CarMiA – Caring Masculinities in Action

National Report AUSTRIA

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Intro

In 2014, the Austrian government issued a NAP to protect women* from violence; this was done in order to implement the Istanbul Convention of the European Council (2011). In 2016, a new protective clause was implemented that punishes coercion and intimidation as means of sexual violence (EIGE 2016).

The GREVIO Report 2017, which assesses the measures taken by the Austrian government to implement the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women* and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention"), comes to the following conclusion: Austria has taken a leading role in Europe over the last 20 years by introducing prohibition to enter and restraining orders to protect victims of domestic violence. In addition, legislative changes in Austria (criminal law) have led to a diversification of criminal offenses and enabled trial accompaniment for victims of violent and sexual offenses. Reporting requirements for medical professionals have been introduced to ensure victim protection.

Nevertheless, improvements are needed to ensure implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Measures focus on domestic violence, with little mention of other forms of violence against women* (e.g., assistance facilities for victims of sexual violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are almost non-existent). In addition, access to assistance is difficult for women* with disabilities and with uncertain residence status. Preventive measures are focused on domestic violence and are limited to campaigns and events. Measures for the long-term prevention of forced marriage and genital mutilation are almost non-existent, which means that these forms of violence are rarely reported (low conviction rate).

A similar issue affects children who witness violence who do not receive the care they need. Moreover, children over the age of 14 do not automatically benefit from the protection of a restraining order issued in favour of their abused mother. Rather, these children must seek a restraining order themselves.

Conviction rates are low for all forms of violence against women*. A reason is that courts often use the option of diversionary measures (e.g., offenders must complete anti-violence training or participate in an out-of-court settlement instead of a criminal conviction).

In addition, the GREVIO report notes quality deficiencies in investigative procedures and evidence collection that contribute to the fact that perpetrators of domestic violence or other forms of violence against women* are rarely prosecuted. [1]

In psychosocial work with perpetrators, there are various approaches that have developed in recent years; telephone hotlines, anonymous counselling centres, perpetrator programs, and forensic psychotherapeutic and psychiatric interventions. The majority of violent acts are perpetrated by men* and male adolescents[2], so "perpetrator work" services are mostly aimed at these target groups. [3] "Perpetrator-related interventions" include both psychosocial and authority-based measures.[4]

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[1] GREVIO's (Basis-)Evaluierungsbericht über gesetzliche und weitere Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung des Übereinkommens des Europarates zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung von Gewalt gegen Frauen und häuslicher Gewalt (Istanbul-Konvention) Österreich Bundeskanzleramt Österreich (2018).

[2] Bergmann, N., Scambor, C. & Scambor, E. (2014). Bewegung im Geschlechterverhältnis? Zur Rolle der Männer in Österreich im europäischen Vergleich (Wiener Beiträge zur empirischen Sozialwissenschaft, Band 5). Berlin: Lit-Verlag.

[3] Haydn, A. & C. Scambor (2021). Täterarbeit – ein Beitrag zum Opferschutz. In: Frauenservice Wien (2021). Frauen.Wissen.Wien. Nr. 11: Gewalt gegen Frauen hat System wie unsere Gesellschaft „Täterschutz" fördert. S.37-51.

[4] Kraus, H. & Logar, R. (2014). Opferschutzorientierte Interventionen für Täter als wichtige Maßnahme der Gewaltprävention. Juridikum, 3/2014, 391–397. (S. 392)

The vast majority of perpetrators are men*.[5] This clearly applies for femicides, which have received increasing public attention in recent years. From January to October 2022 alone, the Association of Autonomous Austrian Women*'s Shelters (AÖF) counted 28 such murders in the immediate vicinity of the female victims.

VMG's position is that GBV is more than VAW – it also includes violence of men* against other men* and other gender groups, since it is deeply rootet in traditions of masculinity. (Often violent), toxic competition among men* must not be forgotten.

The Austrian umbrella organization for men*'s work, DMÖ, promotes both men*'s counselling (for perpetrators and victims) and boys work as means of violence prevention. This is implemented on a regional/local basis, also by the men*'s counselling centres in Austria.

The EU project CarMiA, funded by the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers aims at the prevention of GBV. It promotes care-oriented models of masculinity among students by addressing multipliers in education and younger "change agents" in peer-to-peer work.

The Austrian team at VMG can draw on the institution's experience and practice in men*'s councelling and working with boys* and men* at different ages, in various social situations and on different topics (prominently including violence prevention). The report at hand is based on the experience of the Institute for Men*'s and Gender Studies in research and practical projects on prevention and the contacts with youth social work and educational institutions. From the practical experience, best practice methods are presented that can be adapted to the project needs and used in the process. In focus groups, needs and resources regarding violence prevention as well as gender and masculinity images are collected in order to be able to create targeted measures in the respective fields.

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[5] Scambor, C. & Scambor, E. (2017). Gender Based Violence and the Role of Men (Nasilje na podlagi spola in vloga moških). In: Časopis za kritiko znanosti, Let. XLV, 2017, Številka 267. P.115-127.
https://www.ckz.si/novice/11-publikacije/119-267-stevilka-ckz-prvi-spol-kriticne-studije-moskih-in-moskosti-privlacnosti-spolov

1. Review of good practices

Heroes:
HEROES® is a concept/approach that works with young men* with a traditional ethnic backgrounds, usually from migrant families. The goal is to reach equality-based gender relations on the basis of non-violence and human rights. The approach uses theater pedagogical methods to raise awareness on gender inequality, stereotypes and violence. This process of reflection and self-awareness is accompanied by two group leaders. Participants of 17-21 years run through a 2 months training of 2 weekly hours in order to become agents of change in their communities. Heroes follows a critical masculinities approach to prevent GBV, talks about environments and promotes the resources of the participants. Providing them with alternatives to dominant, toxic and violent masculinities is the main target. The social diversity of masculinities is focused mainly in terms of ethnicity, but the diversity of mind-sets is addressed. Peer-to-peer work is what follows after one year, when the trained Heroes start working actively with the same kind of work in their communities.
HEROES is financed by the federal government and some state governments (namely Styria and Salzburg). The project is in constant communication and interaction with high schools and their social workers, and with educational institutions as well as youth centres where extra-curricular activities are strongly valued and fostered. HEROES® Trainers are also responsible for the promotion of the Project and to seek for potential HEROES®.

Focus on Men – FOMEN:*
FOMEN has been EU project in six countries that was conducted 2019-21. It aimed at gender sensitivity and prevention, targeting men* with international family history, but also - via a capacity building program - multipliers (teachers, facilitators, counsellors, frontline workers, first accommodation operators, psychologists, social workers, educators, and others working directly with migrants and refugees). Moreover, FOMEN developed quality standards and tools for gender sensitive and violence-prevention trainings. The team developed and conducted dialogue-oriented seminars in order to encourage but also challenge the participants' reflection on the topics of gender roles, self-care, social relations, violence prevention and caring masculinities. The facilitators' role is to create a structure in the group and to support the group to focus on concrete topics.
FOMEN's main objectives are to develop gender-sensitive violence prevention, to motivate male migrants and refugees to become allies in gender equality through role-model approaches, to improve the health and well-being of victims by promoting emotional regulation in men* and helping them build social relations, to highlight to the public, as well as local/national authorities, the need for a gender-sensitive approach to violence prevention, to improve the cross-over between migration/intercultural education, gender/masculinity, and violence prevention, improve health and well-being through techniques on handling emotions and building social relations, learning through shared experiences, create spaces for critical reflection on traditional gender roles and masculinities develop alternatives to violence amongst marginalised groups and implement effective participatory programs for male migrants and refugees through dialogue, active exchange, open discussion, and ownership.

Masculinities: Within the different modules, different concepts of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity, caring masculinities, etc.) are discussed. The demands of masculinity, own stereotypes and ideas of gender relations are considered as well. Also, the costs of traditional and toxic masculinity and social privileges of men* are taken into account.

Violence and masculinities: One module focus on the fact that men* develop traits of a violent (toxic) masculinity based on traditional gender requirements, which has disadvantages for society, especially for women* and children, but also for the men* themselves. Pedagogically, the aspect of violence is addressed by sensitising participants to different forms of violence. They also learn techniques to calm the body and quiet the mind, expand awareness and reduce reactivity. One method aims to help participants understand the emotion of anger in its cognitive, motivational, attentional, behavioural, sensory, and imaginative aspects.

Gender-based violence: One of the eight modules focuses explicitly on GBV. The topics of the module are:
- Sensitization regarding forms of GBV and their recognition
- Prevalence of gender-based and domestic violence
- Multiple consequences of GBV
- Legal framework regarding combating GBV

Engaged in Equality - Challenging Masculinities and Engaging Adolescent Boys* to End Gender-Based Violence ´
The project "Engaged in Equality" addresses the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) by addressing Hegemonic Masculinities and the engagement of men* and boys* in gender equality. The project is coordinated by Fundació Surt (Catalonia, Spain). Project partners are: Peace Institute (PI, Slovenia), Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS, Cyprus), Istituto Degli Innocenti di Firenze (IDI, Italy) and Institute for Masculinity Research and Gender Studies at VMG (Austria). The project is funded by the European Commission, CERV-2021-DAPHNE and co-funded by the Social Ministry in Austria. The project's goal is to challenge traditional gender roles, Hegemonic Masculinity and engage young people in becoming role models for the elimination GBV. It also has the objective to empower young people, in particularly adolescent girls* to identify the potential risks of Hegemonic Masculinity and gain confidence to reject abusive behaviours and relationships. Exchange, understanding and cooperation between young people will be strengthened to jointly contribute to healthy and positive relationships. Negative gender stereotypes and norms that hinder gender equality will be tackled by using an innovative and previously tested approach, based on audio-visual media and music, and the capacity building of education professionals.

All approaches focus on young men* (or adolescent boys*), by proposing alternatives to dominant masculinities, either explicitly or implicitly addressing issues of inequalities, domination and violence. Both are suitable in educative contexts of sensitization and prevention of violence. While HEROES applies theatric/art-oriented methods, FOMEN focusses more on dialogue, communication and education (also of multipliers). Both approaches probably complement each other quite well.

2. Focus groups with practitioners/professionals

Focus group composition and agenda

In total, 18 professionals were interviewed in CarMiA focus groups in Austria and three focus groups sessions with teachers and youth workers took place in summer and autumn 2022.

- Focus group school teachers BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL: In total, seven participants between the ages of 26 and 56 took part in this focus group, five of them female and two male. All participants were teachers with different school subjects, such as sports, psychology, German, religion and music. One participant stated that she also works as an afternoon supervisor at the school in addition to teaching.
- Focus group school teachers HTL COUNTRYTOWN: In total, four participants of an estimated age between 25 and 60 years took part in this focus group, two of them female and two male. One of the four participants joined the group a little later. All participants were teachers.
- Focus group social pedagogues and social workers LUZ: In total, seven participants between the ages of 26 and 43 took part in the focus group at the youth center LUZ, three of them female and four male. The interviewees stated their profession as social pedagogue, social worker or youth worker.

In the focus groups, the background of the project was first presented, the voluntary nature and anonymity of the focus group were explained, and the consent of the participants to take part in the focus group was obtained. With the help of a semi-structured guideline with main and secondary questions (partly optional), opinions and attitudes of the participants regarding relevant topics of CarMiA were collected.

In the group talks with teachers and youth worker in schools and youth centres, the status quo was first surveyed and needs were asked about. Specifically, they were asked to what extent the topic of gender plays a role in their own work. Subsequently, the participants were asked about their experiences with tensions, conflicts and violence and were asked for examples. In addition, the role of gender and other dimensions (origin, etc.) in connection with tensions, conflicts and violence and how experiences in this regard have been dealt with so far were surveyed in more detail. Finally, suggestions for improvement and urgent needs were raised from the perspective of the respondents.

The survey also focused on the "culture of care", i.e. what conditions the respondents believe must be in place for this to happen and where they see potential for improvement. The respondents were asked what strategies are used to support young people in talking about problems and what support services already exist in this regard or who can make use of them. Another topic was to find out to what extent male youths stand up against violence, what examples there are and what support they receive in doing so.

Concerning peer-to-peer approaches, respondents were asked what they thought should be considered when integrating peer-to-peer approaches into their pedagogical environment and how they thought male youth could be won over to a peer-to-peer approach to violence prevention.

Findings from focus groups with teachers and youth workers

Gender

Gendered (self) segregation:
Teachers at BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL talked about several modes of separation, some imposed structurally/externally (like a gender division of all sports classes), others by students themselves (group activities, depending on the age/group/teacher). The self-segregation is strongest at the beginning of puberty.

The beginning of puberty is characterised by strong gender identifications (Gottfredson 2005) and a great emphasis on gender differentiations, which is described as a "sameness taboo" (Rubin, 1975) of boys* and girls* „Peer pressure, sanctions against uncommon gender behaviour, affirmation of gender stereotypes, media images, and role models of the real working world usually narrow down educational choices and interests. Thus, the course for longer-term career orientation is set at an early stage." (Scambor et al., 2019: 62)[6] This self-segregation is often connected to traditional gender and masculinity attitudes, gender inequality and stereotypes, which are probably increased in such an environment. (In the paragraph on "Violence", we quote a teacher saying the tone in homogenous boys*' groups is usually "tougher", showing more aggression; so maybe, gender homogeneity is also connected to peer violence.)

Ambiguity, gender stereotypes and aggression:
Teachers' show insecurity about non-cis gender identities, like trans*, non-binary* students. At the schools studied, there is a significant lack of preparedness and competence around non-standard gender identities, which builds a climate that is not safe for trans* or non-binary* students. One teacher consistently referred to a non-binary student as a girl, with no other teacher intervening. Another teacher told of some students being overwhelmed by gender diversity (teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).

If teachers are not able to leave such stereotypes, allow for more ambiguity and make room for different identities, or expressions, how can students learn to do so?

A religious education teacher reports that gender diversity and gender nonconformity also lead to aggression and potentially to violence. "Be gay or whatever, but make a decision soon," one student recently said; this seems to imply a form of threat ('... if you do not decide, it is bad for you'). So, the environment lacking tolerance for ambiguity seems dangerous for those who cannot walk easy and traditional identity paths. (Teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL)

Concealed uncertainty:
Regarding trans*gender children, teachers see themselves as educated and conscious. In general, the participating teachers describe themselves as being attentive and trustworthy for the children: Here, the impression arises of a strong discrepancy between the perception of the interviewed teachers and students. This may be a hint to a defence mechanisms (teachers -

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[6] Scambor, Elli, Jauk, Dani, Gärtner, Marc & Erika Bernacchi (2019). Caring masculinities in action: Teaching beyond and against the gender-segregated labour market. In Magaraggia, S., Mauerer, G. & Schmidbaur, M. (ed.): Feminist Perspectives on Teaching Masculinities. Learning Beyond Stereotypes; ATGENDER, Routledge 2019. https://www.routledge.com/Feminist-Perspectives-on-Teaching-Masculinities-Learning-Beyond-Stereotypes/Magaraggia-Mauerer-Schmidbaur/p/book/9780367193287

HTL COUNTRYTOWN). Also, trans*gender used to be a talking point with parents, when students did not dare to talk about it (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).

"Sick of gender"
When gender is discussed in class, the topic is devalued by the students ("I'm so sick of gender"). Topics such as bulimia and anorexia, which had previously been dealt with at another school (a "girls*' school"), were inappropriate in the respective school and had to be dropped; topics concerning "boys*" first had to be worked out here as a new teacher. Among other things, this also reveals a strong gender differentiation. There is a need to identify where the "sickness of gender" comes from. There is also a demand for theory and methods to approach gender topics, and especially boys* (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).

Overload
One teacher sayed that teachers, such as liaison teachers/guidance councellors (Vertrauenslehrer*innen), often underestimate how many trans*gender students are already in the classroom. They are sometimes overwhelmed with the topic. The teacher said that puberty as a topic would be challenging enough, but nowadays you should also count on the topic of transgender. (Teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN)

Rigid norms among youth centre clients
Social pedagogues report very rigid gender and masculinity norms among marginalized young men* from conservatively religious backgrounds (Social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ)

- Gender does play a role in the daily work at the youth centre, particularly when namely young males* try to fit into group dynamics or to prove their selves as boys*/men*. According to the youth workers, to be a real man* and to be a real woman* among these young people is strongly related to a national identity, faith, and their perceptions of traditional gender roles.
- Most of the male youth visiting the centre have a very patriarchal image of masculinity, which leaves little room for outings or even makes them impossible. Also the youth worker in the JUZ would often not fit into the image of masculinity (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).
- A female youth workers talks about boys* with international family history who share the attitude that one has to have sex with an Austrian woman first, since they are „sluts" anyway, in order to then be able to marry a pure woman.
- Young people visiting the youth centre have quite rigid understanding of conflict and resolution: Many rather risk a fight and consequences because that is part of their image of masculinity (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).
- On one hand, there is a permanent discussion, especially among male youth, about the relationship between showing strength, being masculine, being a thug, being proud to be (add a certain nationality), being a good (add a certain religious conviction) and being a man*. On the other, the gender discussion among young females is often about being a good wife, having children, being in love, being a good (add religious conviction), being feminine, even if some of them may not know what femininity actually means. Therefore aspects that may not fit among these categories are not tolerated particularly among some male youth. Several of them even would react aggressively and unfriendly towards someone who does not correspond to their traditional perceptions of being a man*.
- Although gender norms are particularly rigid among kids in the youth centre, there also seems to be a certain level of tolerance: A youth worker tells that there were already

trans* persons in the youth centre, but they were rather outsiders than part of the majority (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).

Violence

Forms of violence
- The group dynamics among boys* are described as rougher as and harsher than in mixed-gender classes. Rhetorically ("verbal violence" meaning psychological violence), the young people are often described as assaultive among themselves (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).
- During the focus group, two student suicides were mentioned. One teacher shared his perception about a high number of students who showed suicidal tendencies (one in 3 or 4) - (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).
- Homophobia, gender-based discrimination and violence itself are the daily challenges in these centres (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).

Coercion and control in a sexist framework
- Some older brothers would forbid their sisters to come to the youth centre, even though their parents would agree. Some boys* think that it is not a good place for girls*.
- The language of the boys* is very derogatory. Even if they don't address girls* directly, they get that. The issue would probably still exist after 15 years of work. Violence is also contained in jokes or rules that some set up for others (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).

Recognition and (non-)perception of violence
- Teachers have different perspectives on the occurrence of violence in school. One teacher says that violence tends to happen outside of class, for example during breaks or in the locker rooms for physical education. Another teacher thinks that there is less violence in this school, whereupon another teacher says that she assumes that she does not notice much of it (teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).
- Catcalling on the way to school and of a simulated rape in the changing room. The perpetrators were not aware of what they were doing, according to one teacher. Other homophobic and racist remarks by school classes were discussed, although these were not always recognised as violence (teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).
- One teacher states that he or she has not yet experienced physical violence, while another teacher states that he or she has already had experiences in this regard. Physical assaults are dismissed as "clumsy", i.e. unintentional. Material violence is also described, for example, incidents of vandalizing school property (school lockers were demolished) (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).

Ressources/perspectives - Culture of Care

- There was a school focus group discussion about what is needed for a Culture of Care. Teachers should offer space for conflict resolution and conversations and encourage students. But it also needs engaged students and social skills. The latter could be taught in cooperative learning methods, according to one teacher (teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).
- Youth workers point to different needs for a Culture of Care (Social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ):
  - More professionals and more time resources in general.
  - Staff members who speak the respective mother tongues of the young people.
  - But: One female youth worker, who counts herself as a member of the Kurdish community, emphasizes that she first had to build up trust and show that she is not as "judgy" as is usual in the community. In the long term, however, this has led to the development of very good relationships. Some young people have given her feedback that they feel freer next to her than usual, because they can also express their own shortcomings. The employee also emphasizes that the knowledge gained from her own migration background is one of her strongest tools.

- Teachers highlight the importance of a trustful basis and of the relation between teachers and students (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).
- Guides or templates describing procedures in case of violence already exist (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).
- It is reported in the focus group, that support services for student can be found at the school: Girls*' and women*'s representatives, confidential teachers, psychologists are mentioned (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).
- For the Gay Pride Day (CSD = Christopher Street Day in Austria), a flower trough was painted with rainbow colours by a youth worker. As a result, the LGBTQ+ issue has increasingly become a topic. One male youth, for example, asked directly what a youth worker would think about it. Most of the young people ignored the flower trough (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).
- Trans* persons had been visitors of the youth centre(s?) – more in the role of outsiders, but this can be seen as an achievement (given the rigid gender norms of a bigger part of the visitors) (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).
- The respondents emphasize the importance of diversity in the youth centres' teams. Through such diversity, they have mediated some critical situations in their centers. Representing an alternative role model despite traditional gender roles, speaking the language of some young visitors, coming from the same country as some young visitors came from, and even the fact that some youth workers may have an international background and may understand some feelings among these young people, these aspects are considered as an advantage at work (social pedagogues and social workers - JUZ).
- A staff member tells about a violence prevention project at a JUZ: Kick-Start; it works, among other activities, through boxing, self-defense & mediation. Violence prevention already existed before Corona, but was stopped last because of the pandemic. The educators would also embody an appropriate image of masculinity, and practice martial arts themselves. The offer was only accepted by girls*. Boys* 12 and older were meant as main target group, but did not participate. In 2017 there was the same project in another JUZ, there boys* had participated but the commitment was a problem (apparently young people only came sometimes). Many youth would do martial arts themselves. One staff member hypothesizes that the "pedagogical blah blah" does not interest the youth, but this is also part of the project.

Lacks/needs

- Only a few offers for violence prevention are found at the schools, even though there would be training for the youngest pupils to mediate conflicts (teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).
- In general, the teachers would not notice a lot of it because it would take place during the breaks or before school started (teachers - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).
- The fear of media reports on the state of schools was also described in the course of the focus group. During the focus group, there was also talk of two student suicides. In response to the question of how the school reacted to this, there is a strong focus on the needs of the teachers ("why wasn't I informed earlier") instead of the students (teachers - HTL COUNTRYTOWN).
- Youth centres and schools clearly need more resources for marginalized groups, especially of boys* (either those who are in danger of being victimized, or those who might become perpetrators). Especially work with ultra-traditionalist and patriarchal cultural backgrounds need a stronger emphasis. Teachers need more support here, youth centres have more knowledge they could transfer. HEROES and CarMiA knowledge transfer could be very helpful.
- How to involve boys* into violence prevention such as "Kick-start"? Are there good practices that show how the main target group is effectively involved?
- Working with parents and family environments should be put in focus. Work inside institutions is not fruitful, if traditionalist/patriarchal and violent masculinities or unequal gender relations gain a lot of attraction and are normalized within significant relationships such as families.

3. Focus groups with youngsters

Focus group composition and agenda

In total, 44 young people and students were interviewed in four focus groups in Austria conducted in summer and autumn 2022.

- First focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the IT class: In total, twelve students between the ages of 16 and 17 took part, presumably ten of them were boys* and two girls*. The participants were students of the IT branch of the HTL COUNTRYTOWN.
- Second focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the IT class: The number of participants was 12 young people (according to the name 11 male and one female participant), aged between 16 and 17 years. The participants were students of the IT branch of the HTL COUNTRYTOWN.
- First focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the business school branch: In total, 11 students between the ages of 16 and 17 took part, presumably ten of them were boys* and one girl*. The participants were students of the economic branch of the HTL COUNTRYTOWN.

- Second focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the business school branch: The number of participants here was 9 young people (according to the name 8 male and one female participant), aged between 16 and 17 years. The participants were students of the economic branch of the HTL COUNTRYTOWN.

As in the other focus groups, the project background was presented, the voluntary nature and anonymity of the focus group explained, and the consent to take part in the focus group obtained. A semi-structured guideline with main and secondary questions (partly optional) were applied. In the focus group with the young people, they were first asked for their opinion regarding the meaning of gender. They discussed what makes a boy*, a girl* or a non-binary* person in our society. They were also asked what, in their opinion, makes a boy*, a girl* or a non-binary* person a popular, well-respected person.

By providing input in the form of songs or printed lyrics to the songs, the thematic block "masculinities" was then dealt with in the focus group with the young people. For this purpose, the song "Sand in den Augen"[7] (Engl. "Sand in the Eyes") by Danger Dan and, if there was enough time, the song "Boys Cry"[8] were played to the group and discussed. The songs deal with a critical discussion of the hegemonic and toxic notion of masculinity and aspects of an alternative construct of masculinity (Caring Masculinity). First, the young people were asked about their opinion of the songs. Furthermore, they discussed which message the song wants to transmit and how women* and men* are portrayed in the songs. Then they were asked what form of violence the young people recognize in the songs. Finally, the young people were asked what they would change about the songs if they could.

In the final round of the focus groups with young people, the participants were asked about what would be necessary at their school in order to promote justice there, and what would be necessary to promote non-violence at their school. At the end of the focus group, the young people were given the opportunity to add questions, comments, etc. to the focus group.

About the Focus Groups with Young People

The original plan was to do two focus groups in a row with one class. Instead of two, four focus groups with young people were ultimately conducted, since two classes were able to work instead of just one. This came as a surprise and was spontaneously solved in such a way that two focus groups were conducted in parallel, each with one instead of two interviewers. The work was not done in a classroom, but in a larger event room. The first class was an IT class (3rd grade, upper school), the second from the business branch (also 3rd grade, upper school). The conversations were recorded via recording device or mobile phones.

Results

Youngsters - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL (Only one girl in each group!)
Group 1:

NAME	ALTER	NAME	ALTER
MI	17	NA	16
MA	17	JU	16
NI	16	FA	16

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[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1poIN_5x1s
[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSdR4z26Uh8

NAME	ALTER	NAME	ALTER
JO	16	JO	16
MI	16	NI	17
TO	16	AN	16

Group 2:

NAME	ALTER	NAME	ALTER
MA	17	AL	17
AN	17	NI	16
AL	17	JU	16
OL	17	NO	16
JA	16	PA	16

Gender:

What makes a popular boy*/young man*?
G1: Self-confident, emotional self-control, not easily upset, hardened
G2: Extrovert, self-confident, responsible, loyal. Not being a bigmouth or „no dumb mouth"
(„*kein deppertes Maul*").

The man* I like
G1: open-minded, pleasant, show feelings. Debated: Showing feelings among men*/boys*.

On girls*:
G1: similarly stereotypical as with boys*/men* – shy, coy, reluctant, more passive.
G2: respectful, friendly, calm. According to the female participant, popular girls* get catcalls.
In G2, "foreigners" were blamed for most problems (like catcalls or being a bigmouth).

Non-binary*
G1: It is known, but debated: Some want it to be respected, others argue that it is a trend
("cool"), an ego-issue, something that should not be addressed immediately and directly by
those concerned.
G2: Not known to all. "Neither fish nor fowl". They have probably difficult situations, but if
they behave well and don't do "weird things", it should be ok. (Weird stuff: changing names
and pronouns etc.). What makes non-binaries popular persons? "No chance" or "no problem
at all, if they behave normal" (gender conformism: "normality" and "binarity" are basic rules
in the youngsters' norm system).

Songs/Material
G1: In principle, the youngsters are already able to understand the messages of songs critical
of sexism and to find the problematic situations in everyday life. These messages (women* as
commodities or sexual objects) can obviously be discussed controversially. Obviously,
insecurities were also expressed:
One participant* refers to the line that women* are divided into "sexy or ugly" and says that
he would do the same, but also with men*. He seems unsure whether it is bad that he does this
*(*Report Youngsters - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL*).*
G2: Controversial, whether the song refers to Austria (more probably: Iran/Iraq).

On gender attitudes & behaviour

G1: It often seems to be important for the students to present stereotypes, norms, jokes (and also crossing a line) as "not so bad" (or to trivialize them). One should not take derogatory jokes (e.g. about clothing) "so seriously".

Often, comparisons with "worse cases" serve this purpose: In other classes like the mechanical engineers (parallel class), according to a participant*, such jokes would really be worse than in his* class. Pupils in this parallel class would, according to the student, think extremely old-fashioned. Students from other classes always want to show who is stronger. They normalize physical violence between boys*, it was further argued. It would be good if social skills were taught in such classes, was further shared (Report Youngsters - BG/BRG CITYSCHOOL).

G2: There was a case where the teacher in the wood workshop hit a girl on the butt with a piece of wood. So students experience sexualized violence at school from teachers. A boy had seen it, some participants shared. The teacher mentioned still teaches at this school.

Summarized results of the focus group discussions with youngsters - HTL COUNTRYTOWN:

- First focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the IT class: In terms of content, there were major differences of opinion in this focus group, especially on the question of non-binary*. While the two girls* and one or two boys* argued in favour of gender equality, the other boys* clearly rejected it. Regarding violence, the group agreed that there was great tolerance in their class and that violence was not an issue in the class.

- Second focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the IT class: The young people seemed to be very interested in the topic and were very involved in the focus group discussion. Different positions and points of view became visible here. Non-binary* and pronouns were a concept for the young people. The topic seemed to interest the young people (it was discussed intensively) but also to unsettle them. One of the dividing lines that became visible was whether someone knows a person affected personally or only knows the discourse via social media. The online discourse was described as very controversial and agitated. Differences between women* and men* were often argued biologically/genetically, also origin myths (hunter/gatherer) were served. However, social construction and socialization were also argued. Regarding violence, "verbal violence" (as the young people called it) was described and "fun" scuffles in first/second grade. That "verbal violence" offends those involved could be seen from body language (looking to the ground), but it was not vocalized. The young people could partly identify with the first song, partly not. Regarding justice, the young people described that "loud" boys* feel disadvantaged compared to girls* when it comes to help from teachers. At the end, some made it clear that they had enjoyed participating, that they thought it was good that someone asked them for their opinion and when and if one could continue: At this point, the young people were again made aware of the possibilities of participating in CarMiA and at least some expressed interest.

- First focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the business class: The group (business class) was much more reserved than the first group (3rd focus group: IT class). It was particularly interesting that the female read spoke of sexism and sexualized violence, but at the beginning clearly limited this to "foreigners" - although there was clear opposition from schoolmates here. Later, she and a boy* then told of a sexualized assault by a teacher. A teacher had hit her on the buttocks with a ruler, although he did this so subtly that almost no one had noticed. Only one student had happened to observe it. Consequently, however, no steps were taken because, according to the students, there was no trust in the teachers in this regard and they feared worse grades. The student concerned wished that teachers could be

obliged to participate in the project. Despite this incident, the students felt that the conversation was just talk. One of them finally asked what it had been good for. This opened up a good – but unfortunately too short – conversation.

- Second focus group HTL COUNTRYTOWN with students of the business class: In contrast to the 4th focus group (second group of the IT class), the group was very restrained in their comments and in the discussion among themselves and seemed fundamentally unsure regarding the focus group and its topic. One young person was initially sceptical regarding his*her participation; here, no pressure was exerted on participation, which presumably led to the fact that he*she not only participated in the end, but also relatively strongly applied him*herself to the discussion. Nonbinary and pronouns were familiar to the youth. Similar biological/genetic reasoning as in the other focus groups came into play here. A popular boy* must be humorous, self-confident, but also helpful, have a large circle of friends according to the participants. According to the respondents, the same characteristics apply to popular girls*. One respondent describes that girls* at school have to adapt to hegemonically male attributes (being tough, etc.). Austrian society is perceived as fair by the majority of the group, but when questioned in more detail, unequal pay and different role responsibilities are occasionally mentioned. It is also argued here that it is unfair that a man* should do housework but a woman* does not change tires; conservative, partly reactionary images are served here. Arguments are also made here with "freedom of speech" or a one-sided right-wing definition of the term. The passive attitude of the group ran through the entire focus group, however, there were parts where tension (interest, etc.) was clearly noticeable from individuals (voice, posture, etc.), but it was not possible to express this and describe it in more detail in the group.
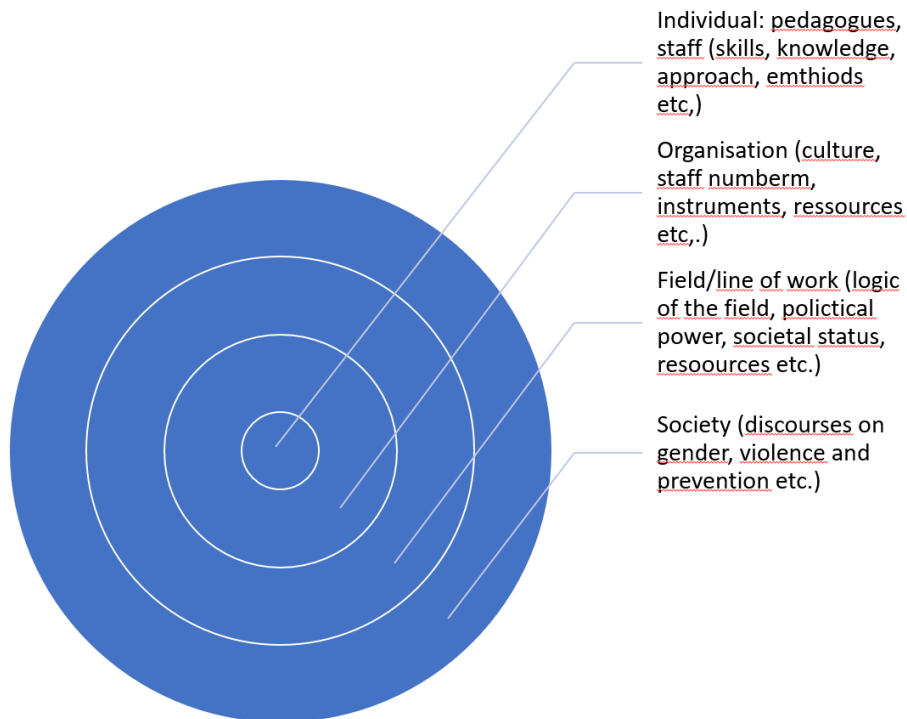
4. Conclusion

Generally, stereotypes of gender (and especially rigid masculinity norms) clearly play a role at schools, but even more at the youth centres. In school focus groups, discussions are controversial when it comes to gender inequality, stereotypes and non-binary*; some argue rigidly stereotypical, others more tolerant or even progressively. Rigid norms seem to correlate with aggression and make violence more probable. They are also particularly relevant at a certain age (beginning of puberty), as Gottfredson and Krabel pointed out (Scambor et al. 2019)[9]. Also, there seems to be a strong relation between class/marginalization and the rigidity of (masculinity) norms.

Certainly, the problem situations around violence and prevention can be systematized and abstracted – as a first idea:

- Lack of resources (staffing ratio in relation to the severity of the problem): In schools, aggression and violence are too widespread in relation to the number of teachers/social workers*.
- Lack of sensitivity/preparation/training
- Lack of control and perception of violence (much is hidden)
- There are mechanisms of "normalization" gender stereotypes (like "boys will be boys"), that hinder the perception and also options for intervention.

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[9] Scambor, Elli, Jauk, Dani, Gärtner, Marc & Erika Bernacchi (2019). Caring masculinities in action: Teaching beyond and against the gender-segregated labour market. In Magaraggia, S., Mauerer, G. & Schmidbaur, M. (ed.): Feminist Perspectives on Teaching Masculinities. Learning Beyond Stereotypes; ATGENDER, Routledge 2019. https://www.routledge.com/Feminist-Perspectives-on-Teaching-Masculinities-Learning-Beyond-Stereotypes/Magaraggia-Mauerer-Schmidbaur/p/book/9780367193287

The following conditional matrix can help to understand needs and resources in a structured way: On different levels, there have to be resources that enable to challenge violence, to overcome gender/masculinity stereotypes, to build caring masculinities, to ensure violence prevention.

Individual: pedagogues, staff (skills, knowledge, approach, emthiods etc,)

Organisation (culture, staff numberm, instruments, ressources etc,.)

Field/line of work (logic of the field, polictical power, societal status, resoources etc.)

Society (discourses on gender, violence and prevention etc.)

- On an individual level, professionals need knowledge, skills and competences in dealing with the concept of Caring Masculinities in a violence preventive way. At the same time, individuals in families and the private/social sphere, e.g. peers, have a huge influence, so their attitudes and practices matter a lot.
- On the level of organizations, resources, instruments and guidelines are needed. At the same time, resources in families and local communities, that surround young people, matter a lot; the same applies for the gender culture in those contexts, the proximity to violence etc.
- Organizations are located in particular societal fields. That structure the logic of institutions. A school and a youth centre, at least in Austria, follow different logics: a school is usually run by the state and is structured by a political and legal structure (like compulsory education), thus the education of professionals is widely run by the state.
- Society and macro-cultures are important to understand how gender and masculinity are structured in general, how they are differentiated by intersectional power relations etc.

Organizational and field logic: The focus groups give a clear impression, that social workers are more trained and capable on gender & violence issues. Violence is probably more their core work and more in line with the logic of the social work field (and professional culture) than that of the school: for social work it is a legitimizing factor, for the school violence is a barrier to learning. While school has to "cram" through a curriculum, social work can take time for aggression and gender. Presumably, it already plays a different role in studies and in the decision to choose a profession, and thus the actors' perspectives are also different.
This results in perspectives for mutual learning on a local, but also on a higher level (even if it looks one-sided at first).

The result that stands out is that especially teachers need more training on gender matters in order to support gender identity minorities and carefully but decisively challenge aggressive and dominance-orientated masculinity stereotypes. In general, in CBP ways to cultures of care should be discussed and mapped/structured.