

# CarMiA – Caring Masculinities in Action National Report Germany

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## 1. Intro

In Germany, there are many existing measures against gender-based violence (GBV). Due to the federal structure, responsibilities are shared between the federal government, the federal states and the municipalities. Many measures have emerged in recent decades as a result of initiatives and political pressure from the second women's movement and other gender political movements, such as the establishment and running of women's shelters. Many measures in Germany are also implemented by non-governmental institutions for legal reasons.

In the context of the implementation of the "Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" ("Istanbul Convention"), which came into force in Germany on 1 February 2018, there have been some relevant improvements at the legal level. For example, even before the ratification of the "Istanbul Convention" in 2016, the sexual criminal law was reformed according to the principle "No means No". This was positively evaluated in 2022 in the first evaluation report on the implementation status of the "Istanbul Convention" in Germany, as were the improvements made in the criminalisation of digital violence against women. In its report, the responsible Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) also welcomes the establishment of the national helpline "Violence against Women" and states: "Germany's long history in responding to violence against women and domestic violence coupled with a strong movement of women's organisations providing the majority of specialist support services and advocacy around violence against women have resulted in a multitude of promising practices in the different federal states." (CoE/GREVIO 2022, p. 6) At the same time, the report recommends the need for better coordinated strategies to prevent and combat gender-based violence through the expansion of action plans at the federal and state levels, and criticises in particular the lack of a state coordinating body to implement the action plans. It is also emphasised that due to a lack of funding, the supply of places in women's shelters is insufficient, especially in rural areas. Strong safety concerns are raised for women without secure residence status, and the safety

situation in collective refuge and accommodation centres is also criticised and an improvement is called for. With regard to the prevention of gender-based violence, the existing activities of the federal government to challenge gender stereotypes and various initiatives against sexism are positively highlighted. At the same time, the GREVIO report emphasises the importance of primary prevention measures that directly benefit girls and women and calls for these measures to be accompanied by appropriate measures tailored to men\* and boys\* (ibid., p. 33).

Measures of gender-reflective violence prevention for boys\* and men\* have been developed and implemented in Germany since the eighties of the 20th century. The reporting institution - *Dissens - Institut für Bildung und Forschung e.V.* - has been involved in many initiatives at local, regional, national and European level since its foundation in 1989. In the meantime, there are gender-reflective educational programmes for boys\* and male youth in many places in Germany on the de-stereotyping of masculinities, on violence prevention, on gender-role atypical career choices, on sexual and gender diversity and other topics that should contribute to the reduction of gender-based violence. Also, since the 2000s, there have been legal requirements at federal and state level to take gender-specific needs into account in the services offered by child and youth work. However, it is still often dependent on local responsibilities and the initiative of the respective responsible persons whether or not children and young people receive good quality offers of gender-reflective pedagogy and education to a sufficient extent. Therefore, there is still a great lack of nationwide provision of gender-reflective pedagogy and education in all areas of schools and child and youth work, which is why boys\* and male youth have only limited access to measures to critically discuss patriarchal concepts of masculinity.

Many stakeholders in gender-reflective work with boys\* are organised in the "Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Jungen\*arbeit" (Federal Working Group for Work with Boys\*), which was founded in 2010. Here, the quality assurance of pedagogical work with boys\* is being advanced. Since the development of this pedagogical approach, the connections between masculinities and violent behaviour have been embedded in the work concepts of

the practically active organisations. These are often only made a little explicit and correspondingly little discussed and further developed in professional debates, also because work with boys\* resists being reduced to violence prevention. However, violence prevention elements and approaches to a critical examination of masculinity can be found in many approaches to work with boys. Sexism and male violence are also critically discussed by young authors on the online platform "MeinTestgelände", which is co-operated by the BAG Jungen\*arbeit. The "Bundesforum Männer - Interessenverband für Männer, Jungen und Väter" (Federal Forum Men - Interest Group for Men, Boys and Fathers) regularly positions itself for gender equality-oriented gender policy and against violence against women and domestic violence and has built up a counselling network for men\*. In both associations, the issue of men\* and boys\* being affected by violence, including intimate partner violence and sexualised violence, has been increasingly addressed in the field of GBV in recent years. There are specialised services for working with male perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner violence in various places in Germany. Many of these providers who work with perpetrators of domestic violence within inter-institutional cooperation alliances against domestic violence are organised in the "Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt" (Federal Working Group on Perpetrator Work with Domestic Violence), which has published standards for this and continues to contribute to the quality assurance of perpetrator work in Germany. Only very few actors in gender-reflective work with boys\* and men\* explicitly address non-violent masculinities. There is still a big gap here, for which the CarMiA project aims to develop offers.

In the following chapters, this report first presents the results of our study on selected pedagogical approaches to the prevention of gender-based violence with boys\* and male youth in the context of critical engagement with masculinities. This is followed by reporting on the focus groups we conducted with educators and young people. In the final chapter, the most important gaps in the previous pedagogical approaches are identified and put in relation to the needs that we took from the focus groups.

## 2. Summary of the Good Practices

In our research for Good Practices about violence prevention with a focus on masculinity (and ideally a peer-to-peer approach) we found five projects/programs: PeerThink, TESYA®, respect, Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle, GEAR. The following criteria were used to identify good practices of programmes and projects working at national level to reduce GBV:

1. The program explicitly addresses boys, men, social constructions of masculinity and gender stereotypes associated with men.
2. The program articulates and promotes alternative, non-violent masculinities.
3. The program has or helps developing a peer-to-peer approach.

Good Practice <sup>1</sup>	Short Summary
<b>Respect</b> - Antirassistische Mädchen und Jungenarbeit gegen Ausgrenzung und Gewalt (Bremer Jungen*Büro, bdp MädchenKulturHaus, 2004)	"Respect" was a workshop program for 14-17 year old students. 13 entire school classes participated in the workshop in groups of girls* and boys*. The project is based on secondary and tertiary prevention and aims to sensitize perpetrators of violence and empower those affected by violence, sexism and racism.
<b>GEAR</b> - Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence (Daphne, 2011)	The project "Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence" (GEAR against IPV) consists of a comprehensive collection of handouts; a handbook for professionals, a handbook for students, as well as a guide for training and a brochure with suggestions for target group-specific advertising and lobbying.
<b>PeerThink</b> – Tools and resources for an intersectional prevention of peer violence (Daphne, 2009)	The PeerThink Manual is a handbook with methods for pedagogical professionals and teachers to work with young people from the age of 10. It consists of a detailed theoretical and practical part and contains methods for working with young people as well as self-learning methods for reflecting on one's own attitude, knowledge and positioning on the topics of violence, racism, sexism and intersectionality. The manual also includes recommendations for implementing intersectional mainstreaming in educational institutions.
<b>Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle</b> (Mannigfaltig e.V. 2004)	"Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle" is a method manual for the prevention of violence in boys' work (Jungenarbeit) (in the brochure and therefore in the following also without *). It consists of a theoretical and practical part. The methods are aimed at groups of boys from 6 to 18 years and can be used in the context of school and youth work. The brochure suggests that the methods should be carried out by professionals who are socialized as males, since (only) they can be male role models for boys.

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description of the Good Practices, see in the Annex: 6.1. Good Practices.

**TESYA®** Systemisch-  
lösungsorientiertes Gewalttraining  
(IFGG/Daphne III, Since 2007)

The TESYA® training is a 6-month training program, which is offered according to §29 SGB VIII individually or according to §30 SGB VIII as a group training for 12 - 18 year olds or 8 - 12 year olds (TESYA-kids), as well as for deaf or hearing impaired youths (TESYA-deaf) and is financed by the youth welfare office (Jugendamt). There is also a variant according to §10 of the JGG for juveniles who have committed a crime. The program was developed with organizations from four European countries in 2005-2007, funded by the EU program Daphne III.

**Target Groups & facilitators:** Most of the Good Practices on masculinity and violence prevention are methodological brochures for educators and teachers working with 14-17 year old young people. All good practices emphasize the importance of professionals training, broadening their knowledge about gender socialization and gender relations. Therefore, they include (sometimes long) sections on theories and concepts of gender reflective work, violence prevention and partly intersectional approaches. Some (such as TESYA® and GEAR) provide for targeted training of professionals in advance of program implementation. Others (respect, PeerThink, Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle) can be used independently by professionals in youth work and schools.

**Peer-to-Peer-approach and funding:** Only TESYA® pursues a peer-to-peer approach. The project also differs from the others in terms of its institutional framework: It is funded by youth welfare, addresses children and adolescents of all genders who engage in violence, and focuses less than the other projects on explicitly addressing gender stereotypes and relations, but rather on resource- and solution-oriented work using a variety of methods. Many of the projects from which the good practices emerged were funded by the EU under the Daphne II or III program, such as TESYA®, GEAR, PeerThink.

**Lack of sensitivity to feelings and vulnerability:** Common to all *good practices* is that they are aware of a close link between masculinity and violence and that they want to work on this link pedagogically. In doing so, they share one of the various explanatory approaches for the close link between masculinity and violence: Many tendencies towards violent acts among boys\* and young men\* can be traced back to the fact that they do not (cannot) adequately recognize, articulate and process their own vulnerabilities, fears, feeling of

stress, pressure and experience of violence. From this follows for the pedagogical practice on the one hand: to strengthen boys\* in recognizing and learning to articulate their - above all negatively connoted - feelings.

**Norm Critique:** In addition to this, many *good practices* contain a second strand, which could be described as "norm critique". Here, they address (for professionals) on a theoretical level how power relations, stereotypes and demands encourage violent behavior by boys\* (and men\*). Sexism, dominance and assertiveness are also reflected in exercises with young people. Boys\* are also encouraged to express their own discomfort, restrictions or pressure through normative demands in order to awaken the potential of a critical attitude towards normative gender images (in general).

**Gender-based violence:** Not all Good Practices contain clear references to the connection between the suppression of vulnerability, emotionality and other characteristics associated with femininity, which, together with sexist or misogynistic attitudes, form the central preconditions for gender-based violence. There are also few exercises that deal with violence in boys\* groups as a "structuring" feature (Meuser, Bourdieu) of masculinity.

**Forms of violence being addressed (individual, structural, intersectional perspectives):** The Good Practices operate partly with a narrower, partly with a broader concept of violence and thus address altogether a broad spectrum and different shades, from impulsive "freaking out" (TESYA®) to (manipulative) relationship violence (GEAR) to structural violence (PeerThink). Some *good practices* try to make structural violence and its link to the world of young people understandable. Especially at the intersection race/gender (Respect & GEAR) and through the experience of racism and the often accompanying experience of powerlessness of young men\* this seems to be particularly feasible. Others, such as TESYA®, focus more on individual resources and identity designs of young people for violence prevention. Here, above all, traces and intermediate spaces of (self-)caring action are sought and strengthened.

**Caring/Alternative Masculinities:** A conceptual alternative model of masculinity, such as *caring masculinity*, which explicitly gives a name, a label, to non-violent actions of boys\*, is not included in any of the Good Practices. Nevertheless, most of the Good Practices encourage boys\* in caring, especially self-caring practices: in recognizing and marking their own boundaries, articulating feelings, allowing vulnerability, and fostering empathy skills. *Some Good Practices* put great emphasis on distinguishing aggression from violence: While violence is here seen as normatively per se problematic crossing of boundaries, aggression can be used as a positive force and resource (Respect, Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle) in educational work with male-socialized young people. An attempt at an alternative, positive counter-model to hegemonic masculinity, i.e., masculinity that fosters violence, can be found in the re-framing of traditionally masculine connotations and values, such as autonomy and strength. Thus, boys\* are sometimes taught that being strong means not being violent, that autonomy means not losing control and "freaking out" (TESYA®). From the point of view of a pedagogy that rather wants to deconstruct sovereignty, autonomy and strength and wants to give place to weakness, insecurity, shame, dependency in male socialization, such reframing seems problematic.

**Voids and critique:** It is striking that older projects usually integrate less gender diversity (non-binary, trans\* and inter\*). There are also some controversial formulations here, such as that pedagogical work with boys\* should only be done by men\* (e.g., Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle) or constructions that seem essentialist, such as "one's own manhood" (ibid.). Overall, there is little on digital violence (unwanted sexting/dickpics, hate comments, etc.) and specifically on violence prevention against trans\*/inter\*/non-binary people. A variety of approaches can be found in the method booklets: Position lines, film discussions, photo/collage projects, worksheets, discussion methods, etc. Body work, on the other hand, is rarely found; "Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle" integrates some methods that deal with setting boundaries, body mindfulness, and cooperation.



### 3. Results of the focus groups with Professionals

Interview	Date	Sample Characteristics
FG1	25.09.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two pedagogical heads (m &amp; f) of an open child and youth work facility in Berlin, main age group: 10 - 14 years.</li> <li>- One staff member (f) in a youth center in a small town in eastern Germany, main age group: 12 - 18 years.</li> </ul>
FG2	20.10.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One* employee* (non-binary) of open child and youth work, main age group: 10 - 16.</li> <li>- - An employee (m) of an association in the field of prevention of (primarily: right-wing) extremism in a small town / rural area, main age group; 15 - 18.</li> <li>- - An employee (m) of a special school ("Sonderschule") of a large city, age group 10 - 16.</li> </ul>

The participants of both focus groups responded to a call that was posted on the homepage of *Dissens* and sent out via various e-mail distribution lists (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Jungen\*arbeit / Federal Working Group for Work with Boys\*) and to youth associations. The group interviews lasted 1-1.5 hours and took place via video conference. The interviewees signed a declaration of consent to participate in the interviews. With their consent, the interviews were recorded and anonymously transcribed, coded, and analyzed for analysis. In the interview analysis below, we identified the key themes raised and discussed by the interviewees and summarized them as close to verbatim as possible. The focus groups were diverse in terms of the professionals' field of work (see above) as well as the age of the target group (12 - 19) and milieu of the target groups (urban/rural ; predominantly white / BIPOC). Despite these and other differences, some common themes could be identified. In the interview, we first asked the professionals to tell us about singular and/or recurring situations in their work in which children or adolescents acted violently. The focus was on the violent actions of boys\*. In the following, we asked about ways of dealing with the situation(s) and approaches to explanations and solutions of violence among boys\*. We

wanted to know in particular: How do professionals explain the violent behavior of boys\*? Are there gender-specific differences in the reasons for and the expression of violence? How do the professionals deal with it? What helps them and where do they feel helpless? What would they hope for in terms of materials/methods/approaches on the topic?

### **Forms of violence and situations in which it is perpetrated**

Almost all participants report that their clients use violent language. They also share the observation that violent language facilitates a transition to physical violence and describe practical situations in which this happened. Insults sometimes function as "jokes" and do not necessarily lead to violent conflict. However, professionals also observe that they are deliberately used as provocations, which usually result in reactions in the form of physical violence on the part of the person insulted. "Son of a bitch" is the "favorite word" and the "best working provocation" (FG2) to escalate a situation, along with insults aimed at the victim's family. In this context, the concept of "honor", which is mostly linked (in socio-political debates) to migrant milieus, also plays a central role (more on this later). Another observation of professionals is: violence occurs when boys\* (or girls\*) "don't get anywhere with words" (FG2). Both the observation that boys\* have difficulties in recognizing their own feelings and in verbalizing them was described. Some professionals observe that accidental contact (e.g. tripping, hurting oneself while playing) is a starting point for violent conflicts. A violent situation is described after a boy\* is devalued by his peer group when he cries. As a result, he becomes violent, which the specialist interprets as an opportunity to show himself "tough" again. Bodily violence manifests itself in the form of kicking, shoving, hitting, fisticuffs, and scuffles. Bullying is named as a common form of violence perpetrated by all genders. In contrast, professionals experience sexist insults as a form of gender-based violence, e.g. in the form of slutshaming (especially by boys\*, but also by girls\*) towards girls\*. Space-grabbing behavior by boys\* is mentioned as a breeding ground for later violent behavior. Another form of violence mentioned is the mutual displacement of two (boys\*) groups within a children's and youth center. The specialist suspects that there are violent conflicts between the groups outside youth center.

### **Explanatory approaches for violent behavior by boys\***

Many boys\* justify their violent behavior with the concept of "defense" against something which is experienced as attack (mostly verbal) and partly say that they had no choice but to react this way. Some professionals see a fundamentally weak self-esteem as the underlying reason, because: "every look, every saying, every action" (FG2) is perceived as an attack. In this context, the term "honor" is often used; if boys\* see this as being violated, violent behavior is justified. Feelings of being overwhelmed or humiliated would be turned into violent behavior by boys\* (more often than by girls\*):

*"So I think with the children in our facility it's quite often a lack of impulse control or something, so [...] a sense of humiliation or something, when others laugh at me or what - show me a sign and then I don't know how to help myself other than with violence. [...] [And] I think that applies to everyone, whether girls or boys or other people [...] - but it happens much more often with boys, because I think, even at a very young age, girls have a better - a healthier way of dealing with emotions on the one hand, but on the other hand they also force themselves to suppress it and not let it out like that."(FG2)*

Misunderstandings could also be more difficult to resolve among (mostly younger) boys\*, as many are less able to communicate and rarely learn to resolve conflicts verbally in their family homes, according to the professionals' assumptions. Professionals also note a tendency towards a lack of empathy among boys\* in conflict resolution situations. Another central explanatory approach of the professionals is the orientation towards traditional role models, which continue to be dominant, especially in school and family. Competitive thoughts are more strongly developed in boys\*. "Standing your ground," "finishing what you start," "one on one" (FG2) are culturally transmitted phrases that guide the actions of some boys\*, which tend to initiate or escalate violent conflicts. The experience of devaluation by the peer group when expressing emotionality (e.g. crying, see above) also points to the relevance of traditional masculine role models.

*"So that's something that's very, very present with our clients, it's actually - everything always runs through this filter, is my honor being attacked here, how strong - so I play the strong role towards the others, am I dominant enough, do I prove myself, and it's actually always about making sure, so to speak, that you're more at the top of the hierarchy and keep the others more at the bottom, and then the others are all the ones who, who are weaker or who you somehow try to fight down through everyday behavior and games and also through violence, so all those who are somehow not considered tough enough, not masculine enough, not strong enough, who are considered gay, women anyway, gladly also against foreigners, exactly, so you always have to*

*be so tough and strong and unyielding [...]. "(FG2)*

Professionals also emphasized that structural violence, such as racial discrimination, classism, and/or verbal, physical, and psychological violence at school or in the family create fear, frustration, anger, and low feelings of self-worth or powerlessness in some boys\*, which they turn into self-efficacy by acting violently and feeling "powerful." Tendencies to act violently were exacerbated by tense periods during the pandemic (lockdowns, lack of services and spaces). Impatience, frustration, and anger with oneself is also specifically observed in the context of with refugee boys\* with learning difficulties and disabilities as a trigger for violent action. There were somewhat different assessments regarding whether violent behavior was due to a lack of impulse control. Older male adolescents\* in particular have their behavior under control, younger ones mostly "tunnel vision." In older male adolescents, alcohol consumption is also a significant factor in violent behavior.

### **Ways of dealing with conflict and approaches to solving it**

The experience is shared that conversations about conflict situations usually work better in individual settings. If boys\* are interested in solving a conflict, for example because they are friends, the conversations usually go well. Professionals try to support boys\* to develop a positive self-image, to strengthen self-confidence and to develop or strengthen alternative (i.e. non-violent but also caring) ways of acting. For example, by asking questions such as: What do others do in such a situation? What have I done differently before? "Pro-contra analyses" sometimes also help to make the harmful consequences of violent behavior visible. Professionals also try to sensitize boys\* to their own vulnerability(ies) ("trigger points") and to acknowledge and comprehend those of others. In the specific case of non-native-speaking boys\* with learning difficulties (see above): They are encouraged to accept inability; not to have to do everything on their own and that getting help is a given.

### **Alternative/Caring Masculinity(s)**

All interviewees reflected on the relevance of the professionals' gender for the work with boys\*. Male professionals have the opportunity to embody alternative masculine role models and make them tangible: to act and communicate in a non-violent way, to embody

caring ways of acting, to be seen to do so, and to make this seem not special or extraordinary, but something taken for granted:

*"(...) that also motivates me a lot, that I can exemplify my masculinity, I bring my existence so purely into a diversity [. (...) [A]lso I think the living out, the talking about it, exactly, but it's not a methodical - I don't have any methods at the moment, [...] just now I thought at first, I'm not actually doing anything, when you asked, but I think [...] for me it's very important the living out and just being there and seeing [...] and positively perceiving caring behavior, yes." (FG2)*

Gender can thus be consciously used as an "instrument", for example by acting against expectations, projections or attributions of young people. If professionals openly tell about themselves, boys\* can be encouraged to behave in a norm deviating way and to open up (e.g. an outing of the professional can favor outings of boys\*). However, projections and unequal treatment of professionals on the basis of gender also lead to the reproduction of traditional role models and gender relations. For example, when primarily female professionals are sought out by boys\* to help them settle conflicts, understand and articulate emotions. Or when female professionals (or male professionals who do not seem "masculine enough" to boys\*) are not taken "seriously" (FG1) by boys\*. It is also emphasized that the attribution of boys\* to a professional read as male "you understand what it is to be a boy\*" (FG1) is an important basis for a good relationship level and successful pedagogical work. The professionals also reflect on their own appearance regarding their own gender socialization. Dominant behavior in the form of "I just want to clarify things quickly and ensure that everything runs smoothly" (FG2) is critically reflected as traditionally male behavior: It is also a form of paternalism to make others "quiet". A tension between respect and empathy on the one hand and confrontation and limitation on the other (especially in the area of right-wing extremism prevention) was also discussed.

### **Helplessness, ideas and wishes for practice**

Professionals sometimes feel helplessness in acute violent situations that require the use of their own bodies (to prevent physical attacks) or calling the police. Professionals also reported that it is difficult for them to communicate that physical and verbal violence can hurt in a similar way. What they wish for are short methods that can also be used spontaneously in youth work. In this context, the idea of a comic strip is also mentioned,

which can be used to promote empathy and illustrate non-violent behavior for younger boys\* (using example situations). The idea of a guide on how to conduct conversations in conflict situations as well as case studies is also positively received. For a peer-to-peer approach, the work with role models (YouTuber, rapper) is emphasized. Within a peer group of the same age, alternative/protective masculinities could be sanctioned, older boys\* would enjoy a different respect, which would make a peer-to-peer approach more fruitful.

#### 4. Results of the Focus Groups with Youngster

Inter-view	Datum	Sample Charakteristika
FG 1	24.01.2023	2 male positioned youths, 19 and 20 years old, from a youth center in the east of Berlin.
FG 2	25.01.2023	9 students: 4 boys*, 4 girls*, 1 non-binary person, between 14 and 16 years old, from a free school ("Freie Schule") in the northeast of Berlin.

FG1 was conducted in the office of *Dissens* with two male visitors of a youth center in Berlin, 19 and 20 years old. The FG lasted about 70 minutes. The contact to the two participants was established through an employee of the youth center. In the interview, the two showed great interest as well as prior knowledge regarding masculinity & gender. They spoke especially about the prevailing image of men\* who do not show and express emotions or, if they do, are labeled as weak. They talked about male privilege, gender inequality (on a structural level) and the need and possible steps to challenge this. FG2 with students, between 14 and 15 years, from a free school in Berlin lasted about 100 minutes. The contact to the group came about when teachers of the school approached *Dissens*: there were conflicts about sexism and they asked for advice and intervention. The participants of the focus group took part voluntarily, but there seemed to be social pressure on some male participants to take part. Overall, the non-male participants were more engaged in the

conversation and showed more interest in the topic than the four male participants. Of the four boys\* present, three spoke only once and very shyly. FG2 was also mainly about the masculinity requirements to be strong, not to show any feelings and especially not to cry. Another topic was sexualized violence at parties and diversity in films and books. Both groups consisted of youth from progressive middle-class backgrounds.

### **Gender stereotypes/requirements and masculinity**

*"Everybody has masculine and feminine sides in them that have absolutely nothing to do with your gender. And I can also like a lot of things that tend to be liked more by women, and that has absolutely nothing to do with my gender. [...]" (FG1)*

In both FGs, stereotypical ideas of masculinity (and femininity) were predominantly criticized and described as constricting and/or unfair. Some participants said that rigid gender norms and the associated expectations caused a pressure and suffering. In both focus groups, stereotypes and traditional role models & masculinity requirements, such as not to cry, to be strong, not to show emotions, etc. were mentioned and criticized. On the other hand, girls\* were said to be weak, dramatic, overemotional, anger was not granted to them (by social norms). Girls\* were less likely to be trusted to do physical work/tasks (by their social environment). There was no agreement/clarity regarding the question in which spheres masculinity and femininity requirements are placed on the participants (e.g. family, school, media and/or peer group) or whether these social spheres would be free of expectations and pressure. In FG 2, there was a discussion about the transmission of traditional notions of masculinity across generations. Participants expressed disappointment about the narrow-mindedness and indignation about reactionary attitudes of older people, One participant reports: "There my grandpa said, if my brother doesn't stop crying, he'll hit him." (FG2). Young people also experience traditional notions of gender more frequently in rural areas than in the big city. It was noticeable overall that in the mixed-gender group (FG2), predominantly non-male participants\* spoke, while boys\* were generally taciturn. The only actively participating boy\* in FG2 showed a certain tendency to reject a critical reflection of gender norms. Although he agreed on some points, he then cited individual and extreme examples as counterarguments. In FG 1, on the other hand, the male participants

expressed their own discomfort with traditional gender stereotypes and masculinity requirements. They named recurring experiences of discomfort with dynamics in boys\* groups, recurring feelings of not belonging, and difficulties identifying with masculinity because they had been surrounded by boys\* and men\* who embodied traditional masculinity and expected them to do this as well. Women\* and girls\* would also make stereotypical demands on boys\*/men\*, stigmatize or put pressure on them, even in the form of seemingly small statements (such as "women like it when men have short fingernails" or "you look gay" (FG1), said in a pejorative manner). The strong association and devaluation of certain characteristics, roles & activities with femininity makes it difficult for boys\* to accept and appropriate these for themselves. While images of femininity diversify, the images of masculinity remain more rigid, according to some participants. Only when they experienced alternative, diverse masculinities in their circle of friends or youth center, it became easier for them to identify as male. They emphasized the importance of the influence of their own environment and the direct experience of other masculinities and gender identities (e.g. Trans\*). Knowing that others have similar experiences helped them to feel less alone. Female friendships allowed them to talk about feelings without being labeled as unmanly (by male friends) and to develop empathic interactions. Some participants said that gender was no longer relevant in their circle of friends or within their family. The female and non-binary participants in FGs said they're being glad that society is more open and "enlightened" (FG2) about gender issues than before, which encourages young people to come out or to live non-conforming to traditional role models.

### **Being capable to show feelings**

In both focus groups, the demands on boys\* and men\* to show less emotions, especially not to cry and to (always) show themselves strong, were described as the "biggest problem" in relation to the topic of "masculinity" (FG1). In FG1, fathers were described as emotionally colder people: "You don't know where you stand, you feel rejected from the male side because you don't embody what's expected." One is lucky to have parents who respect and encourage one in who one is, they said. Many boys\* are afraid to express feelings because it causes stigmatizing reaction. "Are you gay?" as a reaction hurts, especially in childhood. The



demands of masculinity create a vicious circle: being strong and not showing weakness (=feelings) creates fear, which in turn cannot be expressed. Boys\* and men\* would compensate this partly with violence, partly by putting their partner down. One participant reported that it took him several years and that therapy had helped him above all. Now his relationship had become pleasant. In the end, it is nice when your girlfriend gives you a hug when you say you are not feeling well. Another participant reported that he had not seen a friend cry since childhood. According to the participants in FG1, the lack of exchange in intimate relationships, especially due to the lack of ability of men and boys\* to communicate themselves and their feelings, often leads to separations.

### **Violence, gender and gender relations**

In focus group 1, both participants emphasized the greater injurious power of verbal violence over physical violence, of which many people are unaware. Both FGs emphasized that women perpetrate this more often than physical violence. Dating tips in social media also mirror gender inequality in relation to gender-based violence: while men would be encouraged to wear a smart outfit and make nice gestures, women\* would be encouraged to carry pepper spray and share their location with friends. In light of this example, participants expressed to be lucky at having grown up as a man and respect for women to stand up to a "toxic cult of masculinity." (FG1) In FG 2, one participant reported recurring situations of sexualized violence ("rape") at so-called "home" parties. In this context, girls\* in the FG showed horror and incomprehension as to how this could happen and the assumption that boys\* supported each other. Physical inferiority ("natural circumstances") of women\* was mentioned by a female participant as a reason for rape. There was also an awareness of sexualized violence towards boys\*. With regard to assaultive & transgressive behavior ("harassment"), a male participant criticized: girls\* would rarely say anything in situations and then later reproach boys\*. Physical violence would be more likely to be practiced and experienced by boys\*, e.g. in the form of beatings at school. Pulling out of such situations is often sanctioned with social pressure and exclusion, as one is then considered a victim ("faggot"). Physical violence was strongly condemned in FG1, but then also legitimized (in both FGs) as ultima ratio in the sense of defense (also of attacked

friends). It remained unclear what constitutes an attack. One participant reported that the experience of physical violence was "hell". Especially if one continues to have contact with the perpetrator (e.g. at school). Physical violence is committed by men\* because they do not know how to deal with their feelings, according to the thesis of some participants. Another explanation was the search for an adrenaline rush and excitement. It was controversially discussed how to judge when boys\* do not hit girls\* because they are "too weak", because on the one hand it is good not to be hit, on the other hand it is sexist to be stigmatized as too weak and to be excluded. In kindergarten, all children fought, according to one participant, and at some point years later girls\* were excluded. The experience of violence leads to two different impulses for action in boys\*; an increased likelihood to do it themselves or to avoid violent situations. In both groups, the concepts of "competence" and "intelligence" were associated with nonviolent action, people being smart enough to talk about anything. Pressure at school was also named as a form of violence. However, violence and injuries also happen by mistake; reflection is important here and a culture of mistakes. The latter is generally an important topic in relation to masculinity. Last but not least, there are also legitimate acts of violence, such as defending oneself and "self-defense" (e.g. in a political context). It remained unclear what it means to defend oneself, where it begins and where it ends. It was positively emphasized in both groups and by persons of each gender that fighting, "squabbling" or beating with rules and stop signs can have a relieving effect; sometimes one does just not know what makes one angry. Various representations of race/gender in movies and books were welcomed, especially by girls\*. At the same time, the restriction to certain characters and the use of LGBTIQ+ for marketing purposes was criticized.

### **Ways to more nonviolence & gender justice**

What needs to happen for (more) gender justice and non-violence to be realized? In both focus groups, outrage and lack of understanding was expressed about the gender pay gap. In FG1, 50/50 division of household tasks, the lack of representation of women\* (and PoC) in political decision-making structures, prices for cosmetic products, hygiene items or the lack of research on contraceptives for men, more therapy places, better funding for victim

protection, and the unequal accessibility of public toilets for men\* and women\* were also mentioned. Also the inclusion of mental load in the debate about caring activities was named. At the same time, role models were important and a redefinition of masculinity. An emancipation of women\* is not conceivable without serious changes in men's behaviour. A first step, however, is the recognition of problems. This can only happen if points of contact and spaces for discussion are created between people of different genders and experiences (but also origins). This should start as early as possible and schools should offer a space to talk about it. A change of the educational system, in which feelings play a subordinate role so far and pubescent young people become unbalanced and then let this out on others, among other things, violently. Boys\* and men\* could also do their part for gender justice in everyday life: don't take off shirts in the club, confront men who do it about it, ask women\* directly about their experiences, don't walk down the darkest streets, change sides of the street, be open to confronting your own sexism instead of blocking or getting angry etc. Diversity in representation and acceptance of different gender identities, expressions, and sexual orientations, early expansion of role models, and children deciding what gender they are were mentioned as other steps toward gender equity.

## 5. Summary

Except for HEROES (see National Report Austria) and TESYA, we did not find any peer-to-peer approach to gender reflective violence prevention with a focus on masculinities in Germany. However, the interviewed professionals found a Peer-to-Peer approach interesting and said they could imagine it to work in certain settings. Traditional masculinity requirements and gender images and their effects on the socialization of boys\* and young men are problematized by professionals as well as young people and addressed as important reasons for violent behavior. Good practices, and Focus groups share the assumption that the tendency towards (especially physical) violence among boys\* and young men\* is primarily because most of them are less able to recognize, articulate and (non-violently) process their own vulnerabilities, emotionality, especially (negatively connoted) feelings of fear, stress or pressure and/or their own experience of violence, compared to women\* or queer/non-binary persons. Low self-esteem can increase the risk of violent behavior, as can

recurring experiences of powerlessness, for example due to racism, classism or structural violence in school and family. Interestingly, these statements on the relationship between masculinity and violence are close to the findings of gender-reflective violence research (see: Meuser 2002 & 2006). The pedagogical approach of the interviewed professionals and good practices could be divided into what could be called *norm critique & resource strengthening*. While methods and approaches of *norm critique* encourage young people to critically reflect masculinity and gender and other power relations (racism & classism), *resource orientation* starts with the strengthening of individuals' resources: individual potentials of nonviolent behaviour are discovered and strengthened, alternative, non-violent ways of acting are developed. In accordance with the expressed background of male violent behavior, the sensitization for vulnerabilities and the perception and expression of one's own feelings was emphasized as a central topic of gender-reflective violence prevention. In addition, the importance of verbal violence and sexism (catcalling & slutshaming) was emphasized: it has a great power to hurt and is not yet sufficiently recognized and considered as such. Violence, while predominantly condemned, was also seen as a legitimate means of defense in certain situations. The question of what can be considered an attack and when a defense is legitimate remained open. It was shown that gender diversity is a topic of concern to young people. Although there is an overall openness and interest in visibility and acceptance of LGBTIQ+ lifestyles and identities (among youngster from progressive social milieus we spoke with), tendencies of resistance and anti-feminist discourses showed up at the same time. In addition, there is little experience with non-binary/queer lifestyles and lifeworld ("Lebenswelt"). The importance of alternative masculinities that can be experienced in one's own environment was repeatedly mentioned, which makes the diversity of masculinities visible and tangible and encourages young (male) people to question traditional, repressive concepts of masculinity, which offer a fertile ground for violent behaviour.

## 6. Annex

### 6.1 Best Practices

#### **IFGG - TESYA® systemic solution-oriented violence training (Since 2007)**

<https://www.ifgg-berlin.de/tesya-antigewalttrainings-fuer-kinder-und-jugendliche/> (Last access: 16.02.2023)

The TESYA® training is a 6-month training program, which is offered according to §29 SGB VIII individually or according to §30 SGB VIII as a group training for 12 - 18 year old adolescents or 8 - 12 year olds (TESYA®-kids), as well as for deaf or hearing impaired youths (TESYA®-deaf) and is financed by the youth welfare office (Jugendamt). There is also a variant according to §10 of the JGG for juveniles who have committed a crime. The program was developed in cooperation with organizations from four European countries in 2005-2007, funded by the EU program Daphne III. The TESYA® trainings are conducted by pedagogical professionals who have additional qualifications as TESYA® trainers and/or as systemic consultants or systemic therapists. The program was evaluated by the Violence Prevention Office of the Berlin State Commission against Violence: both parents and young people rated the TESYA® training sessions as predominantly positive, in orientation towards a (subjective) goal.

The target group of the training are young people aged 12 to 18 "who have been observed over a longer period of time to be repeatedly getting into conflicts, having difficulties controlling their impulses or using violence in a targeted manner". The young people come at the request of their parents, teachers or pedagogical/psychological specialists, but participate in the program voluntarily.

TESYA® follows a systemic solution-oriented approach and is located in the area of secondary and tertiary prevention; participants are addressed as competent subjects who are supported by the trainers in the development of solution strategies. It takes place on the premises of the IFGG in Berlin-Wedding in gender-homogeneous groups, complemented by individual discussions and work with parents. In the TESYA®-peer model, a young person from the last group is assigned the role of co-trainer. In the group setting, young people learn to support each other and to reduce shame and fear.

The training supports young people in impulse control and in finding access to their own feelings and needs. This is intended to create the basis for self-caring and socially responsible behavior, as well as constructive conflict resolution. In the training, the idea of gender (relations) is discussed with the young people. The trainers consider that gender is a social construction and that young people find gender in the form of unequal expectations, e.g. that boys\* are encouraged to assert their interests through violence, while for girls\* this is a less conceivable/partially accepted way of behaving. The goal is to break down stereotypes and to enable the participants to open up and expand their own gender images and self-concepts. In exercises on biography work, questions about one's own identity are discussed with expectations of gender roles that are placed on young people.

Violent behavior is understood in the solution-oriented systemic approach as a "pattern" that has become entrenched in interaction with others. It is assumed that we find behind every violent behavior „good reasons“, i.e., unrecognized, unarticulated, and/or unfulfilled needs and desires. Even though boys\* are more closely associated with violent behavior than girls\* due to gender stereotypes, the reasons for violent behavior are usually experienced in a similar way by boys\* and girls\*: as an attempt to free oneself from the experience of powerlessness, to gain recognition, to be able to act and to be strong. The program deals with both physical and psychological forms of violence, such as bullying and verbal violence.

An essential focus of the program is the development and training of strategies for impulse control and the recognition and expression of needs, desires and concerns in appreciative communication. The physical perception of feelings also plays a major role here. Nonviolent communication and the perception of feelings are seen in the training as an important key to nonviolent behavior: "The goal is to formulate messages that "get through" and are understood - in contrast to accusations, accusations and threats that quickly escalate situations. A confrontation with one's own experiences of violence and discrimination also plays a role. Since violent or aggressive behavior usually triggers anger, shame, and/or fear (of having failed in parenting) in parents, addressing these feelings is at the heart of parenting work and how parents can provide reliability, support, and safety to their children even when these feelings are present.

Every form of training is intersectional. Social requirements and experiences of discrimination are taken into account. The trainers reflect on their own social positioning and the role this plays in the training. The TESYA® Deaf program has a particularly strong intersectional orientation, which systematically includes the difference line Ability. The training is offered for all genders and in different languages (German, Arabic, Turkish, German sign language).

### **Mannigfaltig e.V.: Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle (2004).**

<https://mannigfaltig.de/service/> (Last access: 16.02.2023)

"Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle" is a method manual, for the prevention of violence in boys' work (in the brochure and therefore in the following also without \*). It consists of a theoretical and practical part. The target group are groups of boys from 6 to 18 years and workshops can be carried out in the context of school or youth work. The brochure suggests that the methods should be carried out by professionals who are socialized as males, since (only) they can be model male role models for boys. The brochure was published by the „Landesstelle Jugendschutz Niedersachsen“ and „mannigfaltig e.V.“

The aim of the manual is to train boys with skills, that have a preventive effect on violence (especially in the area of primary prevention). „Halbe Hemden Ganze Kerle" focuses on body- and experience-oriented methods, such as recognizing and expressing one's own feelings, one's own boundaries and those of others, and above all talking about fears or injuries. Dealing with masculinity is seen as a decisive factor in solving problems of violence. Young men's propensity to violence is understood to be the result of an inner tension in which they often find themselves: the repression of feelings of fear (or their "camouflage" through anger) and the

knowledge or experience of not being able to meet the demands of masculinity. Boys then usually resolve this tension by transgressing boundaries, violence, sexist slogans etc.

In the manual, a lack of real men is stated, which makes it difficult for boys to develop a masculine identity without resorting to toxic media fantasies of masculinity. It often creates pressure to emulate those images or conform to traditionally masculine connotations (from which various exercises are supposed to relieve them). Although the manual consists largely of methods, it is emphasized that the authentic use of the educator's own person in the work is the most important method - "I am my best tool!".

Aggression and violence are distinguished from each other in the manual, with violence defined as the transgression and violation of one's own or others' boundaries. It usually also serves as a defensive reaction in situations in which boys\* experience powerlessness or to restore a sense of self-worth. In contrast, the handbook presents a constructive, positive understanding of aggression as a direct, personal expression of feelings, expressions of will, as an open confrontation, self-statement, personal revelation, a means of protecting oneself, etc. Boundaries can become more recognizable and assessable in the experience of one's own and others' aggression. Some methods are intended to facilitate self-knowledge and self-assertion under a positive, resource-oriented recourse to the emotion of aggression. The manual emphasizes that, at the same time, it is important as an educator to have knowledge of pathological features of aggression suppression. Many methods revolve around the themes of fear, powerlessness, power, closeness, and distance, and are culminated with the goal of better self-knowledge and self-care (but also care for others, such as through massage methods).

### **PeerThink - Tools and resources for an intersectional prevention of peer violence (2009).**

[www.peertthink.eu](http://www.peertthink.eu) (Last access: 16.02.2023)

The PeerThink Manual is a handbook with methods for pedagogical professionals and teachers to work with young people from the age of 10. It consists of a detailed theoretical and practical part and contains methods for working with young people as well as self-learning methods for reflecting on one's own attitude, knowledge and positioning on the topics of violence, racism, sexism and intersectionality as adult/professional. Also, the manual includes recommendations for implementing intersectional mainstreaming in educational institutions. The methods can take place in different settings, but mainly in school settings (e.g. workshop weeks) with both practitioners and victims of violence of all genders. The handout was developed within the framework of the Daphne II project "Peerthink - Tools and resources for an intersectional prevention of peer violence" funded by the European Union.

The overall goal of the project is to reduce power/dominance relations, such as sexism, racism, classism and their interconnectedness with violence. The project aims to address the macro- meso- as well as micro-level of violence and dominance relations with young people, i.e. to make the interplay of personal experiences and actions with social structures and relations understandable. In the handbook, various theoretical explanations about the origin/function of violence and sociological approaches to the analysis of structural

dominance/powerrelations (especially sexism, racism) are presented in detail. Essential for PeerThink is the distinction of different forms of violence according to Johann Galtung (1998). It deals with different forms of interpersonal violence (e.g. physical, psychological, sexualized) as well as structural and cultural violence. Furthermore, it presents different approaches to explain violent behavior. A central strand here is that structural experiences of violence and discrimination are identified and addressed as contributory causes of individual violent behavior. Young people are encouraged to reflect and share their own stories and experiences through a variety of methods. The project assumes that young people are usually both; perpetrators and victims of violence. Methods help to encourage them to tell their stories from both perspectives. Feelings of powerlessness or insecurity are to be made discussable, as they are seen as a cause of violence (as compensation for negative feelings). PeerThink assumes that the hegemonic construct of masculinity legitimizes violence, which makes (individual) violent behaviour a closer possibility for boys\* than for girls\* or non-binary persons. Among other things, acts of violence are understood and thematized as an expression of the affirmation of masculinity (strength, superiority) and the devaluation of femininity (weakness, vulnerability). Cultural, structural and symbolic devaluation and discrimination of women\* is explained as a major cause of gender-specific violence. Masculinity or gender is addressed in each case in intersection (intersection) with other social categories, such as ethnicity and class. The handbook contains methods for dealing with feelings that can arise during experiences of violence, exercises for non-violent conflict resolution, discussion methods, topic-related project work (e.g. film, photo, collage), as well as playful methods for initiating conversations. In the method brochure, different social categories and their influence on the experience of violence are considered: different genders (gender), diverse sexualities, belonging to majority groups or minorities, the question of social class. The intersectional approach is meant to explain violence as well as to reveal resources of young people to act non-violently or not to be (re)affected by violence.

#### **GEAR - Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence [2011].**

<https://www.gear-ipv.eu/educational-material/national-packages> (Last access: 16.02.2023)

Also available in: greek, romanian, spanish, croatian.

The project "Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence" (GEAR against IPV) consists of an extensive collection of handouts; a handbook for professionals, a handbook for students, as well as a guide for training and a brochure with suggestions for target group-specific advertising and lobbying. GEAR was implemented and financed within the framework of the Daphne III program of the European Commission by various associations in Greece, Germany (here SPI Forschung gGmbH), Spain, Romania, Croatia and Cyprus and evaluated externally. It'stntat teachers and pedagogical specialists. The goal of GEAR is to work on the entanglements of gender stereotypes and hierarchies with students and to reduce violence in relationships. GEAR is in the field of primary prevention, is aimed at 14 - 16 year old students and the methods can be carried out in both same- and mixed-gender groups. The workshops with students are to be conducted by teachers and other educators who have been specially trained in advance.



The manual is divided into four modules: Introduction and Objectives, Gender Stereotypes and Gender Equity, Equal and Non-Equal Relationships, Violence in Relationships. The focus is on dealing with stereotypical role models and requirements as well as their social hierarchization. The danger of living restricted by traditional hegemonic role models or of being sanctioned in case of deviation also form an essential part. Some exercises are intended to raise awareness of the fact that boys\* are more privileged than girls\* and to make it understandable how sexism works to the advantage of men\* and disadvantage of women\*. GEAR assumes that boys\* are more violent than girls\* mostly because of the fulfillment of gender stereotypical role models/requirements (strength, assertiveness, devaluation of femininity), but can also be affected by violence. In GEAR, above all, gender-based violence between boys\* and girls\* (in heterosexual romantic relationships) but also among boys\* in peer groups is addressed. Some exercises address how a sexist culture/everydayness makes violent behavior towards women and girls seem more legitimate. Different forms and shades of violence are addressed, mostly focusing on (romantic) couple relationships; physical violence and psychological violence (threats of violence, extreme jealousy, insults, control and surveillance). Some methods address power relations, privileges associated with different categories (age, ethnicity/origin/skin color, body, etc.) and related forms of discrimination and oppression.

One idea that GEAR follows to positively cast nonviolent masculinities builds on the idea that it takes strength to not act violently. Training of empathy, in the form of mental and playful (also theater pedagogical) putting oneself into the experience of girls\* is supposed to achieve this. GEAR also designs "equal relationships" as a positive counter-model to violent relationships. The manual consists, among other things, of playful methods, physical exercises (e.g. on the topic of boundaries), discussion methods, silent worksheets, engagement with cultural products (films, magazines). In some exercises, stories are used to illustrate aspects of the complex topic of "violence in relationships," to show forms of violence, or to show the young people possible courses of action. Still other methods are aimed at dealing with one's own vulnerability as well as raising awareness of the vulnerability of others.

**Bremer Jungen\*büro, BDP MädchenKulturhaus: respect - Antiracist girls' and boys' work against exclusion and violence (2004)**

[https://www.bremer-jungenbuero.de/download/broschueren/respect\\_dokumentation.pdf](https://www.bremer-jungenbuero.de/download/broschueren/respect_dokumentation.pdf) (Last access: 16.02.2023)

"Respect" was a workshop program with the target group of 14 - 17 year old students. 13 whole school classes participated in the workshop in groups of girls\* and boys\*. The project is based on secondary and tertiary prevention and aims to sensitize perpetrators of violence and empower those affected by violence, sexism and racism. The overall project was funded as part of the "Entimon"- Program 'Active against hate - youth for tolerance and democracy against right-wing extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism' of the German government. It was designed and implemented by the "Bremer Jungen\*Büro" in cooperation with the "BDP MädchenKulturHaus". The teams of workshop facilitators were diverse in various respects; in terms of sexual

orientation, gender identity & expression, and migration background.

"Respect" assumes that every boy\* has internalized patriarchal patterns of thinking, behavior and experience, and suppresses and devalues characteristics with feminine connotations. The project therefore wants to encourage boys\* (as well as girls\*) to question norms and requirements and to recognize and criticize power relations and discrimination. In the project, not only patriarchal but also racist dominance and power relations were problematized. The central goal was to encourage young people to speak from their own lives and about their feelings. The pedagogues brought methods and thematic focuses with them but worked according to the principle "disturbances have priority" and emphasized the importance of a gender-reflective as well as anti-racist and intersectional attitude and perspective. The overriding goal was to engage in conversation with young people and to make connection to the issues: "The most important method is the educator him/herself." Nevertheless, the handout contains various methods that emphasize the body, emotions, or intellect.

In "Respect", dominance and the threat of violence against girls and women are understood as central male patterns of action that are legitimized by hegemonic masculinity. Violent actions by boys\* are also understood by "Respect" as functional behavior, as a way to gain social recognition apart from good academic performance. Violent behavior does not occur accidentally in most boys\*, but in it there is an appeal; to feel strong and powerful ("to have fun", as many boys\* say) or to assert their own interests. In the project, the initial aim was to make the functional aspect and the feelings of pleasure in violent acts discussable as such, instead of rashly tabooing and moralizing violence. Only after the feelings of the perpetrators and those affected had been discussed were alternative courses of action developed. A distinction was also made between aggression as a feeling and violence as a way of acting in order to expand the scope for action.

The label "gay" to differentiate from and devalue everything that is considered non-male appeared in the statements of many boys\* in the project. Fears of becoming gay themselves, should a close friend be gay, was a central theme. Also, many boys\* equated homosexuality with sexualized violence, which led, among other things, to violent homophobic statements. Such myths about homosexuality were addressed in the workshops and debunked by the team members. By taking a critical look at norms of masculinity, among other things by means of irritations, it should finally be possible to talk about more intimate topics and feelings of excessive demands, pressure, vulnerability, fears, which is understood by "Respect" as a necessary basic prerequisite for violence prevention.

Physical and verbal violence (especially trans/homophobia and sexism), as well as structural violence (racist, sexist, discrimination, and structures) were equally addressed. Aggression, anger and powerlessness are understood as feelings that are also caused by societal structures and (sub-)systems such as family and school or by experiences of racist discrimination. The project tried to uncover and problematize the social contribution to the emergence of these feelings together with the young people in order not to individualize their experiences and behaviors. "Respects" highlights the importance of the embodiment of alternative

masculinities by the team members, who broke with hegemonic embodiments of masculinities, for example, by being caring and affectionate towards each other or otherwise breaking with classic gender stereotypes. The project reflects on intersectionality, focusing in particular on the intersection of race/gender by addressing racism and sexism with affected and non-affected youth. One focus here is on feelings of powerlessness and exclusion, of othering that migrant boys\* experience, and which in part drives them to a staging of an aggressive masculinity.

## 6.2 Questionnaire Professionals

1. INTRODUCTION: What is your name? What is or was your main focus, what does your work consist of, how would you describe your target group(s)?
2. EXAMPLE OF VIOLENCE: Can you give me examples of violence and difficult conflicts that you encounter in your pedagogical work? To what extent does gender /do gender-related aspects play a role in this?
3. HANDLING APPROACH: How do you/do you deal with it so far? Where do you see/have questions? Where are you/are you perplexed? Where do you/do you see needs for support or help for improved pedagogical action?
4. FURTHER EXAMPLES: Are there other forms of (gender-based) violence (psychological, physical, digital, verbal that you encounter in yours? ACTION: How are you dealing with it so far? Where do you see needs? Where are you at a loss? Needed help?
5. EXPLANATORY APPROACH: How do you explain the violent or difficult conflict behavior? How do you discuss it in the facility or organization? Do you see connections to gender-related aspects?
6. REFLECTING MASCULINITY CRITICALLY IN PRACTICE: In discourses on “critical masculinity” (Kritische Männlichkeit”) and gender ref. In discourses on critical masculinity and gender-reflective pedagogy, traditional masculinity requirements such as assertiveness, negation of vulnerability and emotionality, etc. are understood as the cause of violent behavior. Do you also work with this approach and if so, how can this be put into practice?
7. CARING MASCULINITIES: Do you perceive alternative forms of masculinities (non-stereotypical behavior, caring masculinities)? How would you describe them? Do you promote them, or if so, how do you promote them?
8. P2P APPROACH: CarMiA follows a peer-to-peer approach: What possibilities do you see to promote non-violent, non-hegemonic masculinities through peer-to-peer approaches?
9. INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH: Do you see a need for different approaches in working on gender-based violence depending on the target group, for example LGBTIQ+ youth, youth with family migration background, refugees, socially disadvantaged youth, etc.?

10. Asked again in general: What are the most important needs of pedagogical professionals in relation to work on gender-based violence with boys/male youth in your field of work in order to promote non-violent masculinities?

11. Would one more person like to say something that has not yet been said?

## 6.3 Questionnaire Youngster

### A. Meaning of gender

- 1) What does it mean to grow up in this society as a boy\*, girl\*, queer, non-binary person? What images, claims are one confronted with?
- 2) Which similarities or differences do you notice? What about equality, i.e. equal rights for all, regardless of gender?
- 3) Do you perceive men\*, do you know men who are "atypically male"? What makes them atypical?

### B. Violence and Masculinity

- 1) What forms of violence do you perceive in your environment, neighborhood/society?
- 2) Are there specific ways in which girls\*/boys\*/non-binaries perpetrate violence?
- 3) Are there specific ways in which girls\*/boys\*/non-binaries experience violence?
- 4) What would you do if a boy\* refused to fight back after being attacked?
- 5) It is often said that violence is not a solution. Are there also situations where violence is a solution?

### C. Ways to less violence and more gender equality

- 1) When you think about your environment/district/society, what needs to happen for more gender equity to be achieved there?
- 2) Thinking about your environment/district/society, what is needed to promote non-violence there?
- 3) Do you have any comments or additions that you would like to share with us?

## 7. Literature

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