

## **Integration through Prevention**

### **A violence prevention project for young migrants and non-migrants**

**The overall goal of the project is to highlight the subject of weapons fascination for youth in general as well as to develop educational approaches to it. A central aspect of the project is the role the topic of weapons can play for integrating youngsters into society by means of violence prevention. In this process it is important to limit risk factors and to enhance protective factors in the sense of doing resilience-oriented work in the field of prevention.**

#### **The starting position:**

The European Union is a destination for high numbers of migrants from non-member states, amongst them many youngsters – of around 800.000 people coming to the EU every year, approximately 35 % are from third countries. The main countries of origin are/are located in the Balkan region (most of all Serbia), the Russian Federation, Turkey, Iraq (2010: 13,000), Afghanistan (2010: 4,600) and Africa. The reasons for coming to the EU are manifold, ranging from study or work to asylum seeking.

A number of the countries of origin are currently marred by violent social or political conflicts or even wars, or have been so in the recent past. Direct or indirect experiences of massive violence can lead to a greater need for safety – particularly among youngsters. Many are still emotionally affected or even traumatised by their experiences.

Migration, eviction and flight often lead to difficult reorientations, in fact on both sides, for the migrants and the hosting society alike. As a result, migrants may intensify their search for a sense of belonging as well as for safety. In this context, an important role in the way one experiences his or her identity can also be played by so-called “transitional objects” that symbolize these feelings that one is missing. Weapons can also be such “transitional objects”.

#### **Violence prevention**

For youngsters, weapons play a special role with regard to their own disposition to use violence. Scientific studies show that by carrying a weapon the use of violence increases significantly. According to English studies, 21 % of pupils are said to carry weapons (mostly knives). German studies speak about at least 15% of male pupils who are carry weapons at school, whereas during leisure activities the number goes up to 33%.

This project is co-financed by the European Integration Fund and is also supported in the framework of the “Vielfalt gefällt! – 60 Orte für Integration” programme by the Baden-Wuerttemberg Foundation in co-operation with the Ministry for Integration of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg.

Violence prevention as a field of practice has established important approaches in recent years, but astonishingly one subject area has been completely ignored: The phenomenon of weapons' fascination many youngsters are affected by. That is why experts criticize that the subject of weapons as an element to stage masculine superiority is hardly ever treated so far. New approaches are needed as part of an open debate that includes this aspect of male socialisation – although this subject area not only concerns male youngsters. With this background in mind, educational approaches and ways to deal with this phenomenon in an understanding, non-restrictive way are developed and tried out within the framework of this project.

### **The overall goal**

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There are two target groups that should be reached by this project. On the one hand the project primarily aims for youngsters who come from non-member states of the European union, especially the case of countries and regions in which experience with violence and weapons is probable.

The second target group consists of multipliers (teachers, social workers, etc.), who directly work with these youngsters. The aim of this pilot project is to collect experience with these two target groups in trying out the newly developed educational approaches. This is supposed to open up new ways of working in educational settings.

### **The partners**

Together with a variety of partners and supporters from Germany as well as from Europe, the TGBW conducts this project since April the first, 2013. Partners in and supporters of the project are: "Berghof Foundation/Peace Education" from Tübingen; "Anne Frank Centre" from Berlin; "Kubus e.V." from the city of Fellbach; "Tett-Hely" from Pécs, Hungary; "Akademie für Sozialwissenschaftliche Innovation e.V." (academy for innovation in the area

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of social science) from Waiblingen, Germany; “174 Trust” from Belfast, Northern Ireland; the Kreisjugendring Rems-Murr e.V. (an umbrella organisation of 36 youth organisations), Germany.