Dutch Daphne III research outcome.

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1. Literature and policy review

Introduction

The Daphne III research project gathers information in several European countries about the experiences of school-age children on their way to school and back. The focus is on crime, bullying and the fears of young people about this. Data has also been collected in the Netherlands (Utrecht). This article provides a description of the Daphne III research done against the Dutch background and gives an overview of the information about youth street life safety in the Netherlands in which the current situation of youth safety is described and information is given about national and municipal policy, whereby a distinction is made among bullying on the one hand and violence and crime against youth on the other hand. Attention is also paid to the Peaceable Neighbourhood program, because this is implemented in Utrecht and it matches with the subject matter very closely. This method has its roots in positive psychology and professionals report positive outcomes in several neighbourhoods in the Netherlands.

Youth as victims of bullying

Literature about bullying mostly deals with bullying at school or via the Internet. Research on bullying at school often mentions that it also takes place on the way to school or home, but does not make a clear distinction between what happens at school or in the streets. The following information is primarily about bullying at school. An extensive survey found that most Dutch children age 8-12 feel accepted by their classmates, though about one third of the respondents report being bullied at least once in the past few months (Zeijl et al., 2005). In this group 28% of the children appear to be bullied frequently (twice or more per month) (Zeijl et al., 2005), and 5% of the respondents said they frequently bully others (i.e. twice or more per month). Boys are bullies more often than girls (Veenstra et al., 2005; Zeijl et al, 2005), but most research does not find a difference between boys and girls as victims (Veenstra et al., 2005). In Dutch research among children age 8-12 there appears to be a positive relationship between bullying and victimization: 16% of the frequently bullied children have been a bully themselves as well (Zeijl et al., 2005).

The National Students Monitor 2007 (Vegt, Blanken & Jepma, 2007) provides information about youth from 12 to17 years old. When asked how frequently bullying takes place at their school, 21% of the respondents said regularly and 11% said

(very) often. Students were asked whether they insult, exclude or ignore others at school and how often they steal from others, and whether it happens to themselves.

A relationship is found between feelings of safety and school level. Youths in secondary school at lower levels usually feel less safe than pupils at higher levels. More than one third of the respondents state that fellow pupils incidentally carry a weapon (Vegt, Blanken & Jepma).

Criminality and violence against youth

A survey among youth from 12 to 24, showed that one out of seven adolescents is victim of violent crime and one out of five is victim of property crime each year (SCP, 2006). More extensive surveys on this subject include only youths of 15 years and older. A national survey of 2009 found that one third of youths aged 15-25 feels unsafe at times. Young women feel unsafe twice as much as young men and compared to adults of 25 and older, youths are more likely to be a victim of violence or crime. In 2009 23% of the young people (15-25) were victims of property crime, including bicycle robbery and pick pocketing and about 13% were a victim of violence, in which 'threatening' was reported most. Vandalism was experienced by 14% of the respondents (CBS, 2010). An ongoing research from De Winter, Horjus & van Dijken (2009) deals with youth safety feelings on the street and after school- or neighbourhood-activities, but only in 'Peaceable Neighbourhoods' in Utrecht (for a description of the peaceable neighbourhood, see below). In 2009 they reported that 87% of children age 8-12 feel safe in playgrounds or neighbourhood centres and 69% feel safe outside these areas. Most children feel safe on the street if they know the people they see. They feel unsafe if they see threatening people such as drunken persons, 'big boys', thieves and harassing youths.

Policy

In policies concerning violence and crime against youth, there is a distinction made between inside and outside of the school. Dutch schools are legally obliged to protect their students from violence. Therefore every school has a policy against bullying (Ministerie van OCW, 2011) as well as a safety plan containing the appointments made to prevent and stop bullying, the complaint procedure and the name of the confidential counsellor at school. To prevent bullying many schools have a so called 'bully protocol' that describes how bullying is defined, how it is recognised and how it is dealt with. The national government's policy on bullying supports schools in developing and implementing their safety policy and also informs schools about effective programs against bullying (www.nji.nl). The Centre for School and Safety (Centrum voor School en Veiligheid) provides schools with a database of programs against bullying, e.g. curricula and information materials. The Dutch government wants to test the effectiveness of programs and to bring them together in a Database of Effective Interventions set up by the Nederlands Jeugdinstituut (NJI, 2011). For schools there are the Quality Teams for Safety who support them in solving safety

problems and help to develop structural safety policy in schools. Every school in the Netherlands can ask the help of these teams free of charge (NJI, 2011).

National policy concerning safety of youth in public spaces mainly focuses on young people as perpetrators and not as victims. For example the Wegwijzer Jeugd en Veiligheid [1] provides information about subjects like juvenile crime, alcohol, drugs and vandalism by compiling a handbook of best practices on how to deal with youth violence (CCV, 2011). Though there is a lot of interest for mostly concerning at-risk initiatives, the city of Utrecht does not have a specific primary or secondary prevention policy on youth street life safety, but has instead initiated neighbourhood based interventions, supposing that street life safety of youth has everything to do with the quality of neighbourhoods (Sampson e.a., 1999; Sampson e.a., 1997; Junger-Tas e.a. 2008). To improve quality of -and improve safety feelings in these neighbourhoods a program called The Peaceable Neighbourhood is to be implemented in eight neighbourhoods in Utrecht. This program should constitute a neighbourhood wide, coherent and positive, empowering method of community child raising, explicitly grounded on the ideals of building a democracy.

The Peaceable Neighbourhood (PN)

The program of the Peaceable Neighbourhood (PN) is following a primary school program called the Peaceable School (PS). This PS program is implemented in 55% of the primary schools in the city of Utrecht and offers an integral method to improve the social and emotional climate in the classroom and the school. The PS is aimed at creating a community in which everyone (pupils, staff and parents) interacts in a positive way and feels ownership that prevents them from behaving antisocially. Research by Eduniek indicates that the Peaceable school has an effect on the feelings of safety in the primary school[2] (Pauw ,2009). In the PS children are given a voice and they are contributing to the community that a school basically is. An eye-catching feature in both programs is conflict management through peer mediation. In Utrecht this way of conflict management is the main reason why the municipality agreed to implement the PN program, because there were alarming signals about the increase of violence in the, mostly disadvantaged town areas.

At first the focus is on connecting the domains of school and leisure by training the professional child workers in the same way teachers are trained and to implement a Peaceable environment in all work with children in the neighbourhood. In the near future the most challenging goal is to include the home domain in this approach. By implementing the Peaceable method in the leisure activities, a consistent and repeating approach evolves within and outside the schoolyards. The children are thereby asked to behave in their leisure activities as they behave at the (PS) school.

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[1] Signpost Youth and Safety – a centre initiated by the government in order to to inform communities about policy of the national government

[2] Zie:
http://www.devreedzameschool.net/vreedzameschool/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=120%3Aresultaten06-nieuwe-gegevens&catid=36&Itemid=63

In literature there are research traditions focussing on strengthening the capacity of a community to raise children in a prosperous way and that underpin the basic principals of the PN. But not only when it comes to stimulating positive behaviour, but also when youngsters cause harassment and criminality, neighbourhood factors appear to be important. Previous century criminologist Hirschi (2002) posed the theory that: 'deviant behaviour occurs when the bond of the individual to society is weak or broken'. After that time, an abundance of research confirmed this theory and gave advice to strengthen these ties with the surrounding society. For example Sampson & Groves (1989) describe how (dis-)organisation in a neighbourhood can be expressed in social networks of friends, supervision on street groups and participation in local organisations to prevent victimisation and criminalisation. They also Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls (1997) show the corrective 'collective efficacy' as indicators for crime rates of a neighbourhood. Scales and colleagues (2004) and Mannes and colleagues (2005) conducted research with their 40-asset-method indicating that these resources of thriving connections between youths, families and communities have a positive effect on drug abuse and all kinds of anti-social behaviour as well. The presence, or lack of these assets are a better predictor of antisocial behaviour than factors such as poverty and growing up in a one-parent-family (Mannes et.al. 2005). Even more explicit are Schwartz's and colleagues (2010) who suggest that a positive youth policy is a good prevention strategy against drug abuse, unsafe sex and smoking. In the Netherlands the RMO (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, 2008) sees the problem of street groups not only as a youth problem, but as a inadequate communication between youths and their social environment. Junger-Tas and colleagues state that 'the neighbourhood in which children grow up is of much greater significance for their socialisation than we have assumed for a long time. The effect is so big (...) that it affects the choice for either a conformist or criminal lifestyle' (Junger-Tas, Steketee, Moll & Tierolf, 2008; Scales et al., 2004).

Summarising we see that this literature indicates that the social context is an important influence and that a positive neighbourhood approach is an appropriate strategy to prevent antisocial behaviour.

Ongoing research

The Peaceable School and Peaceable Neighbourhood are basically programs for children up to twelve years old. Although a program for secondary schools is in development, there are hardly Peaceable interventions aiming at youngsters beyond the age of twelve and the effects of the Peaceable method at an older age have never been studied yet. The ongoing research focuses not only on the Peaceable attitude and skills of primary school children but of secondary school children as well. Besides the international comparisons the main importance of Daphne III project for the Netherlands is the research question whether children that experienced the Peaceable method in some way deal differently with conflicts and anti-social behaviour, compared to the children that have not experienced it.

2. Research and outcomes

Methods

Participants
The questionnaire was administered to 608 respondents (253 boys and 306 girls). The majority (67.9%) live in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Overvecht and Kanaleneiland in Utrecht. 27% are primary school pupils and 73% attend secondary school. Gathered data came from two schools preparing for vocational education (VMBO), which is a rather mainstream secondary education in the Netherlands. More than 60% of the children in the Netherlands attend the VMBO after primary school. In addition to the questionnaire six focus group discussions have been conducted. Each focus group consisted of six (and in one case: seven) boys and girls that completed the questionnaire as well. Finally eleven individual interviews have been conducted with youngsters who earlier participated in the focus groups.

Procedure
Data were collected using questionnaires. Most questionnaires were completed online and a few were filled in on paper, because the computer facilities were not adequate. The results of the questionnaire have been discussed more in depth in focus group discussions. The focus groups were conducted with two researchers. Scenarios have been used in two topics. In other topics a 'thesis play' has been used with the participants. They were asked to stand up and join a person having a view similar to theirs, after which they were asked to clarify their position.
Finally individual interviews were conducted in order to clarify some subjects in more detail. All data collection has taken place at schools, because this was the best way to get into contact with youths in this neighbourhood.

Measures
The questionnaire consisted of 51 questions concerning safety and anti-social behaviour on the streets. Besides questions investigating the journey to and from school, questions were asked concerning safety, witnessing, experiencing or committing harassment, knowledge of the peaceable school and neighbourhood program and attitude in respect of pro-social skills learnt in this program, and questions concerning 'Code of the street' behaviour.
In focus groups and interviews five themes were discussed. We explored times needed to get to and from school, reasons for committing acts and responding to

problems, expectations from parents and peer group and suggestions for promoting resilience.

Results

Dutch youngsters travel to and from school, mostly by foot or on a bike (87%). Almost 30% sometimes use the public transport. The youngsters in the latter category are likely to be in secondary school and attend a school in Utrecht that is about 10 minutes away from there home by bus. The respondents who travel by bike or foot need approximately 5 to 20 minutes. 61% go with friends and 37% travel alone.

Safety
80% of the respondents never worried about their safety and 18% did sometimes. 2% worried often or always. Boys worry less often than girls. (Boys: 88% never. Girls: 73.7% never) (Pearson chi square =20,28, df=3, p<.000). 11 year olds worried more often than 12-16 year olds. (68% never). About 60% did nothing to feel safer, most likely because they already felt safe. 39% stayed with friends and 21% took a cell phone with them. Almost all respondents had witnessed harassment on the streets. Gossiping ranks highest with 56%. Violence ranks second with 54%, and neglection third with 33%. Violence is reported most by boys (61.1%) and less by girls (49.1%). On the contrary, gossiping is reported most by girls (66,1%) and less by boys (44.7%). Where witnessing harassment is common, actual victimization is rare. 83% did not experience any harassment and 15% only sometimes. Only 3% has experienced it always and often. There is no difference in sex. Harassment took place mostly around the school. 26% of the respondents mentioned to have neglected someone. 18% reported the use of violence. These respondents said it happened sometimes, or just once. When asked why they did this, 23% stated that they were angry. 10% did it just for fun. Item 17 concerns the reaction to harassment: 56% replied 'not applicable'. 18% retaliated and 10% said to talk with a third party. 6.2 % solved the problem (with someone). Children, who solve the problem, are mostly from Peaceable schools. These answers where further explored in the qualitative data gathering.

Responses to problems
Almost all respondents in the focus groups said they would fight back when being physically attacked, mostly because he/she will feel the same pain the victim felt. You need to '*stand up for yourself*'. The ratio is that if the other starts with violence, talking has no use. You have to defend yourself. The respondents would not often start a fight with someone older and stronger. Some say you can also get your older brother

or cousin to help you. If you don't fight back, other people would think you are weak. But if you start a fight, you are also weak.

Committing acts 'for fun' or 'because everyone does it' is mostly a way to look tough. Those committers want to belong to a certain 'popular' group. That popular group will provoke you to commit certain acts on the streets. If you get used to that, you will commit acts even without the group of friends supporting you. Bullying for fun is actually teasing when both agree that it is teasing. If this is not the case, than it is bullying. On the street people can start a fight or provoke others 'just for fun', because they want to show the others they are tough and have authority. But showing you are tough was not appreciated by the participants, "*those boys just want to attract attention*".

Reported to whom

Data from the questionnaire shows that 26% tells a friend, 20% tells their parents and 11% tells a teacher when being harassed. It depends on the situation who respondents report incidents to. School related incidents are mostly reported to the teachers, so they will have a stronger case against the perpetrator. Younger respondents (11 and 12 year olds) also report to their parents. Most older respondents specifically don't report to their parents. They say their parents will be worried, protect and restrict them. The police only is consulted in serious cases like physical mistreatment, theft etc. They are not expected to react to bullying. When respondents want someone to help them with a problem they call for help with a friend or brother. It is important that the assisting person is stronger and taller than the person that bothers you, because the perpetrator should fear the retaliation of the one you bring along.

Role parents and peer group

75% of the respondents in focus groups and interviews said that their parents want them to hit back to defend themselves when being attacked. Parents mostly expect them to use self-defence on the streets. Others said that most of the time they have to hit back, but that there are some situations when they don't have to do so. For example, if they are being attacked by someone stronger, they should walk away and ask for help from their parents. About 20% of the respondents get the advice to find a more peaceable solution. When the advice of parents and the school don't match, they value their parent's advice more. They think the school doesn't prepare the pupils adequately for the street situation because they don't know what is going on.

Friends play an important role in the behaviour from respondents on the street. Some youngsters act differently when they are with or without their friends. In some cases youngsters have to act tough to stay within the group of friends, sometimes they have to bully someone, to prove they are tough. This is most commonly seen in 11 to 14 year olds. In the data from the questionnaire we can see that a vast majority of 61% says that the reason why people bully is because bullies 'want to look tough'.

Suggestions for promoting resilience

When asked about solutions for bullying, the respondents mainly mention things the victim could do, like taking a different route to school, asking the teacher for help or 'just going away'. Some say the best solution is to show others you're not afraid. Resilience should come from learning to stand up for your self. The bully should unlearn his behaviour and the bystanders should speak out for the victim and not laugh.

We asked participants to describe the victim in focus groups and they say victims are victims because they are weak, don't have protectors (elder brothers are frequently mentioned), are not clear in drawing a line or are simply different (dark skinned for example). This corresponds with the outcomes from the questionnaire. 43% state that victims are weak, 35% says they look different and 28% says they are being bullied for no reason. Most participants believed that although bullying is wrong, it's mostly the victim's fault, because of the way they look or behave.

In interviews we asked what school could do to help promote resilience. 6 out of 11 participants believe school could play an important role by talking about this issue in the classroom, but a condition is that victims trust their teacher. One respondent said a former victim could visit school and tell his/her story. Teachers can teach you how to handle certain situations on the street, but it would be better if youth workers were to come to the classroom to talk about situations on the street. They are better informed about the street life than teachers are.

The Peaceable Neighbourhood

68% of the respondents come from a neighbourhood where the Peaceable Neighbourhood is implemented since 2009. 20% is from a neighbourhood where the PN is implemented since 2010. We found that 'Peaceable' children worry less than 'non-Peaceable' children. These groups differ significantly (t=-1,96 df=565 p<0.02) We analysed the attitude of the respondents in respect of certain pro-social skills that are included in the PN method (9 items: α=.75). 40% was very positive, 48% was positive and 12% not positive about the PN attitudes. We found that younger children were significantly more positive about the pro-social attitudes than elder children were (Spearmans Rho= .248 p< .000). But in focus groups we found that elder children still used the skills learnt in Peaceable primary school, these were mostly youngsters who were mediator during primary school. The mediator is about the best informed/trained subject in the PN. Respondents say that they still use these mediation-techniques and they believe impartiality is the most important value learnt. We also made a scale concerning the 'Code of the street' (National Institute of Justice, 2009)) (7 items: α=.71). Based on extensive field research, Anderson (1999) argues that the behaviour of many youths is influenced by a street culture or "code" that prescribes violent reactions to interpersonal attacks and shows of disrespect. We found a negative correlation between the supposed independent variable 'being a mediator or not' and this COTS-scale (Spearmans Rho = -.102, p=.009).

3. Lessons learned

The majority of the pupils (80%) never worry about their safety. Boys appear to worry about their safety less than girls, although it is possible this is only a difference in reported worries and not in actual prevalence, because boys might be less willing to admit they are worrying. During focus groups we noticed boys acting more tough for there friends who were also in the focus group. As for actual experience during these times of travelling, 83% never experiences violence and 18% report the use of violence.
This finding contradicts with outcomes of the focus groups where almost everyone said they would defend themselves, because otherwise people will think you are weak and they will keep on threatening you.

(Female 11 year old): *"If, for example, you ask your mother to help you, the boy will be punished, but he won't feel the pain you felt."*

This contradiction could mean that youngsters mostly don't start a fight, but when being attacked they would almost always fight back and that the mentioned 18% is a group of youngsters who would start a fight, which they motivate in the survey by saying that they do it for fun or to gain respect with peers.

Peers
The influence of peers on bullying behaviour has been mentioned by most respondents. They say that sometimes the peer group makes a person do things like teasing or acting sturdy, he or she would not do when being alone. However, respondents mostly describe this process as if applying it to others and not to themselves. In other words: they do not report themselves being influenced by peer pressure.

(Female 12 year old): "*If you want to belong to the other group you have to do things that don't match your personality. Why would you want to belong to the dark side*?"

Still we know from research that people in general are very susceptible to social influence. Ajzen (1991) constructed his concept of perceived social norm around this phenomenon and Boom & Brugman (2005) indicate, based on the work of Lawrence Kohlberg that a moral climate is a better predictor of behaviour than an attitude is. It is likely that teenagers are even more susceptible to this social norm than people in

general are (Kroger, 1989). This social norm consists of norms and values, and in the neighbourhood these youngsters live, there is a strong influence of a street culture which is described by Anderson (1999) as the Code of the Street which is a value-system and a kind of 'belief'. This code consists of two aspects. First the belief that the use of violence is acceptable to survive socially and second, a distrust in social institutions and legal authorities. From the survey and the focus groups we see that children sometimes approve the use of violence, but the adjustment to this code is probably only temporal, due to the uncertainties of adolescence, but they stay in contact with social institutions, and believe this involvement will eventually benefit them. Also this social norm changes with situations. At school and in the street there are different social norms and they are not necessary most valued by the person. In the focus groups when confronted with the contradiction of sometimes behaving anti-social on the streets while having pro-social attitude, pupils thought behaving according to the code of the street is a case of choosing the lesser of two evils. They have to, in order to maintain their status or position. This makes it essential to discriminate between adjustment to a set of norms for opportunistic reasons and a set of norms and values they identify themselves with, because it may well be assumed that the latter may not have the strongest -, but probably a more lasting effect on behaviour (Boom & Brugman, 2005, Ajzen 1991).

Parents

It seems that parents encourage their children to defend themselves. About 75% of the respondents say that their parents want them to physically defend themselves or hit back. Parents' advice is valued over teachers' advice. Pupils think the school is naïve in advising only the use of peaceable means on the street. Most respondents say that solving conflicts with just talking often does not have an effect on the street, because the rules of the street are not the same as at school (Anderson, 1999)

(Male, 16 year old*): "School is naïve about what we should do in the street, but on the other hand, I don't think it is right if they approve violence at school*"

When young people experience harassment, they usually report this to someone else. The aim of reporting this might be 'just to tell the story', but most respondents explained that they told others because they could help. To whom they report the story depends on the situation. The person most likely to report harassment to is a friend, some respondents tell their parents or a teacher. Police is only consulted in serious cases and parents are sometimes not informed as they might be worried and restrict them. Persons to assist in an argument are a friend or a brother. Important is that this person is older and stronger than the one who attacked you.
Summarized the overall strategy in reacting to harassment is first to avoid a confrontation and especially when the other party is more powerful, second to avoid confrontation by impressing or to threatening implicitly or explicitly (with the help of others). When the confrontation can't be avoided the respondent fights (with the help

of others). First aim still is to stop the harasser, but the respondents judge merciful on themselves losing self control during the confrontation

Bullying
Most respondents agree with the idea that teasing tends to be bullying when one party thinks it is bullying. The respondents reported several possible solutions for bullying. They frequently said that the victims should learn to stand up for themselves. For example, they think the victim should act or look different in order to remove the cause of the bullying.

(Someone has been bullied because of her bracelet…)
(Male, 12 year old): *"She should stop wearing a bracelet then."*
(Female, 12 year old): "*Or, everyone should wear a bracelet!*"

However, they also think the bully should unlearn the bully behaviour and the bystanders should not fuel the bullying by laughing.

(Female, 16 year old): "*I think bullies are pathetic, but still I laugh when he bullies.*"

The respondents who were bullied them selves confirmed that talking about it in the classroom helps. It gives insight in the victim's feelings and helps the classmates understand why bullying is wrong. But the victim will only speak if that he or she trusts the teacher or mentor. If no one is bullied in the classroom, or no one would wants to talk about it, it is also a possibility to invite a former victim into the classroom to tell his of her story. To empower students to stand up for themselves on the streets, without using violence it might be an idea to invite youth workers into the classroom. According to the respondents, youth workers are more credible than teachers. Also a method like the Peaceable School method could empower students and learn them positive skills to cope with problems on the street.

Peaceable method
In this research 68% of the respondents come from a neighbourhood where the Peaceable Neighbourhood (PN) is implemented. The majority of this group shows a positive attitude towards this program: 88% of the respondents value the pro-social attitudes underpinning the PN. Younger children value them more than older children. This could be explained by the fact that the retention decreases over time, but another factor could be that the quality of the implementation of the PS and PN improved over time. On the contrary we found that pupils, who used to be mediator during primary school, still value their mediation skills highly. They can't use the skills that often tough, mainly because their secondary school does not work with the Peaceable method and therefore gives no opportunity. We believe that by giving these youngsters the opportunities and providing a structure to use these skills, they will contribute to a safer environment where pupils feel ownership that prevents them from behaving antisocially (Hart, 1997; Pauw, 2009). The findings suggest that the

development of a Peaceable program for secondary schools is promising. (De Winter, Horjus & van Dijken, 2009)

There is a significant negative correlation between being trained in the Peaceable method and an antisocial attitude scale 'Code of the Street' (based on National Institute of Justice, 2009). The Peaceable method seems to promote social behaviour in children; however this effect has only been shown in children who have received the Peaceable training to become a mediator. As for worrying, this research has shown that being familiar with the Peaceable method correlates significantly with fewer worries about their own safety. The Peaceable method seems to offer a promising remedy against youngster's negative experiences on the way from home to school and back.

It seems that youngsters are empowered and have a certain grip on the situation. When they have the feeling they have influence on affairs on the street this leads to lesser disorder and a safer climate (Bickmore, 2002; Turnblom, 1995;Oppelaar, 2005).

4. Policy recommendations

- When schools work with anti-bullying-programs (like the Peaceable method) it seems important to connect the school domain with other domains like the street that youngster live in,. In this way there could be a transfer of behaviour in which the learned positive behaviour can be used outside schools. Besides the attitude, and skills the youngsters learn in school it's therefore necessary to create a moral climate on the street where using violence isn't the standard. Because research indicates that a moral climate is a better predictor of behaviour than an attitude is. A first move could be to install buddy's or mediators on the street, see below.

- Besides the fact that youngsters themselves are capable enough to solve conflicts constructively is could be valuable to install buddy's or mediators on the street, and in after school activities. These youngsters could help others in solving problems, or can operate as peer-counsellors. In the Peaceable Neighbourhood program these so called 'neighbourhood-mediators' are active in two neighbourhoods in Utrecht, with result that children from primary schools who see them, feel safer. Also, these mediators can help primary school children solve a problem, so that less violence is used.

- In the opinion of youngsters schools should not interfere too much in the street life, but on the other hand they think school doesn't prepare them enough or in an adequate way. The outcome of our research indicates that youth is rather willing to talk about the subject in a schools context. It is therefore recommended to have regular school discussions about the subject.

- Experiences at the Peaceable schools indicate that forming a 'student improvement committee' on the subject enhances ownership of youth with the problem and will probably lead to a more successful approach of school

related bullying. We suggest that student improvement committees are not only concerned with safety, but have the opportunity to deal with all student issues in the school.

- Peer pressure should not be underestimated, it seems that peers have a big influence in the use of violence on the streets. The attitude of youngsters is mostly positive, but to belong to the peer group in this population you have to earn respect. Respect is mostly gathered by using violence, retaliation, and teasing. To bend this phenomenon, it's necessary to let youngster experience that respect can be earned by displaying more positive behaviour. This could be achieved by participation in the school and all kind of leisure time activities. Our ongoing research (Winter, Horjus & van Dijken, 2009) indicates that peer mediators and children participating in a children-neighbourhood-counsel and participation groups do earn this respect. This has an empowering effect on the participating children themselves, but also on peers because they see that children and youngsters can accomplish something worthwhile for the community.

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