



Regional Research

ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

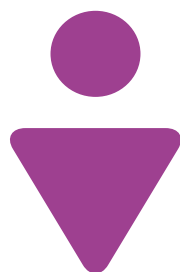
Country Report: Croatia

In partnership with: International Institute for Child Rights
and Development & Child Hub

Date: November 2020



SUPPORTING & CARE SERVICES
FOR CHILDREN



Researcher:

Marina Trbus, Miroslav Rajter, Emina Horvat

Partner Institutions:

Brave Phone, Zagreb Child & Youth Protection Centre
in Zagreb,

Rijeka Protection Home for Children "Tić"

Disclaimer & copyrights

The research has been produced in the framework of the
Child Protection Hub project, supported by the Austrian
Development Agency, Oak foundation and Terre
des hommes. The research does not necessarily
reflect the views of the donors

WITH FUNDING FROM
 AUSTRIAN
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION

 OAK
FOUNDATION

Executive Summary



Introduction

The purpose of this research was to measure the social and gender norms impacting school related gender-based violence, and the potential role of children in challenging these social norms. It was implemented in Croatia, in October and November 2020, at the following sites: Rijeka, Zagreb and Čakovec. In total, 19 young people (13 girls and 6 boys) aged 13–18 took part. Seventeen adults from various institutions and organizations from Rijeka, Zagreb and Čakovec were involved (2 males and 15 females).

Methodology

This was a mixed methodology research, with a “qualitatively-driven approach” (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015). It was inductive and deductive, as well as exploratory, drawing on participatory methods. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research was adapted to respect physical distancing at the site in Rijeka, while participants from Zagreb and Čakovec took part online. High ethical standards were applied in accordance with the Tdh Child Safeguarding Policy and national legislation.

Key Findings

Out of the 6 research questions, several findings stand out. Children witness violence every day, varying from mild to damaging incidents, and they report normalization and desensitization toward it, which is a call for action.

Many risk factors were identified: presence of weapons, drugs, alcohol, and lack of parental control and attachment. Almost all young people are potential victims, but those from vulnerable groups and those who are in some way different (members of the LGBTQ community, national minorities, disabled children) are more at risk.

The acceptance of violence is a key social and gender norm. It is perceived as a method for enhancing dominance and social status. In some cases, school management and teachers have trivialized violence, shown a lack of understanding and empathy, or even been perpetrators of violence themselves. Students describe some teachers as uncaring or “turning their heads away” from violence (ignoring or allowing it). Adults, especially parents and teachers, say they lack support, skills and knowledge, and often feel helpless. However, there are some professionals that state that they do see differences, and cite prevention programs, education and a shift in norms and attitudes toward creating a society that does not tolerate violence. Victim blaming is quite present, as well as traditional expectations of

how girls and women should behave (not expressing themselves in a way that could be considered provocative or sexual, like men are allowed to do). Some girls tend to behave more like boys in order to gain footing in the social hierarchy. A specific subculture was identified among the young people: gassers – groups with a common appearance and specific risky behaviours.

A child's agency is often ignored and diminished by adults. Young people differ in seeking help from adults depending on their connection with their parents, teachers and school management. Boys are less likely to seek help.

In general, an emerging theme for Croatia is the decline in the mental health of young people due to internalized problems.

Both adults and young people see opportunities for change in more open and empathic communication, while professionals see a need for the broader implementation of prevention and intervention programs.

Key recommendations

- Broader implementation of evidence-based prevention programs
- Support for community-based intervention
- Support for the participation of children and young people
- Enhance children's agency and their responses to violence
- Better screening and support for young people whose mental health is at risk



Table of contents

	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	04
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	06
1	INTRODUCTION	08
2	Methodological Overview: Overview of multi-country study	09
2.1	Guiding Questions and Contextual Lens of Analysis	09
2.2	Research Methods and Approach	10
2.3	Ethical Considerations	12
3	Country-Level Methodology	13
3.1	Research Team	13
3.2	Site Selection	13
3.3	Participants	14
3.4	Sampling	16
3.5	Ethical Issues	18
3.6	Research Tools: Adaptations and Reflections on their Implementation	19
3.7	Limitations	19
4	Violence Against Children in Schools in Albania	20

5	Findings	22
5.1	Incidence, Type and Perpetrators of Violence Against Children	22
5.2	Social and Gender Norms Around Violence	24
5.3	Protection from Violence and the Promotion of Well-being	28
5.4	Children's Agency and their Responses to Violence	29
5.5	Key Emerging Themes in Croatia	30
6	Discussion	32
7	Key Recommendations	34
8	References	35
9	Appendices	36
	Appendix A: Key Definitions	36
	Appendix B: Ethical Protocols	39
	Informed Consent (Adapted from Columbia Group for Children in Adversity [2011])	42
	Limited Confidentiality (Adapted from Columbia Group for Children in Adversity [2011])	43
	Appendix C: Country Level Consent Forms	46
	Appendix D: Royal Roads University Consent Form	49
	Appendix E: Map of Research Sites	53
	Appendix F: Social maps drawings	54
	Appendix G: Flyer inviting young people to participate in the research	54

1

Introduction

It is no longer possible to ignore the significant and widespread impact violence has on children. It influences children in the short and long term, and even across generations. Despite the three decades that have passed since the international community came together to launch the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Hollis, Marcy, Amboy and Kress (2016) found that over 1 billion, half of all children between the ages of 2 and 17, had experienced violence, abuse or neglect in the previous year. Violence against children happens in schools, homes, communities and across systems. In South East Europe, violence against children is pervasive.

Understanding that direct and indirect experiences of violence in childhood undermines our investments in children in health, education and development, this research focuses on further understanding the social and gender norms impacting school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), and the role of children in challenging these social norms.

For this research, Child Hub Europe partnered with Terre des hommes and the Institute for International Child Rights and Development to address this critical issue.



Methodological Overview: Overview of multi-country study

This study was conducted in South Eastern Europe, specifically in **Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia.**

The purpose of the research was: **to measure the social and gender norms impacting school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), and the potential role of children in challenging these social norms (RFP Child Hub).**

Guiding Questions and Contextual Lens of Analysis

2.1

The following questions guided all aspects of the study, and were integrated into the study framework and relevant data collection instruments:

1. What do we know about the incidence and type of violence that children are facing in and around school in Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as the children that are most impacted by it?
2. What are the social and gender norms of school children, community members and school professionals related to violence against children?
3. What are the social and gender norms of school children, community members and school professionals related to gender-based violence against children?
4. What are the informal and formal mechanisms, child-led actions, community resources, values and services that protect children from violence and promote a child's well-being?
5. To what degree do children feel able to prevent or respond to violence (and GBV specifically) against themselves and their peers, and what ideas do they have for preventing and responding to violence?
6. How has children's experience of violence in and around school changed since COVID-19?

Note: due to measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was temporarily suspended until it could be resumed in accordance with national and local requirements to ensure the safety of participants and researchers.

To maintain the consistency and legitimacy of the data collection, the research questions remained the same, but additional contextual information provides clarity on data that refers to retrospective perspectives of what was occurring prior to pandemic policies and school closures, and any changes that have occurred as a result of lockdown measures. Some additional questions were added to explore the perception of the change in experiences of violence in schools and other educational experiences (including online, learning from home) that occurred as a result of COVID-19 measures.

In order to gather information on the current status and practice of violence against children, as well as on social norms, attitudes, practices and knowledge around violence against children, this study explored educational settings in addition to the full context of children's lives within which violence takes place. This study focused on:

1. Girls' and boys' experiences and life stories (in general),
2. Educational settings (including formal and informal educational settings [in person, at a distance, online], for teachers, principals and fellow students),
3. The route to educational settings (including outdoor spaces, recreational areas, business areas, roads, etc.),
4. Formal and informal support services (including social services, state care and the judicial system)
5. Cultural values, beliefs and norms that shape children and adults' social and gender norms with respect to violence against children.
6. Children in exceptionally difficult circumstances, such as children with disabilities, children living on the street, migrant children, ethnic or religious groups, etc.

2.2 Research Methods and Approach

This is a mixed methodology study with a "qualitatively-driven approach" (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015). It is both inductive and deductive, as well as exploratory, drawing on participatory methods. Using a variety of research instruments with groups of children and adults (see the table below), the researchers' understanding of children's lived realities gradually deepened. Further exploration of children's lives will yield stronger indications of social norms and practices, and will enable a clearer direction for future programming and policy, rather than a process that reaches larger numbers of participants with less depth.

Within the participatory methodology, the focus of the instruments was to provide children and adults with a framework in which they could explore the violence that is taking place in children's lives. Rather than asking closed questions, researchers created the space for children to name what they perceive as violence, explain its prevalence and its impact on their daily lives, discuss their

attitudes towards violence, as well as the attitudes of their peers, parents and the broader community, and the impact of these attitudes. In addition, attention was given to creating space for children to identify strategies for prevention and support services, as well as for social change.

Researchers in each project country identified the most appropriate sites based on the sampling frame.

The sampling frame aimed to include the following:

- Children aged 13–18 (approximately 30 children/site [2 groups of 10–15 children, one boy group and one girl group], in approximately 2–4 sites)
- Adults, including: parents, teachers, principals, other school professionals, community and religious leaders, social service providers and community members (approximately 15 people/site)

However, given the added complications associated with COVID-19 distancing protocols, the sampling frame was adapted according to health and safety specifications.

Methods conducted with Children and Adults

Children	Adults
Tool 1: Social Mapping - Part 1 (Rijeka, in person with students)	Tool 7: Focus Group
Tool 2: Vignettes (Rijeka, in person with students and Online)	
Tool 3: Participative Ranking Methodology (Rijeka, in person with students, Online)	
Tool 4: Social Mapping - Part 2 (Rijeka, in person with students)	
Tool 5: Social Network Mapping (Rijeka, in person with students)	
Tool 6: Focus Group (Online)	

Note: due to COVID-related measures introduced during data collection, tools were adapted to fit one or both of the following formats:

Method 1: In person, respecting physical distancing

Method 2: Via smartphone or computer with internet connection, or remote participation

If it is not possible to safely bring together a small group of children while physically distancing, consider the following adaptations:

Online Video-Conferencing: in groups with Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting, etc.

WhatsApp/Phone Calls: If children are unable to connect to a video-call app, consider using WhatsApp or audio-based group calls and/or individual calls to chat about maps.

Online via Zoom, Jam Board, Miro or other visual collaboration software

No internet and unable to meet in person: Co-create activity packages with children and adults that can be mailed or safely dropped off at children's homes (with postage for them to return it, or a convenient drop-off location).

All efforts were made to conduct research in person to avoid the ethical complications of conducting distance-based research with children on violence.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Research on sensitive subjects, such as violence against children, can cause unintended harm to participants, for example, if confidentiality is breached, informed consent is not obtained, or a group of people is stigmatized. Researchers need to be careful not to raise expectations, which can lead to mistrust of outsiders and disillusionment. Researchers also need to be cautious not to increase power imbalances that may cause a particular group to become vulnerable.

The research on violence may ask children and adults, even without direct questions concerning personal experience, to re-live painful and difficult trauma. For researchers working with children who may have suffered from violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, there is a critical responsibility to “do no harm” in their interactions with children and youth.

The researchers in this study were trained to watch for signs of distress (both verbal and non-verbal) among children. They ensured that the environment within the activities remained respectful and supportive, and took time to speak with children who may have needed extra support outside of the activity. The name and contact details of a support worker, as well as emergency numbers and local reporting protocol, were listed on a flipchart at all times, enabling children to reach out for additional support on their own. Where a flipchart was not practical, handouts were given to young participants before each session. When, for example, a researcher saw that a young person required support, they were able to discuss this with the child and call a support person to request a personal visit be made to the community. The researcher was then able to follow-up with both the child and the support worker using appropriate child safeguarding protocol, as per the Tdh Child Safeguarding Policy and national legislation.

Please see Appendix B for more on Ethical Research Protocols, including further ethical guidelines, recommendations and practices for working with children, informed consent and limited confidentiality procedures and considerations.

Country-Level Methodology

Research Team

3.1

The research team included:

- Marina Trbus, lead researcher and report writer
- Miroslav Rajter, researcher
- Emina Horvat, research associate

Site Selection

3.2

Research sites were selected based on several sample criteria foreseen by the research methodology. Rijeka and Zagreb were identified as two sites enabling the participation of young people from different backgrounds and from different minority groups. Moreover, as these sites are bigger cities within Croatia, and multicultural, they matched the criteria and allowed us to observe social norms, gender-based issues and violence.

It was also key that the research site be in an area where near-by institutions could assure support and treatment to young people in case a young person disclosed abuse. In Rijeka, counsellors, social pedagogists and psychologists work at the Protection Home for Children “Tić” (PHCT). In Zagreb, at the Child and Youth Protection Centre (CYPC), there are counsellors, social workers and psychotherapists. Both child protection institutions are acknowledged and recognized as examples of good practice in Croatia.

Rijeka is a city of 128,624 habitants. It is located on the Adriatic Sea coast, and is one of the biggest ports in Croatia. It is a vibrant and multicultural city. In Rijeka, we implemented research in person while respecting social distancing. Research was conducted at two vocational high schools. Recent research on a representative sample of young people in Zagreb showed that students from vocational schools are at a significantly greater risk of peer violence and other forms of violence compared to their peers from gymnasiums (Ferić, 2018).

After conducting our research in Rijeka, the research team was informed that one of the groups of pupils that we had worked with would be self-isolating due to a positive COVID-19 case. To keep everyone safe and in agreement with CYPC Zagreb,

we postponed further research for two weeks. However, due to the rising numbers of infectious COVID-19 cases in Croatia, we decided to conduct further research in Zagreb online.

In Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, with around 1,000,000 citizens, we had planned to work with children at CYPC in person, but converted to online sessions to keep everyone safe. This allowed us to reach a broader group of young people. Furthermore, to have as inclusive a sample as possible, we reached out to students in Čakovec, in the north of the country. Čakovec has around 30,000 citizens and one of the largest Roma communities in Croatia.

3.3 Participants

Young People

In total, 19 young people (aged 13–18) participated in 3 cities: Rijeka, Zagreb and Čakovec.

Rijeka:

- Students from 2 schools/sites were involved. There was 1 researcher for a group of 4 students and a group of 6 students. The number of participants was limited by school management due to COVID-19 measures.
- Both sites were vocational schools¹: one dealing with trade and one with economics.
- Participants were 16–17 years old (in their third year at vocational school).
- There was a total of 10 participants (8 girls and 2 boys).

Zagreb and Čakovec:

- Participants were identified based on their involvement in the Youth Council of CYPC. This Council gathers young people who aim to advocate for prevention and better protection of child victims of violence. Some benefitted from the treatment and support of CYPC (counselling, therapy, etc.).
- Research was implemented online via the Zoom platform.
- 9 participants took part (4 girls, 5 boys).
- Participants were 13–18 years old.
- Of these students, 1 was an elementary student, 8 were gymnasium students, and 1 university student.
- Participants were from 1 elementary, 6 different gymnasiums and 1 university.

¹ The educational system in Croatia is such that, after completing elementary school (at approximately age 14), children can choose to go to vocational schools (for 3–4 years) or a general high school, called a gymnasium (for 4 years).

Adults

Rijeka

- In total, 9 participants took part: 1 teacher, 1 principal, 1 school professional, 1 community representative, 2 representatives from the police, 2 representatives from social service, and 1 representative from an NGO that works with victims of violence.

Zagreb and Čakovec

- In total 8 participants took part: 1 teacher, 2 parents, 1 mental health expert, 1 social service representative, 1 police representative, 2 representatives for the Ombudsmen for Children (a lawyer and social pedagogist).

Locations:

In each country, researchers worked with children and adults in 1–2 locations. These locations were selected based on:

- ability to observe social norms, gender-based issues and violence;
- the diversity of the occupants: presence of various nationalities, ethnic and minority groups;
- access to a good support system for young victims of violence.

In Croatia, research teams worked with 5 groups: 3 groups consisting of 19 children in total, and 2 groups with 17 adults in total. The activities took a total of 5 days to complete: 3 days with children, 2 days with adults.

Given the nature of the research, children aged 13–18 were selected as they represent an age group that has reached a developmental stage that can understand the complexities of violence and the systems that influence it. Given the gendered nature of experiences of violence, the groups needed close to an equal number of participants from both genders. Children on the gender-spectrum had the opportunity to choose to participate in the group they most closely identified with.

Group size was determined by engaging the largest number of participants without compromising the depth of the research for a team of up to two researchers.

Based on the proposed methodology, researchers should have worked with 2 separate gender-specific groups of children and 1 separate groups of adults, for a maximum total of 30 children from each site (ideally, an equal number of girls and boys) and a maximum number of 15 adults from each site (ideally, an equal number of men and women). This would mean a maximum of 30–60 children and 15–30 adults engaged per country.

In Rijeka, where the group meetings were conducted on-site while respecting physical distancing, the groups were selected based on their school. Each group meeting was conducted with 1 researcher and 1 assistant. In Zagreb and Čakovec, the group meeting was conducted online. In this case, 2 participants from Čakovec

were included with the group from Zagreb because this sample was too small to be an independent group. Due to an inadequate number of participants in terms of gender (e.g., in Rijeka, 1 group consisted of 5 females and 1 male student), the groups were not separated by gender.

The adult groups were conducted separately for Rijeka and Zagreb. Since the number of participants was adequate for conducting group meetings (<10), the groups were conducted for each city separately, thus enabling good knowledge of the local specifics for each group.

3.4 Sampling

Researchers in each project country identified the most appropriate sites based on the sampling frame.

Research was implemented in cooperation with **Brave Phone from Zagreb, Child and Youth Protection Centre in Zagreb, and Protection Home for Children, “Tić” in Rijeka**. Young people from different settings and schools were reached through these organizations. In total, children from 10 schools participated in Rijeka, Zagreb and Čakovec.

The sampling frame aimed to include the following:

- Children aged 13–18 (approximately 30 children/site [2 groups of 10–15 children, 1 boy group and 1 girl group], in approximately 2–4 sites)
- Adults, including: parents, teachers, principals, other school professionals, community and religious leaders, social service providers and community members (approximately 15 people/site)

Due to COVID-19 measures, the focus group in Rijeka was implemented in person, respecting physical distancing and with the use of face masks. Focus groups were implemented online via the Zoom platform.

Adults from various institutions and organizations from Rijeka, Zagreb and Čakovec were involved. In total, 17 adults were involved (2 males and 15 females). They represented various institutions: the ombudsman for children, schools, local government, social care workers, the police, health services and NGOs. Also, we involved parents. Due to COVID-19 measures, both groups were involved using the online platform, Zoom.

However, given the added complications associated with COVID-19 distancing protocols, the following sampling frame was used:

Children ages 13–18, (19 young people from 3 cities Rijeka [group 1]), Zagreb and Čakovec [group 2]).

- Group 1: 10 participants (2 boys, 8 girls)
- Group 2: 9 participants (5 girls, 4 boys)

Choosing the appropriate school was limited by numerous pragmatic and sampling constraints. Therefore, the schools were identified via convenience and purposive sampling in order to select specific populations representing a diverse range of children in a diverse range of settings.

We worked closely with schools, community organizations and local governments to ensure that we could conduct the research with the same children and adults throughout; the same group of children moved through all the research tools identified, allowing researchers and participants to deepen their understanding as each tool progressed.

Sampling Children

Our local partners (CYPC Zagreb and Protection Home for Children “Tić” Rijeka, PHCT) supported the process of identifying schools, and sampling children and adults. Moreover, prior to sampling we held a presentation for the Ethics Board of CYPC and PHCT, as well as some of their employees and directors. This helped to build a mutual understanding of the research goals, and helped formulate strategies regarding the challenges posed by COVID-19 measures.

Due to COVID 19 measures, the following sampling was used:

Rijeka – In person respecting physical distancing.

- 10 students aged 16–17 participated (2 boys, 8 girls).

Zagreb and Čakovec – online via the Zoom platform.

- To assure high quality research and discussion, we limited the number of participants to a maximum of 10, but just 9 participants, aged 13–18, were involved: 5 girls and 4 boys.

Sampling Adults

Adults from various institutions and organizations from Rijeka, Zagreb and Čakovec were involved. It was a convenience sample.

- 17 adults were involved (2 male and 15 female)
- They represented various institutions: ombudsman for children, schools, local government, social care, the police, health providers, NGOs and parents.

Data Analysis

The data analysis included a review of transcripts, observation notes, as well as drawings (social maps) made by young people.

Coding and categorization of the data was carried out using the Violence Against Children in Schools in SE Europe Data Analysis Tool. Based on the research questions, themes were identified, and later, following coding, categories. This allowed for a synthesis and better understanding of the data.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The research team consisted of psychologists trained to watch for signs of children expressing distress (both verbally and non-verbally). The first and main goal of our research was to “do no harm” in our interactions with children and youth. Therefore, research was carried out in Rijeka with the collaboration of the Protection Home for Children “Tić” (PHCT) and their counsellors, social pedagogists and psychologists. In Zagreb, we worked with the Child and Youth Protection Centre (CYPC), in cooperation with counsellors, social workers and psychotherapists.

The aim was to provide high-quality support in any given situation where young people were suffering stress or trauma, or where they disclosed being a victim of violence.

Moreover, at both locations an adult safe-person was on-call to accompany young people to one of the institutions where partnering practitioners could intervene and help them to report violence.

The Ethics Board from Child and Youth Protection Centre (CYPC) revised our methodology and approved our work with children and young people.

Consent and **true participation** were also very important to us. Consent forms for young people and parents were translated (see appendix E) as well as **flyers** (see appendix G). We asked school professionals to hand these out to children so that those interested in participating could contact us.

To ensure that the environment within the activities remained respectful and supportive, we took time to present **ground rules**, such as:

1. We do not laugh at each other; we respect each other's opinions.
2. What we hear in these rooms, stays among us.
3. You can leave the group and stop participating at any time.
4. Raise your hand; please do not interrupt your colleague.

A poster (in person) or PowerPoint slides (online) with the names of institutions and organizations where participants could seek help and support were available, as well as info and brochures from partnering institutions/organizations.

Rules and sources of support were repeated several times during the time spent with children.

For online groups, the hand signals for those wanting to safely disclose violence in the home while on a video-call was introduced. Participants were encouraged to show this sign, and for other young people and adults to pass on this information.

At the end, a small thank-you gift coupon was given to participants. Researchers were available for follow-up using appropriate child safeguarding protocol, as per the Tdh Child Safeguarding Policy and national legislation.

Following the online research, participants from Zagreb/Čakovec were contacted by phone to ask if any additional support was needed. In Rijeka, the research team contacted school supervisors to check in.

Special note during COVID-19: As each local context rapidly changed during COVID-19, both for children and project staff (for example, governmental restrictions on physical distancing were suddenly relaxed), ethical protocols were regularly examined (at each point of change).

Given the timing of the research within the COVID-19 pandemic, protocols were more stringent for online interactions. Appropriate adaptations were undertaken (see 3.6.). Moreover, before the research took place, and while contacting young people and asking their consent to participate, we informed them, several times, that whatever they disclosed among the group would remain confidential and that they would be able to speak openly.

Also, no direct questions were asked about the participants' experience of violence, but rather their understanding of the violence occurring in their communities.

Research Tools: Adaptations and Reflections on their Implementation

3.6

As some of the research was conducted online, we adapted tool #3: the Participative Ranking Methodology. To support the discussion about the incidence and various forms of violence, we prepared a PowerPoint presentation that included data on peer violence (national research data on the incidence and form of peer violence, e.g., 24% of girls and 54% of boys stated that they were hit by one of their peers; or 37.8% of students experience at least 1 form of peer violence per week). Moreover, we presented data on sexual harassment of young people, as well as data about intimate partner violence among adolescents. We presented data about cyberbullying, followed by clips and screenshots from the media and newspaper about violence against children.

In comparison with groups we met in person, we did not see a loss in quality of discussion or richness of data.

Due to an inadequate number of participants, and the resulting gender imbalance (e.g., in Rijeka one group consisted of 5 females and 1 male student), the groups were not separated by gender. However, online, where we had 5 girls and 4 boys, we divided them during vignette #2 to have a more open discussion on the gender norms that shape children and adults with respect to violence against children.

Also, the online group of young people did not draw maps, but we included questions from tools #1, 4 and 5 to gain an understanding of unsafe/safe places and persons, contextual factors, perpetrators and victims, references groups and sanctions, as well as their impact on children, family and community.

Limitations

3.7

The research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it challenging to enter schools or organize online research with young people and adults. This is reflected in the sample size, the variety of children we could work with, and the fact that we had a convenience sample. Our findings would have better strength with intentional samples.

4 Violence Against Children in Schools in Croatia

Croatia has one of the lowest rates of economic activity in the European Union, with only 52.5% of the working-age population active in the labour market in 2015. Employees make up only 37.68% of the total population, posing a serious obstacle to the sustainability of the social system and economic growth. Research carried out in Croatia showed that lower education, parents' unemployment, higher levels of stress, family conflict and lower levels of family intimacy predict a higher risk of child abuse (Rezo, et al, 2019). This is quite important to note, along with the lack of systematic implementation of evidence-based programs (Rajter, et al, 2016; Rajter 2019; Rezo, Rajter, Ajduković, 2019), in order to better understand the prevalence of violence against children in schools in Croatia.

Corporal punishment of children as a pedagogical measure has been prohibited in Croatia since 1999. However, the results of epidemiological research on violence against children show that violent educational practices are often still used in Croatia (Ajduković, et al 2012). The results of the analyses implemented by Rajter, et al (2016) indicate that fewer parents have positive attitudes towards corporal punishment, and a substantial number of them support corporal punishment to a certain extent. In other words, a relatively positive attitude towards the use of violence in rearing children persists. Along with a lack of economic safety, witnessing family stress can affect children's cognitions, emotions and behaviours.

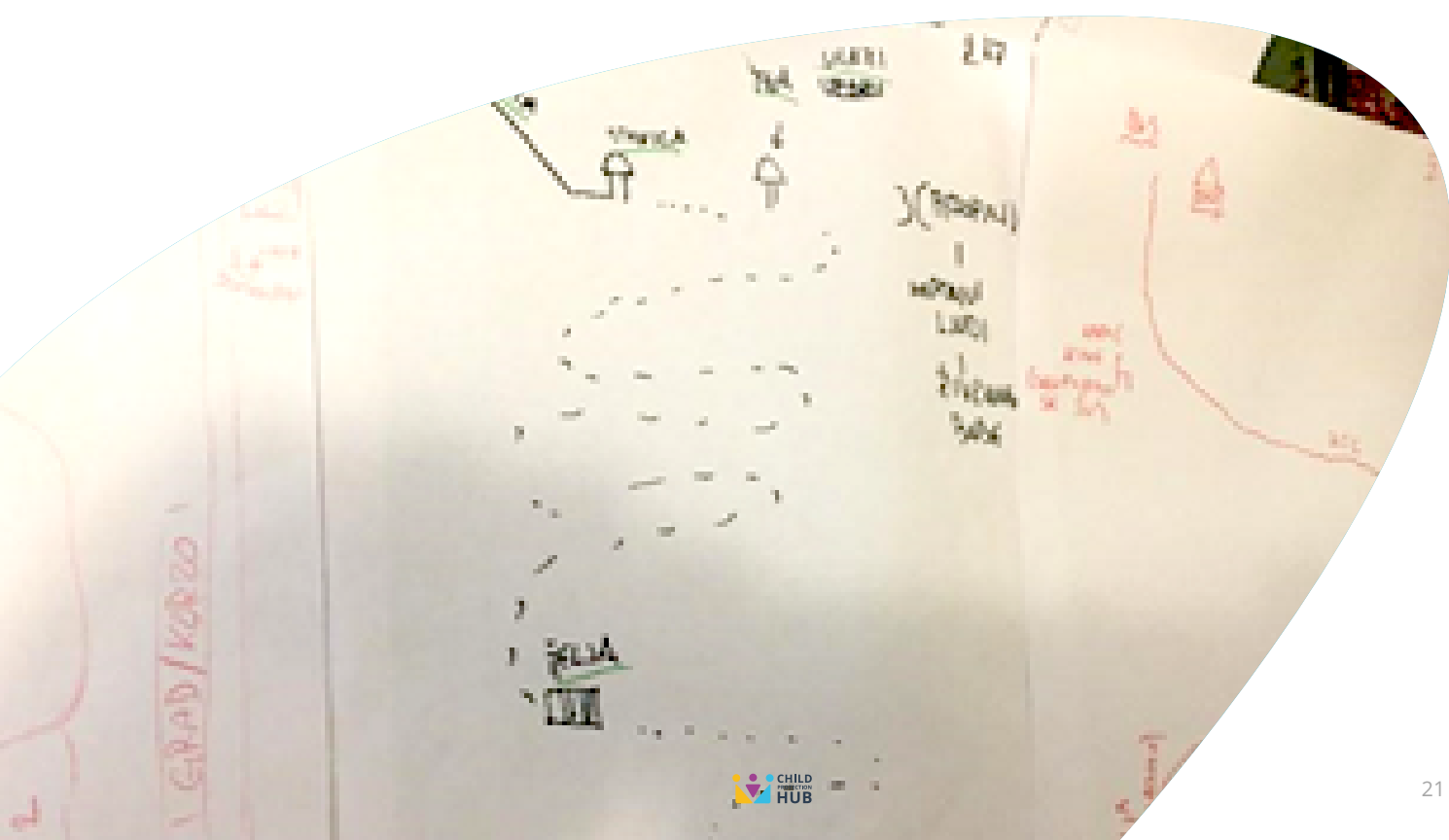
Numerous studies have proven that there is a link between peer violence and the experience of domestic violence (Baldry, 2003, according to Bulat & Ajduković, 2012). Regarding peer violence, Rajhvajn et al (2011) found on a sample of 558 male and female second-year high schoolers, that 37.8% of students experience at least 1 form of peer violence every week, most commonly, psychological violence, especially gossip. Following this data, Trbus, et al (2015) showed on a sample of almost 2,300 young people in Croatia, that 64.50% of girls and 56.50% of boys stated that they were harassed by one of their peers at least once in their life; 24.70% of girls and 54.20% of boys stated that they were hit by one of their peers at least once in their life; and 31% of girls and 4% of boys stated that they were sexually harassed by someone. It was also found that 37% of young people express the likelihood that as parents they will use corporal punishment as an educational measure, which shows a positive attitude towards violence and the

transgenerational transmission of violence. Regarding intimate partner violence among adolescents, on a sample of 330 young people (63% of girls and 37 % of boys) in 12 high schools, Bjelić (2016) found that:

- 47% of young people believe that a young man has the right to hit his girlfriend if she wants to break up with him or if she pays more attention to her friends than to him;
- 49% of young people think that a girl has the right to hit her boyfriend if he does not listen to her;
- And approximately 1/3 of young people state that they know couples among their peers whose relationships involve verbal, physical and sexual violence.

Epidemiological research on family violence against children in the Republic of Croatia (Ajduković, et al, 2012) showed that 13.7% of young people experienced sexual abuse according to stricter criterion, and 18.1% according to milder criterion.

The aforementioned context of positive attitudes towards violence, lack of programs and strategic action in the prevention of violence, and desensitization of the public as well as continued socioeconomic challenges, somewhat explains why data in Croatia shows there has been no change in the prevalence of violence against children. In 2011 and 2017, a two-time-points research with a probabilistic stratified cluster sample of pupils in year two of high school was conducted about the self-reported one-year prevalence of parental violence. Results showed there was an increase in the prevalence of physical violence, while the prevalence of psychological violence remained unchanged. In the context of gender differences, in 2017, girls were at a higher risk for psychological aggression than in 2011, while the risk for psychological abuse became equal for boys and girls over the years (Rajter, 2019).



5 Findings

5.1 Incidence, Type and Perpetrators of Violence Against Children

Verbal abuse is the most prevalent form of violence against children, and it ranges from regularly (weekly or less) to often (daily). Perpetrators are mostly peers and younger adults, but young people also report that senior citizens, especially older women, tend to be verbally aggressive, usually on public transportation. This kind of violence bothers girls more and makes them feel shamed and troubled.

“There are a lot of grumpy grandmas there...”²

“There are a lot of grandmas and they yell ‘Move!’, and I have nowhere to move, but nothing special and scary, just a lot of people.”

Aggression and bullying occur frequently, and is more prevalent for boys. This happens mostly in school, often in restrooms, on the way to school, and also on playgrounds, sports fields, parking lots, transport terminals, near liquor or low-cost shops, as well as around pubs and nightclubs —especially night clubs with folk music.³ It is closely related to verbal abuse. Also, there are a large number of organized fights:

“...this Saturday, at 9 pm, there’s an organized fight at this place. Two of them are fighting and there will be two on each side so that no one can interrupt or stop the fight.”

A parent participating in the focus group said that his son took part in organized fights when he was in year two of elementary school.

As well as experiencing, young people witness different forms of violence on public buses, in school, on the way to school, and in public spaces, such as: playgrounds, sports fields, parking lots, transport terminals, near liquor or low-cost shops, and pubs and nightclubs — especially folk night clubs. The types of violence they witness includes verbal abuse, threats, extortion, physical violence and aggression, up to sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. Furthermore, participants

² Most of the quotes in this report come from child participants, but due to the small sample size, in order to protect the identity of the speaker, no identifying attributes (age, gender and location) will be given. Quotes from adults will be noted as such, i.e. adult participant.

³ In this context, folk music refers to pop-folk music (or contemporary folk music), popular in the countries of Southeast Europe.

note that now, due to COVID-19, online verbal abuse is more frequent. Girls and boys witness this equally, and suggest it does not change with age, they just get better at recognizing it.

"I honestly think that if you would implement research now, during COVID, and look at it from when it began, the numbers would be even bigger."

"Some more dangerous spots in the city are the bus terminal, near the radio station and some parking lots...and some night clubs, but also, there is violence inside schools, both during big breaks and after school".

"Every day they [high school pupils] throw freshmen off the bus, and the drivers, they are afraid of them".

"Kids start to play those violent video games when they are 6, and they see blood and play to kill, it has to affect them in some way..."

"Who beat whom...actually those people gain popularity."

Young people report witnessing sexual content (pornographic images, films, etc.) through online applications and social media (Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, etc....).

"60-70% of the violence went over Snap[chat]."

"It is there on the internet, anyone can google it. You literally don't have to go to incognito either, you just go. There is no censorship, anyone can access it at any time."

Also, distribution of pornographic content changes with age. While children aged 9-13 share nude pictures on social media, older children and young people are much more aware that distributing this material is a criminal offence under Croatian law, so they share pictures or videos in person with their closest, trusted friends. The participants did state, however, that taking and sharing intimate pictures is quite common.

"Yes, everybody does it...it is more likely that guys will share, but yes, everybody sends their pictures."

"I mean we all know about things like [sharing intimate pictures and videos] because it happened to almost everyone."

"All those pictures, it's cool for a week or two, and then it disappears."

"But now some thirteen-year-old girls, they don't send pictures over the Internet, but sleep with someone in real time."

Police representatives commented on the seriousness of the distribution of pornographic materials and sexual predator behaviour:

"When it comes to pornographic content, from photos, from texts, you can't believe it was written by a young person of 12, 13 or 15 years of age."

Young girls report the presence of sexual content, sexual harassment and sexual violence. This type of violence increases in frequency with age. The perpetrators are adults. Young people tend to identify these perpetrators as they are commonly known at the community-level as local troublemakers.

"On the bus, there was one girl from the 8th grade, and he was touching her all the time and she was trying to get away from him."

"The guy comments on them, all the girls. The guy gets on the bus, 5 guys and 2 girls, and then everyone comments."

But young people also identify the presence of intimate partner violence.

"It became normal that people in relationships beat each other."

"For example, I know a girl who was slapped by her boyfriend and he broke her cell phone".

All young people are generally at risk of becoming victims, but those from vulnerable groups or those who are "different" are at a higher risk.

"Two guys came, we were at the bar, and they knew my friend was gay. I stood in front of him and that guy pushes me and hit me so he could reach [my friend]. He rolled his eyes and called him a faggot."

"All his classmates send him [boy with disabilities] to the bakery. They would tell him, you have three minutes, and you have to come back. So he must run..."

5.2 Social and Gender Norms Around Violence

5.2.1 An emerging sub-theme from Croatia

is that participants recognize that violence is normal.

"To me, when somebody says 'you're a fool', it means nothing to me."

"...psychological violence is present in greater numbers because we perceive it more as normal, because when someone fights, you know it is violence, and when someone insults someone, it is already routine."

This indicates that violence is very widespread, and children, as well as adults, are sometimes desensitized, so they lack a response to violence or have a high level of tolerance to various types of violence. This is best described by a quote from a young student:

"Young people see violence as normal, the most normal thing for them is that groups beat each other, that we beat each other, that people in relationships beat each other —mentally, physically, in all directions — because it is presented to us all the time as something normal, and it should not be."

They also identify the role of mass and social media, as well as the video game industry, as a contributing factor in promoting violence.

"The media also plays a role in how we perceive violence".

"I don't think enough attention is paid to the development of meaningful relationships; short term, one-night stands are promoted. We are pushed and encouraged for some kind of pleasures, parties, drugs, drinks and that, and now we are encouraged to do something useful..."

5.2.2. Social and gender norms about violence against children

There is a transgenerational transmission of violence.

"... That is one vicious circle, because after an adult is raised in a way that he thinks is okay, he will pass it on to his children, there is really no end..."

"If we learn all our lives that violence is okay, at the age of 20, we will not see a problem in that."

This is reflected onto the societal level so that schools, at some level, are perceived as a rough ecosystem and some teachers are seen as perpetrators of violence.

"School is a rough ecosystem, and you have to prove yourself — prove that you are the strongest."

"...the professor started insulting me. She told me I'm like a dead plant."

Moreover, students say that some teachers show a lack of understanding and empathy, and some tend to treat violence as a trivial matter.

"The professor said it's nothing, they're just kidding, like it's their way of having fun."

"To school, it only matters whether it happened in school or on the way to school. Everything that happened outside of school, they don't care..."

This encourages the use of violence:

"All of society teaches us that we must not be weak and seek help; we must somehow fight for everything ourselves."

Some practitioners and professionals state that they see a difference, and they list prevention programs, education and shifts in norms and attitudes towards creating a society that does not tolerate violence:

"The progress back some 20 years is obvious for all forms of violence against children, including sexual and peer...it was not talked about at all, neither in schools nor in families. It was an attitude: if we do not talk about it, there is no problem....Today the picture is different, the environment is different, and in fact, as a consequence, the public is constantly talking about violence and sending messages about how important it is to protect children from violence..."

Some parents and teacher, however, report a lack of education and programs to lower the incidence of gender-based violence against children:

"[A]s a parent I would say that there is a very low awareness of what violence is."

"[S]pecifically, violence is not talked about at all...it is all pushed under the rug..."

The underlying factor hindering progress is fear: students are afraid to approach their parents to ask for support and help; parents are afraid to ask for help; and teachers feel inadequate in dealing with this and knowing how to proceed.

"Let's say a kid breaks a vase and they tell him, don't tell daddy. You learn 'daddy is scary', and 10 years later, when bigger problems come along, you certainly won't talk about it to avoid getting in trouble."

"The reason that they don't turn to teachers for help is that they are afraid of punishment. It is a vicious circle."

"We would have called the police, but if you know that they will call your parents... we stayed locked in a shed and begged him [perpetrator] to let us go, rather than call our parents."

"Parents usually do not even come to these workshops for fear of being identified as a bad parent who will then have problems with institutions."

Finally, participants say that they recognize that consequences differ in accordance with socioeconomic status and connections to decision makers. On a contextual level, this creates feelings of double standards and clientelism, which contributes to the belief that those who are aggressive have power.

"It's all very unfair to me. Rarely does an institution help like that. It doesn't make sense to me. I feel like no one is helping anyone, but I see that it all goes through some connections."

"That guy continued driving around the neighbourhood, all the time during the 6 months of his probation, because his daddy solved everything."

5.2.3. Social and Gender norms about gender-based violence

Quite often, the victim is blamed for the violence. Participants explained the norms of behaviours you should follow regarding sending intimate pictures to people

you like or love, because it is expected that these images will be distributed or somehow shown to other people.

"The girl is more often condemned; they say that she is a whore. While for a guy, he is a legend; he's big. But the girl, she is a slut, but the picture is good..."

The consequences of these actions depend on how the environment reacts: whether it would catastrophize or trivialize. There will be no major shame or damage for victims of shared nude photos if they are higher in the social hierarchy; it is more likely to be trivialized. In general, students recognize that the higher you are on the social scale, the less likely it is that you will be mocked and bullied. But if you have fewer or no friends, and you are not popular or somehow different, it is quite likely you will be harassed.

The girls that participated stated that they often feel limited in expressing themselves because they are easily labelled "provocative".

Gender-based violence was identified in intimate relationships. It differs based on attachment to and relations with the family. It also differs based on the school the participants attend, being more present among vocational school pupils, and less so in gymnasiums where students have more supportive relationships with their parents and tend to disapprove of violence towards a significant other. Those girls who have less supportive or authoritarian relationships with their parents tend to encounter higher-risk situations or more harmful relationships.

"We went to a friend's apartment and a guy came and just pulled out a gun."

"How jealous can he be? Here we are, barely 17, and you forbid me to hang out with my girlfriends. I mean, already my mom and dad forbid me from doing so much, who are you to tell me I can't hang out with them?"

One explanation for this discrepancy can be that gender-based violence in Croatia is, in certain situations, seen as acceptable and justified. Research confirms that these attitudes are still very strong predictors of intimate partner violence (Ajduković, Löw & Sušac 2011). In response to this vulnerability, some girls tend to model aggressive behaviours. Some school staff said that they noticed that girls sometimes express masculine behaviours. This is especially common for freshman girls in vocational schools.

"I notice that at the beginning of the school year, these freshmen girls often behave more masculine, like they are making their status in school."

"Girls would fight, and students would all surround them, and those young men were actually cheering and filming it..."

This kind of masculine behaviour is recognized as a subgroup called "gasser". It has a specific set of norms, appearances, and behaviours.

"Those are kids who think they are tough. They wear Nike or Diesel hoodies — that's how they got their name — or Nike tracksuits and Air Max sneakers. They brag on Instagram when the police write them a ticket for dealing weed."

This subgroup has its female counterpart and participants describe them as: "...those girls are like elites; they also like to fight and like to boss everyone around."

5.3 Protection from Violence and Promotion of Well-being

The young participants recognized that there are some teachers and staff that you can turn to for help in school, and others you would not. Boys are less likely to ask for help to avoid looking weak or being teased by their peers.

"I mean, not all professors are like that, some sympathize more and give us advice. Some are afraid of the principals, so they react. And some think they are here just to teach us their subject and nothing more."

"Most friends condemn him the moment he goes to complain to the professor!"

Finally, they also see the need for improvement in formal mechanisms of protection (social centres, the police and justice system).

"And I don't know how effective the police are now because we all know that the judiciary is not the fairest in Croatia."

"It's all very unfair to me. Rarely does an institution help like that. It doesn't make sense to me. I feel like no one is helping anyone, but I see that it all goes through some connections."

"It all depends on the police — how much they are willing to do."

"I personally don't know where to seek help if something like this were to happen to me."

Adults, especially practitioners, recognize that a lot of effort has been put into the reporting system, and both informal and formal protection from violence, as well as promotion of children's well-being. They stress that there are a lot of programs and activities to prevent violence and to empower children, young people and parents towards more peaceful behaviour.

"All those prevention programs and activities where the topics are tolerance and democratic citizenship are extremely important."

"As far as I know, the programs that are implemented are in kindergartens, and there are different ones specified for different types of issues for developing parenting competences."

Also, they recognize that the integration of services and intersectoral cooperation are a good basis to lower incidence of violence and contribute to children's well-being.

However, they identify some parents as being more responsible for incidence of violence:

"There are children who are victims of violence and their parents seek help, but the parents of children that have aggressive behaviour do nothing, even if they are warned about it, and the need to stop that kind of behaviour is pointed out...I think I see the big responsibility of the school in this."

"There have certainly been behaviours that are punishable under anti-discrimination law, and this form of behaviour shows how unaware parents are; parents of children who commit violence deny that it is violence at all, and it is a good direction for us to act at the level of prevention, to inform parents about what violence really is...to call a child a 'gypsy', to insult him on a national basis — a 'stinking Serb' or I don't know what is an insult on a national basis — there are forms of discriminatory behaviour that are punishable".

Children's Agency and their Responses to Violence

5.4

Adolescence is usually described as a period in which independence is achieved. It is more accurate, however, to talk about a change in the balance of independence and dependence with other parts of the young person's system: e.g., parents, peers, community and even health professionals (Christie & Viner, 2005).

A child's agency mostly depends on their relationship with other peers and adults. The more these relationships feel safe, attached and supportive, the more likely the child will be to show initiative.

"I would try to tell the teacher, because if the girl sleeps during class, it is obvious that she has some problems and that she should not yell at her, but ask her if she is ok."

However, these children expressed agency on several occasions, especially the students from VAT schools, and were disappointed.

"We got a new teacher and we're constantly protesting and looking for a replacement because she acts like we're talking to a wall."

"There were a million such situations where we complained to the professors. There was one girl and there was a boy with difficulties. That girl filmed him naked in the toilet and the principal and everyone knew, and nothing was solved..."

"There is no solution for such things in our country. Professors never react. I think that is one of the biggest problems here. And when we complain about something, professors pretend to be deaf."

"No, we kept writing it in the suggestion box. And those letters kept disappearing. Later, one teacher told us to stop inserting letters because that is the job of a psychologist and a principal, not ours."

Despite, all this, they still have ideas on how to make a difference:

"That everything we tell you adults doesn't turn into a lesson".

"I think that people are different and having different opinions should be normalized."

"I think we need to somehow not allow technology and social networks to pull us too far in. We need to be more in the real world."

"We need activities like this where we can just talk to each other, present our problems".

"Parents would have to come to conversations with some person, and that person would explain to them how they should be there for us, no matter what."

5.5 Key Emerging Themes in Croatia

The key emerging theme concerning young people in Croatia is mental health. This has been shown by research data, and was confirmed by this research. Even prior to COVID-19, the data was worrying. For example, a study conducted by the Laboratory for Preventive Research, Department of Behavioural Disorders of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences in Zagreb, on a representative sample of young people in Zagreb (N = 4,821 young people aged 14 to 19) showed that:

About 30% of young people have expressed a depressed state and serious symptoms of anxiety. About 20% of them have reported serious signs of depression, symptoms and stress. Now, after social isolation, the mental health of young people, especially their social functioning, is further endangered. Many students pointed to symptoms of impaired mental health: 10% of young people have extremely high anxiety and depression and stress, and one in three believes that they will need professional psychological help.

During our research, students talked about feeling disconnected from their parents, peers and community. Students also reported people who are somewhat isolated in their classes:

"Well, they sit by themselves, don't communicate too much with anyone, or hang out with others. They are kind of isolated. They are isolated from society, but they are isolated in their heads."

"There are those two girls. As soon as one is missing, the other one will not hang out with us, but will sit alone all day and be alone."

"We were a really big class, there were 30 of us: half guys, half girls. And there were always the ones who were screaming like, "Oh my god, I'm so depressed", while those loud ones were sitting next to a girl who really had a problem, and she was quite."

One boy became very agitated regarding the question "How are you?", implying he felt annoyed that everybody asked this to be polite and seemed concerned, but nothing ever happened.

"....and I loved that question: How are you? Are you OK? I loved it. Of course, I'll tell you I'm fine... just, you know, let's get that off our hands."

"Wherever we turn, there is not much help until we manage to extinguish that emotion of anger, sadness, and oppression."

Related to the shame and humiliation that some pupils experienced due to their nude pictures being published and distributed on social media, participants said that some children and young people harmed themselves in order to draw attention away from these incidents.

"I know some people who had this happen: their pictures went online and then they started cutting themselves."

"It was when I was in the eighth grade, it was a big trend. And then it happened in Rijeka that a girl cut herself too deep and cut her vein and ended up in the hospital. Since then, no one does it anymore, just people who are depressed."

Some students recognized that if there was someone to turn to and to get support from, for some of them, it would make a difference.

"A lot of young people are just looking for some attention."

"I think that we need more compassion, more space. Empathy is also important."

"[T]here [should be] such a person in the school to whom everything can be told, who will listen to it all, will not pass it on and will give us some normal advice."

The first question posed in our research was: what is the incidence and type of violence that children face in and around schools in Southern and Eastern Europe, and which children are most impacted by it. In Croatia, by far the most present form of violence is verbal abuse, on- and offline. Now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, young people report that this has seriously increased. Moreover, children witness a range of violence every day, from mild to damaging, and they report normalization and desensitization toward it, which is a call for action. Many risk factors have been identified: presence of weapons, drugs, alcohol, lack of parental control and attachment for some young people, especially those from VAT schools and those with lower academic achievements. Almost all young people are potential victims, and those from vulnerable groups or who are in some way different are more at risk.

Regarding the second research question — what are the social and gender norms of school children, community members and school professionals related to violence against children? — a contributing factor is the widespread norm that violence is acceptable. It is perceived as a method that enables you to enhance your dominance and social status. One of the findings revealed that the higher you are on the social scale, the less likely you are to be bullied or harassed. This is also promoted by the role of mass and social media.

Clientelism is present in the country, and punishment may depend on whether you have connections and influence. This reflects on some school management and teachers who in some cases trivialize violence, lack understanding and empathy and are even perpetrators of violence and abuse. Mostly, as pupils say, teachers do not care and ignore it.

Adults, especially parents and teachers say that they lack support, skills and knowledge. They say they often feel helpless. However, there are some professionals that state that they do see differences and cite prevention programs, education and a shift in the norms and attitudes toward creating a society that does not tolerate violence.

Related to norms of gender-based violence against children, during the research a specific subculture called “gasser” was identified. They have a specific appearance and behaviours that include violence, drug dealing and promotion of their style through mass media. In general, there is a change in the way that some girls, especially those who are at a higher risk for developing behavioural problems, express more aggressive/masculine behaviour. This shift towards aggressive

behaviours among girls is in accordance with some previous Croatian data where 49% of young people think that a girl has the right to hit her boyfriend if he does not obey her (Bjelić, 2016).

It must be stressed that boys, or their male peers, do not report being victims of sexual violence, as opposed to girls who do report it. This must be taken into consideration as the data shows that this type of violence happens both to girls and boys. We must question if norms of not talking about it are still very present for boys.

On the other hand, there are still the notions that girls should not be “provocative”, and that victims will be held responsible if something happens to them.

Children have ideas about how to prevent and respond to violence, but often they are not heard or are not valued. Moreover, young people said that they would reach out to their peers or maybe parents, even occasionally some teachers or NGOs, but in general, they, especially boys, do not seek help. This leads to an emerging national theme: mental health; these young people have said they would self-harm and/or become withdrawn, but would ask for help only when the situation became absolutely beyond their control.

Covid-19 is not a daunting concern for these young people, but is rather referred to as the new normal. They do notice the pressure of online schooling, more socializing via online apps, and thus a rapid growth of online violence. This is an emerging topic for future research.

Finally, adults see the need for change and they suggest more prevention and involvement of families at a higher risk, as well as developing values toward tolerance. Young people see opportunities for better, more empathetic and open communication with each other, their parents and teachers, and as often as possible, without the aid of technology.

Key Recommendations

The data in this research confirmed that children witness and experience a wide range of violence. Moreover, they report desensitization towards various forms and incidence of violence. Thus, our key recommendations would be:

- More **systematic evidence-based prevention programs**. This would apply to universal prevention, but also to intervention programs for families that are higher-risk: to support parents and equip them with additional parental skills, skills on how to have constructive arguments and how to enhance attachment in the family and with children.
- Assure better synergy and cost effectiveness to **support community-based intervention**. During this research, children and adults stressed the presence of numerous risks (guns, drugs, violence, corruption, etc.). Exposure to many risk factors has a cumulative effect. At the very least, risk factors appear to have additive effects on vulnerability (Coie et al., 1993). The presence of drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and violence occurs in communities or neighbourhoods where people do not feel connected to the community, where there is a higher rate of vandalism and where there is low supervision of public places (Ferić Šlehan & Kranželić, 2008). The presence of this **risk factor contributes** to a low connection between community members, leads to **disorganization of the community**. Probably the most significant question of connection with the community is: Do the members of that community feel that they have can have an impact on their own life?

This brings us to an additional key recommendation: to **support the participation of children and young people and enhance children's agency and their response to violence**.

Children's **participation** appears to have a protective and **preventive effect for health-related problems** (de Winter, Baerveldt, Kooistra, 1999). Therefore, it is argued that enablement, a key element of the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, should be at the core of every child-health promotion program. This is in direct line with an emerging key theme in Croatia: **mental health**. Thus, enabling child agency would contribute to their well-being. Bearing in mind the challenges that COVID-19 has placed on the mental health of children and young people, as well as on adults, one of the key recommendations is investment in key actors, programs, activities and interventions that promotes children's well-being.

References

1. Ajduković, D., Löw, A. & Sušac, N. (2011). Rodne razlike i prediktori partnerskog nasilja u mladenačkim vezama. Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 18 (3), 527-553. Preuzeto s <https://hrcak.srce.hr/75435>
2. Ajduković, M., Rimac, I., Rajter, M. i Sušac, N. (2012). Epidemiološko istraživanje prevalencije i incidencije nasilja nad djecom u obitelji u hrvatskoj. Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 19 (3), 367-412. Preuzeto s <https://hrcak.srce.hr/96677>
3. Bijelić, N. (2015). GEAR against IPV II Country Report: Dating violence, intimate partner violence and sexual violence in adolescents: preventive and supportive initiatives. Zagreb: CESI./unpublished/
4. Christie, D., & Viner, R. (2005). Adolescent Development. BMJ (Clinical research ed.), 330(7486), 301–304. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.330.7486.301>
5. Coie, J. D., Watt, N. F., West, S. G., Hawkins, J. D., Asarnow, J. R., Markman, H. J., Ramey, S. L., Shure, M. B., & Long, B. (1993). The science of prevention. A conceptual framework and some directions for a national research program. The American psychologist, 48(10), 1013–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066x.48.10.1013>
6. de Winter, M., Baerveldt, C., & Kooistra, J. (1999). Enabling children: participation as a new perspective on child-health promotion. Child: care, health and development, 25(1), 15–25. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2214.1999.00073.x>
7. Ferić, M. (2018): Jačanje otpornosti adolescenata. U: Stručni skup „Pozitivan razvoj adolescenata Grada Zagreba: analiza stanja”.
8. Ferić Šlehan, M. i Kranželić, V. (2008). Procjena rizičnih i zaštitnih čimbenika u zajednici: razlike između percepcije mladih i njihovih roditelja. Kriminologija & socijalna integracija, 16 (1), 33-43. Preuzeto s <https://hrcak.srce.hr/99108>
9. Kranželić Tavra, V. (2002). Rizični i zaštitni čimbenici u školskom okruženju kao temelji uspješnije prevencije poremećaja u ponašanju djece i mladih. Hrvatska revija za rehabilitacijska istraživanja, 38 (1), 1-12. Preuzeto s <https://hrcak.srce.hr/17642>
10. Rajter, M. (2019). Razlike u jednogodišnjoj prevalenciji roditeljskog nasilja prema samoiskazu adolescenata u 2011. i 2017. Godini. Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 26 (1), 5-37. <https://doi.org/10.3935/ljsr.v26i1.295>
11. Rajter, M., Trbus, M. i Pećnik, N. (2016). Socio-demografske odrednice stava prema tjelesnom kažnjavanju djece. Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 23 (2), 211-234. <https://doi.org/10.3935/ljsr.v23i2.135>
12. Rezo, I., Rajter, M. i Ajduković, M. (2019). Doprinos modela obiteljskoga stresa u objašnjenju rizika za zlostavljanje adolescenata u obitelji. Društvena istraživanja, 28 (4), 669-689. <https://doi.org/10.5559/di.28.4.06>
13. Trbus M., Rajčić, H. i Rajter, M., (2015.) Enhance the Right of the Child to be Safe. Zagreb: Parents' Association "Step-by-Step".

Appendix A: Key Definitions

Violence Against Children: “All forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” (UNCRC, Art 19)

Sexual violence: An umbrella term used to refer to all forms of sexual victimization of adult women, men and children, including different forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. “Any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.” (Kewkes, Sen, Garcia-Moreno, 2002, p.149)

Child sexual abuse: “Engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities (this does not apply to consensual sexual activities between minors), and engaging in sexual activities with a child where use is made of coercion, force or threats; or abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child.” (UNICEF, 2017, p.6)

Types of Violence Against Children (Adapted from Dawes, Bray, & Van Der Merwe, 2007)

Particular types of violence against children are elaborated below:

Physical Violence: Intentionally inflicting injury or death on a child.

Emotional Violence: Exposing a child to or inflicting psychological or emotional harm on a child.

Sexual Violence: Sexual activities, with or without the child’s consent, where the perpetrator is older or in a position of authority. (This may also involve force or trickery.)

Neglect: Lack of care provided by caregivers, usually over a longer period of time that results in physical or psychological harm to a child.

Exploitation: Broader term usually referring to the use of a child for another person’s gains, that has a negative impact on the child, such as harmful child labour, early marriage, child trafficking, child prostitution or pornography, etc.

Categories of Violence Against Children CRIN (n.d.)

Physical and Psychological Violence

- Abduction
- Bullying
- Death Penalty
- Domestic Violence
- Extra-judicial Execution
- Gang Violence
- Harmful Traditional Practices
- Honour Killings
- Infanticide
- Judicial use of Physical Punishment
- Kidnapping
- Physical Abuse
- Physical Punishment
- Psychological Abuse
- Psychological Punishment
- State Violence
- Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment



Neglect:

- Abandonment
- Dangerous, Harmful or Hazardous Work
- Deprivation
- State Neglect

Exploitation:

- Pornography
- Sex Tourism
- Sexual Exploitation
- Slavery
- Trafficking
- Violence at Work

Child: The Convention defines a “child” as a person below the age of 18, unless relevant laws recognize an earlier age of majority.

Child Protection: UNICEF’s definition of child protection is the “strengthening of country environments, capacities and responses to prevent and protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and the effects of conflict.” (UNICEF, 2008)

Child Participation: “Participation is the term used to encapsulate activities that ensure a child’s right to participate in matters that affect them are adhered to. This draws on the concept that ‘children are not merely passive recipients, entitled to adult protective care’. Rather, they are subjects of rights who are entitled to be involved, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions that affect them, and are entitled to exercise growing responsibility for decisions they are competent to make for themselves.” (Lansdowne & O’Kane, 2014, p. 3)

Child Well-being: “Child well-being is a dynamic, subjective and objective state of physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social health in which children:

- are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.
- meet their basic needs, including survival and development.
- are connected to and cared for by primary caregivers.
- have the opportunity for supportive relationships with relatives, peers, teachers, community members and society at large; and
- have the opportunity and elements required to exercise their agency based on their emerging capacities.” (ACPHA, 2019, p.10) Please see Appendix F: Tdh Conceptual Framework on Well-being Pillars.

Child Safeguarding: “The responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported.” (Keeping Children Safe, 2014, p.3)

Social Norms: “The full range of these definitions includes a constellation of social rules ranging from mere etiquette to the most fundamental moral duties [13, 14, 37, 38]. In their simplest definition, social norms are the informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions in a given group or society.” (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018)

Gender Norms: A simple definition suggests, “gender norms are the social rules and expectations that keep the gender system intact.” (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019, p.4) However, a more nuanced and complex definition suggests that “gender norms are social norms defining acceptable and appropriate actions for women and men in a given group or society. They are embedded in formal and informal institutions, nested in the mind, and produced and reproduced through social interaction. They play a role in shaping women and men’s (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting their voice, power and sense of self.” (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019, pp.9–10)

Appendix B: Ethical Protocols

In addition to the information contained in **section 2.3**, the following ethical protocols were considered.

Research on sensitive subjects, such as violence against children, can cause unintended harm to participants. For example, if confidentiality is breached, informed consent is not obtained, or a group of people is stigmatized. Researchers need to be careful not to raise expectations, which can lead to mistrust of outsiders and disillusionment. Researchers also need to be cautious not to increase power imbalances that may cause a particular group to be vulnerable.

Given the timing of the research with the COVID-19 pandemic, protocols will be more stringent for online interactions. It is strongly recommended that remote violence against children (VAC) data collection does not take place with children while lockdown measures are in place (Bhatia, Peterman & Guedes 2020). Where it is deemed appropriate for research to continue, adaptations will take into consideration the kinds of questions being asked and the level of privacy afforded participants in the setting where they are joining. Given the potential for heightened levels of violence experienced by children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in keeping with recommendations by UNICEF-IRC 2020, no direct questions will be asked about participants' experiences of violence, but rather their understanding of violence occurring in their communities.

Research on violence may ask children and adults, even without direct questions concerning personal experience, to re-live painful and difficult experiences. As researchers working with children who may have suffered from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, there is a critical responsibility to "do no harm" in our interactions with children and youth.

Researchers will be trained to watch for signs of children expressing distress (both verbal and non-verbal). Researchers will ensure that the environment within the activities remains respectful and supportive, and will take time to speak with children who may need extra support outside of the activity, from a safe distance. The name and contact details of a support worker, as well as emergency numbers and local reporting protocol, will be listed on a flipchart at all times, enabling children to reach out on their own for additional support (for example, the psychosocial service of the school and Child Protection Unity in Albania). Where a flipchart is not practical, handouts will be made to give to young people before each session. Should a researcher see that a young person requires support, the researcher will discuss this with the young person and call the support person to request a personal visit to the community. The researcher will follow-up with both the child and the support worker using appropriate child safeguarding protocol, as per the TdH Child Safeguarding Policy and national legislation.

When working with participants, researchers will pay close attention to the following ethical guidelines, recommendations and practices:

Confidentiality:

- Inform children that you will be collecting quotes and stories, but no names will be attached, only gender, age and community.
- Ensure that you obtain children's written permission as well as the written permission of their parents or caregivers. In some cases, permission might need to be gained from the Ministry of Education in each country. Please see Appendix A for a sample Consent Form.
- Ensure that you obtain the written permission of adults as well. Please see Appendix B.
- Remember, informed consent is an ongoing process. Participants should be regularly reminded of their options. No child should be made to feel that they must participate.
- If you plan to use a recording device, be sure to inform children of this and obtain their consent. Explain how the recordings will be used and what will happen to the recordings at the end of the project.
- If attending virtually, request that participants have a place that offers some privacy, and where this is not possible, that they share who else is in the room and when with the group (as noted below).

Voluntary informed Assent/Consent Conversations

Special note during COVID-19: As the local context may change rapidly during COVID-19 for both children and project staff (for example, if governmental restrictions on physical distancing are suddenly relaxed), it is recommended to regularly address voluntary informed consent (at each point of change). It is useful to think of consent as an ongoing conversation that you have with children (and their parents/carers). You can document consent by asking children/parents to sign consent forms, and you can digitally record their verbal consent if physical distancing is required, or if children and/or their parents/carers have low levels of literacy. Signed consent forms or recordings of consent should be kept securely. It may be useful to use a "script" or checklist when having a consent conversation to ensure that you do not forget anything.

Make sure participants are comfortable and fully informed:

- Select a suitable location where children feel comfortable and at ease.
- Be open and honest with children.
- Explain the entire process, including how the tools could affect young participants.
- Don't raise expectations. Be clear about what can and cannot be achieved through the research.
- Privacy and confidentiality are extremely important, but cannot be guaranteed due to the involvement of the group of participants in the research. Make sure that limited confidentiality is clearly communicated before the start.
- Let children know that they can always ask questions: No question is a bad question.

Know yourself:

- Learn about and be reflective of your lived experiences, biases, assumptions, and trigger points.
- Be comfortable with the uncomfortable. Change can often include feelings of discomfort and confusion. Recognize and pause during these moments.
- Be emotionally present and available to engage with children and listen effectively.
- Communicate genuinely and honestly.

Develop an understanding of the local culture, context and understanding of children and youth:

- Understand the local culture and context you are working in.
- Remember child protection factors differ across gender, age, race, culture, socio-economic status, ability, and other factors.
- Learn about local power dynamics as they may undermine genuine participation.
- Be open to learning. Inquire and ask questions to seek understanding.

Build relationships:

- Build relationships with organizations, communities, families, children and youth.
- Learn from and with children, youth, families and communities.
- Work in partnership, not opposition. Exercise humility.

Be prepared:

- Remember that children may be resilient in one area of their lives but not in others due to their social-ecological framework.
- Remember that talking about one's experiences can be harmful in some contexts.
- Make sure to identify someone to provide follow-up support for those who may need help or want to have a more in-depth conversation.

Be inclusive:

- Be inclusive and involve the most vulnerable populations.
- Remember that most victimized children and youth do not receive services.

Support the group:

- Be flexible and adaptable. Situations and circumstances change, and sometimes things do not work out as planned.
- Hold people accountable. Do not be afraid to hold people accountable for their actions. Be firm but respectful and create an opportunity outside the group to talk through any issues.

Build from strengths and bolster resilience:

- Build from the strengths in people (e.g., positive behaviours, coping techniques), cultures and systems.
- Build capacity. Nurture innate self-healing and protection capacities.
- Recognize people's agency and capacity. See people as experts and survivors and not as victims.

Follow-up:

- Follow-up with participants afterwards to make sure they are doing okay. For example, you might want to check in with them at the end of the session.
- Leave participants the phone number of someone they can talk to, and with information on how to access helpful resources.
- Remember, if you hear about violence or abuse, you have a responsibility to connect that young person with a support person, and to report it the appropriate organization following local protocol.

Informed Consent

(Adapted from Columbia Group for Children in Adversity [2011])

Participation in research must be voluntary, and people must be free to decline or end participation without any negative consequences. The decision to participate should be informed by an understanding of the purpose of the research, how and what information will be collected, how the information will be used, and potential risks and benefits to participants. When participants are children, informed consent must be obtained from the children themselves and from their parents or guardians.

Obtaining informed consent is inherently difficult for many reasons, such as the power imbalance between researchers and participants, the pervasive expectations that participation will bring material improvements now or at a later point in time, and the prevailing norms of hospitality, among others. Obtaining written consent may not be feasible because of low literacy levels and/or prospective participants' fears that written documents will be used against them. Because of this, it is important to treat informed consent as an ongoing process rather than a one-off action.

Specific steps to ensure informed consent:

- Use a child-friendly approach in explaining to children the purpose of the research, what and how information will be used, and their right to say "No" without negative consequences.
- If the participant is a child under the age of 18, obtain the informed consent of both the child and his or her parent or caretaker.
- Tailor the approach to obtaining informed consent to local circumstances. Where appropriate, use the forms provided in the Appendices and request signatures to indicate voluntary and informed consent.

- The process of obtaining informed consent must be implemented for each individual participant.
- Avoid the subtle coercion that can occur. For example, if a parent tells a child “you should participate” or if a village leader says, “we should welcome the researchers and answer their questions”, explain informed consent to the person in power and ask them to explain to others that they are free not to participate, and that there will be no disadvantages or penalties for people who decide not to participate.
- Manage expectations by explaining in simple, clear language that no material benefits will come from participating in the research. Add, however, that the information collected will be fed back to communities and countries, which may find the information useful in taking stock of and improving community-based mechanisms of child protection.
- Explain that, should someone begin to participate and decide that they are not comfortable, they can always leave the research without any penalty.

Limited Confidentiality

(Adapted from Columbia Group for Children in Adversity [2011])

Research participants will be informed that the information they provide is confidential, unless they share anything that puts themselves or others at risk. If there is an incident, suspicion, or disclosure of current violence or abuse, the researcher will work with the child or adult to follow up and explore appropriate services of support using the TdH Child Safeguarding Policy, Research Ethics Protocol of the local University research partner, and the legal protocol in the country. The researchers will not publicly share any personal information such as names that could be used to identify specific individuals or sources of information. Where identity information is collected, it will be maintained in a separate, locked file, and will be made available only to people who have a legitimate need to know. Pseudonyms will be used when data is being quoted. Specific steps to ensure confidentiality include:

- Conduct discussions in a private setting. When conducting interviews with young people, ensure that there is always a minimum of three people present (either two children or two adults) and if not, there is a third person within vision for child safeguarding purposes. If there are departures from privacy, make sure all participants know who else is present and listening or observing, and get their informed consent to continue.
- Keep any records of names and other identifying information in a safe, locked place that is not open for public access.
- Do not leave confidential files open on a desk or computer. Always close them and put them out of public access, even if you leave your desk only for a minute or two.
- Use general descriptors (e.g., 13-year-old girl) rather than a specific name or other identifying information in writing up your data and reports.

- Share information from your field notes, including identifiers, with members of the research team, but not with people outside the research team.
- Hold information about specific cases of abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect in strict confidence, sharing information only with the Lead National Researcher or the UNICEF Focal Point.

Please note: It is important to be clear with participants, that they should only share information in the activities that they want the group to know; you cannot guarantee that other participants will keep the information they hear confidential, though you will strongly encourage it. Participants are welcome to speak with you after the activity in private, should they want to share additional information.

Remote adaptations: Restrictions in meeting children face-to-face due to the COVID-19 pandemic means that online interactions and participatory activities via devices, such as smartphones and computers, are likely to increase. This increases risks to children that are specific to the online environment, such as increasing the likelihood that family members will be present, through to more significant risks like the dissemination of false information, exposure to violent extremist messaging, or surveillance and censorship. For the former, transparency and good communication allows participants to be clear on the level of privacy they are able to maintain within their physical environment (as noted above). For the latter, digital applications, platforms and services need to be safe, secure and should not result in inappropriate or unethical capture and/or use of data on children. Safeguarding considerations for online communication and interaction fall into three key areas:

Safe behaviour online

- Guidelines are developed for users of digital platforms and products. These explain expectations regarding posting, speaking, commenting on the site or platform, and establish consequences for misuse.
- Build relational safety by having regular “safety” check-ins with children at the beginning or end of virtual sessions, where a key worker listens carefully and responds sensitively to the child.
- All websites, phone lines and platforms where children are commenting or sharing information, photos and stories are moderated by staff to maximise safety and privacy and minimise risks. Where concerns of harm or abuse are identified, reporting procedures are followed.
- Procedures for reporting and responding to harm or abuse exist for each digital platform or product. These take into account local laws, cultural norms and the availability of protection services.

The Canadian Women's Foundation developed the following hand signals for people who want to safely disclose violence in the home while on a video-call.



Ethical access to and use of children's data

- Children using digital platforms must be given the opportunity to agree to a specified use of their personal data. This consent should not be assumed based on their consent for other activities (e.g., for their photo to be used in media activities).
- Active consent must be captured in a way so that consent is not the default option.
- A written agreement is in place to control and authorise the release of information on children (data, images) to partner organisations, the Internet, the public domain or any third party. Consent conversations with children (see above) should include an assessment of the need/benefit of sharing information that is balanced against potential risks, before consent is given by children for use of their data.

Responding online to disclosures and allegations of child abuse during COVID-19

If a case of abuse is reported or disclosed when physical distancing restrictions are in place the following issues will need to be addressed for responding online:

- Seek the views of the child victim/survivor (where it is possible to establish safe, direct contact) on their situation that will inform a risk assessment for responding to the report of abuse. It may be useful to connect to child helplines to identify services that might support the child victim/survivor.
- Conducting remote interviews, focus groups and other participative activities (e.g., via Zoom or WhatsApp): Outline the process in advance to participants. Make sure they can safely participate online and are able to use the software.

If it is not safe to do so (e.g., a child is in the same room as a violent parent/ carer) do NOT conduct the process. Establish the identity of the participant and ensure you are communicating with the person you are intending to speak to. Provide information on local support services at the end of every interview.

- Ensure privacy and manage confidentiality: participants should use a computer that is private or isolated, make use of headphones and limit the use of identifying information (i.e., agree to refer to Mr. Smith as Mr. X). Check there is no one else in the room or nearby and record interviews if possible.

Appendix C: Country Level Consent Forms

PRISTANAK ZA SUDJELOVANJE U ISTRAŽIVANJU O NASILJU U ŠKOLAMA

Poštovani,
željeli bismo provesti istraživanje vezano bolje razumijevanje sigurnosti i dobrobiti djece i mladih kroz zajednički rad i druženje.

TKO SMO MI?

Moje ime je **Marina Trbus**, psihologinja sam, a uz mene, istraživanje će provoditi moj kolega, **Miroslav Rajter**. Zajedno radimo za organizaciju **Hrabri telefon** koja je dio velike mreže organizacija iz cijele Europe – **ChildHub**. Organizacije iz te mreže ulažu puno truda kako bi pomogli djeci, mladima ali i stručnjacima da djeca budu sigurnija od nasilja. Uz Hrvatsku, istraživanje se još provodi u Moldaviji, Albaniji, Kosovu, Srbiji, Rumunjskoj, Bugarskoj, Bosni i Hercegovini i Hrvatskoj. Ukupno će sudjelovati oko 400 mladih i oko 200 odraslih (roditelja i stručnjaka).

ZAŠTO PROVODIMO OVO ISTRAŽIVANJE?

Želimo saznati zbog čega se djeca i mladi osjećaju sigurno u školama, ali i koje nasilje se događa u i oko škole i zbog čega se mladi osjećaju tužno, loše, usamljeno ili izolirano. Također želimo čuti vaše ideje kako se nasilje i zlostavljanje može spriječiti i smanjiti.

ŠTO ĆE SE RADITI U OVOM ISTRAŽIVANJU?

Ako se odlučite sudjelovati u ovom istraživanju, uključiti ćemo vas u 2 radionice u prostorijama Dječjeg dom Tić, Rijeka. Radionice će se održati u petak, 25. rujna, 2020 godine s početkom u 10 sati i trajat će s pauzama do 15 sati. Druga radionica će se održati putem video linka, a za sve ćemo se dogovoriti na našoj prvoj radionici. Napominjemo, tijekom svake od tih radionica, dakle, u svakom trenutku, moći ćete reći da ne želite više sudjelovati i napustiti radionicu. Tijekom radionica osigurati ćemo osvježnja i obroke tijekom pauza. S vašim školama dogovorili smo da vas za taj dan oslobode nastave.

ŠTO ĆEMO RADITI S VAŠIM ODGOVORIMA?

Ono što u ovom istraživanju naučimo i saznamo od vas i vaših vršnjaka koristit ćemo za buduću podršku i brigu za drugu djecu i mlade.

AKO KAŽEM DA ŽELIM BITI U ISTRAŽIVANJU, MORAM LI ODGOVORITI NA SVA PITANJA?

Ako vam postavimo pitanja na koja ne želite odgovoriti, možete nam reći da ne želite odgovoriti i jednostavno ne morate ništa odgovoriti. Ako vas zamolimo da radite stvari koje ne želite raditi, onda nam recite da ne želite sudjelovati u aktivnosti. Možete reći ne i ne sudjelovati u bilo kojem dijelu ili cijeloj radionici ili cijelom istraživanju.

TKO ĆE ZNATI DA SAM DIO OVE AKTIVNOSTI?

Ono što kažete kao i bilo koje informacije koje zabilježimo neće imati vaše ime, tako da nitko neće znati da su to vaši odgovori. Istraživači neće dopustiti da itko osim vas samih vidi vaše odgovore ili bilo koje druge podatke o vama. Vaši učitelji, roditelji, članovi zajednice nikada neće vidjeti odgovore koje ste dali ili podatke koje smo napisali o vama. Vaši vršnjaci koji se nalaze u istoj radionici će čuti što kažete, ali od njih će se tražiti da ni u kom trenutku nikome ne govore što su čuli na radionici. Radi vaše sigurnosti, nećemo spominjati vaše ime ni u jednom istraživačkom izvješću.

MORAM LI SUDJELOVATI?

NE! Ne morate sudjelovati. Nitko se neće naljutiti ili uznemiriti ako to ne želite učiniti. I zapamtite, ako se i odlučite uključiti u projekt i onda se kasnije predomislite, možete nam reći da ne želite više biti na radionici. Imate potpuno pravo na to i nitko vam to neće zamjeriti ili se naljutiti, niti ćete imati nekih posljedica zbog toga.

PITANJA?

Pitanja možete postaviti u bilo kojem trenutku. Možete pitati sada ili možete pitati kasnije. Možete razgovarati sa mnom ili možete razgovarati s nekim drugim u bilo kojem trenutku tijekom radionice. Možete me kontaktirati na 095/4855 117 ili e-poštom na mtrbus@gmail.com. Ako želite razgovarati s nekim drugim uključenim u projekt, možete se obratiti i Hrabrom telefonu na <https://tinejdzeri.hrabritelefon.hr/> ili 116 111.

Veselimo se učenju od vas!

S poštovanjem,

Marina Trbus

OBRAZAC PRISTANAK

Razumijem o čemu se radi,

- ☐ Znam koji će dio biti u aktivnosti i znam koliko će trajati,
- ☐ Imam priliku i znam gdje postavljati pitanja o radionici i aktivnostima,
- ☐ Znam da mogu reći da ne želim sudjelovati i prestati sudjelovati,
- ☐ Dopuštam da se tijekom radionica fotografiraju moji radovi (fotografije mog lica neće biti snimljene),

- ☐ Dopuštam da se za potrebe lakšeg zapisa istraživanja audio snimaju moji odgovori koje će isključivo čuti istraživači i nakon toga će se snimke uništiti,

Slažem se da sam dio ovog istraživanja.

☐

Ako želite sudjelovati u ovom istraživanju i radionicama od kojih se istraživanje sastoji, napišite svoje ime u nastavku, a roditelja ili skrbnika zatražite da ispod ispiše i potpiše svoje ime. I dalje možete biti dio ove studije ako ne dopuštate snimanje svojih fotografija ili audio snimke.

Vaše ime		Ime vašeg roditelja ili skrbnika	
Datum		Datum	
Datum		Potpis vašeg roditelja ili skrbnika	
Vaš potpis		Telefonski broj vašeg roditelja ili skrbnika	
E-adresa vašeg roditelja ili skrbnika			

Appendix D: Royal Roads University Consent Form

Child Informed Consent

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSENT LETTER

WELCOME TO THE DISCUSSION ON VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

We would like to lead play and art-based activities about children and young people's safety and well-being in schools.

WHO AM I?

My name is [INSERT YOUTH FRIENDLY SENTENCE ABOUT RESEARCHER LEADING]

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS PROJECT?

We want to find out what makes children and young people feel safe in schools, and what type of violence is occurring that makes them feel sad and/or bad. We also want to hear your ideas on how violence and abuse can be prevented and responded to.

WHAT DOES BEING IN THIS RESEARCH INVOLVE?

If you decide to take part in this study, there are some different things we will ask you to join in. You will have the opportunity to decide if you do or do not want to participate. I will ask you and your peers to join in on participatory research activities that will take you 1.25 days. We will have refreshments and meals during the day.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL THE ACTIVITY TAKE?

Our engaging activities will take 1.25 days. We will work with adults in your life to make sure they take place after school hours or on the weekend so as to not disrupt your studies. We will ask you what hours work best for you.

ARE THERE GOOD THINGS AND BAD THINGS ABOUT BEING PART OF THE PROJECT?

What we learn in this project from you and your peers will be used to support future programs and policies for children and young people. In any experience there may be parts you do not enjoy. If there are, you do not have to join in.

IF I SAY YES TO BEING IN THE PROJECT DO I HAVE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS?

If I ask you questions that you do not want to answer, then please tell us you do not want to answer those questions or simply abstain. If we ask you to do things you do not want to do, then tell us that you do not want to do them. You can say no and choose not to participate at any time.

WHO WILL KNOW I WAS PART OF THIS ACTIVITY?

The things you say and any information we write about you will not have your name with it, so no one will know they are your answers or the things that you did. The researchers will not let anyone other than themselves see your answers or any other information about you. Your teachers, parents, community members will never see the answers you gave or the information we wrote about you. Your peers who are in the same activity will hear what you say but they will be asked to keep it confidential. For your safety, we will not include your name in any research reports.

DO I HAVE TO SAY YES?

NO! You do not have to be in this activity. No one will get angry or upset with you if you don't want to do this. And remember, if you decide to be in the project and later change your mind, you can tell us you do not want to be in the study anymore.

QUESTIONS?

You can ask questions at any time. You can ask now, or you can ask later. You can talk to me or you can talk to someone else at any time during the study. You can reach me at [insert local phone numbers where applicable] or by email at [INSERT RESEARCHERS EMAIL]. If you want to speak to someone else involved in the project, you can also contact [INSERT TERRES DES HOMMES DETAILS]

Look forward to learning from you!

Best,

[INSERT RESEARCHERS NAME]

CHILD AND YOUTH CONSENT FORM

- ☐ I understand what the activity is about
- ☐ I know what my part will be in the activity and I know how long it will take
- ☐ I have had the chance to ask questions about the activity
- ☐ I know that I can say I do not want to participate at any time and stop taking part
- ☐ I agree to having photos taken of the things I make in the research, and my voice recorded (no photos of my face will be taken)
- ☐ I agree to be part of this project

If you want to be a part of this project, please print and sign your name below and ask your parent or guardian to print and sign their name below too. You can still be a part of this study if you do not want your photo taken, voice recorded, or video taken.

Your name, printed: _____

Date: _____

Your signature: _____

Date: _____

Your parent or guardian's name: _____

Your parent or guardian's signature: _____

Your parent or guardian's phone number: _____

Your parent or guardian's email: _____

Informed Consent Form- Adults

Purpose of the project: This project aims to

Researcher: My name is BLANK, and I am [INSERT TWO SENTENCES FOR EACH RESEARCHER]

For any questions or concerns, you can contact me and/or a member of my team at: INSERT EMAILS

Benefits of being a part of this project: What we learn in this project from you and your peers will be used to. We will provide refreshments.

Procedure: Participation will include engaging in BLANK activities over one day. All foreseeable risks and discomforts: The study will ask questions involving violence in and around schools for children and young people in your community. Some questions may cause some discomfort if you by chance reflect upon an unpleasant memory. If you feel uncomfortable at any point in time you may choose not to answer a research question, and/or discontinue your participation temporarily or permanently. You can also choose to request that all your previous answers are not used in the project. If you are triggered and/or want follow up support we will provide contact information for support services and follow up with you to find support.

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be maintained, and your name will not be referred to in this research project if you do not want it to be. If you have any concerns after your participation, you can request to review the notes from our discussions. Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. If you share anything that puts yourself or others at harm, we will need to work together to follow up to find supports and report the situation.

Length of time involved: You are asked to contribute 0.5 day for the activities.

Recording and Transcription: Our discussion will be recorded and written out.

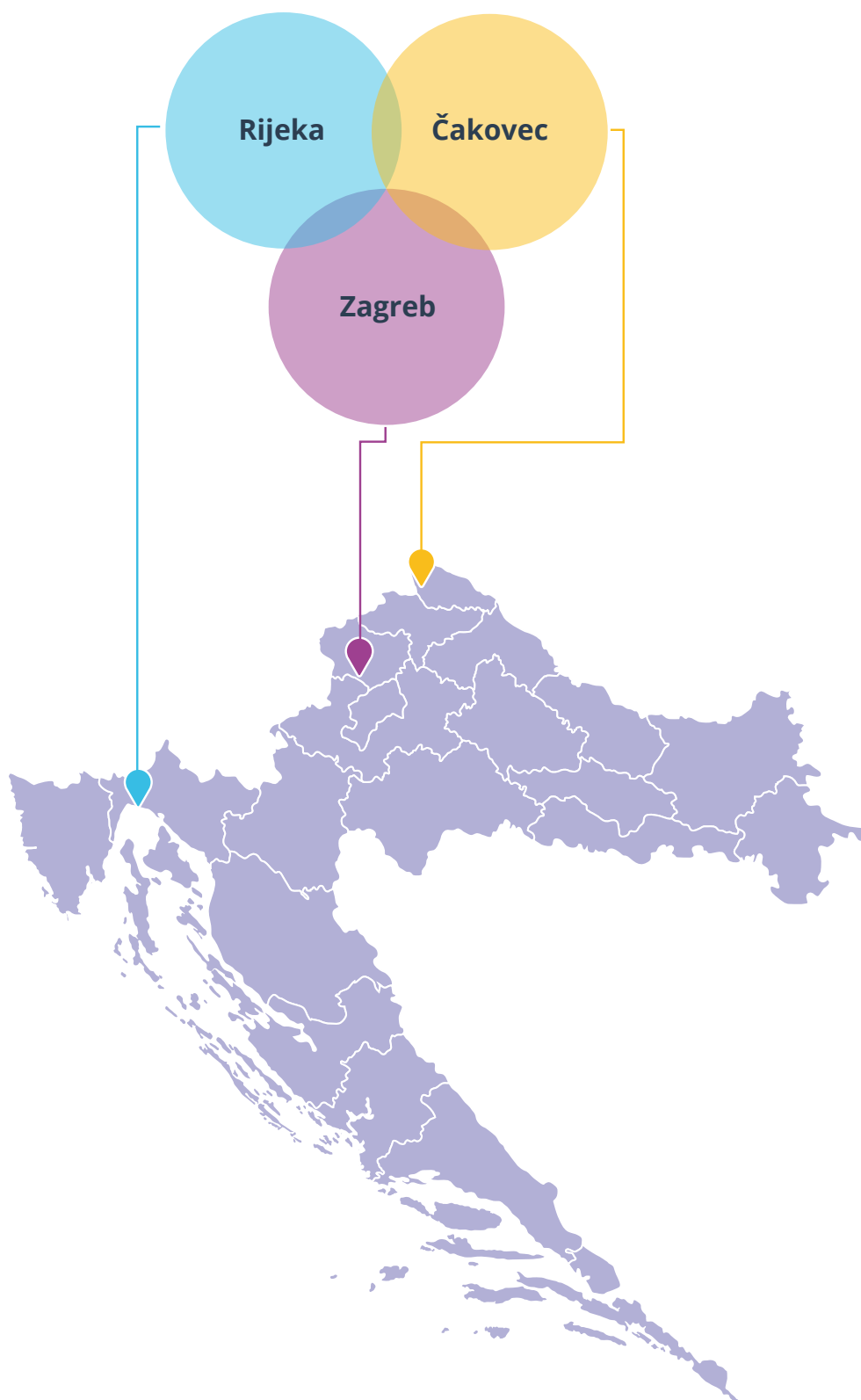
Agreement: Please sign this form for your consent.

Name of Participant, printed

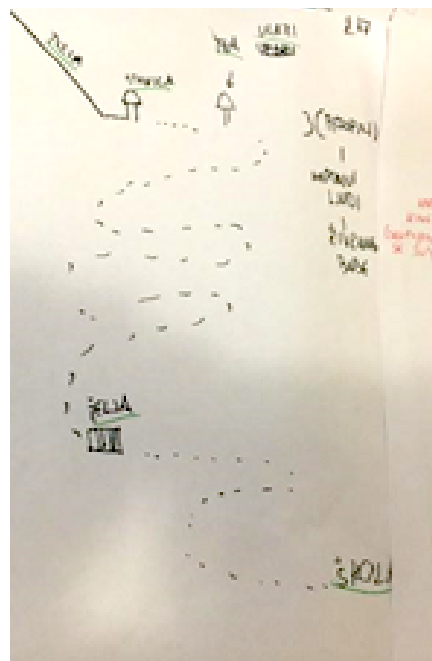
Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix E: Map of Research Sites



Appendix F: Social maps drawings



Appendix G: Flyer inviting young people to participate in the research



ZATO JER NAM JE VAŽNO DA TE
ČUJEMO!

**UKLJUČI SE U
ISTRAŽIVANJE**

*Zanima nas što mladi vide kao uzroke nasilja koje se događa
u njihovoj školi, kvartu, gradu....*
Više detalja možeš naći na <https://bit.ly/3c0DqSb> ili skeniraj



**KADA? 1. DAN - 19.03.2020 U 10 SATI
2. DAN - 26.3.2020 U 11 SATI**

GDJE: DJEČJI DOM 'TIĆ'
Istraživanje će se provoditi kroz radionice, diskusije i
rasprave. Osigurali smo i puno dobre energije, igre i
osvježenja.



Regional Research
**ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS
IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE**

Country Report: Croatia

In partnership with the International Institute for Child Rights and Development and Child Hub

Researcher: Marina Trbus, Miroslav Rajter, Emina Horvat
Date: November 2020