



ICONET

Activity Report France





ACTIVITY REPORT

PROJECT ICONET

Sociology of letters from imprisoned underage and major teenagers

-

Attending violent teenagers

Dr Emmanuel Jovelin

Lille Social Institute / Lille Catholic University

October 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1. PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANISM, ORIGIN AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT	4
1.1 The organization's activities	4
1.2 The origins of the project.....	5
2. RESEARCH ON THE LETTERS FROM UNDERAGE AND MAJOR TEENAGERS IN PRISON	6
2.1 The letters from imprisoned underage teens through the scope of sociological analysis	6
2.2 Methodology	8
2.3 Sociological profiles	8
2.4 Reasons for imprisonment	10
2.5 What one can say about these letters	10
2.6 Theoretical explanation.....	10
2.7 Conclusion	13
3. INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL WORKERS	13
3.1 Reminder of the aim of the work	13
3.2 The methodology	13
3.3 The grid of interviews for professionals	14
4. PROFESSIONALS FACED WITH UNDER-AGE OFFENDERS	16
4.1 The interview as a time of questioning in relation to his professional practice....	16
4.2 The project of the youngster in the institution.....	16
4.3 Youngsters and prison	17
4.4 Social support	20
5. PREPARATION OF TESTING or IMPLEMENTATION	21
5.1 Type of organisation/institution.....	21
5.2 Preparatory work.....	21
6. REALIZATION/SETTING UP OF THE TRAINING MODULE	22
6.1 Methodology	23
6.2 Contents of the training.....	23
6.2.1 Adolescence and family	23
6.2.2 Adolescence, violence, deviance.....	23
6.3 Violence in educational institutions.....	26
6.4 Preventing delinquency.....	26
6.5 Reestablishing the social link	27
6.6 Accompaniment	27
6.7 Experiences, reflections and results.....	27
6.8 Problems and reflections during the formation.....	28
6.8.1 Parents/teenagers relationship	28
6.8.2 School/teenager relationship.....	30
6.8.3 Relationship between the teenager and his friends.....	30

6.8.4	Conclusion.....	31
7.	MEETING WITH THE TEENAGERS.....	32
7.1	How to live together?.....	33
7.2	How to analyse these answers?.....	36
7.3	What helps us living together?.....	36
7.4	What prevents us from living together?.....	37
8.	TRAIN THE YOUNG MEDIATORS?.....	39
8.1	Diagram of the process of institutional mediation undergone by peers.....	41
8.2	Mediator's charter.....	43
8.3	Aptitudes to become a "good mediator".....	43
8.4	Stages in mediation.....	45
8.5	Develop competences.....	46
8.6	Become a Mediator.....	46
8.6.1	Handling conflicts.....	46
8.6.2	The mediator as a director.....	47
8.6.3	Role play: a keystone.....	47
8.6.4	Awareness and representation of violence.....	49
8.6.5	Conclusion: procedure of a true mediation.....	53
9.	GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	54
	ACCOMPANIMENT GUIDE.....	55

1. PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANISM, ORIGIN AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

1.1 The organization's activities

The Catholic University of Lille is a private university welcoming 17 000 students and regrouping 6 faculties, 20 higher education institutions, and 5 higher institutes. The Social Institute of Lille is part of the polytechnic university federation of the Catholic University of Lille, with 600 students. Its objectives are to train, attend and bring evolution to actors of social action who are able to promote a global, harmonic and durable human development. It tries to contribute to the building of trainings to social intervention professions in national and international networks. It implements its ability to intervene on every step of a course of development of professionals from medico-social sectors.

The approach of the Social Institute is the one of a human scale organization, with a global and committed approach in partnerships, educational and local development projects. The teams of this institute are mobilized around three complementary and united activity poles:

- Initial professional training (training of social workers)
- Training of recreation officers
- Medico-social and social university training
- Continuing and superior education, International Research and Development

Besides the initial training for social workers, the institute also offers a Master Degree in social work in Europe, prepared in collaboration with 11 European universities, and also a Master degree in social and urban development prepared in collaboration with the University of Evry Val d'Essonne. The Social Institute of Lille is engaged in many European actions, Interreg, the network of Master of social work in Europe and International Migrations, and also in the world, with Lebanon, Angola, Morocco, Madagascar and Congo etc.

1.2 The origins of the project

This project is a consequence of a research lead within the Interreg project, between Kent (UK) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France) to evaluate the systems of wandering teenagers. This research pointed out a few salient points pushing us to think about it in the ICONET project, notably in a sample of 60 teenagers, 33 of them had been placed before in the institutes by judges dealing with cases involving minors. We met teenagers with modest social background, with a disrupted familial relationship, complaining about being abused in the past, teens who went to jail or who had been placed in institutes with social aims and being in extreme poverty. Nearly all have their father working in a factory and their mother staying at home. When you have low qualifications, the way to social insertion often looks very long, even inaccessible.

According to the discussions with professionals, we need to offer the teens a chance of stability. The reception institutes have to be *“a melting-pot of well-being for those who feel good, and those who feel bad.”* We need to put in place a proximity accompaniment. Some educators indeed let the teens to themselves, talking about autonomy or, as underlined by the professionals we met, *“we can’t send them to look for a job or a professional training, we need to go with them.”* In our study, of the 60 teenagers, 33 come from foster homes. How can we explain this? We don’t mean to incriminate the structures or the teens, but there really is a problem to be examined and corrected, notably the tracing of the teen’s itinerary through the projects put in place all along the placement. In addition, when the child is placed by order of a judge, we need to inquire about how the definitive return into the family is going, which isn’t often done. Unfortunately, many of them end up on the street, or in prison.

2. RESEARCH ON THE LETTERS FROM UNDERAGE AND MAJOR TEENAGERS IN PRISON

This research is based on letters from teens who were placed in an institute from Northern France, and who have been imprisoned either when they were still in the institute, or after they had left it. In those letters, they express regrets about them being placed. However, in that kind of sociological work, limiting ourselves to the letters themselves is to be a mere reader. On the sociological point of view, we need to understand the reasons why they have been placed and their lives within the institute so we can understand how they could end up in prison. The analysis of the files shows that their imprisonment would be the logical development of a long trajectory, starting inside the family, going through the group of peers, and for some amplified by their stay in an institute.

2.1 The letters from imprisoned underage teens through the scope of sociological analysis

Having indeed about a hundred of those letters, the aim is to draft the sociology of regret, trying to understand how the teens regard their stay in prison. What do they say about the deeds that led them to prison? What retrospect do they have through this imprisonment, and how did they go from the institute to prison? What elements triggered the passing from a teen on his way to reinsertion to an imprisoned teen? Is prison a process starting inside the family, being the end of a trajectory; or was it favored by the institutional environment following an inefficient educational work?

Incarceration indeed sends us back to a quadruple imbricate sequence: the familial sequence, the institutional sequence, the sequence called criminal populism (collective emotion), and the preparation to the return to society.

Our aim has been to replace *“the criminal sanction not only in the judicial context which determines its legality and produces its social legitimacy, but even deeper in all the biographic thickness into which this sanction inserts itself. It’s not about depicting the prison as the place where the sentence is executed and where the answerable, temporarily deprived of his freedom, is preparing a reinsertion before being amended, but relieved of this interpretative vice, as a passing place, a specific episode of an existence, a place towards which individual fates converge.”*¹

¹ Gilles Chantraine., Expériences carcérales et savoirs minoritaires, *Revue informations sociales*, n° 127, 2005

This work mainly focused on two specific population groups: the imprisoned teens on the one hand (analysis of a hundred of letters, and of the placement files of these teens), and on the other hand the social workers through the notion of project, to analyze the educational practices. Two logics prevail on this work: understand, through the discourse of the professionals and the teenagers, how we can avoid the teens being in deviant situations. What would have had to be done in families or institutes, what wasn't done? What has been the link between the social workers, the teenager's family and the teen himself? How did these teens take the path to a deviant career, when they were inside an establishment supposed to stop their deviance?

Imprisonment of teens indeed raises some questions, and one can wonder about the sense of the sanction. According to J.C. Froment, the sanction begins precisely "where the authority stops". It's possible to reconcile authority and sanction in the crucible of legitimacy. The legitimacy of a sanction depends on its ability to positively engage the future of the person undergoing it. The sanction thus is an occasion to work on the revision of one's life (J.P. Daumas), or a limitation to the excesses of an age, the teen age, "where one embraces the difficulty to exist for oneself" (Ph. Jeammet). According to Denis Salas, the criminal sanction switched target. Punishment is done no longer to correct the faulty responsibility of the individual, but because "society, via public opinion, Medias and victims expect a punishment". This link between the punished and punisher is also to be found in the establishment for delinquent teenagers, in the evolution reports sent to the judges.

Going through the letters and the files of the imprisoned teenagers, including the evolution reports sent to the magistrates, we can see the left and right hands of the educators, pushing the teenagers towards imprisonment, and also especially the crisis of the educative act, unless we consider prison as a place of redemption and insertion. By the words educative act we mean the lack of social accompaniment. For these teens, there was a lack of efficient social accompaniment, which could take into consideration the other one's needs, since "*accompany someone is not to make someone's well being for him, it is to join with him in his potentialities, in a project or in his freedom.*"²

The aim of this ICONET project was at first to propose a methodological guide allowing us to accompany this type of persons. BUT after the Evora reunion (Portugal), we realized we also had to take into consideration the teenagers' point of view.

² Bloch-Laine. François, L'éthique de l'accompagnement social, *Union sociale*, n° 86, octobre 1995

For this we will see that in the last part of this work, after the training of social workers and the results of the conclusion, we decided to do a training with the teenagers and to propose the apparition of young mediators to help controlling the teenagers' violent acts.

2.2 Methodology

- an analysis of the letters and personal files of the young inmates
- interviews ...

Briefly, the aim is to understand the raisons which lead young people in jail. The project is settled by a specialized service provider to help those young people in their daily difficulties.

Our ambition for this project Iconet/Leonardo is to build a methodological guide thanks to meeting and interviews done with social workers to help young people. This guide could be used as a database for social workers providing them a methodology in helping the young people.

2.3 Sociological profiles

All are coming from upset families, living in a single family generally with their mother. The parents are divorced or lived together. In case of a divorce, the children are more often left to the mother rather than their fathers who were pretty more absent than present. They often belong to a large family between 3 to 13 children. The average is around 5.

Some examples of sociological profiles

1. CR: His father was a beneficiary of a disability pension after he had a car accident and he was very prone to drinking. His parents argued frequently. He had six brothers and sisters. He is a very emotional and unstable boy. He is very aggressive due to his short height (inferiority complex due to a short height and which is compensated with aggressiveness). He is not reluctant to resort to physical violence to assert himself. He likes deceiving people, fighting, being rude and aggressive, lying and is always looking for trouble. He always does things behind your back, even if you are friends with him. He is a master blackmailer. He has no sense of morality and is often involved in petty theft. He knows how to please the taller one and bullies the smaller ones. He needs constant watching and is not to be left alone as he's always ready for mischief. He is incapable of taking care of himself and constantly needs to be reminded of proper behavior.

2. DJ: His father left home and hasn't given news since. His mother can't read nor write and has been living with someone for 12 years. The five children from her first wedding were put to foster homes. From the second wedding she had seven children and one of them was put to a foster home. DJ has been living in a foster family since he was eight. He is very stubborn, not very bright, is very introvert and wallows in reading. He is not very hard working. He is prone to fits of anger.

3. Dal: He is the fifth child in a family of 7. He is unstable, a liar, a cheater and indulges himself in thefts. He likes confrontational situations. He is very aggressive with his entourage as well as with adult people. He has a very badly structured personality and can't express his inner tensions other than by being aggressive or violent. He is very childish. This child seems to be very anxious, lost. He introduces himself as a child deprived of mother love and of a normal relation with his father. He is in pursuit of affection. He has a badly structured personality and seeks the immediate satisfaction of his desires. He was more and more difficult to handle. He also committed several thefts within the institution. The parents were constantly arguing and he seemed to suffer from the situation. The children witnessed very violent scenes, especially when the dad had been drinking. The death of the father led the young boy to a dead end situation. He felt he had every right in the institution; he broke every rule, went out without authorization, and went wherever he wanted to despite heavy scolding.

4. BA: His parents are divorced. He is from a family of six. He was found guilty of crime for example by slashing the tires of a dozen cars in his neighborhood. Despite having been sent to a foster institution, he still committed petty crime (violence against the employer, violence towards his friends and towards the educating community). He especially bullied the weak children. He was strongly influenced by his insecure family background which he rejected. He is very selfish, suspicious and tends to be depressive. His life is "just a series of unrelated instants". He can be said to suffer a psychic imbalance with psychopathic components. Psychiatric prognosis in the institution: Professional future very uncertain. He will probably escalate in crime even more than he has no counterweight when he is under the influence of alcohol. A boy who can be a threat to his close circle (psychiatric examination).

2.4 Reasons for imprisonment

- Aggravated Theft
- Aggregated theft
- Larceny
- Selling of stolen goods
- Damages to a private or public property
- Rape
- Collective rape
- etc.

2.5 What one can say about these letters

Through the letters of these young inmates and through the analysis of their personal files, including the follow-up reports sent to the judges, we also find the hands of social workers who drive these people at the prison's doorstep (on the brink of prison) and especially a crisis of the education action. Unless you consider prison as a place of redemption and reinsertion, the crisis of the education is intended as a lack of social care and attention.

2.6 Theoretical explanation

A society only gets the young people it willingly allows for itself. The question one may ask is: what sort of adult deals with these teenagers? Gérard Guillot (2006) distinguishes five types of adults: The catching adult: authoritarianism/complicity; the merging adult: reciprocal complicit /equality in roles to play; the dogmatic adult: power/command; the indifferent adult: avoids conflicts; and the adult adult: Neither authoritarianism nor laxity/constructive authority. According to the author, the only real adult is the one who considers himself an adult as only an “adult adult” is able to contribute to the child’s evolution.

From a theoretical point of view, there are many ways to explain the deviance of children towards their parents, society or the institutions.

Maurice Cusson identifies four elements which are likely to influence this social control:

- *The level of social integration*: it deals with the frequency and the quality of the interactions existing between the members of a society. When relations are numerous, individual control increases. However, when we have a look at violent young people of our sample, the situation is different.

- *The level of information:* control will be more effective in a society where information quickly and well circulates. The lack of information and the low level of information create an anonymity which reduces social control.
- *The level of acceptance of authority.* Control is effective, if it is recognized and accepted by the members on whom it is exerted. "The authority of control agents must be recognized to enable this control to be exerted in good conditions". AS far as families are concerned, failure of authority is present, more especially because some parents are afraid of their children. This gives them a feeling of powerlessness
- *The level of development of social reaction.* For an effective social control, there must be an adequacy between the seriousness of the situation and the intensity of social reaction provoked by this situation. The reduction of social control increases the probability of delinquency. Thanks to our polls, we have notices that parents are passive and very quickly discouraged. Acts of violence committed by children nearly become a kind of fate.

This reduction in social control is a source of delinquency acts and is locatable in three different spheres:

- *The family:* the increase of divorces and separations generally combined with the reduction of control in the families (teenagers who progressively take power, test limits. Father is absent or does not play his social role of authority with his children)
- *The school:* in schools, teachers often consider themselves as people who transmit information to pupils and not as teachers who must transmit moral values.
- *The city:* the demographic density, the denounced disorganization of the society is a factor which could increase delinquency.

Violence related to parental education style

Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber inspire their works from Maccoby and Martin and proposed to distinguish between four paradigms of family functioning which can provide us with explanations light on the subject.

- *The paradigm of parental negligence (neglect paradigm):* These are families in which parents do not spend enough time with their children in positive interactions. They do not pay enough attention to children's silly things.

- *The paradigm of family conflict (conflict paradigm):* Families in which parents and children face a great number of conflicts. Parents cannot put limits or impose discipline. They are either too severe or not enough.
- *The paradigm of deviating family (deviant behaviour and values paradigm):* Families where parents themselves have deviating behaviours.
- *The paradigm of disturbed family (disruption paradigm):* A model in which external events come and disturb the relationship between parents and endanger the family unit (stress makes irritable, aggressive...)

The question of authority according to Durkheim

Eventually, to stop delinquency among young people, they must feel that they belong to a social group punishing punishable acts. The integration of an individual in a group is the fact for an individual to be incorporated in a social unit and to become part of it. To become a moral being, an individual must be attached to something else than to his person. It is necessary that he feels interdependent with “an humble society” said Emile Durkheim. One can say that individuals make delinquent acts because their bonds with the society are weakened or broken, which thus makes regulating action of the social group inoperative.

Travis Hirschi's theory about social bonds:

He considers that "norms and laws come from the social consensus; so delinquency is an infringement to this law, an infringement resulting from a too weak commitment of the individual compared to conformity and social consensus". This bond between the individual and the society consists in four essential elements:

1. Attachment to others which encourage teenagers to conform to legitimate expectations of the other in order not to disturb him.
2. Commitment in honest activities which encourages him/her to avoid making offences. The feeling to be held by former commitments.
3. Involvement which is simply the fact of being occupied during leisures
4. Belief which is the conviction that one must abide by the law

2.7 Conclusion

Looking at these young people, one might say the sanction is corrective when it restores a faulty responsibility. The sanction then is to the soul what the medical art is to the body: it is a remedy, an evil which precedes a good thing. Reading the letters this stands out: “ I’ve done something stupid, now I pay for this ... it's over. I'll never come back to prison”. This is only possible when there is social guidance from the start (in the institutions, in prison and when released from prison). The object of the ICONET project is to offer a methodological guide which may allow this type of public to be guided.

3. INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

3.1 Reminder of the aim of the work

The work consisted especially in interviewing professionals working with delinquent minors to build an intervention project and contribute to the self-understanding of the educational practice. The target groups are essentially social workers, many of whom have difficulties offering true alternatives to accompany youngsters in difficulty.

Two axis of work will come out from these interviews: a training program and a guide which can give several keys to professionals to accompany underage offenders.

Beyond the social workers, there are also other categories of professionals notably: The juvenile court judges, the staff of the institutions welcoming underage and adult youngsters in danger, the teachers of the institutions welcoming youngsters in difficulty and all the staff working with youngsters (*mission locale*, reception centre for young people, etc.)

3.2 The methodology

To carry out this work, we questioned a first team of seven social workers using semi directive interviews. The interviews took place in the institution during the hours reserved for the team meeting on Tuesday afternoon. Firstly to carry out this work, we met the director of the institution and then the head of department. To remain objective and to favour free speech, we wished the head of department not to assist in the interviews because the nature of his status would prevent professionals from speaking freely. But we questioned him later on. We thus conducted interviews with the following grid and also organized a general meeting with discussions revolving around themes of the grid of interviews below. This grid comprises four parts:

1. *The sociological profiles* to try to seize the socio-demographic characteristics of professionals working with under-age offenders
2. *The project of the youngster in the institution.* Here, we want to understand how professionals build the youngster's project when he arrives in the institution, when he lives there and when he approaches the age of majority.
3. *Youngsters and prison.* Starting from the fact that all the letters sent by young prisoners that we have analyzed come from people who have lived in this institution, we wanted to know the reasons of the passage from the educational institution to prison. How professionals analyze this passage to prison? What were the measures taken to stop this delinquent career? What are their relationships with the family of the under-age offender?
4. *Social support.* Beyond the difficulties met by the professionals when accompanying youngsters, it is also about asking professionals what efficient methods can be used to avoid some youngsters from becoming offenders. From these met difficulties, we can build a training plan for professionals and a methodological guide of intervention. These two last elements will only appear at the end of the project once the diagnostic work of the difficulties is finished.

3.3 The grid of interviews for professionals

Sociological profiles of the professionals interviewed

- Age
- Sex
- Are you married or single?
- Do you have any children?
- Occupation
- How long have been working with youngsters in difficulty for?

The project of the youngster in the institution

- Did you have a project when the youngster was admitted in your institution?
- Can you describe the type of project you have been setting up?
- How is this project built?
- How is this project assessed? How many times during the year and by whom?

- How do you prepare the project young adult?
- From what age do you prepare it?
- If you prepare it when the youngster approaches of the age of majority, why do you wait for so long before setting up the project?

Youngsters and prison

- In your institution several young people went to prison, why?
- Can you clearly explain what lead these young people to prison, whereas they were placed here to get social support?
- When did they start to offend? Where? (in the family) or (in the institution during the placement) ? Clarify your answer
- If they started to offend in your institution, what did you do to stop them?
- What were the measures taken to help youngsters?
- If they started to offend in the family, what did you do?
- Do you visit families? What happens during these visits? What do you talk about with the parents?

Social support

- How can we help parents faced with children who have a deviant behaviour?
- Do you have particular methods? Which one?
- What are the difficulties you meet with these youngsters?
- What do you set up to get round these difficulties?
- What do you lack in relation to this type of youngsters to provide them with the best help possible?
- How can we help you to better accompany these youngsters?
- What can we set up to help youngsters? What prevention?
- Do you have a special program when they come out of prison? If yes, which one? If no, why don't you have one?
- Yet, this first work combined with the analysis of letters and files of imprisoned minors has revealed the difficulties to accompany this public and to offer a training program to professionals.

4. PROFESSIONALS FACED WITH UNDER-AGE OFFENDERS

4.1 The interview as a time of questioning in relation to his professional practice

We start from the principle that the interview is also a time of introspection in relation to oneself. Thanks to the carried out interviews and to the discussions in groups, the professional finds himself in a “situation of self understanding in relation to his practice”. We have noticed it during our discussions, when some said, “yes, it’s true, that maybe must have been done but I didn’t know it at that moment”. Thus beyond the training which is to follow, we are convinced that the time we spent with professionals is also a time of professional training, which managed to awaken their conscience in the alteration of professional practices.

4.2 The project of the youngster in the institution

The arrival in the institution

To the question on the project of the youngster in the institution, social workers often refer to the pedagogic project of the institution: stabilisation of the behaviour, educational and professional training, integration in social life, coming back to traditional school.

When it comes to describe the type of project when the youngster arrives in the institution, this latter is above all focused on the internal school and the complementary activities. There are no elements to assess the project. However, a report about the sociological as well as the psychological evolution of the youngster is issued during the term. Later, the project is regularly adapted according to the behaviour in the institution. For the “good little boys”, the educational curve quietly follows its path, for the “bad boys” who don’t fit into the project of the institution they are often expelled, which happened to many young prisoners.

At the approach of the age of majority what happens?

The social workers are taken by surprise when the age of majority arrives, because the project is not necessarily inscribed within a perspective of the taking care of the young adult. This latter, surprised by the extent of the phenomenon, is placed in a flat at the age of seventeen and six months without any preparation as it is the case of C. This youngster

arriving in the flat found himself quite at a loss. To counter loneliness, one of the solutions was to make his friends come over. The institution rules and the pedagogic project forbid to welcome mates to avoid traffic, and the circulation of drugs. The lack of preparation induces a perverse effect leading youngsters to the street and probably in the school of delinquency and so to prison. We see here one of the difficulties which the social workers have not noticed though concerning the deviance of some children and it induces us to think about the training of the social workers for the construction of the youngster's project when he comes of age.

4.3 Youngsters and prison

“Young people today don't understand anything...they don't know their interest. It's shocking when you talk to them, it's a complete waste of time, before at least they listened, it's alarming, where are we going?”

This speech shows a dangerous youth participating to a vision of common sense as if delinquency was a recent phenomenon. But, if we refer to history, we would quickly realise, as the excerpts below attest, that youth has always been stigmatized at all epochs. Didier Pingeon (2007: 27-28) takes up a series of former speeches which we find anew in the speech of educators:

“Our young people are ill-bred, Socrates said, they don't care about authority and don't have any kind of respect for the elders. Our children today don't stand up when an old man comes into a room; they answer back to their parents and chatter instead of working. They are simply bad.”

Another quotation, three thousand years ago, inscribed on a pottery in the ruins of Babylon:

“This youth is rotten from the bottom of the heart. Young people are harmful and lazy. They would never be like the youth in the olden days. The ones today will be unable to maintain our culture.”

Hésiode (720 before Christ) also doubted about the capacities of youth: *“I no longer have any hope for the future of our country if youth take command tomorrow, because this youth is unbearable, without any restraint, simply terrible”*

Finally, an Egyptian priest said, two thousand years before Christ: *“Our world has reached a critical stage, children don’t listen any more to their parents, the end of the world is no longer very far.”*

These speeches echo the way the educators express themselves about a youth which would be very different from before and a more problematic and dangerous youth than in the olden days. They describe a youth on which it is difficult to act, acknowledging the educational failure.

The youngster arriving in the institution with his difficulties some educators feel at a loss: *“It’s true that when we are in, we have our head a little in it. We must analyse, but we take care of kids at a given moment, to break a little from their surroundings, from delinquency, but three months, six months, one year isn’t enough, and we can’t notice everything anyway!”*

Here we may wonder if delinquency starts in the environment of the youngster. They lack time to be able to remedy the difficulties met by the youngsters.

An educator has given the example of J.T arrived in emergency at the institution without having a lot of information about this young person. J.T will put to good use the uncertainty about his arrival at the institution to commit offences more or less serious (thefts, covering his mates with mercurochrome during the night, throwing mattresses out of the window). All that on the mode “not seen, not caught” but always acting so that (the educator said) *“we couldn’t doubt him to have committed these offences. This game has entailed a very big insecurity among the children as well as among the adults. This situation has led us to build our taking care according to three axes: - to curb these misconducts by reinforcing as much as possible the supervision and by taking up every reprehensible act (reprobation, sanctions, explications)- The situations of talks and actions likely to show him “You needn’t misbehave for us to look after you” must be multiplied. – Doing what is necessary to establish a privileged link between the youngster and ourselves especially with his referent. Well, this has produced positive effects because we have noticed it in time, not for a long time because we need to be constantly vigilant, but as we can not permanently exercise control over his environment, he ended up in prison all the same. We have done the work that had to be done, it may be not enough; yet we can’t do more.”*

We have often heard again this phrase *“we can’t do more”*. Social workers sometimes seem overwhelmed by the events. Moreover, many do not favour individualised social work: *“you know when you have young people as a referent and in the evening you are only two to look after fourteen youngsters and still now it’s alright, before we had six youngsters for two educators in the evening. Apart from becoming prison warder, how can you do a work with them? When it’s like this, it’s hard to work with them.”*

Another problem raised by the members of the educative team during a collective meeting was the lack of time to set up an individualized work with the adolescents as it is laid down in the pedagogic project because of a lack of staff. The referent educators of youngsters attempt to work individually with the youngsters but it is not always easy.

The family

“There are parents who have no authority at all. We do a work here and when they come back home, there are no limits any longer.”

“Look at X, his father is alcoholic, when he goes back home and then comes back it’s a complete mess. Now, we have decided that he won’t go back home any longer as long as his situation isn’t stable. But he may run away this week end. What are you going to do, to punish him? And how can you punish him? Since he hasn’t come back home. We have nothing to make him submit...”

Two notable things in the speech of social workers: the lack of authority of parents and the renunciation of parents. We will have today parents who give up their responsibilities. Thus we may wonder: how to give back to the parents their place in the upbringing of their children? How can professionals help these parents?

Inefficiency of the sanctions

At last, the inefficiency of the sanctions was also mentioned: *“Today, everything is allowed. You don’t have anything to act. You can’t give a slap otherwise it’s you who will find yourself at the director’s office or at the police station, so we let them do what they want...nevertheless we act but carefully and now the youngsters know it”*. Another will say: *“for example, a youngster has run away for two months, but he has done many silly things here, and we said to ourselves, it’s finished, but we are obliged to take him back,*

today it's the children who is the king and the educator is the watchman and not the educator. How can you be credible?"

The problematic of the sanction is the daily lot of the institutions welcoming underage offenders. Before we practiced "*the slapocracy*" (therapy by the slap), today, we talk with youngsters but for them words are not as powerful because youngsters don't hear what we tell them. The lack of sanction would be a passport to transgression.

4.4 Social support

The question was to know what help can we provide to parents in relation to the behaviours of their children?

Regular visits to the families

According to the social workers we met, frequent visits to the families are needed because parents are at a loss: "according to me, there are parents who can't take it any more and suffer; we can't leave them like that."

Educative measures

"Educative measures are needed and today we hear a lot about penal measures, penalties and all that. Today, we don't educate any longer we punish: "We consider educative measures³ which are laid down by the article 122-8 paragraph 1 of the penal code (measures of protection, of supervision and of education). Fundamentally different from the notion of penalty, they make the underage go out the penal field to inscribe him in the educative one. Those measures aim at placing or moving the underage offender in a social, moral and educative support which enables the adolescent to think about what pushed him into offending, about his personal responsibility in the committed act and maybe to regulate his behaviour. In the same manner, this requires the mobilisation of all the actors around the child (parents, educators, magistrates etc.): "So, the educative response is necessarily situated in a dynamic where the sanction is no longer an end in itself, but on the contrary a continuation, a passage. It constitutes, in fact, a meaningful bet of hope on the ability, the educability of the underage and on the skills of his environment" (Ghizzoni, 2007:64-65)

³ Ghizzoni, Nathalia (2007). *Délinquance des mineurs : de la prévention à la sanction*, Paris, ESF

Prevention

Prevention in family, in neighbourhoods, at school etc has been mentioned by the social workers.

Trainings

Some educators have mentioned the need of training because they are more and more confronted to psychiatric problems to which they were not accustomed. An updating of knowledge and even consolidation is needed to deal with adolescents today.

In conclusion, this first work combined with the analysis of letters and files of imprisoned minors has revealed the difficulties to accompany this public and to offer a training program to professionals.

5. PREPARATION OF TESTING or IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Type of organisation/institution

The training is carried out in Phalempin's Training Centre. This establishment was founded in 1948 and welcomes suffering minors. Children are placed in this Centre by a court decision, by a judge or by the General Council. This establishment includes a school, workshops (like painting and joinery, as well as a natural and environmental workshop and an apprentice training restaurant). The Centre of Phalempin can welcome 65 children aged from 14 to 17. The analysed letters come from children who had been placed and then went to prison.

5.2 Preparatory work

The preparation of the training module was done thanks to discussions I carried out with social workers. At the end of the interview, I spoke with the departmental manager to suggest a training with accompaniment which could be given to minor offenders. This module takes into account the speeches collected during the interviews showing the difficulties met by social workers to accompany young people. I noticed that during the interviews some educators spoke about the needs in trainings because they are more and more confronted to psychiatric problems to which they were not before. An updating and even a consolidation of knowledge are necessary to fit today's teenagers. By developing

knowledge for professionals, it will be up to them to develop skills for young people in order to support their integration in the social and professional life and also to prevent them from falling into delinquency.

The training alternates theoretical and practical approaches. These professionals were asked to bring a material on practical cases of minor offenders. What can be found out with practical cases brought by professionals during the training? Family and school trajectory of the young person, delinquency problems met in the establishment, difficulties met with the young people, solutions to regulate the difficulties met and strategies put in place to develop the social skills of the young person. These practical cases must be confronted to the theoretical approaches developed during the training and be a subject for debate.

6. REALIZATION/SETTING UP OF THE TRAINING MODULE

Description of the training

Target group: 2 groups of professionals (7 in each group)

Target groups are mainly made of social workers, some of whom having difficulties suggesting real alternatives in order to accompany young people in difficulty. Two broad outlines of the work will be set up thanks to those interviews: a training programme and a guide able to give some keys to professionals, in order to accompany minor offenders.

Apart from social workers, there are also other categories of professionals, mainly:

- Children's judges
- People working in establishments welcoming minors and young adults in danger.
- Teachers in establishments welcoming young people in difficulty.
- Any professional working with young people (local missions, welcoming centres for young people...)

Summary

The training module is the result of the analysis of under age offenders, of the interviews with professionals and of the difficulties met to help these young people.

The aim of this training programme is:

- to understand violent behaviours and violent acts among young people
- to improve the explanation for young people's violent behaviours
- to identify the different kinds of violence
- to incite people in their jobs to question themselves about violence and aggressiveness
- to think about intervention strategies and elaborate action plans as an answer to youth violence
- to adopt an observation and detachment policy about violence
- to question oneself about one's good practice (what exactly does it mean to “welcome” someone?)
- to better manage the notion of “help”

This training programme tackles the questions of adolescence and family, the sociological theories of deviance, the problems of violence, and also the theories of social link to better help young people at risk.

6.1 Methodology

Alternating between theory and exchanges with professionals, studying the different cases, sharing practices and debating over given situations. Documents will be given to trainees at the end of the course.

6.2 Contents of the training

6.2.1 Adolescence and family

The purpose of this first theme is to go back to this difficult step to show its complexity. It is also about working on the link between the family and the child.

6.2.2 Adolescence, violence, deviance

What are the reasons which lead to delinquency?

Study of the different psychological theories leading to deviance:

Causal theories (influence of the individual, of the environment and of society)

As far as the influence of the individual is concerned, some theories state that deviances are committed by individuals having particular aptitudes which drive them to hurt compulsively. This notion is to be found in conceptions supported by biological

determinism. About the environment, Shaw and Mac Kay demonstrated that what is decisive is the environment in which the individual evolves. In environments where there is very little social control, a loosening of morals is to be noticed, which encourages young people to adopt deviant behaviours. Therefore, the environment plays an important role in shaping one's identity.

Disorganization theory

This concept enables to understand how social rules, in certain circumstances, seem to lose efficiency. Delinquent acts are part of the dynamic process of the individual's life. According to some sociologists, drug addiction is a solution to anomie, which results from social disorganization. Drug addiction as a social and individual problem is a response created by the prevailing ideology and which has repercussions in social disorganization.

Numerous events testify to this disorganization: unemployment, bad living conditions resulting from poverty and from the increasing economical growth.

From a sociological point of view, behaviours are neither determined by people's individual stories, nor by their immediate interaction with their family members, but rather by the organisation of the society in which they evolve. This kind of reflection directly refers to the anomie theory.

Anomie theory

Risky behaviours such as drug addiction can be explained as the outcome of a conflict between aims (values) and means (norms). Actually, when objectives which are socially promoted become inaccessible to individuals or to some social groups, a phenomenon which Merton calls "anomie" begins to develop, as a result of the frustration rising from the inadequacy between the aims which had been set and the means available to reach them.

In this case, some individuals try to find a way out through drug addiction. According to Merton, anomie results from the *gap between the cultural objectives suggested by some society to its members and the institutional means they have at their disposal to succeed*. As some individuals do not have the legitimate means to meet those objectives, they will adopt a deviant behaviour. It is a *contradiction between the reference values and the impossibility to legitimately reach them*. Thus, it is about the malfunctioning between the cultural system and the social structure.

Differential association theory

Risky behaviours are learnt through interaction with other people by means of a communication process. According to Sutherland, deviant behaviours can be learnt just like any other behaviour when particular circumstances are gathered. Those who do take the plunge do it because they are in close contact with models which encourage them to act in this way. In fact, individuals break the law when unfavourable interpretations to abiding by the law are more important than favourable ones. Each individual invariably assimilates its environment's culture unless other models happen to counteract it. Actually, to understand why a teenager moves towards a deviant behaviour, it is necessary to analyse the practical conditions which put them "more easily at risk of unfavourable conceptions of the law than favourable ones." (A. Ogien, op.cit)

Stigma theory

The stigma theory was initiated by Edwin Lemert, who stated that it is not deviance which leads to social control, but on the contrary, social control creates deviance. (A. Ogien). It is not the first act which creates deviance but rather its reception by those who witnessed it (that is, the social reaction, the social audience).

According to this author, "deviance is not an attribute of the committed action, but rather the consequence of someone else's application of rules and sanctions to some wrongdoer. The deviant person is someone to whom this designation has been applied; deviant behaviours are behaviours which others decide to call so." (Becker, 1973)

From this, it follows that "it is not motives which create deviant behaviours, it is the opposite. Deviant practices create, little by little, deviant motives." (Becker)

All those justifications are built step by step, thus forming the career of a marijuana smoker, which I have just emphasized above.

What is to be said about all those theories, and what conclusions are there to be drawn?

There are many reasons which drive young people to adopt risky behaviours and so they can hardly be exhausted. The analysis of contemporary forms of youth deviances puts forward the entanglement of several phenomena: acts which come close to predatory delinquency, interpersonal acts of violence which are sometimes quite serious and finally expressive violence and damages which massively occur as quite spontaneous collective actions receiving a great deal of media coverage. (Hugues Lagrange, Esprit, oct. 2000) All

these problems cannot be the subject of a single interpretation, if we tackle the problems to which solutions are to be given, the trajectory analysis method is the most accurate in order to understand what can make an individual fall into the world of delinquency.

6.3 Violence in educational institutions

First step: the different types of violence noticed among teenagers. The point is to make the different forms of violence/aggressiveness stand out, to put them into categories and to give a definition of violence/aggressiveness. Work on the different representations of violence.

Second step: construction and deconstruction on a theoretical level of the concept of violence, from contributions brought by members of the team. This theoretical contribution is mainly based on sociology and psychology.

Third step: causes of violence. The aim is to make the causes of violence among young people stand out, according to professionals. List of the main causes observed on the field and questioning about professional practices.

Fourth step: theoretical approaches about causes of violence (related to the third step)

Fifth step: practical exercises and elaboration of a methodological tool. The members of the team will speak of situations they have experienced and we will attempt to analyse them from a reading grid. Here, it is possible to refer to Durkheim's rules of sociological methodology, especially the object building in sociology, that is to say that “we are able to understand social phenomena from the meaning we spontaneously give them, whereas the real meaning of those phenomena can only be found out by an objective and scientific exploration.” The question is to know how to get the internal meaning of social facts (violence). How can we break away from received ideas? How can we break away from the vision we have through common sense?

6.4 Preventing delinquency

When an educator contributes to the personal and social development of children, they take preventive actions by protecting them from the charms of delinquency. Preventing means: “*Taking steps ahead to be a stumbling block, stopping something thanks to precautions.*”

“Preventing a crime would therefore be to anticipate it and stop it before its being committed.” Prevention should target its instructors and make delinquency go down by taking actions on situations favourable to delinquent behaviours (situational prevention). In fact, it would be about focusing on preventive actions, especially pre-criminal situations. But by acting on the child as well, by making them develop self-control and social abilities (developmental or social prevention) (Cusson, op. cit.).

6.5 Reestablishing the social link

Eventually, in general, for young people to stop falling into delinquency, they need to feel that they are part of a social group that condemns criminal acts. The integration of an individual in a group is perceived by the individual as the incorporation to an ordinary social unit and as the feeling of belonging to it. For a man to be a moral being, he needs to value something else than himself. He needs to feel united to a society, as humble as it might be, as the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, pointed out.

From this, it is possible to say that individuals commit delinquent acts because their link to society has been weakened or broken, thus making the social group's regulating action ineffective. This individual-society link would be made of four essential elements.

To conclude, we could make an association with Hirshi who asserts that conventional social links play an essential role to control and inhibit deviant motives and that deviance and delinquency result from fragility and from weakening or broken links with the conventional society.

6.6 Accompaniment

What does it mean to accompany?

What is a project?

How is it possible to build a project for young people from their entry to their leaving the establishment?

6.7 Experiences, reflections and results

We did our formation with professionals from Phalempin's Training Centre. Two teams of 13 people were trained on a formation program made from reports of interviews made with those professionals. This training made them think about the lacks of attendant measures for young underage delinquents. During this training, the social workers brought concrete cases they had experienced during their professional life. The elements gathered during the

debates following the training, and during the interviews will allow us to put together the training module.

Before we start the training beyond the program below, some general questions were raised, which found the project and feed the prior reflection.⁴ What are the personal experiences, perceptions and representations of the phenomenon “violence, conflicts, incivilities lived by professionals and children from the educational institution”? Is it possible, with the help of those concerned, to determine an approach allowing us to get out of the destructive forms such as aggressiveness, violence, theft etc. within the educational institution? More specifically, can “institutional mediation between peers” constitute an educational system aiming at overcoming and resolve in a constructive way the conflicts appearing between children either inside or outside the institution?

Can the institution promote and arouse a movement of reflection and action around the initiation to institutional mediation, which would allow the creation of working conditions and friendliness characterized by non-violence and mutual respect in the field of the teaching of citizenship? Beyond this, is it possible to influence in a positive and noticeable way the children’s point of view towards the apprenticeship of life?

6.8 Problems and reflections during the formation

There hasn’t been any specific problem. The main difficulty has been to gather all of the social workers and to find the appropriate time and date. About the organization welcoming the children, one group had to be moved to another city and it hasn’t been easy to get all of the teams to come at the same time. We had to wait till the beginning of the school year in September to do the formation.

There have been various reflections during this formation. Here are the ones that seemed important to us:

6.8.1 Parents/teenagers relationship

Lack of boundaries for children with deviant behaviour.

Family is considered by the professionals as the main factor and the privileged interlocutor whenever educational measures or pedagogical monitoring is concerned. All the professionals who participated to the formation underlined the role of the family. Family is regarded as “a means to growing up, and shaping oneself” (according to a psychologist).

⁴ Pigeon D., *En découdre avec la violence*, IES éditions, 2007

Actions such as theft, insults, lack of respect and violence are acknowledged by professionals as behaviours starting within the family first, and then in the neighbourhood. Professionals also reported the difficulties parents encountered raising their children. They explained they had encountered many families which were feeling guilty for their children's deviances. Family is often considered as the origin of the apparition of children deviance. Professionals clearly pointed out that "the absence of boundaries...or of a frame weakens the shaping of a teenager's own identity. At this age they need to have references, to be supervised, or they might take advantage of it"

One of those professionals continues: "The teenager needs to face adults who can tell him what the lines he shouldn't cross are. Between forbidding everything, which brings the teenager to either passivity or revolt, and allowing everything which gives him neither confrontation nor limits, parents are facing the need to offer their kid a space where they can grow up without getting lost." (psychologist)

Familial environment and context are also frequently mentioned by the professionals as a possible reason to the deviance of a teenager. Here, the difficulty concerns family's past, more specifically the parents' past. "Divorces, single-parent families can weaken and disturb a child. (educator)

Another educator said the children often find themselves jolted from one family to another, where they discover another way of life, with different values and norms. They undergo the problems created by the disagreement between divorced parents. One teenager had a violent behaviour towards his classmates (several suspension reports from his school proved the point). The young man lived through the divorce of his parents. He lived one week at his father's and one at his mother's. He no longer managed to talk to either one of them, and couldn't suffer the constant arguing between the two. Another teenager based his deviant acts on his family problems. "It wasn't going that well at home...I needed to evacuate...so I was misbehaving".

In short, professionals explained that parents often copycat the familial outline they had experienced. When the question of educational support was raised, it was said that "It's important to know and to understand what the parents' idea on education is. What kind of teenagers they were, did they have any problems of any kind? (Divorce, death of an important figure) These questions are essential to the understanding of how the family's functioning.

6.8.2 School/teenager relationship

According to the professionals we met, school is an intermediary between the family and the teenager. It aims to “completing the parental role”, says an educator. The members of the pedagogical team and the teachers are important partners to the professionals.

Yet one of the social workers admitted that “the school system isn’t always adapted to the teenager. The difficulties to learn, or to understand, can lead a teenager to switch off the school system. If the teacher doesn’t quickly spot a teenager having difficulties, he favours and increases the distance the young person will take regarding to his studies.”

Absenteeism is one of the consequences of the difficulties met by the students. An educator explained that in all the kids she had seen, about 30 of them had had a bad orientation, which had led to the gradual absence of motivation, then to delinquency and finally to their arrival in the educational institute. This mistake caused an endless spiral: « the absence of motivation from the kid, due to bad marks or lack of comprehension, leads to a slight switch off in his schooling. He no longer does his homework; he no longer has any interest in his courses and thus is marked by the teachers as « lazy », causing an even greater lack of motivation. He then decides to skip some of his classes...and is marked as an absentee. A spiral with perverse effects is created. School, in that case, is a brake and doesn’t fulfil its role as a socialization agent.

6.8.3 Relationship between the teenager and his friends

Professionals explain it’s important to hang out with people of the same age when you’re a teenager. According to an educator, “*The group of friends allows him to get out of the familial cocoon, and to see other things.*” A psychologist adds that “*It gives the teenager an opportunity to grow up and to find other landmarks. It has some influence on the teenager*”. Another educator says that “*with his friends, the teenager wants to go out, do other things than just being at home in the afternoon or in the evening.*”

Professionals know that it’s during the adolescence that the young people need to distinguish themselves from other people. “The clothes are important, the look is all about appearance; the teenager needs to be accepted by others at first glance to manage to shape himself.”

6.8.4 Conclusion

During the formation, three main themes stuck out from the discussion: the lack of education suffered by teenagers towards their parents, the negative influence of their friends and the inappropriate environment (neighbourhood, school etc.) for some young people. The influence of friends is considered by professionals as able to bring a kid to adopt a deviant behaviour. The school system is also said to be a possible factor. Educational maladjustment for a student, the feeling of injustice felt by the under-achievers could also cause a deviant behaviour.

The relationship between the teenager and his family is discussed a lot during the formation with professionals. Familial factors such as the absence of rules, lack of supervision from parents towards their kids, lack of communication, of bound, of marks, also implied are the lack of boundaries and limits, or on the contrary their excess would favour the apparition of a deviant behaviour for a teenager. Many of the teens who went to prison are included share one or more of these characteristics.

From there came the main question: How can we support and help the parents meeting educational difficulties with their children? How can we make sure the parents can get the suitable competences to raise their children?

It seems that the development of prevention by the partners would allow the families to find some help when they are confronted to difficulties with their children. However, the professionals say that the family is the first partner when educational measures are concerned.

After the formation, the question “What did you learn” was asked. Here are some of the many answers given:

- To listen to others and to listen to myself
- A full consultation with all the partners is necessary to develop young people's competences
- Teach the kids to put themselves into somebody else's shoes through role games.
- Train the kids to be mediatory with other young people.
- We acquired a language and tools to develop the pedagogy of non-violence and to help the children to live together in society
- Better communication between us

- It gave me competences, assurance to face difficult situations, and to avoid being violent when someone's violent with me.
- I'm more confident when there's a conflict between some students in the institution.
- I know the theory we learnt and the exercises we practiced can help us develop competences for the kids.

The objectives determined after the training are:

- Secondary prevention: teach the kids to solve their problems in a non-violent way thanks to the restoration of the social link.
- Primary prevention: teach the children to behave like citizens, to communicate inside the institute, at school or at home.
- Develop the culture of mediation through an educational project base on communication pedagogy.

The latter was specifically underlined by the social workers. They proposed two-days-training with the teenagers.

7. MEETING WITH THE TEENAGERS

Along with the social workers we decided, at the end of the training, to work with the teens on the question of violence to prepare them to be mediators, and to help them to undergo a self-understanding process as far as violence and delinquency are concerned. The training of young mediators must begin with making them aware of the non-violent solutions to conflict (Pingeon, 2007). Becoming aware of violence, of its forms, causes and of what is at stake, added to a reflection on the various reactions it provokes allow the teens to choose a different way to react when confronted to violence. To this aim, role plays or quizzes are interesting and relevant tools.

During this meeting we asked them the question: "How to live together?" We gave a sheet of paper each, and then we discussed what they had written. Here are their answers:

7.1 How to live together?⁵

- Respecting other people
- Respecting yourself
- Punctuality
- Stop being a pain in the ass
- Stop using your classmates as patsies
- Stop pushing your friends to misbehave
- Stop hitting other people
- Stop being rude
- Stop throwing things and spitting in the corridors
- Take care of other people's things and give them back in due time
- Have lunch together
- Most important is to LISTEN
- Trust each other

To be able to live together, we must “respect one another, cut the insults, avoid wasting food and share the task equally. One must do his own dishes in the morning and at tea time, proving his maturity. We must respect grown-ups. We just have to get along well, to avoid conflicts, to be able to understand each other without having to provoke, it's not that complicated, but so complicated at the same time.

There is the problem of “caïdisme⁶” which is unusual and should exist. Caïdisme is not living together since you listen to other bad-behaved kids. The more you listen to them, the more you feed caïdisme. Violence too should be avoided, because when violence is between two people, or more, you have to understand to know.

- Learn how to stay at the table like normal people, and not to reject anyone by saying “seat's taken”
- Learn to respect other people's sleep. For instance, I've got class on Wednesdays and I hear people singing in the corridors, and loud music.
- Don't throw papers on the floor, respect the cleaning personnel. You have to be polite with the educators and respect Monique's work.

⁵ From here to next section will be the answers given by the teenagers as they have been written down. I have translated them the best I could. (the translator)

⁶ “Caïdisme” refers here to the young people acting tough, without any respect for anyone, and trying to boss their classmates. It can be related, to a minor extent, to the gang phenomenon in the US (the translator)

- We mustn't follow others who are misbehaving.
- Respect the rules of our group.
- Forbid alcohol consumption within the institute.
- Be polite with the young people
- Be responsible
- Student representatives must do their job (within the students there are representatives such as, for instance, a financial representative planning the activities with an educator. He manages the remaining budget for paying activities such as going to the swimming pool or to cinema...)
- Stop hitting other people.
- To live together, we must be polite with each other, respect the rules.
- To live together, you first have to respect yourself. That means taking care of your body.
- You also have to respect other people (educators, teens, and people outside the institute), avoid saying insults, and respect the rules which are there to help us live better.
- Respect the equipment (pool table, vehicles). We must show solidarity and share what we have. Solidarity is to help each other when we're in trouble. We also have to respect the grown-ups (educators and parents).
- In life, there always will be laws to respect so we can live in a better community. Others also must respect me without trying to dupe people (flush the toilets, do your dishes in the morning, stop spitting in the corridors, the group has to be clean).
- Respect is important; it helps us live better together. When you respect the young educators, they respect you in return, and this is important.
- We have to be united and follow the rules.
- We must respect grown-ups and other people. We must do what the educators say, like do the dishes, or the service. We must learn to share, and not to waste food.
- We need a minimum of rules to live together.
- We mustn't let the others lead us to misbehave, and we mustn't drink alcohol inside the institute because educators have good eyes and spot us very easily.
- We must respect everyone:
 - 1) Respect the facilities
 - 2) Stop insulting each other
 - 3) Behave like human beings

- 4) Manage to get along, even if sometimes it doesn't go quite well
 - 5) Respect the three words of our law: freedom, equality, fraternity
 - 6) We must say what we think, and not keep it to ourselves
 - 7) We must help and support each other
- Respect others (teenagers), not having rows, respect our hygiene, respect other people (educators)
 - Have meals together, share food and drinks, respect the cleaning personnel's work, and respect other people, not be lead to misbehave by other teens.
 - Have a job, learn how to work and pull through.
 - Respect yourself, and other people
 - A human being must be properly respected, and an animal must be treated like a human being.
 - A Coloured person must be respected as a White, and a White person as a Coloured one.
 - Respect is to shake hands, say hello.
 - Respect helps you grow up and make peace.
 - Respect is for everybody to live better together.
 - God created the word 'respect' so we could use it. Live with other people, together, for Good and against Evil.
 - We must respect our environment, our hygiene.
 - Live in legality, i.e. not to rob a bank or something.
 - Not to steal other people's stuff.
 - A minimum of rules and duties, i.e. 12:15 lunch, do the service.
 - We have to think of ourselves as human beings.
 - To live together, people need laws, and that the essential be respected
 - To live together we need to collaborate.
 - We must listen to what educators say to us, respect the rules and hygiene.
 - Get along well together
 - Help and support each other, respect food, room service, showers etc.
 - Talk to other people
 - Respect the town.

7.2 How to analyse these answers?

The question was “how to live together in this group which is more and more confronted to violence between the teens, and also between the teenagers and the social workers?” We received a diversity of answers which can seem redundant, but we’ve reported what each teenager had written down. What has been said isn’t innocuous and has to be analysed.

If they have to live together in the training centre, we must find them a goal. Many teenagers in this institute face violence problems in their family or their environment. For some of them, it was either prison or the training centre.

- What project in this life group?
- If this is to work, the project has to be accepted by everyone. How are we to do that?
- Living together doesn’t just concern the training centre. There also are: school, family, sport centre, neighbourhood, city, country etc.
- We can’t do anything on our own; we have to do the effort to learn common competences to live together.

7.3 What helps us living together?

After this first question, the teens were asked two more questions: what helps us living together? What prevents us from living together?

- Solidarity
- The will to make efforts
- Friendship
- The other people
- Laws
- Love
- Rules
- People
- Family
- Educators
- Trust
- Communication
- Sharing

- Harmony
- Friends
- Discussion
- Listening to others
- Communicate
- Dialogue
- Comprehension
- Making projects
- Politeness
- Helping others
- Will
- Share the same feelings
- Work
- Talk about action
- Pleasure
- Leisure

Analysis

The word 'trust' has been quoted the most (16 times), either by the teens or the educators. Then come solidarity and love, but the one thing that's important and helps us living together, LAW, didn't appear very often. What we have are feelings, good feelings, but very few concrete things such as rules or laws. Friends and persons who help you living together have also been forgotten.

In the teens' heads, they know you have to love and trust, but they forget it happens through mutual respect and through laws regulating everyone's passions, thus inviting to form a community. Good feelings find their meaning only when anomie has nothing to do in a legally constituted state. The teenagers' ideas can be applied only when they'll have grasped the existence of laws.

7.4 What prevents us from living together?

- Thefts
- Gluttony (many eat more than their share without thinking about the others)
- Jealousy
- Aggressiveness, violence (gratuitous)

- Caïdisme
- Drugs
- Lack of hygiene
- Personal problems
- Rudeness
- Fights
- Absence of laws
- Difference
- Lack of courage
- Anger
- Damage of properties
- Incomprehension
- Competition
- Betrayal
- Egotism
- Indifference
- Physical abuse
- Rebellion
- Boredom
- Desire of freedom
- Go fuck yourself
- Those motherfucking educators

Analysis

Here, 'caïdisme' was quoted by 15 people, then violence (12), then aggressiveness and thefts.

We know violence and 'caïdisme' are closely related. Without violence, there can be no caïdisme. The main problem of groups of teenagers is violence, and then many thefts, or assaults.

Analysing those two questions, we have on the one hand the good feelings, solidarity, love, trust (if we forget about law), and on the other hand the strong acts creating a feeling of insecurity within the group of teenagers: violence (caïdisme, thefts). This is what the group has to deal with and eradicate first. Strong acts prevent you from living in a community.

How can we solve these problems? Good feelings aren't enough. When we confront good feelings with strong acts, we can deduce:

How can I show *solidarity* to someone aggressing me and other people?

How can I *trust* a thief?

How can I *love* someone who's violent?

How can I *respect* someone who doesn't show respect to anyone?

With the educators, we concluded that we had to consider the rules based on family life, aggressiveness, theft, and caïdisme. These rules have been there a long time already. Why aren't they respected? How can we change this?

Educators realized that very few rules are punished and the person responsible for enforcing the rules isn't mentioned anywhere. Are the educators the only persons who can make the teenagers respect the rules? Teenagers could do it as well. *Beyond the training organized with the teenagers and the social workers, the idea came to train teens to be mediators, and to write a booklet on the accompaniment of teenagers.*

The conclusions to the training also contributed to a self-understanding from the teens. They got aware of the problems existing within the group. After the meeting, the educators said that the group was quieter; there was less violence, less insults and less aggressiveness.

8. TRAIN THE YOUNG MEDIATORS?

The training of young mediators is a progressive approach, an awareness process which has to begin from the non-violent resolution of conflicts. Before becoming part of the mediation, especially of social regulation, they need to think about violence - as a personal experience and as its representations-, about its meanings, causes and purposes, and about who's responsible for it. The aim is to approach a few concepts and to build the arguments justifying the instauration of a regulation system used by teenagers, for other teenagers. The aim is also to discover the part conflicts are playing in the development of the seeking of balance. The whole method is inspired by the idea of non-violence. The objective is to discover and accept that each person has his own way of experiencing violence, of representing it, and of reacting and acting according to it. Before profiling boundaries and

rules, we will illustrate mediation in the day to day life of a group in an educational institute with a few diagrams:

External causes of violence in the educational institution:

- Precariousness, poverty, unemployment
- Familial anomies
- Adult violence
- Alcoholism, child abuse, incest
- Absence of roots due to constant move
- Absence of a structural law
- Dictatorship of appearance
- Law of the strongest
- Inappropriate housing
- Lack of communication
- Denials, depreciation
- Lack of social links
- Lack of meeting places
- Stigmatization etc.

Internal causes of violence in the educational system:

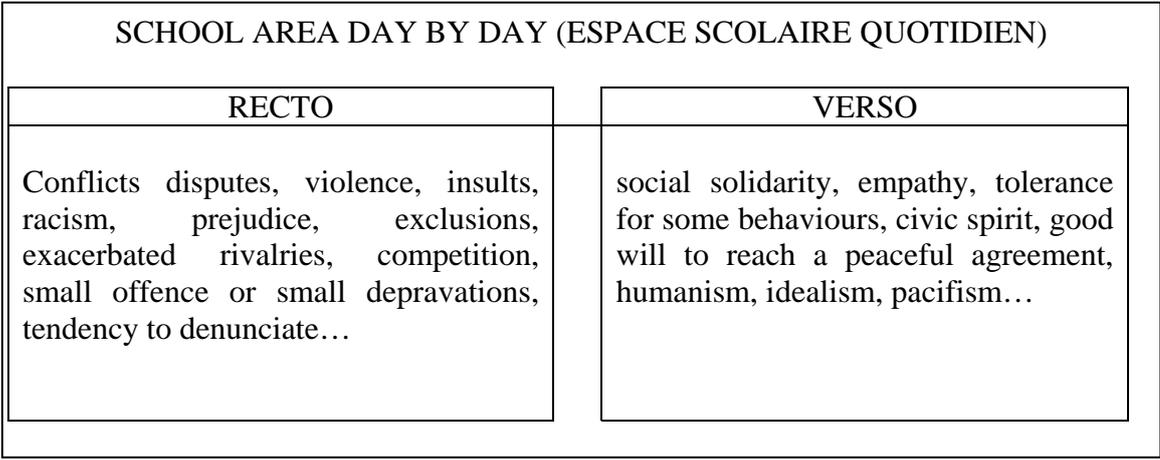
- Mocking, irony
- Depreciation, denial
- Child abuse from adults
- Invective, foul language
- Lack of values
- Competition, selection
- Failure
- Lack of solidarity space, stigmatization
- Lack of time to learn
- Institutional marking
- Weak assertion of structural laws
- Risk of ethnic ostracism
- Thefts, “caïdisme”, aggressiveness, extortion racket, incivility, degradation of property, insults, mocking.

Here we show that violence has many causes. In the external and internal causes, we saw that the institution trying to solve the problem also creates problems of its own. The world isn't going well, and the institution doesn't have the power to make it better.

8.1 Diagram of the process of institutional mediation undergone by peers

The diagram below takes us to the heart of mediation by other teens. It shows that if mediation can exist and develop in an institutional context, it is because the day to day life in an institute is made of a front page and a back page. On the front page are competition, disputes, verbal violence, incivilities, racism, segregation, jealousy, vandalism... and on the back page are tolerance, empathy, solidarity, civility, pacifism...

The front and back pages are situation during which alternatives can happen at any moment. This is when good will and competence appear and deploy to understand and resolve conflicts, to communicate and restore the bound and "give Hell to violence".



↓

WILL AND COMPETENCE TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

TRAINING OF NEW SCHOOL ACTORS

Conflict, dispute, tension, offense, violence, incivility

Party A:
 The Victim
 The Plaintiff

EXPRESSION
 CONCILIATION
 COMPENSATION

Party B:
 The Offending party
 (individual or group)



8.2 Mediator's charter

To make sure those mediators really are acknowledged by the other teens, and that they are aware of their own place, this charter will be put in a place that can be seen by all the teenagers of the institute:

- The mediator is a teenager like you, who followed a training allowing him to help others resolve their conflicts.
- The mediator isn't an educator, or someone who will find faults with you. He doesn't take sides, doesn't judge, but helps you to find a solution to your difficulties.
- The mediator doesn't force anyone to go and see him, but proposes his help in a spirit of mutual respect.
- The mediator is there to listen to you: he's taking an interest in your problems, gives you his attention and his time, and asks you to have some good will in return
- The mediator doesn't report to anyone what you said to him. He is discreet and deserves your trust.
- The mediator will do his best to help you, but doesn't necessarily have an answer to each and every one of your problems. He is not a magician; don't ask him to do the impossible. The real solution is in your own hands.
- We are not judges. Our role is not to know who's right or wrong. We're here to listen to you, to make talking easier for you, to re-establish a dialogue, a relationship, by changing the perception of the situation so you may find the solution you seek.

8.3 Aptitudes to become a "good mediator"

The training expects the future mediators not only to refer to limits, but also to play on flexibility, decentralization, partiality and also to listen to others. The trusted mediator must be prepared to follow a procedure, thus to follow a few basic rules and principles. This presupposes the acquisition of the competences below:

Look at the conflicts and the people involved with it with lucidity:

- educate oneself to flexibility, to the capacity of changing one's emotional reactions or point of view

- learn to develop ways of communication suitable and appropriate to the protagonists
- learn that conflicts can't be avoided and be available to detect and accept them, to better face them and solve them afterwards
- consider the conflicts one witnesses as a learning process
- learn not to smother one's emotions, but to express them in the right way, so one can
- develop a capacity to talk about behaviours without judging anyone

Prepare to approach the conflict:

- learn how to examine and decide whether the conflict is negotiable
- distinguish between real needs and asserted positions
- do one's best to see things from the other's point of view, learn to decentralize oneself.

Create an atmosphere suitable to negotiation.

- have the suitable behaviour, talk, respect the other people and their word to facilitate and guarantee a mutual trust
- never judge and never do assumptions, stay honest, develop empathy whenever needed and appropriate
- in fact, never fear to either apologize or compliment.

Dare to use "I"

- express oneself in a personal way, i.e. using *I*, either to communicate information or to express one's interests or needs
- ask the other person to do the same, to be "the other *I*" and to ask questions facilitating the expression of his needs
- identify problems in which the conflict dwells, explore the given explanations and the attributions of responsibilities

Meet on a common ground.

- Avoid any judgment and favour mutual understanding
- Examine the problems while trying to find out what can be the common points, or the agreements, beyond the causes, reasons, or justification of the conflict.

Arouse a research of the solutions:

- Invite the protagonists to propose possible solutions to the problem
- Propose a brainstorm without worrying about evaluating the propositions coming forward.

Chose a satisfactory solution

- Go back on the proposition, seeking to evaluate them
- In all the propositions, look for the one which seems the more adequate and able to wholly satisfy both parties
- Fix the dispositions and concrete behaviours allowing to realize and respect the chosen solution
-
- Establish the ways to control and the possibilities to make amendments to the chosen solution

8.4 Stages in mediation

“Theoria”

The conflict is exposed, in cognitive and affective ways. Each person will describe what he’s living. Talk and listen. Silence is replaced by sharing. Dialogue replaces monologue. Two versions of the conflict are thus exposed. The mediator will then summarize what he’s heard, reformulate both points of view, make sure each side is aware of the other’s position and arguments. It’s a welcoming time of expression, listening, clearing. From there one enters the “*crisis*” stage.

“Crisis”

The conflict is now known in all its dimensions. Reactions are to be expected. It’s the confrontation. Contradictions, oppositions appear, thus emotion, suffering, interrogation, feelings. It’s the “*crisis*”. The shout of one confronted to the other person’s. People we seek to reconcile confront one another, but must never go too far. Violence and abuse don’t find their place here. Facts become secondary to the feelings they provoke. During “*theoria*”, the mediator is a mirror, whereas in “*crisis*”, he keeps on reflecting, but to allow to progressively distance oneself from emotions, suffering, and to let silence come. Yet he

shall not usurp the protagonists' words, nor shall he interpret it. From there we go to "catharsis".

"Catharsis"

It's because we could express anger, suffering, malaise, and because we managed to slowly recognize those various feelings that they can be overcome and become a ramp to the last stage. Here we evolve from egotism and self-interest to the other's interests and altruism. Things are clarified, it's liberation. The power struggle yielded to sensibility. From "catharsis", a solution can be considered, an acceptable way out for both parties, without winner or loser.

8.5 Develop competences

A pedagogical tool can be elaborated, which would allow the educators to develop the required competences for young mediators, to lead the protagonists from conflict to true mutual communication, and to solve their disagreement how and as they want it. It's important to remember that each institute can build its own tools. Games have advantages; they favour a relaxed atmosphere, and nevertheless allow the learning of important notions. Play and learn. The game thus is a basic element of the mediation training. Word games, physical games, reflection games, any recreational support leads to realizing, discovering, asking new questions. Playing together is the encounter of self-consciousness and the consciousness that the other are there, all this very smoothly.

8.6 Become a Mediator

8.6.1 Handling conflicts

After talking about pre-required aptitudes to be a mediator, it's time we talk about handling conflicts and leading of mediation sessions. Different role plays can be put in place. But for a teenager to be ready to handle conflicts on the playground, he needs a few additional tools, or advices. These can be acquired via the learning of some rules of conduct, or reference rules, helping the teenager with his new function as a mediator. But as a whole, the learning of mediation is mainly done with role plays where the teen is put into a situation. Concrete and real situations are played to practice the various required and acquired qualities.

A few principles are to be respected. Procedure has to be clear, intangible, and act like a true vertebral column, a landmark authorizing the protagonists to let their creativity loose,

along with liberty and the unexpected. A strong column is needed to build something around it.

There is a rhythm to respect in mediation, steps to take one by one to reach the solution. To the people undergoing the mediation, the situation must seem new, unexpected and without any possible escape route through prejudice or bad habits. Most important is the demand to go beyond the mind, beyond what we know, beyond the facts, by using affection, feelings and personal experience. We need to get away from the troublesome facts to promote the being. It's the emphasis of the person as it is. Assumption and prejudice aren't welcome here. Nothing is pre-established. We seek the human being.

8.6.2 The mediator as a director

The mediator is neither a judge nor will he assess anyone. He doesn't seek to know who's right or wrong, since the mediation will be put in a sense struggle rather than a power struggle. Whatever happens, whatever is said, the solution will leave no winner or loser. The mediator is to listen to the parties, to allow each one to express their view, to establish a dialogue which had been broken, to build back a broken link. He is there to lead to a change of perception of the situation. The solution is to be built and adopted by both parties. The mediator isn't a prompter. He's rather the director of a show in which he plays no part. I didn't write the scenario, nor did he built the décor, or is specialized in drama. He's directing expression, diction, giving it a space of its own. He makes the actor repeat, uses the lines. He's a mirror. He doesn't have to carry the conflict, since he's not responsible for it. He gives it the stage, the décor, the rules and the place of resolution. The role play, combined with some exercises, will lead the teen to practice a mediation that will be his.

8.6.3 Role play: a keystone

The role play is the keystone to the training. It allows putting into situation, living, experimenting, adjusting, and correcting what will be a "true" mediation. We usually start in a more directive way, predetermined, according to an imposed scenario and very strict instructions. Role plays first will be very short sketches on contentious situations quite simple (purposely), not too tragic, constantly under the direction of the animator. This form is what allows us to settle the protagonists, giving them landmarks. These scenes can be played again, depending on the reactions they provoked. We can also start from spontaneous mediations in which the protagonists define a simple, "basic" situation.

Groups of 4 people are formed, two mediators and two “mediated”. One of the latter defines the contentious situation with his “adversary”. The animator asks the mediators to re-establish communication. He also checks that the two mediated agreed upon a specific situation and decided who the offending party was and who the plaintiff was. Then the mediation begins. Then the protagonists discuss and assess each other’s performance and take the discussion to the whole group. This kind of exercise allows the participant to be aware of the difficulties met by a mediator, or by a mediated, but also to have the role of the offending party or of the plaintiff. Not having any rules, no real path to follow and no concrete technique allow each and everyone to define what’s necessary to restore communication. From this first approximation come rules, strategies, and landmarks.

From there we quickly go to known situations proposed or known by the training teenagers. Even better, whenever appropriate, is the use of personal experience, which presupposes to live again or reactivate through simulation a role that had already been played in the past. We can actually ask a teen to play his own role (for realism’s sake) to be able to work on “true” feelings, closer to reality as it was lived, explained and felt. The teen may be asked to decentralize and to take the “opponent’s” place to have the other point of view, and another perspective.

In this second case, the animator will merely observe and will rarely say anything. On the other hand, he will initiate an evaluation at the end of the play, as much as on the interventions of mediators as on the feeling of the mediated. Then, as the formation continues, the exercises may vary, with two or three mediators, either always keeping the same or doing a rotation. Mediation can be done either in small groups or with the whole group.

Mediation in a whole group permits to experiment mediation while leaving any protagonist –except the mediated- license to remain an attentive observer, or to participate as a mediator. It means that during mediation, mediators can say stop whenever they feel they’re digressing or that they no longer know how to make the discussion constructive, and be replaced by other mediators. Or, observers can decide to replace a mediator whenever one has a pertinent idea to share.

8.6.4 Awareness and representation of violence

This first stage could insure a good cohesion within the group. From there we need to become aware of the conflict and violence experienced and represented by teenagers to then move on to the representation of awareness.

First example: everyday violence

1. How many fights happen here in one day?	
2. How many insults do you hear every day?	
3. How many insults do you say every day?	
4. Are educators interested in your feelings (joy, anger, sadness)?	
5. Are your classmates interested in your feelings?	
6. How do you react when you are angry with a teacher/educator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I sulk. b) I stop listening. c) I cry. d) I mock him. e) I'm complaining to my parents f) I'm complaining to another teacher/educator g) I try to talk to him h) I try to set other kids against him i) Other reactions (explain)
7. What do you do when you're angry with one of your schoolmates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I hit/bite/scratch him b) I yell/scream c) I damage his stuff d) I tell him off. e) I'm complaining to other kids f) I try to set other kids against him g) Other (explain)
8. What do you do when your feelings are hurt?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I grumble. b) I'm mad c) I complain to someone d) I keep quiet e) I'm telling myself it doesn't really matter f) Other (explain)

9. What do you do when you're unhappy/frustrated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I grumble b) I cry c) I damage stuff d) I eat candies e) I tell my parents f) Other (explain)
10. When a conflict happens, can the opponents win?	
11. What does make peace with someone mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I'm right, others must do as I say b) The others are right, I must do as they say c) Agree with everyone d) Looking for means to understand each other e) Forgive f) Other (explain)
12. How do you usually solve conflicts with your parents or your friends?	
13. Are there conflicts in your environment in which you would like to intercede?	
14. Have you ever try to intercede in a conflict to see it only made things worse? Why do you think it happened?	

A pooling of the answers will show what the teenagers live and feel. They will talk about their personal experience, compare them, or talk about feelings such as fear, anxiety, and declare themselves as violent or pacifist, introvert or extrovert. After this first step, we can approach more precisely the way of acting and reacting when facing a conflict.

Second example: actions and reactions

A cell is drawn at the centre of a sheet of paper, the words “violence, aggression, conflict” written inside this cell. From there some arrows point to suggestions for possible reactions. One may add to the diagram his own reactions or the ones considered possible. Answers which may exacerbate the situation will be circled in red, the ones having no effect whatsoever will be circled in blue, and the ones making it better will be circled in yellow. Then another pooling is done: teenagers form small groups and discuss, with the educator/ animator, discoveries that have been made, problems they encountered. (P.S. this exercise can also be done with all the teenagers, and not only the young mediators.)

Someone will have to remark that some reactions cannot be circled in just one colour, or that some aren't circled in the expected colour. This remark will make everyone realize there isn't only one way to react, but that you have to adapt, and constantly adjust your reactions to the situation. There is a variety of possible attitudes when facing a conflict. One has to be aware that all depends on the circumstances. One discovers one answer isn't appropriate to all situations, and that it depends on a specific context and on various protagonists. There is actually no possible classification of answers liable to aggravate or attenuate the mediated or the point of view they have according to the context.



Third example: my reaction to the conflict

There are multiple possible reactions. Each person has his own way to react to conflicts. This awareness is a kind of auto-analysis allowing a reassessment of one's own reactions and prejudices. Below is a "reaction scale" allowing teens to "see themselves", to know where they are as far as their own reaction are concerned. This questionnaire leads people to compare themselves to symbolic figures to determine the personality (example with animals, are we rather shark, bear, turtle or fox?)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I make sure all the different points of view are considered equally, even if the disagreement is very strong.						
B. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I find it more important to make others understand the logic and advantages of my position than to please them						
C. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I state my own wishes while trying to moderate them by looking for intermediary solutions.						
D. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I go momentarily away from the discussion to avoid the tension.						
E. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I care more of the other's feeling than about my personal goals.						
F. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I make sure my wishes don't disturb our relation.						
G. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I openly express my ideas while trying to understand the others' opinion.						
H. When I realize there is a divergence of opinion, I care more about what I believe is important than about what others think about it.						

The teenagers being aware of their difference when facing conflicts, of the variety of possible responses, we need to make them realize the importance of the notion of difference of point of view.

Different points of view

It isn't easy to admit the other person has or may have a different point of view, and a legitimate one that is. This discovery is necessary to reach a minimum of decentralization. From there it becomes possible to put oneself into the other's shoes, to reflect -materialize, incarnate- "into" the other for a few moments to feel like he does. This is the origin of empathy.

8.6.5 *Conclusion: procedure of a true mediation*

Mediation aims to find an agreement satisfying both parties. But procedure dictates the steps to follow. If a conflict occurs on the playground, the teenagers alert the mediators. If they want to be in private, they go in the specific room allowed to this aim. They also can find a quiet place elsewhere. Mediators can also offer their help if they witness a conflict, violence or argument between teens susceptible to worsen.

- **First step: the mediator offers his help:** *“You’re arguing. Do you want me to help you solve this problem, or would you rather speak to a teacher?”* If both teens accept the help, the approach continues.
- **Second step: the mediator explains his task:** *“I chose to become a mediator, and I’m on duty this week. I will take side with no one. You will speak in turn about your problem and together we will find a solution suitable to everyone.”*
- **Third step: mediation in progress:** In turn, each protagonist talks about the conflict and his point of view. They speak quietly, politely, and they use “I” when speaking. The other one listens without interrupting his schoolmate, even if he doesn’t agree at all with him. The mediator quickly summarizes what has been said by both parties and reformulates: *“If I got it right, you were near the door when...”* He also underlines the feelings *“You were very angry that...”* or *“You felt humiliated when you saw...”* If the mediator needs more information or precisions, he may ask a few questions until the problem is clearly defined: *“If I got it right, the problem is...”* This exchange must happen in an atmosphere of attention and respect of the other’s words. Each teenager only speaks when he is authorized to do so. If the problem isn’t solved right away, adversaries and the mediator can do some kind of brainstorm to evoke the possible ways out of it. The parties choose the solution they think best, compare and evaluate them.
- **Fourth step: the end of mediation.** It is over when a suitable solution is found. The mediator makes sure it is by asking both parties: *“Are you quite satisfied with this?”* If necessary he can have them put their agreement on paper, especially if the conflict occurs on a regular basis. This agreement has to be signed by both teens. If the people close to the teens (family, friends) have been involved in the conflict, the mediator can ask them if things are indeed going better. Finally, the mediator valours the hard work the teens have just done. But for this mediation to work, adult presence is compulsory.

9. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work hasn't been easy to do because we had to adapt all along this project. We started from the analysis of the imprisoned teenagers' letters, hypothesizing that, for these teens, prison is a long trajectory which begins inside the family, but which is reinforced within the educational institutes. We first analyzed the letters and files as shown below. These analyses showed us the flaws of education system in the family as well as in the institutions. We interviewed professionals (see grid below). These interviews revealed difficulties of professionals facing the teenagers, and also the reasons pushing some of the teens towards prison. After those interviews, the training was the only logical thing to do. The object of this training was to develop the professionals' competences so they can develop the competences of the teenagers in the institutes. After the training, we agreed upon doing training with the teenagers. Finally, the last idea was to train young mediators to "help" to stop violent acts through meditation with other teens, but under the watch of adults. All this brought us to propose the methodological accompaniment guide from teenagers in difficulties.

ACCOMPANIMENT GUIDE

PREVENT VIOLENCE AND ACCOMPANY ENDANGERED MINORS

Emmanuel JOVELIN

Lille Social Institute/ Lille Catholic University

What do we mean by social accompaniment?

Etymologically speaking, accompany “comes from companion...which means sharing bread” According to the Robert dictionary, accompany means “add yourself to, join someone to go where he’s going at the same time, but also to guide. Social accompaniment is about a contractual relationship between individuals...it’s about building relationships between individuals to reach the objectives set in common.” Gaston Pineau (1998) says that in social work, there often is confusion between accompaniment and help. *“To help is to do for someone a thing he can’t do on his own. Help is a bit like support, succour or assistance, but accompaniment has a meaning of share, to be with or next to one another, and not in his place. Everyone is considered as an acting subject, no one is the object of the other.”* We aim to work on the stories of those teens’ lives to detect the moments where they fall, and the moment where they hang on. *Have social workers been working enough on those teens’ stories? As Gaston Pineau underlines it, accompany someone in the story of his life is “to support him in his pursuit for existential meaning, in his quest for identity and in the emergence of creative aptitudes so he can access his personal and temporal autonomy all by himself, and find in him the answers to his questions, shortly, it would be to accompany him so he no longer needs accompaniment.”* Working on his life’s story allows the individual to get a better comprehension of his life, so he can become what he will be, because imprisoned teens need this work, since *“by allowing the subjects to gather and put the different pieces of their life together, which have been sown and dispersed with the years, whether for the good of the bad, the story of their life make them build their own time, giving them a specific temporal knowledge, a history.”*

All this shows us that accompaniment is the element of a route which has to lead if not towards permanent insertion, at least towards some autonomy. The objective of insertion,

whether social or professional, justifies and gives a meaning to accompaniment. Accompaniment, in the context of social intervention, is a methodological process of a contractual relation of insertion between a specialized agent and the user of a specialized service or a social action system. Its aim is to express answers to difficulties experienced in cases of insertion by giving objectives: help the people to decipher the often complicated social codes, be a mediator between those people and a bureaucratized institutional environment, help them assert their rights, mobilizing at the same time the environment and the resource of those people in difficulty. Social accompaniment necessitates a global and transversal approach, i.e. *an approach which takes into consideration listening, mutual help, support, help and mediation* basing itself on various but well-defined actions (accommodation, activities, employment, culture, everyday life, etc.). It is also based on an ***ethic of mutual engagement between people***. Questions of the time of the engagement, of its limits and of responsibility are indeed asked at the very beginning of the accompaniment.

When we consider these teenagers in particular, we can say the sanction is corrective when she re-establishes a failing responsibility. Punishment would be the soul of what medicine is to the body: a remedy, i.e. an evil announcing a good. (*It shows through the letters: "I've been an ass, now I'm paying for it...never again! I'll never go back to jail." This is only possible when there's a social accompaniment upstream (in the institute, in prison and after prison.)*)

Profile of teenagers welcomed in educational institutes.

1. Teens living in foster homes often experienced confrontational family situations, influencing their decisions to accept advices and support from professionals. The teens aren't keen on respecting the rules of the educational institutes. These teens feel rejected by their family; some no longer have any contact.
2. Breaking up with familial life creates a very strong emotional impact on the behaviour of homeless teens. The conflict is in the family and often provokes the placement. Difficulties met by the teens are mostly being taken care of by the institutes despite the difficulties with some of the teens.

Prevent teenagers' violence

“The time we live is less and less propitious for a single-linear representation of the trajectory of life (...). Uncertainty prevails, present is yet to be continuously conquered and the cycle of individual life is looking like an obstacle course. This is a time when nothing can be definitely accounted for, knowledge, competence, employment and activity period, social or affective support, and all this giving strong bases to private existence.”

To work on “preventing teenager violence” is to work with a curative aim. Thus it’s not about dealing with violent teenagers, but to ask oneself how we can avoid them going down to delinquency, to violence?

Here are a few propositions of necessary actions in the accompaniment of that kind of public.

1. Ask ourselves simple questions on teen age: what’s a teenager? Who is he? What is he looking for at that age? Why is he often in conflicts with adults? Trying to answer these questions is to put ourselves in comprehensive logic, to understand the object of the reflexion. So take a look at the books on teen age.

2. Do a little theoretical detour via the sociology of deviance to understand the reasons which push towards the deviant act in general. Having a look at these causal and comprehensive theories may enlighten the social workers in their accompaniment mission.

3. Create a partnership watch.

We remarked there were quite difficult crisis situations which caused heavy damage to the familial cell and to the children, and that the social services had not been able to intervene. Thus, the upstream intervention is necessary for some children and families if we don’t want to have to find difficult solutions when the rupture is already too big. It belongs to social workers and professionals from social intervention to identify the problematic familial situations. The partnership watch can allow taking in charge in a global manner the child, the teen or even the family in its different steps of breaking-up. For this, a complementary work is necessary with the different actors of the social action.

4. Creation of listening, speaking and information places.

Some children never talk to anyone about their problems. It’s the same for adults. Yet the multiplication and the advertising of welcoming and listening places can allow some people to find an attentive ear, to face some breaking-ups in social life and spot

the situations of withdrawal and self-cathexis. These places must be put in places belonging to the kids or the youth (primary or secondary schools, universities, leisure and prevention centers, sports clubs, local missions etc.)

5. Project of educational success associating parents, school, associations and the town.

Many teens we met on the project about wandering children⁷ were dropouts. We know school is the first place where we meet differences in many domains. When there is no link between the teachings, the teachers, the students and the families, the kids find it difficult to have a normal scholarship. And a young child having difficulties following a teaching should have the opportunity to be helped, and so should his family. Thus a tutorial system can be created to help him do his homework or learn his lessons. This is the reason why “the project of educational success is an efficient tool if used properly”

What is the project of educational success? Concretely, let’s have the town of Caudry (discussions with the mayor, the social workers, teachers and policemen) to understand the importance of the project.

It’s a project complementary to the already existing systems, which will permit a synergy in a global objective. The objective of this project, which emanation is the law of program planning for social cohesion from January 18th, 2005 is to accompany kids showing signs of weakness as soon as the first years of primary school, considering their environment and their difficulties entirely. These programs have two distinct axes:

- Intervention for children and teenagers who are at school (primary and secondary), in association with the parents
- Development of educational, sport and cultural projects for teenagers in difficulty in boarding schools

The creation of the program revolves around three modalities determining the eligibility of local projects:

- 1. An organization focused on children and teenagers: it’s a personalized support and an accompaniment adapted to each familial situation, both to be durable.*

⁷ Dequire AF, Jovelin E., *La jeunesse en errance face aux dispositifs d’accompagnement*, Rennes, Ed. EHESP, 2009

2. *A partnership within a judicial structure: the global apprehension of a child's or of a teen's difficulties demands the participation to the conduct of the program of all the concerned institutions.*
3. *A multidisciplinary professional team: creation of the educational success program leans on one or many multidisciplinary support teams within a coordinated network.*

More simply, one of the objectives of the educational success project is to create a synergy of what already exists with priority objectives defined by the committee in charge:

-School accompaniment

-Parental support

-Better access to medication and contraception

-Access to leisure, culture and sports

-Adaptation to the intense mobility of the pupils as seen in some of the schools of Caudry

We mean to REINTEGRATE THE FAMILY IN THE EDUCATIONAL MONITORING OF THE CHILD

6. Mediation

To prevent wandering, we think mediation is necessary at some point between the children and their parents, to avoid this point of no return since mediation is the ability to put oneself in the middle, to intervene. As far as we're concerned, it means to allow the parents and the children to talk to each other to try to solve the conflicts opposing them.

7. Rethink the relationships between teens and the institutes

Today, it's still about intervening for a problematic population to avoid deviance (as unsuitability to the norms of this group). The objective is to offer services to publics which are no longer defined by insufficiencies or handicaps, but by behaviours that are to be taken care of. *"The action must answer first to their demands and the objective of prevention must lean on their autonomy."*

We actually went from assistance and a specialized taking in charge to the association of an offer of transversal services of a mobilization of local actors, and an attempt to involve the concerned public with territory taken into consideration.

8. **Train young mediators to lessen the effects of violence for their friends**
(see last part of this document: "aptitude to become a good mediator")

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Balandier, *Le désordre* PUF 1988 cité par Olivier Galland *Sociologie de la jeunesse, Paris, Ed. Armand Colin, p. 7*

Barreyre, Jean .Yves, Bouquet et alii., *Dictionnaire critique de l'action sociale*, Paris, Ed. Bayard, 1999

Bloch-Laine. François, L'éthique de l'accompagnement social, *Union sociale*, n° 86, octobre 1995

Chantraine G., Expériences carcérales et savoirs minoritaires, *Revue informations sociales*, n° 127, 2005

Dequire AF, Jovelin E., *La jeunesse en errance face aux dispositifs d'accompagnement*, Rennes, Ed. EHESP, 2009

Ghizzoni, Nathalia (2007). *Délinquance des mineurs : de la prévention à la sanction*, Paris, ESF

Guitton Christophe, Sibille Hugues., *Former pour insérer. Evaluation d'une politique publique de Lutte contre le chômage*, Paris, Syros, 1992

Pineau Gaston., *Accompagnement social et histoire de vie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998

Pingeon D., *En découdre avec la violence*, IES éditions, 2007