STAMINA - Formation of non-violent behaviour in school and leisure time among young adults from violent families 2008 - 2011

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1. Introduction

Resilience, as a concept, is rarely researched and discussed in the literature concerned with violence. Most of what is written emphasizes the reasons why violence occurs, as well as, how it affects both perpetrators and/or victims. Resilience research, on the other hand, asks the question why certain people do not react violently – even though their family history might predispose them to this kind of behaviour- or why potential victims do not become victims – even though situations or circumstances may indicate the likelihood of this happening. STAMINA is a ground-breaking study that researches which characteristics adolescents have and which resources they may use to avoid becoming violent even though their family history and thusly, their predisposition, is one of reacting violently. This approach in the study of violence is only recent and may greatly add to the body of research concerned with violence.

The concept of resiliency shies away from focusing on deficits and moves towards the relevance of competencies and resources as they are used in assessing general life challenges and coping with the ensuing stress. Traditionally, It has been used to gain a better understanding of conditions which maintain and foster psychic health and stability in children, who are *exposed* to particular *developmental risks* (Wustmann 2005: 192).

In an effort to expand our understanding of resiliency, a cross-sectional study, divided into quantitative and qualitative parts, was conducted in Germany, Spain, Austria and Slovenia. The results of the project should deliver useful information for creating effective measures addressing both families and schools.

A summary of the results of the Quantitative Study are presented in section two, and of the Qualitative Study, in section three. Recommendations for the practical application (mainly in schools), further research and policy formation are found in section four. An extended version of resiliency theories, methodological approaches and research findings can be downloaded from the website: www.stamina-project.eu

2. Results of the quantitative study

2.1 Sample and data

In the Spring of 2009, a questionnaire was administered in four EU-countries (Austria, Germany, Slovenia and Spain) with N=5149 adolescents (see table 1 for sample characteristics). 47% of the adolescents were female, 53% were male, and approximately 29% had migrant backgrounds. The mean age of the sample was 14.4 years. 23% of the adolescents reported having experienced physical abuse by their parents and 17% had witnessed domestic violence being perpetrated against the other parent. Approximately 27% exhibited signs of depression and nearly 35% of the students questioned reported that they had perpetrated violence against other adolescents.

Table 1: Sample descriptives

	in %	Absolute number
Migrant Background		
Without migrant-background	71.2	3.666
With migrant-background	28.8	1.483
Sex		
Girls	47.0	2.418
Boys	53.0	2.731
Country		
Germany	55.0	2.832
Austria	14.1	724
Slovenia	14.1	726
Spain	16.8	867
Parents‘ socio-economic status (SES)		
Low	33.2	1710
Medium	32.7	1686
High	34.0	1753
Physical abuse by parents		
Yes	23.0	1184
No	77.0	3965
Witnessing domestic violence between parents		
Yes	17.3	892
No	82.7	4257
Depressive symptoms		
Yes	27.1	1394
No	72.9	3755
Perpetrating physical violence		
Yes	34.8	1793
No	65.2	3356
Age, mean=14.40, SD=0.934	N= 5.149	

Note.
Migrant background was defined by combining the youngsters' citizenship, country of birth and mother tongue.
Socio-economic status was defined by parents' level of education, profession and number of books in the household (tercile split).
Physical abuse by parents: See notes to table 2.
Witnessing domestic violence between parents: See notes to table 2 ("Physical partner abuse in the family").
Exerting physical violence: See notes to table 2.
Signs of Depression: Indicators for self-doubt and a negative attitude to life were measured, e.g. "Now and then I feel that my life is not worth living." Items in this scale were adopted from Beck Depression Inventory.

2.2 Results

Of the 5149 young people included in the study, 1644 (31.9%) witnessed violence being perpetrated within their families. In these families, young people were either physically abused by their parents (752 young people or 14.6%) or their parents physically abused each other (460 young people or 8.9%). In addition, there was a third grouping of young adults who reported having been physically abused by a parent and who also witnessed a parent perpetrating domestic violence against the other parent (432 young people or 8.4%). Almost every fourth student (23.5%) at a mean age of 14.5 had been physically abused by her/his parents and almost every sixth student (17.3%) had witnessed a parent perpetrating domestic violence against the other.

Within the overall population, gender seems to have played an insignificant role. Small differences were found when comparing the role of gender within and between countries included in the study, socio-economic status and the young people's migrant backgrounds. We concluded that the occurrence of family violence was almost always equally distributed throughout the four countries, the three socio-economic groups and those with or without a migrant background.

In the next phase of the study, only adolescents with a history of family violence (N=1644) were included, meaning, they had either experienced physical abuse by their parents and/or witnessed domestic violence being perpetrated by one parent against the other ("STAMINA-burden sample"). Based on their reported aggressive behaviour and depressive tendencies, these adolescents were clustered into three "resiliency-groups":

- Adolescents were included in the group "resilient" if they reported that they had not acted out violently in the past 3 months and had also been included in the grouping of those with relatively low (i.e. the lower half of the sample) depressive tendencies (n=510 students, i.e. 31.0% of the STAMINA-burden-sample of N=1644)
- Adolescents were included in the grouping "non-resilient" if they had been included in the highest quartile in both physical violence and depressive tendencies (n=668, 40.6%)
- Adolescents who fell in between these two groupings were categorized as "near-resilient". Use of violence and their depressive tendencies (n=466, 28.3%) seemed to cluster midpoint.

For adolescents whose family backgrounds were violent, differences were also insignificant between national samples, socio-economic status and migrant backgrounds. In contrast to those findings, a higher proportion of girls as compared to boys were found in the group of "resilient" adolescents. In this case, gender does play a much greater role.

As a next step, logistic regression analyses were used to identify the resiliency patterns of family violence exposures in the STAMINA-Burden (Challenge) sample, separately for both boys and girls. A set of predictors was used to indicate whether the adolescents belonged to either the "resilient" or the "near-resilient"-group resp. to either the "near-resilient" or the "non-resilient"-group. The set of predictors included variables from the (thematic areas?): self-concept; activities against violence; family risk characteristics; parenting style; aggression experiences and aggression-related beliefs; school risk characteristics; alcohol and drug misuse. The results were summarized in the table below. The variables that are listed in the table can be considered relevant for differentiating between the groups "resilient / near-resilient" resp. "near-resilient / non-resilient". Overall, the predictive models that had been applied worked very well.

Self-concept, in particular emotional *self-control,* appears to be a strong predictor for differences between the groups for both genders. In addition, the predictors directly relating to *violence* were strongly gender-specific and highly relevant. The type of violence experienced and who perpetrated that violence along with the measures taken to prevent that violence appears to play a differing role between male and female adolescents. This also applies to the *family risk*. The significance of the predictor's *self-concept, activities against violence, family risk and experiences of / attitudes to violence* must also be emphasised. On the other hand, *parenting styles, school*, and *substance/alcohol abuse* seems to play a more insignificant role.

Overall, we concluded that "resilience status" could be influenced by moderating the living environments of these young people. Minimizing risk factors, on the one hand, and reinforcing protective factors, on the other hand, are both necessary. In this way a large proportion of young people with a violence-challenged family environment could be supported, and the development of symptoms could be prevented. However, the following socio-political aspect needs to be borne in mind: the underlying causes of why violence occurs within families cannot be addressed if young people are only supported by compensatory pedagogical interventions. Both support for young people with a family background of violence and resources for pedagogical interventions are necessary. Still, the underlying cause for violence in these families remains untouched by these interventions.

Table 2: Predictors

		Predictor differentiates:		Predictor differentiates:
		Resilient	**Near-resilient**	**Non-resilient**
Gender	**Category of predictor**	**predictor**		**predictor**
Girls	***Self-concept***	**Emotional self-control**		**Emotional self-control** **Self-acceptance** **Fear of future**
	Activities against violence	**Talk with parents or peers about violence** **Seek help against violence**		
	Family risk			**Physical partner abuse in the family** **Physical abuse by parents**
	Parenting style	**Inconsistent parenting style**		**Parental supervision**
	Aggression: experiences and beliefs	**Aggression-supportive beliefs** **Relational aggression against boys** **Victim of physical aggression by boys** **Empathy**		**Victim of physical aggression by boys** **Empathy**
	School			**Verbally aggressive teachers**
	Substance and alcohol misuse	**Drugs**		**Drugs**
Boys	***Self-concept***	**Emotional self-control**		**Emotional self-control** **Self-acceptance**
	Activities against violence	**Talk with parents or peers about violence** **Seek help against violence**		**Talk with parents or friends about violence** **Seek help against violence**
	Family risk	**Physical partner abuse in the family** **Verbal partner abuse**		**Physical partner abuse in the family**
	Parenting style	**Authoritarian parenting style**		
	Aggression: experiences and beliefs	**Relational aggression against boys** **Aggression-supportive beliefs**		**Relational aggression against boys** **Relational aggression against girls** **Victim of physical aggression by boys**
	School	**Verbally aggressive teachers**		
	Substance and alcohol misuse	**Alcohol**		

Note. The predictors consisted of scales combining several items which were answered on various rating scales. As a consequence, the predictors reflect the extent, degree or "less-more"-relations of features. Examples for items are given below.
Emotional self-control: e.g., "I am one of those people who sometimes cannot control their anger".
Fear of future: e.g., "I am afraid of everything that might happen in future."
Self-acceptance: e.g., "I have quite a good opinion about myself."
Talk with parents or peers about violence: e.g., "If – during the past three months – you committed physically violent actions, how often did you confide in the persons mentioned below? Help from mother, father, peers"
Seek help against violence: e.g., "I try to solve a problem by talking instead of lashing out."
Physical partner abuse in the family (parents): e.g., "I noticed one of my parents strongly shoving or pushing the other one about."
Verbal partner abuse in the family: e.g., "I witnessed my parents shouting at each other very loudly."
Physical abuse by parents: e.g., "People in my family beat me up so severely that I had bruises or scratches".
Inconsistent parenting style: e.g., "My parents often scold me for no apparent reason."
Authoritarian parenting style: e.g., "My parents often do not tolerate any contradiction."
Parental supervision: e.g., "My parents listen to my opinion in the same way as they

would listen to an adult."
Relational aggression: e.g., „I blackmailed a girl/ a boy".
Victim of physical aggression by boys: e.g., "During a brawl, I was hurt by a boy so badly that I was in pain for several days and/ or had to go and see a doctor".
Empathy: e.g., "Mostly I do not care too much about other people's unhappiness." (recoded).
Aggression-supporting beliefs: e.g., "Fighting is a good way of defending my friends".
Verbally aggressive teachers: e.g., "You were insulted or sworn at by a teacher."
Drugs: e.g., "Did you consume one or several of the following products during the past 12 months? Marijuana, hashish..."
Alcohol: e.g., "How often do you drink the following alcoholic drinks, even if only in small quantities? Beer, wine..."

3. Results of the qualitative part

As in the quantitative part of the project, the qualitative also addressed the question *- why certain adolescent's behaviour remains positive, namely, they do not react violently – even though their family history might predispose them to this kind of behaviour.* In an effort to investigate the phenomenon from a different perspective, both definitions and methods were used differently in the qualitative part of the project. Resiliency was approached in the qualitative study as follows:

- According to research literature, resiliency, as a concept, includes both negative life circumstances and coping strategies. In this study, the adolescents' resiliency competences and resources were assessed on a *case by case* basis in relation to their challenges, experiences and circumstances. In this way, we were able to identify the most appropriate adolescents for future interviews and further analyses.
- Similar to the quantitative approach, resiliency was seen as a gradual phenomenon, leading to the differentiation between *general resiliency* and *limited resiliency,* based on the degree of violence perpetuated against another. Adolescents from violence-challenged family backgrounds who did not act out violently qualified as *fully resilient*, as well as those who reported very few acts of bullying or rarely participating in fights, failure to render assistance, or who described their own development as formerly being frequently violent and presently, living a violent-free life. Adolescents from violence-challenged families were considered to have *Limited resilience* if they had behaved violently in the past but showed some *resilient competences* in certain situations, or if a promising – yet ambivalent – development could be observed (e.g. change of attitudes or environment).

In all four countries (Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Spain), adolescents were recruited for the qualitative interviews from the quantitative study sample if they had left their contact data on the questionnaire, and if their response patterns peaked the interest of researchers. Moreover, social workers, youth workers and/or teachers were contacted in

an effort to find additional adolescents who might meet the required profile (violence-challenged family, rare or no violent behaviour). From a total of 132 qualitative interviews (61 girls and 71 boys), n=30 were selected for an in-depth-analysis (16 girls and 14 boys); 12 of them were coded as *fully resilient* (9 girls and 3 boys), 18 as *limited resilient.* The interviews were transcribed and analysed, with a focus on finding factors and patterns related to resiliency: vulnerability and protective factors, as well as protective processes which influence and modify the negative effects of adverse life conditions and violent experiences.
In a first analytical step, phenomena (**protective factors**) were identified that could be frequently found in the *resiliency sample* (i.e. full and limited resilience, n=30; see table A). These factors could be causes or results of protective processes (e.g. having developed *strategies against violence* can be a possible outcome of a process that has enhanced violence resilience) or be a potential protective factor against violence in the future.

Table A. Single protective factors, found in at least a third (n=10) of the qualitative resilience sample (n=30). Absolute numbers by gender.

Factor	**Female, n=16**	**Male, n=14**
Reflectiveness	12	10
Support by family	10	8
Support by friend(s)	10	7
Clear future plans	8	7
Strategies against violence	7	6
Self acceptance	7	5
Empathy	8	3
Open view on gender roles	8	2
Good school environment	5	5

Note.
Reflectiveness: The ability to think about oneself and one's development.
Support by family, support by friend(s): In case of demanding situations or detrimental experiences, some of the youngsters reported of emotional and practical support.
Clear future plans: The ability to develop realistic life goals (family, education, occupation), based on one's life experiences.
Strategies against violence: The adolescents' specific reactions to threatening situations. Reactions could be defensive (avoidance of violence) or active (evident in violent situations). The reactions could involve efforts to solve a social problem or to regulate one's emotions. E.g.: seeking for a safe place; walking away from violence; looking for help and support; change of interpretational patterns.
Self acceptance: The extent to which an adolescent accepted himself/herself and showed a positive self-esteem.
Empathy: The ability to take over the perspective of another person, to predict others'

emotional reactions, and to adjust one's behaviour according to this perspective.
Open view on gender roles: Attitudes and beliefs in relation to gender that differed from traditional, restrictive positions.
Good school environment: Some schools were active against violence on a structural level, e.g. by following a zero-tolerance-strategy against violence or support for pupils by conflict mediators.
In a next step, the protective factors were combined with a **multi-level** conceptual framing approach (recently developed by Hagemann-White et al.). Each factor was assigned to one of the levels *ontogenetic, micro, meso* and *macro* (see table B), with the following specifications:

- *Ontogenetic level:* Factors that focus on personality and life history, early or continuous support and protection as well as mental health.
- *Micro-level:* Factors that focus on the influences of immediate and close social environments, values and norms, such as expectations of respect, of masculinity and femininity, notions of peacefulness, which have an impact on day-to-day interaction.
- *Meso-level:* This level includes social institutions and processes of life organisation, as well as patterns of action embedded into conditions of the family, the neighbourhood, the school environment, societal values and norms. This level also includes opportunities, e.g. easy access to (professional) support by adults.
- *Macro-level:* This level includes conditions and regulations in the society as a whole, social equality, childhood and gender as institutions, institutions like the law, existence of a social support system. The access to social service institutions and therefore the access to professional support, based on child protection and safety laws, define conditions of security or insecurity in societies. Structural factors (e.g. children's rights, normative regimes of anti-racism and gender equality) appeared in the adolescents' statements and narrations.

Table B. Protective factors found in the qualitative material, assigned to one of the levels ontogenetic, micro, meso or macro.

Ontogenetic level	**Micro-level**	**Meso-level**	**Macro-level**
Personal competencies Continuous support by adult(s) Open view on gender roles Clear future plans	Parental interactions Friends' support Adults' support Teachers' support Close relationships Affiliation to community Norms and values Open views on gender roles Clear future plans	Good school environment Style of raising children Continuous support by (public) support system	Legal regulations, support and sanctions Social equality Normative regimes Existence of social service support system

Note:
Support by others (family, friends, and teachers); open view on gender roles; clear future plans; good school environment: see table A.
Personal competencies: Youngsters' features that had been observed and found relevant in connection to the development of resilience, e.g. empathy, self acceptance, reflectiveness, self-esteem, openness, happiness, responsibility.
Continuous support by adult(s): Support especially in times of difficulties (death of a close person, divorce, relocation etc.)
Parental interactions: Interactions between parents, and between parents and youngsters that had supportive quality.
Close relationships: Relations characterised by trust, empathy, support
Affiliation to community: E.g. youth subculture, religious association.
Norms and values: opposition to violence, justice, responsibility etc.
Style of raising children: Parenting style, e.g. rules, daily routine, supervision/soft control, as well as institutionalisation and external family support.
Existence of social service support system: E.g. youth welfare service, counselling services, in general: supporting institutions.
Legal regulations, support and sanctions: E.g. laws that forbids to beat children, juridical decisions for family support or other interventions.
Social equality: Realization of social equality by policies (e.g., housing policies).
Normative regimes: Certain norms were evident in the youngsters'statements, e.g. anti-racism, gender equality etc. The influence of the media has to be taken into account in promoting such norms and values.
In several cases, *social turning points* were identified, caused by basic events or important biographical changes (e.g. migration, new school, divorce). In some cases, social turning points changed the environment of the adolescents in a way that improved their lives, in other cases adverse life conditions have worsened it.
Some of the adolescents shared the experience of a common social turning point, which had influenced their life situation in a positive way. When the life situations of those kids were compared, common protective factors appeared. Common sources for emotional and social support were observed inside and outside their families, such as *important friendship, positive experiences in school, good relations to teachers, other adults outside the family* and others. Protective factors in the close social environment of the adolescents seem to contribute to the development of resilience in a fundamental way. Despite quarrels and the experience of violence within the families, all the respondents could develop a positive emotional relationship to at least one other person (attachment figure).
In some cases it was possible to identify *matched pairs,* i.e. two youngsters with very similar characteristics, life situations and experiences, but different resilience status (one of them violent, the other one non-violent), like in the following case example:
Miha and Ivo are working class boys from Slovenia, living in urban areas. Both had experienced severe family conflicts, screaming and quarrelling, as well as a stressful divorce. Now both of them live with their mothers and brothers, both are loners and sometimes victims of bullying and mockery in school. Both have weight problems, they hate football and group sports; Miha as well as Ivo play a music instrument. Miha was assigned to the resilient group (non-violent behaviour), Ivo showed violent behaviour against others. Differences between the two youngsters which can help to explain their different trajectories regarding violence are the following:

Ontogenetic level: Miha made a reflective, normative, open and trustful impression, Ivo rather not. Ivo could rather be described as emotionally detached. Miha openly spoke about his suffering and pain because of the divorce, Ivo gave rather superficial statements. Ivo was also much more frustrated because of his obesity than Miha.
Micro level: Miha expressed many strong values (family as the utmost value, education, equality among people, non-violence), while Ivo did not express any value at all. Ivo legitimised violence as a strategy for conflict resolution. In general, Miha showed a stronger orientation towards social relationships than Ivo who spent far more time with computers than Miha. Miha talked about positive relationships to many family members, while Ivo's relationships made an ambivalent impression. Miha was also in close and trustful relationship with his class teacher ("We can trustfully tell her all secrets, and everything that bothers us and then we solve school problems together."), while Ivo did not mention any such supportive relationship. It is not that Ivo lacked supportive persons in his life at all (he reported positive relationships with his grandmother and grand aunt), it was more his alienation from himself and his feelings that made the difference.
Meso level: It seemed that for Miha external support in dealing with the hardship of the divorce had been supportive, although in the quarter where he lived there seemed to be no good infrastructure to get help or to get into contact with youth workers or other youth agencies. For Ivo, no such support was evident.
Macro level: The lack of a supportive infrastructure points to deficits in implementation despite of supportive legal regulations regarding youth welfare and violence.

Although it was not easily possible to reconstruct the development towards resilience throughout the respondents' biographies, it seemed plausible that later factors built on precedent factors. E.g. the presence of a supportive adult person at an early age could contribute to the development of supportive personal attributes (e.g. self-esteem), despite detrimental experiences in the family; a higher self-esteem could then contribute to better relations to peers at school, etc. In this way, positive developments could emerge step by step in the youngsters' biographies.

4. Recommendations for practice, research and policy

These recommendations for schools, policy makers and researchers highlight how an approach of strengthening preventive mechanisms can be used as a viable alternative within the concept of violence prevention. In this context, schools play a particularly important role due to the amount of time a child spends there and the powerful socializing effect it has on the development of that child. Recommendations presented here are not general guidelines for violence prevention in schools but rather focuses on a specific issue: *how can schools reinforce the resiliency of a child who faces tremendous adversities in her/his life?* These recommendations are based on the STAMINA project study which gives voice to those children facing difficult life challenges and those experts who attended the final STAMINA conference, held in Berlin, in February of 2011.

The recommendations are organized in four sections. In the first section we briefly present the concept of resiliency in order to further discuss the role it may have in the schools. In the second section we develop several recommendations for teachers, headmasters, social workers and psychologist who are directly involved in the school system. Recommendations focus on the role schools may play in resiliency and violence prevention. In the third section we develop recommendations for further research, in particular, on the methodological approach and research design when investigating such topics as peer violence, the school system and resiliency. In addition, we suggest topics in need of further, in-depth research. The fourth section provides additional general policy recommendations.

4.1 The role of school in fostering resilient trajectories

The sciences which study psycho-social development and its disorders mainly focus their attention on threatening and harming factors, which contribute to the development of psychosocial disorders, which appear in the child, the child's family and the wider environment. However, the explanatory value of these theories decreases if the question 'Why have disorders developed with the child A?' is rephrased into the question 'Why has the child B, who lives in similarly unfavorable environment as child a, not developed these disorders?' This is shown by the fact that a large majority of children originating in highly unfavorable environments do not suffer from psychosocial disorders and remain, despite numerous threatening factors, in good psychosocial conditions. A resilient trajectory means that child, whose forecast for development of psychosocial disorders is clearly unfavorable on the basis of constitutional, family, social and other risk factors, still remains in good psychosocial conditions, and is capable of positive management of social demands and pressures from the environment (Mikuš-Kos 1992). However, it needs to be stressed, that resilience does not constitute an individual trait or characteristic. Rather, the attributes of resilience are substantially shaped by life circumstances and therefore dependent on protective and supportive resources available in the environment.

From the point of view of prevention, it would be necessary to determine what enables such a child a positive development, what safeguards her or him. Such supportive resources available in school which are particularly crucial for the children whose family life is visibly unfavorable and threatening can be: inclusion into the wider social web and its support, participation in pro-social groups, organizations and activities, such as a sports clubs, various leisure activities, good peer relations and positive experience in the school, like academic success, trusting and supporting relation with at least one adult, positive peer group influence, friendships etc. The most crucial school preventive factors include also school ethos and culture, school performance, good relations with the teachers and the peer social group, opportunity for social education and learning by models, busy schedule and opportunities to develop and bring to life various interests. Positive school experience made it more likely that young people facing adversities in family would develop their self-esteem and self efficacy, making it more likely to feel confident that they could handle challenges and act in a positive way. Schools are definitely able to foster positive chain reaction and create opportunities for turning point experiences which open up new opportunities. Teachers and school personnel often feel overwhelmed that schools and their engagement have no impact, but it's necessary to point out their important role in violence prevention and their work, which do make a difference. Therefore resources would be needed also for supervision and reflection of their work regarding violence prevention in schools.

4.2 Recommendations for school

Good school environment was identified as one of the most frequent protective factor in the Stamina qualitative study. Good school environment as supportive environment includes structural and individual level. On structural level anti-violence policy, school climate and conflict mediation programme were the most commonly found. On individual level we identified good relations with teachers and peers, personal success and active participation in decision making processes in school. Thus two key topics occurred as the most important when developing recommendations for schools:

- school as a safe place (school climate, place of justice and equality)
- school as a source of support (individual and general support, school climate, good relations with teachers and peers, the role of teachers as models, accessible and supportive, the need for social and emotional skills training)

School as a safe place

School as a safe place for socializing

School is more than just the place for learning; it is a place for socializing with peers, it gives the opportunity for informal, social and emotional education, to practice relational competences and skills. It involves coeducation, which enables creating a positive school atmosphere, a climate of trust, and a safe place for socializing and learning.

"Because of my school friends more than anything [she likes going to school]. I come here and switch off from the problems I have in the family and other things" (from the interview, Spain).

School can be also a relief from home for children and youth experiencing violence and other adversities at home. School as a safe place for socializing and learning, and teachers as supportive adult persons take the role of violence preventive factors.

School as place of equal treatment and a place where each voice is heard
Equal treatment of all pupils in the class, in school gives positive recognition that every voice is important and that despite diversities every pupil can contribute. It also contributes to positive class and school atmosphere, and enables open communication between pupils and teachers in solving problems, discussing important issues and taking decisions.

"… the pupils take decisions in class ... we are quite cool in that point [Teachers support pupils decision process] ... I am class representative this year ... our class teacher and we sit together every week for one hour and discuss important topics ... the class teachers talks a lot with us ... if we are in troubles" (from the interview, Austria).

Being a class representative also enables young person to take the responsibility and show competences. In the interviews we found children in difficult situation in their lives as class representatives, which gives them self-affirmation, positive self-image and an opportunity to learn necessary social skills (discussing, interacting, etc.).

School as a ticket for better future, a place that fosters opportunities and visions for children
In many interviews young people emphasize the importance of formal education as a structural way to overcome adverse life situations. Many of the interviewees have clear future plans and visions regarding their educational path and professional career. They want to continue their studies after they complete their compulsory education. School is perceived as a long term investment, together with the idea that education is directly related to better quality of life. The role of school is to foster the visions for future life, which also means to give as many opportunities for intellectual growth, such as extra curricular activities, which enable to develop social skills and competences.

School as a safe place for doing non-hegemonic genders
School shall represent a place that is open for alternative ways of doing gender, a safe place for expressing and doing gender, which does not reproduce traditional gender images and traditional gender roles. In particularly, it's important for boys, where violence is stereotypically related to constructions of masculinity. In the interviews we identified quite many examples, where boys with non-violent patterns, expressed their non-hegemonic masculinity. In one of the interviews, a boy from Slovenia, mentions that he doesn't like to hang out with his male class mates, because it's always about the power and competitions, who is better. He likes to hang out with female class mates, because he can talk with girls, and he can count on them more than on boys. Boys who are not 'typical guys', who are not part of hegemonic masculinity are also often victims of peer violence and sometimes also mocked by some teachers.

School as a source of support

Teachers and other professionals in schools: Become a helping other and provide support to youth as mentors

Many children who expressed attributes of resilient trajectories identified the role of at least one caring person as having a role in their decision to not get involved in violence and attempt to lead positive attitude towards life. The interactions with the helping person often made it possible for young person under stress to sublimate feelings of doubt, fear and guilt into a plan for positive life. From the perspective of young people in this study, the supportive and instrumental relationships were less dependent on the professional qualifications of the adult caring person. What mattered most was the individual's attitude towards them, their commitment, and consistency of the messages they taught, and who communicated warmth and caring while setting consistent rules and expectations. Through such a relationship, the consciousness of the young person could be further raised, as the adult helped the young person uncover more information about her/himself, offering alternative interpretations. The relationship also helped the young people to assess how they felt about themselves with respect to their involvement in adverse situation, assists in values clarification, and provides corrective emotional experiences. Thus the helping relationship significantly influences the potential for self-liberation and re-creation of faculties that were damaged by traumatic experiences, such as the basic capacity for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity and intimacy.

"… there was one teacher I really liked a lot ... he is teacher in city in X town.... I was able to talk to him ... I never had any troubles with him ... when my best friend died [he was 14 years old when his best friend died in car accident] ... this teacher accompanied me at the funeral…" (from the interview, Austria).

In schools it would be possible to set up a team of teachers, who has personal competences, experiences and affinity to work as personal mentors to kids in adversity. It could be set up as a personal mentoring with kids with severe family burden with the purpose to create a shelter in a school.

Teacher as a role model and example of survival of adversity

Supportive person can be a teacher who is at the same time also a role model, having similar experience of exclusion from youth. The similar experience of social exclusion and peer violence gives the young person recognition that he/she is not alone and isolated in experiencing social exclusion. Also, it empowers the young person with the recognition of overcoming the problematic and often violent situation and enables to develop positive future plans.

"he [art teacher] had the same style as I do now and he understands me, because he experienced that people talked behind him back, saying that he's taking drugs … and I can tell him … he won't talk about me with other teachers like some others would" (from the interview, Slovenia).

The need for reacting: Take measures if needed

For most respondents, it was the actions of, and not the words spoken by, these individuals that earn their trust. An important role of the helping adult is also to enable access to network of services and foster webs of positive relationships.
As in the case of a girl in Austria, who experienced continuous violence from her mother,

social services and school support played an important role when taking measures to end mother's violence. The girl told a female teacher what happens at home and social workers talked to her mother afterwards, who after some interventions stopped beating the children. In school she can talk about her family situation with her peers and some teachers, also she gets their support.

"It was [clears her throat] it was, when I went to primary school … my mother used to beat us all the time … and – then she stopped, because people from social services went to her - I told my teacher [what happens at home] … and she [teacher] called the people from social services, the person who looked after my mother … and they talked with my mother …" (from the interview, Austria).

Once it is publicly recognized that a kid has been harmed, the community, school must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and repair the injury. These two responses – recognition and restitution – are necessary to rebuild the survivor's sense of order and justice.

The need to speak out

By speaking out, most of the young people are able to reconstruct the stories of their involvement in adverse situation. The need to speak out to a trustful person, in school environment can be a teacher or a class teacher, enables young person to reflect about the problematic issue and increases the possibility to overcome the adverse situation.

"I'm in very good relations with my class teacher, because, she helped me a lot, when I had problems with low marks, she advised me. And then, when my uncle had cancer, I opened myself to her, and she told me that everything will be ok, that I should put the focus on learning and that everything will be ok. I don't know, it seems, she knows me well … and also at the parent-teacher meeting, she always says some positive words about me, and this gives me motivation … (from the interview, Slovenia).

Provide accessible web of after school activities

The attainment of cognitive and creative abilities, academic achievements and vocational skills, social and cultural competencies are also needed for the young people to leave behind their traumatic experiences and bad situations. These are all compensatory influences and have capacities for positive experiences and positive self-evaluation. They offer opportunities to become agents of their own positive development; they enforce empowerment and get the opportunities to exercise increasingly autonomous positive self-regulation. Therefore, general accessibility of after school activities is very important for child's educational career and his/hers cultural and social capital. In some cases, the interviewees commented that they couldn't do extra-school activities because their families couldn't afford them.

Contextual sensitivity: Sometime, being different and on the edge can be a protective process

A major limitation of the concept of resilience is that it is tied to the normative judgments relating to particular outcomes. It is possible that the socially defined desirable outcome may be subjectively defined as undesirable, while the socially defined undesir-

able outcome may be subjectively defined as desirable. From the subjective point of view the individual may be manifesting resilience, while from the social point of view the individual may be manifesting vulnerability (Ungar 2004).

In the interviews we identified important link between subculture in relation to youth with resilient trajectories. From the first glance subculture could be seen as a risk factor, making her/him as "other", different in the eyes of school mates, which can lead into bullying the child. In our interviews, it became clear that belonging to a subculture constitutes personal integrity and can very positively influence someone's difficult situation in the family, in school and wider social environment. Belonging to a subculture widens someone's informal social network, brings supportive persons and in terms of subculture related to music and dance also activities.

For example, in some places in Catalonia youth programs offer activities for boys and girls carried out through hip hop dance and music. In this case a young person broadens informal network based on specific activity (music, dance), acquires responsibility through mentoring of "older brothers" and the discipline, which performing this activity means. Hip hop subculture has bad reputation in wider society, also in schools among teachers, and is related to consuming drugs. Despite bad reputation and the possibility of subculture as risk mechanisms, hip hop subculture represents a protective mechanism for a boy from the interview in Spain. He experienced extremely difficult situations, such as violence in the family, experienced racism, has migration background and poverty was constantly present. Also he lives in the area where drugs consumption is normal in the school and in the places where he socializes, and violence use and risk tendency on the part of the boys is prevalent. In the case of this boy, hip hop subculture have reaffirmed and helped to acquire resilient competencies by mentoring and protection of older boys in the group. Besides, hip hop dance can be seen as healthy activity, which gives security in him through dance training. As pointed out in the citation below, music and dance can also be a good place for canalizing negative feelings (anger, sadness, etc.).

"If I have a bad day when I am going to dance it passes. If you go sad to dance, when you start, you concentrate on dancing and sorrow leaves you" (from the interview, Spain).

Recommendations for inclusion of children with migrant background, in particular "new" migrants

In multicultural neighborhoods schools have to take special measures to facilitate children's and their parents' inclusion in the school environment. Steps must be taken to identify, prevent and stop acts of racism, nationalism and collateralization. In order to prevent institutional discrimination teachers must be informed about these mechanisms of exclusion.

"For instance, at the beginning when I came [from Bosnia and Herzegovina], they … some teachers … they didn't really exclude me, but they didn't ask me questions, they were acting like I don't know anything, at least I had this impression … like, 'well, she doesn't speak Slovene, we won't ask her, because she doesn't know the language' … " (from the interview, Slovenia).

Time and patience are necessary for appropriate placement of these students. Attempts to rush language acquisition only frustrate the teacher and student. Learning another language, even for the most diligent student, is a lengthy process that cannot be completed in a few months. Additional language class is one of the crucial elements for migrant youth to be able to attend school in the new place, to learn and study in the new language.
Also informal engagement of teachers and peers, such as help with studying, with homework and learning the language, play an important role of social inclusion of 'new comers'.

"She was my class teacher in 8th grade, now she is my sub-class teacher. I can tell her everything, everything, she is like my friend. She also likes to help, when I came [to Slovenia from Bosnia and Herzegovina], I didn't know anyone, nothing, and she taught me and helped me, I like her very much because of that … (from the interview, Slovenia).

Apart from educational part, teachers need to prevent any racist, sexist and homophobic peers' attacks. As in the case of migrant girl from Austria, whose teacher reacted to racist bullying and took necessary steps to end it.

"… teacher cares about you, they take care, that no one says "nigger" to you, things like that – so no one says "nigger" – teachers take care about it … in our class there is just me and one boy, we are two people with migration background" (from the interview, Austria).

Fostering and supporting peer educators/mediators
School mediation is one example, which includes active role of pupils. This is one possible way to gain social skills and competences. Being a conflict mediator with the official duty to find violent-free solutions for other peers' problems might be a relevant step for the mediator and also for the conflicting parts. The opportunity to learn responsibility and to gain good peer reputation also builds social skills and increases self-esteem. Besides, school mediation to handle conflicts can also contribute to better school climate and good relations with teachers and peers.

Create space, acceptance for speaking about violence with trained moderators (peers and teachers) for youth, for parents and for teachers.
Occasional workshops in schools for teachers or for youth to discuss issues about violence is not enough. The need, recognized from the practice, is that a continuity in education for violence prevention is necessary in schools. Education for violence prevention for youth is to be prepared in relation to human rights education, gender equality and anti-discrimination, and to involve social and emotional skills training. Education for violence prevention for teachers should be interdisciplinary in terms of connecting social work, pedagogy and other social sciences. It also includes the work to train professionals (train the trainers). As for the families violence education could include social skills.

Networking and inclusion of different agents in violence prevention
In violence prevention the cooperation between schools and families is relevant together with social services (social work centers, youth centers, etc.) as well as wider community.

4.3 Research

The researchers should be aware of how findings on resilience could be misinterpret in the way, that resilience constitutes an individual trait rather than being shaped by life circumstances and supportive infrastructure. Therefore the researchers need to provide *clear operational definitions of the construct* in all reports and need to be proactive in dissemination of knowledge in clear terms about the limitations of empirical findings.

In research about resilience it is relevant to get *children's perspective,* to include their stories/*individual case studies* and perspectives. Children's voice is important part of the research on violence and resilience and also often marginalized in the research.

There is a need also for *longitudinal research* (time points), starting the research from childhood to adolescence, which would give more answers considering violence, youth and resilience, and would lead to the knowledge on causal relations. This is of significant importance since resilience is a process. In this perspective, the relevant question, how to consider school violence in relation to structural and individual violence could be included and researched more systematically and in depth.

Interdisciplinary approach in researching violence and resilience is necessary.

Methodological approaches in research about violence, youth and resilience should be taken into account as well. The quantitative approaches are predominantly in the research field of violence and youth, which lack personal perspectives, micro level that cannot be measured by numbers. On the other hand, also qualitative approach would be enriched with quantitative methods. Therefore, the recommendation for methodology is to integrate perspective consisting of quantitative and qualitative methodology - *mix models*. Combination of quantitative and qualitative methodological approach would bring more complete picture of researched topics.

Since there is not much empirical evidence about intersectionality, violence and schools, special consideration should be on the question *how to proceed with intersectionality.*

Under researched and under conceptualized topic is also *girls and violence*. It is a gap in research and knowledge on girls in relation to violence, since there was more research emphasis on boys and violence. Violence is stereotypically related to the construction of masculinity as a way, how boys grow up within peers. While on the other hand the construction of femininity is stereotypically based on the opposite of violence, such as empathy, understanding, obeying, etc.

Among research topics, more interest should be on good practices, research about resilient schools (what is the background of the school, what are directions on which the schools are working). In this regard more research focus should be put on 'interventions'.

Under researched is also topic related to perpetrators and non violence. In this regard research topic could focus on the questions, what needs are being met by violence and what else can meet these needs?

Future Insights
This study may provide us with some future insights into the nature of resiliency:
We can conclude that the theoretical and empirical model can explain the differences between "near-resilient" young people, on the one hand, and "resilient", on the other, for "non-resilient" young people. From a content perspective this means that the "resilience status" could be influenced in a focussed way by moderating the living environments of these young people. According to the compilations this would need to involve on the one hand minimising risk factors and on the other hand supporting protection factors. In this way, a large proportion of the young people who were negatively affected by their family environment could be sufficiently supported to become much more symptom-free.

- Nearly all of the adolescents studied had violent histories and only a few did not become violent themselves. For us to develop a more cohesive definition of resiliency, the subjective circumstances and points of view of those who are the exception, those who did not become violent, must be better understood and considered.

- The expectation to live violent free in a society which legitimizes (male) violence in public (war, police) as well as tolerates it in private spheres (domestic and family violence) as well as if it is applied to minorities (migrants, queers, Roma people etc.) might be perceived as being hypocritical, especially by adolescents who feel unprotected or are not valued by society. Researchers might well want to bring these contradictions to the forefront.

- Those resources and factors which help an adolescent reject becoming violent range from personal traits to the development of close relationships; from social institutions to cultural and social factors, and yet, they are all interrelated. Longitudinal studies are needed to identify and further clarify non-violent socialisation patterns. Most of the data for this study came from the adolescents themselves. Other resources, such as friends, teachers, parents, communities, etc… need to be explored for us to develop a better understanding of the nature of resiliency.

4.4 Policy recommendations

Notwithstanding the real political value of providing welfare for young people, the socio-political perspective should always be borne in mind: The causes that affect violence within the family would by far and away not be addressed by this, but either the young people themselves or the compensatory pedagogical interventions would be empowered to cope with these. This is certainly not nothing – given the existing problems, to assert the contrary would be naked cynicism, but from a pedagogical perspective could well be described as suboptimal.

Youth coping strategies that increase the potential of a future, positive outcome needs to be supported by an environment in and out of school that reinforces resiliency. Schools and youth centres must be well-prepared structurally and professionally to strengthen child and adolescent development.

Schools, and all other settings where young people gather and socialize, must be made safe places and social workers/youth workers must ensure that schools remain a violent- and coercion-free environment. Care should be taken to avoid labels such as abuse, violence, violence prevention and intervention.

Policy makers need to be fully aware of the high incidence of all forms of family violence and of the potential for abusive behaviour on the part of educators. They need to be well aware of the damaging effects of domestic violence, child abuse and abusive educational methods during child and adolescent development. Furthermore policy makers must strengthen prevention and intervention measures targeted at youngster. Resources must be made available to intervene on behalf of youngsters, correctly assess their needs, especially when they do not follow social norms, and fully support their development.

Following is recommended:

- Professional support and youth networks need to be made available to young people overwhelmed by stressors such as violence, poverty, migration, etc…
- A community based support system for children and youngsters, addressing domestic violence, should be implemented.
- The potential to decrease or even prevent violence is enhanced when informa learning settings are used as opportunities to create discussions about such topics as gender equality, human rights education, etc… These settings need to be made more readily available.
- Effective violence prevention, domestic violence and intervention programmes are needed in schools. Teachers and other professionals must be educated on these topics and resources are needed to be made readily available to them.
- Violence prevention policies should also address larger questions such as identity, identity development, race, ethnicity, status, power, death, disability, legitimacy, urbanization, inequality and immigration.
- Programs for acquiring language proficiency for immigrant children and young people should be implemented.

In general, awareness raising measures on these topics are needed at community and national levels.

daphne

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