

PREVENTING VIOLENCE

Violence has been a concern of the Council of Europe for many years and a number of conventions related to this issue have been adopted by the member states, such as:

- ▶ the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its protocols;
 - ▶ the European Social Charter (revised);
 - ▶ the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
 - ▶ the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.
- Most relevant, however, is the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted in 2011.
- The 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth (Budapest, 2005) was devoted to youth policy responses to violence. In the final declaration, the ministers agreed, among other things, on the importance of taking stock of all forms of violence and of their impact on people, on the need to develop violence-prevention strategies and to recognise young people as actors in violence prevention, “whilst raising their sense of responsibility and actively promoting their participation and co-operation” in this domain. The declaration also recognises human rights education as containing an essential dimension of violence prevention.
- The ministerial conference was the culmination of a project against violence in daily life which resulted in various educational instruments and initiatives to prevent and address violence, such as the Manual for Living Library organisers.
- The Megaphone project in Stockholm, Sweden, is a good example of an Enter! initiative that sought to tackle violence.



With specific reference to the Enter! project, the recommendation recognises that violence is a concern for young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as they are often victims, both inside and outside the home. Many young people can also be the cause of violence. Violence can take many forms and can create a climate of fear, further increasing discrimination against young people. As a means of addressing violence, the following measures are proposed to administrations in member states, at national, regional and local levels:

- ▶ provide opportunities for dialogue between young people living in disadvantaged communities and their representatives and the responsible national, regional and local authorities, including police, justice and probation services, youth organisations and youth workers, to identify the causes of violence and agree on strategies to deal with violence;
- ▶ introduce formal and non-formal education programmes to deal with bullying, sexual harassment, gender-based violence and other forms of violence;
- ▶ provide support programmes to aid the recovery of young victims of violence and provide information through youth-friendly communications;

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- The objective of this project, These Days (Nuförtiden), was to create a news magazine where young people had the opportunity to discuss issues of interest to them, such as racism, violence and discrimination. The participants were 19 young people of immigrant origin, aged between 16 and 25, from Rinkeby-Kista, a borough of Stockholm.
- Rinkeby-Kista has a population of approximately 60 000, and the project was mainly aimed at young people from Kista district, which has one of the highest unemployment rates among young people in Sweden; many of them do not do well in the education system. There is also a high level of criminality in the area. Consequently, the young people lack social networks and the motivation to engage with society or to be able to access their social rights and overcome discrimination and exclusion.
- The project raised awareness among young people of their social rights to make them more capable of accessing these rights. They were able to set their own agenda and tackle issues that concerned them. The rights that the project focused on were: non-discrimination, non-violence, employment, education, participation and housing.
- During the project the local council employed six of the participants. As a result of the training aspect of the project, another 12 young people developed their journalistic skills. The magazine was distributed to more than 3 000 young people in the area and it demonstrated what young people can do, and this increased the interest of more young people in the project and in the work of Megafonen. As a result of the project the young participants were motivated to continue volunteering and to be more engaged in their neighbourhoods.

21. See <http://megafonen.com>, accessed 10 June 2016.

- ▶ encourage victims to report violence against them to the police, including gender-based violence; also, make sure that victims of violence have access to services that can guarantee their safety and the safety of their families, including, if necessary, re-housing, counselling and financial support;
- ▶ train members of police forces, legal professionals and staff of other relevant public bodies involved in dealing with violence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in gender-sensitive human rights;
- ▶ encourage members of police forces to protect young people living in disadvantaged communities from violence, including sanctioning any individual police officers who fail to do so;
- ▶ introduce initiatives to support the rehabilitation and social re-integration of those young people who commit acts of violence and other young offenders and also set up initiatives to prevent hate speech and hate crimes.