience: The young people were given the experience that their voices had a value and that they could rely on being taken seriously. They were allowed to dismiss methods they did not like and make their own suggestions for improvement.

Innovation: The set of participation methods offers an alternative to mere token participation and encourages the young people to be co-creators of their living-spaces.

Challenges in the implementation The participatory methods need time for implementation. The challenge for the carers is to take the young people concerns seriously and not dismiss topics as silly or ridiculous. Professionals expressed that they would need to persevere in their commitment to the process and be open to change outside the usual work routine.

Achieved results The young people were given a space for experimentation and experiencing. They were allowed to express what worked for them and what not, which in itself is already a participatory process, even if they would dismiss individual methods.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation)
The professionals expressed surprise in their own initial reluctance to implement new participatory methods, be it because of the extra work or reluctance to change in general. After starting the process, they expressed surprise and excitement about the process that was started. The young people expressed that maybe they did not like every single method but were excited at being able to try new things and were encouraged to express their opinions.

The feedback was given verbally in evaluation talks with an emphasis of the feedback of the young people.

Sustainability of the action The participatory methods are a long-term project. The individual methods are there to initiate a process that is ongoing and sustainable.

Conclusions The youth friendly participatory methods shift the focus from participation 'on paper' to one that is focused on the young people´s everyday needs and enhances their sense of self-efficacy. Professionals can learn to engage in a new way with the young people and develop enthusiasm for experimentation.

Contacts
alternative-future@dissens.de
http://www.dissens.de

3.3.3 The magic trunk

Organisation: SURT

Context CRAE Les Palmeres is a Residential Care Facility located in Barcelona that provides care to children aged 3 -18. It is a mixed facility, for 12 boys and girls.

Justification On the basis of the results of the Needs Assessment phase, it was clear that experiences of violence negatively affect people's emotional well-being, including their self-esteem and confidence. This is especially important in adolescence, when the influence of how others think and treat you is of major importance.

Conversely, high self-esteem helps young people to recognise their own skills and capabilities more effectively. It furthermore helps them assume responsibilities, deal with problems and autonomously develop new coping strategies.

Contributing to young people's self-esteem and empowerment is fundamental to their recovery from the experience of violence and to helping them build a life free from its ongoing effect.

Practical organisation The action was conducted outside the facility, at a nearby public library.

The duration of the action was 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The material used was: pieces of paper, markers, mirror and a box.

Participants There were 4 participants: 1 boy aged 14 and 3 girls aged 15-17.

Not all boys and girls living in the facility took part in the action, as the staff considered that not all of them were ready to participate. Some, for example, had recently been admitted to the RCF and were going through a period of adjustment.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

Professionals prepared the material previously. A mirror was placed inside a box with the following message:

You are the person you were looking for.

You are the most wonderful person.

Look at yourself in the mirror and mentally repeat three times, so that you can always remember:

I AM AN IMPORTANT PERSON.

I AM A WONDERFUL PERSON.

THAT'S WHY I APPRECIATE OTHERS.

Participants were told there was a box with a picture of a wonderful and important person inside it. Only two clues could be given: it is not a science-fiction character and he/she is currently alive.

Participants were asked to guess the person of the picture and were given a paper to write down their guesses.

Then one by one were asked to look inside the box and not tell the others what they had found, while the others were still trying to guess the person of the picture.

When all participants had already looked inside the box and discovered their image reflected in the   mirror, they shared their emotions and feelings. Then, some questions were raised and discussed:

How did you feel when you found the image of yourself reflected in the mirror?

Please identify positive features of yourselves.

Please identify one positive feature of each of your mates.

Best practices criteria First, this action proved to be effective, based on the evaluation of professionals and young people (see below). Furthermore, through a children's rights approach it enhances young people's empowerment, their decision-making capacity and control over one's life. At the same time, it contributes to reducing the risk of future violence and connected risks by enhancing protective factors: self-esteem and confidence. Finally, it can be easily replicated and transferred to other facilities and to different countries.

Challenges in the implementation Peer-to-peer pressure is especially intense in adolescence. The way participants acted and expressed themselves was therefore strongly influenced by the opinion of the group.

Other challenges encountered were to do with the continuity of the action. As the professionals emphasised, this action is a key step but is not sufficient in itself to build young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Achieved results The support action had very positive results. Boys and girls were highly motivated and actively participated in the action.

They all had thought of famous people as the wonderful and important person in the picture and showed surprise when they found their own reflection when opened the box. At the same time, they looked very pleased to find their image in the box, as something unexpected but positive.

Participants had difficulties in identifying positive features of themselves, whereas it was easier for them to identify other people's.

At the end, participants commented on the difficulties of receiving and acknowledging compliments from others, as well as defining their own positive attributes. They all were more used to criticism.

The action promoted reflection on the way young people feel about themselves, their abilities and thoughts.

Evaluation (based on children and professionals' evaluation) After its implementation, professionals and young people assessed the action through evaluation questionnaires.

Professionals and young people gave a very positive appraisal of the action.

Professionals positively remarked on the degree of involvement of the participants in the action.

Young people valued the chance to express their own views freely. They also felt their opinions were listened by the educators and by the rest of the group.

Young people also said the action had helped them feel part of the group and find more space for themselves within the RCF.

Sustainability of the action The sustainability of this action should be ensured through individual work. Professionals can maximise the impact of the action by addressing the following questions in individual meetings with the participants:

Do you think you are the most important person to yourself?

If not, what are the reasons why you are not?

What could you/we do to achieve it?

Conclusions This action addressed a very significant and sensitive topic for young people: self-esteem and confidence. Even though it promoted reflection on the importance of valuing, much work remains to be done there is long path to build self-esteem. In this sense, it is necessary to keep on enhancing young people self-confidence and help them better rely on their capacity to build opinions and achieve their own goals.

To do so, group work and individual work can be complementary and important methods to achieve a long-term impact.

Contacts
CRAE Les Palmeres – Associació CEPS
(Barcelona)
E-mail address: palmeres@asceps.org

Resources
Villa Bruned, Joaquin (1998):
La animación de grupos. Editorial Escuela Española, Madrid.

3.3.4 Art Exhibition on Theme of Identity

Organisation CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND

Context Howdenhall, the RCF in which the support action took place is operated by the local authority, the City of Edinburgh Council. Most RCFs in Scotland are public provided by local authorities. All placements of children in the care system in Scotland require a statutory order. These convey obligations of the local authority looking after them, as well as specified rights when in care and entitlements to support until the age of 25 for the young people.

Few children under the age of 12 are ever placed in residential care in Scotland. Howdenhall, however, does infrequently accommodate younger children as it is one of the few secure units in Scotland. This means that the young people placed there are subject to a legal order under which they can be (though are not compelled to be) locked up for up to six weeks after which the order may be allowed to expire or may be renewed. Young people are placed there only if there is clear evidence that their behaviour presents a danger to themselves or others. The unit has capacity for 12 young people but occupancy levels are dependent on the numbers who meet the criteria for a secure order to be made at any given time. A school forms part of the unit; those children who are locked up will attend school there, as well as those who do not currently have a school placement, but some residents continue to attend their own school outside the unit.

Justification The Howdenhall residents represent the most vulnerable and troubled young people in the care system. Invariably their past lives have been damaging and traumatic. Violence has characterised their previous experience; most have been victims of violence within their families, many have witnessed domestic abuse and some have inflicted violence on others. A significant number self-harm. Given the nature of the unit population, it is unsurprising that there are from time to time incidents of violence among residents or towards staff, though unit practice and culture is very much about de-escalating potentially violent incidents and keeping young people safe.

Many of the residents did not have a strong sense of self and had low self-esteem. Most had experienced far less stability and far more turbulence in their lives than the majority of young people. The project's objectives were to explore themes of identity and belonging and to represent these themes in art and craft work.

Practical organisation The project took place over nine weeks. It was led by a residential care officer and the head teacher of the school, though it involved the whole staff team. It required art and craft materials. As it met formal learning outcomes for the Scottish school curriculum some of the project took place during the school day and some during evening free time.

Participants Ten young people aged 12-16, six boys and four girls.

Implementation (structure, activities, observations)

Week 1:

Introduction to project, powerpoint on identity, questions on characteristics and what creates an identity

Personal Development Award (PDA):

"Myself and Work"

Self- evaluation sheet completed. Personal development skills identified.

Week 2:

Showed young people example powerpoint presentation on "I am from….." and they used PC and ipads to create their own PP on the place they identify with.

PDA:

"Myself and Work"

Self- evaluation sheet completed. Personal development skills identified. Reminded YP of identified areas for development.

Week 3:

Creating art based on theme of identity: using young people's own fingerprints to create word art.

Making wooden memory boxes.

No PDA work this session as new PE teacher spent time with YP outside.

Week 4:

Staff working on self portrait paintings. One participant completed three drawings based on fingerprints and one made a mask. All young people completed self reflective task to create words for fingerprint art. No PDA work this week.

Week 5:

All young people worked in rotation on art work: self portraits on canvas, fingerprints and memory boxes. Good progress made! Pauline came into class to work with the young people and discussed social pedagogy with them. She helped one participant to produce a piece of art based around these principles.

Week 6:

All young people worked on self portraits and memory boxes in rotation. Trees for display in corridors were also completed.

PDA work completed in class.

Week 7:

All young people worked on self portraits and memory boxes in rotation. Excellent engagement. Decision made to give over time to ensure completion within deadline.

Pauline had meeting with young people to decide on time for opening event and discussed who would be invited.

Week 8:

Emphasis on completing all work for display next week. All young people completed memory boxes and two completed masks. Most work framed ready for display. Young people excited and engaged.

One participant took responsibility for corridor displays and liaising with staff to ensure cohesion.

Week 9:

Exhibition day and all young people very excited and engaged. HI helped with hospitality prep and rest of young people assisted with any final tasks. Fantastic turn out of guests and family and exhibition was opened by local councillor. Young people interacted well with guests and fed back that they had enjoyed the experience.

Majority of senior phase young people achieve PDA "self and the community" award.

Best practices criteria The support action successfully engaged young people with high levels of vulnerability, poor experience of relationships and traumatic early life. It helped them think about and make sense of some of the things that had happened to them. It helped them develop confidence and a stronger sense of personal value in an enjoyable way. It contributed to formal learning outcomes. The approach could be used in any residential setting and the resources required, other than staff time, are minimal.

Challenges in the implementation Working on such a sensitive issue with very vulnerable young people is always challenging, but the skilled staff group managed this well.

Achieved results All the young people gave highly positive feedback on the project and how it had helped them understand some very complex and troubling past experiences. The programme section above also sets out some of the results.

The following learning curricular learning outcomes were achieved:

I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.

- Theme of "identity" exploring what makes us all individuals
- Group work skills developed
- Education and care staff working together with YP. Role modelling apparent.
- Peer evaluation
- Sense of belonging to a community both geographically and school, explored and fostered
- Inviting and welcoming family and guests to visit their school community

I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.

- Theme of "identity" exploring what makes us all individuals
- Group work and communication skills developed
- Self -portraits and memory boxes encouraging personal reflection on identity and feelings

I can solve practical problems by applying my knowledge of measure, choosing the appropriate units and degree of accuracy for the task and using a formula to calculate area or volume when required.

- Using basic measurement units to create memory boxes and food items for hospitality

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

- Poetry on theme of identity created by young people
- Self -reflection task completed focussing on positive and negative aspects of identity
- Unique fingerprint created using text to reflect identity

4. Conclusions

This online catalogue has provided information on the support actions carried out within the European project "Alternative Future: Towards the empowerment of child victims of violence in alternative care through a gender sensitive and child-centred capacity building programme for professionals" carried out by six European partners. The focus and the issues addressed in the SA are the results of the needs assessment phase that was conducted through the focus groups and questionnaires addressed to professionals and young people whose results are available in a transnational report.

From the description of the support actions presented in this on-line catalogue, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the most recurring themes, the adopted methodology, the main results achieved and challenges encountered as well as some recommendations for the way ahead.

Concerning the themes addressed, great attention was devoted to the issue of gender norms and stereotypes and the prevention of gender based violence with activities carried out on those themes in Bulgaria, Germany and Catalonia. One main point which emerged from the needs assessment is the normalization of violence, including gender based violence, in the experience of the young people living in RCF. Often intimate relationships based on possessivity, jealousy and control are normalised among boys and girls living in RCFs. Therefore, working on the prevention of violence, gender-based violence and violence in intimate relationships was deemed as fundamental in many RCFs. The first step towards this aim was based in many cases on a discussion on gender stereotypes and gender roles. Young people were invited to discuss about which behaviour are regarded as appropriate for men/boys and women/girls and what happens to those who do not conform to them. (this was done for instance in Bulgaria through the 'gender roles box' exercise). In other cases, as in the 'gender month' action carried out in one RCF in Germany, activities which are normally regarded as feminine (such a beauty evening) or masculine (playing soccer) were offered both to boys and girls in order to question gender norms and to allow and empower non-conforming gender behavior. One support action ('Real life', performed in Austria) focused on how

gender intersects with other dimensions such as class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation etc in order to complement the reflection on gender stereotypes with that on intersectional privileges and disadvantages. In some cases, residential facilities were composed only of boys or girls, however the exercises that were proposed can be used in mixed groups as well.

In general activities that relate to gender issues, gender identity and sexual orientation need a previous specific training by the educators and professionals of the RCF as these topics relate to their personal history and behaviour. Moreover, without a specific training professionals might not feel confident enough to address such sensitive topics.

A second area which was addressed by different activities relates to the promotion of safety online and offline, including gender-based violence. In Bulgaria one activity was realized about the creation of safe spaces through exercises and discussion on what is a safe/unsafe space. Safety through Internet, cyber-bullying and grooming have also been the object of different SA in Austria, Italy and Catalonia. Young people share a lot of personal information through the internet, such as their name, interests, photos, videos and other sensitive data. This sharing of information can be dangerous in relation to privacy issues and can facilitate the perpetration of diverse forms of abuse both by other young people and by adults. Based on this understanding and on the results of the Needs Assessment, dealing with violence occurring in social networks has emerged as a sensitive topic and one of the challenges faced by professionals working in RCFs.

Different methods were used (videos, cartoons, interviews) aimed at reflecting on the different behaviours young people tend to use in their real life as opposed to their on-line life. In one case, a specific reflection about how gender affects bullying (video on cyberbullying by girls) was carried out in Austria while in Italy cartoons were used that proposed different possible reactions to instances of cyberbullying and grooming. One challenge that emerged in this area relates to the tendency by young people to state that they already know how to behave on the internet and how to protect their privacy, while in reality they adopt more risky behaviour.

Bullying was also addressed in more than one support actions as it is a very common experience among adolescents in general, as victims and sometimes also as perpetrators. Also in this case, sometimes young people react by saying that they already know how to face instances of bullying because the topic has been the object of many awareness-raising projects in schools. However, if the activities used are able to prompt a more in-depth discussion, the young people tend to reveal their doubts and discuss about their personal experiences.

Finally, a third fundamental area addressed in the SA concern the promotion of child participation, emotional education and empowerment: valuing young people's thoughts, feelings and voices. Given that children and young people who are residing in RCF have often undergone abuse or neglect, their ability to deal with emotions, their sense of security and their self-esteem is often compromised. Different support actions aimed at tackling this situation. For instance, in one RCF in Italy a support action was carried out to promote emotional education through physical exercises, role plays, discussion through videos (the cartoon 'Inside out') as it had emerged that young people have difficulties in identifying and addressing the multiple emotions they face in their everyday life. The main challenge with this typology of exercises is that young people tend to negate their emotions, therefore it is important to provide them with different tools that may help them to open themselves.

Other activities, such as 'the magic trunk' carried out in one residential facility in Catalonia, aimed at promoting the self-esteem and empowerment of young people in order to enhance their recovery from the experiences of violence and to help them build a life free of violence.

The needs assessment carried out during the project showed that (critical) acceptance, knowledge about rights and participation are amongst the most relevant needs of young people in residential care facilities.

Such a need was taken into consideration as SA aimed at involving children directly, in promoting a free discussion and in some cases to give children the possibility to propose activities to be carried out in the RCF. For

instance in one RCF in Germany a specific action was carried out in order to improve the participation in the everyday life and decision making of the RCF. Through a number of exercises (grumble box, wish and grumble chairs, comfort spaces) the SA aimed at shifting from a participation on paper to one which is focused on young people's everyday needs.

The methodology that worked best in the carrying out of the SA was the one that used interactive, participatory tools such as videos (movies, cartoons, monologues), exercises, role plays etc. Sensitive subjects such as gender based violence, bullying etc were often addressed through tools that were able to prompt a discussion on the issue without being too heavy, for instance cartoons, parts of movies carefully chosen, monologues that represent the subject in a humorous way. The use of appropriate tools emerged as a key factor in the carrying out of the SA in order not to re-victimize the young people and to create a relaxed atmosphere that would enable them to feel safe and discuss freely.

Finally, looking at future directions in the work with young people some issues emerged as key.

First of all, working towards the implementation of children's rights, ensuring a real participation for children living in RCF while at the same time ensuring their safety and protection is one of the most relevant challenges faced by professional.

Another crucial area refers to the prevention of violence, including gender-based violence as violent behaviour are often normalized in the experience of young people living in RCF. To this aim, activities aimed at emotional education and the creation of safe space can be helpful tools. Finally, the focus on gender stereotypes, gender identity and the prevention of gender-based violence emerges as particularly relevant in order to provide these young people with the tools not to reproduce or been victims of violent behaviour as well as in order to make choices in their life which are not dependent on gender norms, but are oriented by their own skills, abilities and desires. We hope that the SA described in this toolkit can provide some valuable examples in this direction.

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The drafting of this online catalogue was coordinated by Erika Bernacchi from Istituto degli Innocenti and Donka Petrova from Animus Association Foundation. The editorial layout was realised by Lynn Gilmour from Children in Scotland.

The following people contributed to the drafting of and collection of information about the best practices described in the catalogue: Elli Scambor, Anna Kirchengast (Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark); Donka Petrova (Animus Association Foundation); Marion Macleod, Lynn Gilmour (Children in Scotland); Tanja Abou, Bernard Könnecke, Thomas Viola Rieske (Dissens); Erika Bernacchi, Tania Berti, Francesca Lamedica, Raffaella Pregliasco (Istituto degli Innocenti); Alba Elvira, Amanda Alexanian (Fundació Surt).

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