

INTERVENTION SYSTEMS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: PROFESSIONALS' AND VICTIMS' VOICES

CEINAV – Cultural Encounters in Interventions Against Violence

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Summary

- Brief description of project CEINAV
- Professionals' voices in the 4 countries: main results.
- Victims' voices in Portugal, Germany and England.
- Discussion

Project CEINAV

- Analysis of intervention systems in three forms of violence:
 - Child abuse and neglect
 - Domestic violence
 - Human trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- 4 countries:
 - Portugal, Germany, England & Wales and Slovenia
- In what ways are women and children's fundamental rights assured in the 4 countries?
 - Listening to professionals
 - Listening to victims/protection services' users
- Objective: proposing transnational ethical guidelines for intervention in these areas.

Professionals' voices

- Focal groups
- Three phased discussion of a family scenario
- 6 questions on the intervention in the situation
- Method:
 - Transcription of discussions
 - Analysis of the main themes (frames).
 - Working papers
 - Comparative paper

Focus Groups with Professionals

Portugal	England	Germany	Slovenia
3 groups	2 groups	2 groups	2 groups
26 professionals	15 professionals	22 professionals	13 professionals
Judges, Prosecutors, Police officers, Child protection state services representatives, Teachers, Physicians, Child protection NGOs representatives, and social security representatives.	Judges, Social workers, Teachers, Nurses, Lawyers, Child protection NGOs representatives	Social workers, Judges, Police officers, Prosecutors, Social security representatives, physicians, Teachers, Psychologists, Tutors	Police officers, Prosecutors, Judges, Social workers, Teachers, NGOs representatives, Nurses

Intervention in situations of child abuse and neglect

Portugal	England	Germany	Slovenia
Distinction between family violence and discipline.	Focus on severity and presence of marks in the body.	Sufficient reason to intervene in the family.	Severity of non consensual physical punishments
Discussion on the child and family's best interests.	Discussion on children's possible risks.	Discussion on the child and family's best interests.	
Difference between risk and danger. Avoid excessive intervention.	A need for more information and information sharing with other organizations.	A need for more information. Focus in the family. Importance of transparency and trust.	Importance of information sharing and collaboration between organizations.
Distinction between social and criminal intervention.	Tensions between criminal and social intervention.	Tensions between criminal and social intervention.	Qualification as criminal offense allows entry in the system.

Intervention and Culture

Portugal	England	Germany	Slovenia
Concern with causes for violence. Connection with families' social class.	Concern with what and how. Causes weren't discussed.	Concern with understanding the values and racionali of families.	Concern with the causes of violence.
"Other" cultures are "different universes" and with greater tolerance to violence. View that all children share the same rights.	Cultural differences object of deep and complex discussion.	"Other" cultures seen as impenetrable. Intervention must be adapted. Consideration of cultural and linguist barriers.	Same intervention to all families. Perception that some cultures don't accept norms.
View that it's necessary to take the family's culture into account. Focus in Roma communities.		Appreciation for cultural differences mentioned by some professionals.	Give more time to families from minority cultures.

Ethical dilemmas and aspects

Portugal	England	Germany	Slovenia
All professionals demonstrated great interest and commitment in protecting children and promoting their development.			
Professionals under pressure. Feel that work is complex and sometimes dangerous. Feeling of insecurity.			
Lack of resources to help families. Difficulty dealing with families in which there is no cooperation from parents. Slow and late procedures.	Cuts in resources. Exclusive focus in protection. Perception that rules are too strict.	Lack of qualified professionals. Professionals admitted their own lack of knowledge and competences to deal with different cultures. Confidentiality extremely important.	Professionals question if intervention meets the children's best interests. Need for clearer and more precise rules.

Victims' voices

- Interviews with victims of abuse and neglect in infancy and youth
 - Recorded and fully transcribed
 - Construction of personal narratives of intervention
 - Concern with maintaining participants' voices
 - Stories' reviews with the participants.

Victims' voices

- Stories' analysis:
 - Semi-inductive analysis
 - Frame description
 - Frame organization in themes and subthemes

Entrevistas a jovens vítimas de abuso e negligência

Country	Portugal	England	Germany	Total
Number of interviews	9	7	8	24
Ages	19 to 21	16 to 21	13 to 21	13 to 21
Sex	3 girls 6 boys	5 girls 2 boys	4 girls 4 boys	12 girls 12 boys
Situation	All youths lived in institutions	All youths lived with foster families	5 youths lived in institutions and 3 with foster families	14 in institutions 10 with foster families
Participants from minority groups	2	7	8	17

3 big themes in the 3 countries

- Young people's participation and self-determination in the decision-making processes
- The importance of a trustworthy person
- Cultural aspects

Young people's participation and self-determination in the decision-making processes

Portugal	Inglaterra	Alemanha
Several young people reported an abrupt entry in the intervention systems as well as sudden changes with no preparation.	Some young people started the process of leaving home by themselves.	Most young people didn't mention the opportunity to participate in the decision-making.
Some young people also talked about feeling that the institution's staff had very low expectations regarding them.	Several young people had contact with many professionals from different areas.	Young people reported that their opinions and wishes weren't taken into account.
Young people's self-blaming.	Some young people complained of not being heard and of their opinions not being taken into account.	

The importance of having trustworthy people

Portugal	Inglaterra	Alemanha
Most participants talked very affectuously about the institutions' staff and of at least one person with whom they had a close relationship.	Interviewees expressed the importance of the continuity of social workers.	All interviewees had one trusted person in the system.
Some participants talked about the difficulty in dealing with the professionals' departure from the institution and with the sudden institutions changes.	Some participants talked about the difficulty in changing social workers often.	However, some had no one at the start or for long periods of time. Some also felt that the relationship was more focused in supervision than trust.

Cultural Aspects

Portugal	England	Germany
Minority young people mentioned situations in which they felt mistreated and discriminated by other young people in the institutions.	Family and culture very related. Some young people mentioned the importance of growing up with families from their culture.	Most young people didn't feel that their culture had influenced the intervention, although they felt bullied by other young people.
Awareness that immigrants' rights are very different from nationals' rights.	Some young people didn't feel connected with their foster families despite sharing cultural elements.	Vision that the general public and their opinions are problematic.
Young people also talked about the obstacles in obtaining and renewing the residency permit, as well as the costs associated with not having the permit.	Every young person had British citizenship, except for a young girl that is filing an asylum process.	Young people talked about greater discrimination by the teachers in rural areas than in urban areas.

Portugal's Situation

Victims	Professionals
<p>What needs to change in the intervention systems from the victims' point of view?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sibling separation • Acknowledge children's needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden and frequent transitions • Lack of information about their own story • Revictimization in the institutions • Young people self-blaming • Lack of attention to socioeconomic aspects of development 	<p>Professionals' main dilemmas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of violence: difference between violence and discipline. • Professionals' fear and insecurity. • Police power: in what situations to act with or without a warrant. • Children's right to live with their biological families and poverty • What to do when resources are scarce? • In what way can we listen to children and fulfill their wishes?