

Research Report about Community Safeguarding:
Slovakia

One slap is not the end of the world

National Research Report

Slovakia

FUTUREG

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“The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees that every child anywhere in the world has the right to life without any form of violence. In order to let this principle work in practice, the true nature and scale of the problem must be documented and unfold. “

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Contents

Research report about Community Safeguarding: Slovakia.....	1
Contents.....	3
Executive summary	4
Introduction.....	5
Children and their social care in abusive situation	6
Community Safeguarding	7
Methodology	8
Questionnaires' methodology for children	8
Campaign analysis.....	13
Demonstration of the demographics of society.....	15
I. Questionnaire for adults - Knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and responsibilities of adults	16
Introduction to the topic	16
Methodology of data collection	16
Analyses of questions	21
Parental responsibility and discipline.....	25
Discussion to the adult survey	30
II. Questionnaires for children.....	31
II.I. Questionnaire for children 1 – Do you speak up?	32
Reactions of children in abusive situations	33
II.II. Questionnaire for children 2B: Will you tell others? Who would the children turn to?.....	37
II.III Questionnaire for kids – Whom you can talk to?	48
III. Focus groups - Responsibility for child protection at a community level - interviews in focus groups	52
Introduction of the target community	52
Participants and the course of focus groups	52
Findings of interviews in focus groups.....	53
Group of parents	53
Group of experts.....	58
A mixed group of parents and experts 1.....	61
A mixed group of parents and experts 2.....	63
Conclusion	66

Executive summary

This research report deals with the description of the research One Educational Slap Does'not Harm, which took place in the period March 2021 - June 2021 in Slovakia and consisted of three parts.

In the introductory part of the report, we summarized the research objectives, methodology, online campaign and presented the demographic composition of the respondents. Data collection was described in details in terms of online and offline selection and methods. Then individual answers were analyzed in three sections according to target groups and type of research. Initially, we worked with an online survey for adults. The survey for adults was longer and more detailed. Subsequently, we focused on questionnaires for children with three types online, a survey for adults and focus groups. We surveyed demographic data such as: age, residence, education, employment, information about the number of people in the household, as well as the number of children and the profession of the sample. We have incorporated the results of the adult survey into the following thematic areas: knowledge, mental statements on violence against children, which follow forms of violence against children, as well as legislation. In the case of knowledge, we also asked about the signalisation system, as well as attitudes and ways of raising children, parental roles and behavior.

In the second section on beliefs, we asked about discipline, the prevalence of disciplinary methods, reporting interventions, social norms related to discipline and responsibility and reporting violence. We identified barriers by reporting violence, social acceptance of abuse, and sought answers to questions: what is considered abuse? What forms and levels of aggression are considered unacceptable? We received information about abuse, personal and social responsibility.

In the third part of the research, we conducted interviews with four focus groups, which focused more deeply on quantitative responsibility for child protection at Community level. The research report contains: introduction, methodology, introduction of the selected community, data collection, introduction of target groups (recruitment, groups, participants, etc.). The description of the most important results can be found in the final part.

The focus groups were anonymous, targeting a group of people who belong to one community. During focus group interviews, we addressed the following topics: willingness to help, responsibility for children in the community, professional focus group, child protection in the community, network of professionals, relationship between professionals and residents, common target groups (residents and community professionals) problems affecting children in community, variations in community programs in which residents and child protection professionals meet and are interactive. In this section, specific solutions were sought, which were recommended by the respondents of the focus group.

At the end, we summarized and compared these three research phases, based on which we determined the recommendations and possible solutions. This report will be available on the websites of the participating organizations after the end of the research.

Introduction

Slovakia as a member country of the EU has decided in many official documents to eliminate violence against children. From 2020 onwards, zero tolerance should be accepted.¹

In particular, violence against children can be observed daily and everywhere the following measures may be taken in this way: slapping a nervous parent by a "messy" child, sexual abuse of a teenager by a classmate or neighbor, bullying of one child by another in the schoolyard, emotional abuse and humiliation of an immature wife by own husband.

However, this happens without prejudice to the economic and social situation, cultural and ethnic diversity.

Too many children all around the world come across with violence, even if it is not clearly marked as violence, from the reason as it appears very often. These effects are not likely to be neglected- the domino effect is due to the fact that the community is currently involved and has impact to the next generation.

Neglected or abandoned children have often slower development, difficulties with learning, lower self-esteem, suffer from depression, which may be associated with risky behavior towards their own children and commit suicide.

In this context, there is a tendency for children who are raised in violent environment to take on the same patterns of violent behavior.

In addition to the tragic impact on individuals and families, violence against children has serious economic and social consequences, whether in the form of lost potential or reduced productivity.²

Over the last decade, the level of recognition of the nature and impact of violence against children has increased.

However, this phenomenon still remains undocumented. There can be several reasons for this, including the fact that some forms of violence against children are socially accepted, tacitly overlooked, or simply perceived as incorrect and harmful.

¹ <https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/prevensia/>

² <https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/>

Many victims are too young or too sensitive to reveal their experiences or to defend themselves. Even if the victim gains courage, the legal system fails too often.

Inadequate data are not available to address the emergence of certain phenomena, which may be affected by the presence of biological agents and biological predisposition. First of all, it is necessary to address these issues in a single way - in other areas of complexity.³

The first step in combating all forms of violence against children is to bring the issue to light - in all its complexity. Despite difficulties in obtaining data and "measuring" violence against children, despite significant gaps, we have been able to collect an unprecedented amount of data within half a year, proving that countries need to develop effective policies, legislation and programs to address violence.

Reliable data and research are a basic prerequisite for bringing this topic to the forefront. The data are also important in revealing hidden attitudes and societal norms that allow violence against children to be repeated over and over again, as well as factors that put children at increased risk.

Children and their social care in abusive situation

In Slovakia, we do not yet know a similar project of this kind, which would systematically and comparatively examine the specific situation on the international scale of the state and attitude of society on violence against children. Following the literature, we can bring this concept closer to the goals of the European Strategy of Standard Child Protection,⁴ while the responsibility for the protection of children is the responsibility that organizations must ensure that their employees, facilities and programs do not harm children, ie. They do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse and all concerns of the organization regarding the safety of children are within the communities in which they work are reported to the competent authority. "Do no harm" is a principle used in the humanitarian sector, but it can also be applied in development. It covers the responsibility of organizations to minimize the damage they may inadvertently cause as a result of their organizational activities, where standards address this. The standards are applied by municipalities, communities, cities, for example in the form of a protection partnership, which aims to ensure that everyone in our city can live in safety; without abuse, neglect or crime - regardless of their age or circumstances. According to this strategy, everyone who lives or works in the city has a role to play in achieving this goal. Security

³ <https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/standards_child_protection_kcsc_en_1.pdf

involves having knowledge and understanding of various types of abuse and neglect. It identifies what to look for and how to be able to find signs, to know how to proceed in case of suspected child abuse, to know what to do even in such a situation if the child or adult admits that they are being abused. Community security is everyone's responsibility - if one has any doubts about reporting and following concerns, or is unsure of the thoughts of *"What if I'm wrong?"* You need to think, *"What if I'm right?"*

Community Safeguarding

Inbound for the purpose of communicating or so called "Community Safeguarding" shall be considered as such and shall be subject to the conditions laid down by the Community. The application must be submitted in the same way as the city, in order to meet the requirements of the municipality. The phenomenon of active communicative activity appears in Child safety in the community Child safety in the community or so-called "Community Safeguarding" means the safety and guarding of the most vulnerable in the community. The term is applied especially in the case of the child's place and place in the community, in the community in which he can intervene and influence by participation. The phenomenon of active community security occurs more intensively in the local governments of Western states. The research, which gives us an overview of the current situation of children in Slovakia, was initiated by the Hungarian Hintalovon Foundation, a non-governmental organization focused on promoting and protecting children's rights an organization, which has been dedicated to children's rights since 2015.

The organizations participating in the research from 5 European countries were as follows:

- Center for Children's Rights Albania, Albania
- Hintalovon Foundation, Hungary
- AO Concordia. Proiecte sociale, Moldova
- Caritas Alba Iulia, Romania
- Civic association FutuReg, Slovakia

The answers to the questionnaires were voluntary, it was possible to interrupt them at any time without consequences. The questionnaire survey was carried out using Typeform software. Relevant data management regulations were available at the following link: http://futureg.sk/gdpr-ochrana-osobnych-informacii/gdpr_community-safeguarding-kutatas_research_hintalovondocx

Methodology

The research methodology was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research consisted of three parts, chronologically the first part contained a questionnaire for adults and took place in March and April 2021, the second part took place in May and June 2021, which focused on children. The last part of the focus groups took place in May 2021, during the lockdown using recorded conversations and divisions into Zoom.

Table 1 Summary of research methods and types of questionnaires

Method of methodology- Type of questionnaire	Survey for adults	Questionnaire Type A <i>Do you speak up?</i>	Questionnaire Type B <i>Will you tell others?</i>	Questionnaire Type C <i>Can you count on others?</i>	Focus groups
Qualitative methods	xx	xxx			Deep interview
Quantitative methods	Online survey	Online survey	Online survey	Online survey	x

Source: own processing

The answers were registered anonymously. The process of completion could be interrupted and then resumed by the same device later. It was not necessary to answer every question, using the navigation buttons in the right corner, it was possible to skip the questions. This might cause that for some questions, the number of respondents did not match the sum of the individual answer options. It took an average of about 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaires by the respondents.

Questionnaires' methodology for children

In the case of the Questionnaire for adults, the respondents complained about its length; in the case of children's questionnaires Type A, B, C, this kind of problem was not observed, only partially appeared by type C. The focus group sessions lasted one hour and a half, a maximum of two hours. To comply with GDPR requirements, respondents had to confirm the statement that they are aware of the purpose, method and use of the information obtained from the research. They had read the data management information and express their consent to the management of their personal data and acknowledged that all data would be used only anonymously and summarized by the participants for their analysis.

At the same time, they were informed that their participation in the research is voluntary and they may decide to withdraw without interruption and suspend its completion. As we did not have a good experience with Facebook-sponsored links in the first phase of the Questionnaire for Adults in the period of April-May 2021, we agreed with schools to cooperate in advance with filling out the questionnaires Type A and B: *Do you speak up? Will you tell others?*

During May 2021, the ban on sponsored posts on social media was unblocked, so at the beginning of June we were able to carry out a campaign for children. We received official notification on the grounds that the term “*slap*”! (“*pofon*” in Hungarian) was considered an aggressive word in the campaign according to FB rules and therefore sponsored links in the form of a paid campaign are rejected. This ban from April affected us for up to two months in the long run. The marketing agency we worked with unblocked the ban with time. Opinions on solving abusive situations and their social support were various. The results of the surveys will be the basis for the development of a model action plan. We asked the following research questions from the children:

- What happens if you find yourself in an abusive situation (15 situations)?
- What influences children to express / take a stand or let go?
- Who would children discuss their experiences of abuse with?
- How do children perceive their social support?

Methodology of online surveys were conducted in the same way in each country.

We presented three shorter online surveys through the Typeform service with topics

- *How do you see it? Will you answer/ Do you speak up?*
- *How do you see it? Will you tell others?*
- *How do you see it? Who can you rely on? Who can you talk with?*

The aim of dividing our questions into three parts was to shorten the length of the individual survey and thus ensure that they do not leave the entire questionnaire blank. The surveys worked separately- filling in one of them was not a condition for proceeding to the other, nevertheless, the name of the trilogy indicated to children that all the surveys belong to one series.

Target group of children was selected from the age of 13 to 17 (teenagers who can register on social media - where we promote the survey independently). The target was to collect 500 responses on survey. We met the set aim by 150% as we received more than 750 questionnaires, from which 30 % was collected online and the rest offline.

The first survey lists 15 abusive situations that may occur to children in their immediate or wider communities. The children ask if they will stand up or let them go and why. The second survey used the same situations, but asked the children if they would discuss or talk about these events with anyone. The third survey uses the items of the multidimensional perceived support scale (Zimet et al, 1988). ⁵Multidimensional perceptual support of the so-called MSPSS is a 12-item scale designed to measure perceived social support from three sources: family, friends,

⁵ Zimet et al, 1988, MSPSS

and other significant adults. This measure has been taken in many languages to identify cases where children need guidance, where they are most hesitant, where topics need to be defined where information is most lacking. All surveys have been published and run simultaneously in all countries and simultaneously evaluated accordingly. The topic was built logically and hierarchically, so we decided to promote the first one during the first 2 to 3 weeks, systematically monitor the number of respondents and re-evaluate this strategy and, if necessary, promote the other two questionnaires. As with the Violence Questionnaire, the press release and sample promotional materials were shared in English, in editable versions, as well as other tips. In Hungary, the Hintalovon Foundation made a short video with child volunteers as part of the survey, detailing the background to the research. We could use this video for promotion, it was a subtitled video in Slovak, Romanian, Moldovan and Albanian. Both the questionnaire and the videos used mostly informal language, which was considered suitable for children. We also tested the questionnaire on the sample in the pretest phase.

We are happy to organize the call and discuss any sentences or phrases so that our purpose is clear - the MSPSS scale in Slovakia - used 10 items, such as Hungarian adaptation, which also used 10 items instead of 12. The research was planned by the intergenerational and interdisciplinary team Hintalovon. Three high school children were involved in research design development, case design and promotion planning. The translations were also processed in Slovak and tested on teenagers on a sample of 20 children (approx. 1 class) in the period of May 2021.

Online campaign

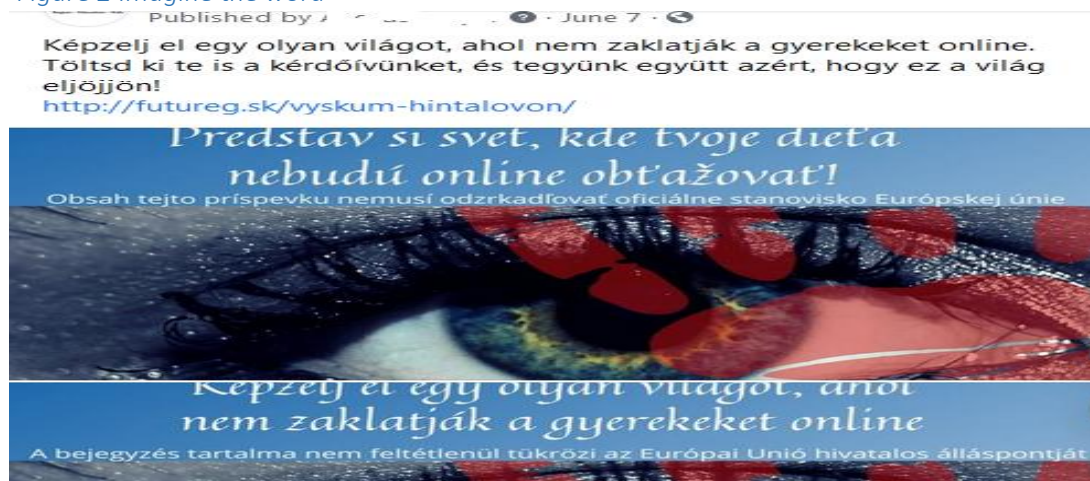
Aim of the online campaign was to anonymously collect data with the help of social media. At the same time, they were informed that their participation in the research is voluntary and they may decide to withdraw without interruption and suspend its completion. They took note of the information at the beginning and voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. The questionnaire, which examined the opinions of 13-17 year olds, was presented with well-remembered messages, which on the one hand show graphically specific situations from the questionnaire, on the other hand are very suitable for clicking in terms of short posts.

Figure 1 Every third child met cyberbullying



The next visual was to make the image of the world visible, when children will be not bothered online. As well as sponsored links, the first visuals were Slovak, but the posts were set in the language in which the person reads.

Figure 2 Imagine the word



Each slogan or visual was bilingual and focused on a deeper formulation of ideas in the questionnaire. An approach was also considered an interesting approach, which said that we are asking about the individual experience of children from a subjective point of view. Such was the slogan: *Tell us your story how you were harassed online?*

Figure 3 Have you ever been treated with violence?

The concept of storytelling, the so-called telling the story seemed to us to be very personal and very effective on social media nowadays. We also used the phrase that children can also express their opinion and we built the idea on how they can participate in decision-making. Finally, children can express their opinion - it also evokes a kind of social change.

Figure 4 Finally, children can share their opinion

The visual deployment of the campaign was diametrically different than in the case of Hıntalovon, because the dark and thematically slightly sadder and more serious visuals did not work for us. *Help us by being honest* - was our last slogan, where we tried to draw attention to the credibility of the questionnaires and the importance of children's opinion and participation.

Figure 5 Help us with being honest

We used World Child Victims and Violence Day to visualize cyberbullying. In the case of the online violence video, we combined the idea of online violence with research. As the video had

a high viewership and thousands of views, we got closer to this topic. The image of KIDSAFEDU shows a promo video that was used in a similar project.

Figure 6 International Day of Violence against children



If you could help, how would you help? The campaign reached more than 15,000 people, but there were few respondents online. Slogans about how to stop online violence and visuals aimed at children were very well evaluated in marketing in this segment.

Campaign analysis

The campaign ran during a continuous plan for a total of two weeks a month. The geographical distribution of the campaign was nationwide. The campaign with sponsored posts took place throughout Slovakia, but unsponsored links were shared several times in southern Slovakia. We set behavioral targeting for the female population at a young and middle age, because we wanted to tune into marketing groups that are willing to fill out similar questionnaires. We targeted women between the ages of 25 and 55 who are interested in charity and the noble cause. In our target and key words, we have chosen the following: *community issues, volunteering, children's rights, equal opportunities, political and social issues, Save the Children group*. The results of the campaign were mostly positive. We consider the approach to a specific click to be the first attempt. We see that the periodicity of the campaign has a positive effect on CTR (Click Trough Rate) and CPC (Cost per Click Click Per)

Table 2 Online marketing analysis of the online campaign

Campaign Period	Seen	Reach	Reach Click	CTR
23-28 April 2021	13139	6279	433	6,89%

29-30 April 2021 Adults	2684	1602	124	
May 2021 Promo Video	16,239	16,239	0	0.39€
May 2021 Web page	10.222	10.222	13	0.12%
June 2021 Questionnaire A for kids	33.892	9.506	185	1.94%
Jún 2021 Questionnaire B	29.651	8.688	143	1.65%

Source: Own processing, AM Business Marketing Agency, www.am-business.eu

The social media campaign took place during June 2021 in various compositions with various themes. Geographical distribution was homogenous. The campaign took place throughout Slovakia. We focused on children aged 13 to 17. Requested indicators were not met, as the online campaign brought only 200 questionnaires. The campaign was rather successful in succeeding in the social field with two questionnaires for young target groups (i.e. twice as difficult task) and generating a CTR well above 1.50%.

Data collection took place offline in June after lockdown, when the association FutuReg actively visited primary and high schools in the region of Southwestern Slovakia. With our current peer-mediation projects (*Tolerance*, *SchoolMediator*), our staff and interns asked schools for cooperation in this survey, as well. At least 15-20 minutes were set aside for all-day seminars to complete the questionnaires. The first hundred questionnaires were collected in various ways using online campaign on Facebook. For targeting of Slovak public opinion, we sponsored posts only in Slovak.

In the case of questionnaires for children, we decided to combine our existing workshops with a surveying schools dedicated to the topic with Questionnaire Nr.2 *entitled as Will you tell someone?* Furthermore, in Questionnaire Nr. entitled as 3 *Who can you talk with?* That is why these questionnaires remained a little more completed than you will answer. The topic was similar tolerance and mediation. As part of the three-day training, we set aside an hour of time for these questionnaires. When choosing schools, we tried to take into account the widest range, we involved cities, the capital and municipalities.

The schools in the region that were contacted for cooperation were as follows:

- Elementary school with Hungarian language Trstice (only higher level of elementary school aged 13-15 years)
- Grammar school with Hungarian language Dunajská Street in Bratislava

- Peter Pázmány Grammar School with Hungarian language in Nové Zámky
- Secondary vocational school with Hungarian language Gyula Szabó, Dunajská Streda
- Secondary vocational school Hurbanovo
- Private secondary vocational school Adventim Dunajská Streda
- Zlaté Klasy Elementary School
- Biskupická Elementary School, Bratislava

Offline questionnaires were later processed using databases, where all responses were recorded and summarized. We considered this step as important for credibility, as well as monitoring and evaluation were treated as very necessary steps. Because of manually added offline collected data we were able to find out almost exactly the number of online vs. offline and Hungarian vs. Slovak questionnaires. As the number of Hungarian questionnaires was higher, more respondents were girls than boys, there were more respondents from the city than from the municipality we choose questioning strategy of directly selected choice.

Demonstration of the demographics of society

According to the Statistical Office of SR, the Slovak demography shows the following data from 2020. 51.2% of the population of the Slovak Republic were women (data from 2019) in the case of the division of girls aged 13-19, this number was similar.

Table 3 Analysis of Slovakia's demography of children aged 13-17

Age of the respondents	Total	Girls	Boys
From 10 to 14 years old	281 424,0	144 463,0	136 961,0
In percentages		51,38%	
From 15 to 19 years old	262 462,5	134 854,0	127 608,5
In percentages	100 %	51,3 %	47,7%

Source: own processing based on the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2021

It is interesting that the census took place in Slovakia in the period March 2021 as well. Therefore, other questionnaires could come in the same period in Slovakia as recurring or similar. From Slovakia, 772 respondents from all regions participated in the survey, both online and offline.

Media coverage took place through portals in southern Slovakia in Hungarian, their average readership is from 40,000 - 150,000 per month: <https://dunaszerdahelyi.sk/egy-pofon-meg-nem-vilag> ams <https://klikkout.sk/2021/04/01/egy-pofon-meg-nem-a-vilag-on-szerint-hol-kezdodik-a-bantalmazas/>

I. Questionnaire for adults - Knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and responsibilities of adults

Introduction to the topic

The goal of this research, which took place between March and August 2021, was to explore options related to the implementation of child protection within a community and how members of some local communities can strengthen their abilities to prevent child abuse. The research contained online questionnaires to evaluate the views of the adult population on violence against children. The questionnaire below was compiled by the Hungarian Hintalovon Foundation together with four other non-profit organizations with similar profiles from 4 different European countries. By using online questionnaires, we wanted to find out how much the community cares about children, their safety and their rights. In the research, we aimed to gain a deeper understanding of what different communities think about violence against children. The purpose of this research was to provide suggestions to increase the safety of children. The honest answers of children when filling out the questionnaire are appreciated, as they are and will be useful for non-profit organizations and states. Questions about violence against children can be traumatic. We also offered solutions and consultation options for children and adults, at the end of the questionnaire we provided contact details, if after completing the questionnaire the respondent feels that they need help or consultation, they have the opportunity to call toll-free numbers of psychological help. In the case of Hungary, it is the line *Lelki Segélyszolgálat*: 116-123 and in the case of Slovakia, it is the line: 0800 800 566.

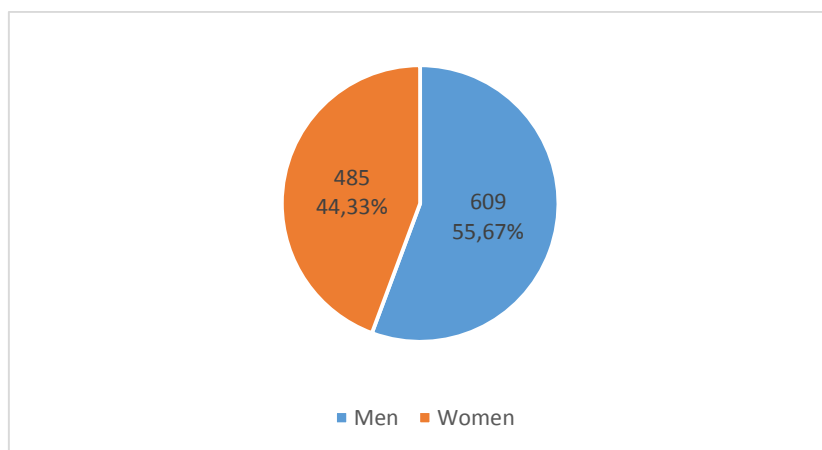
Methodology of data collection

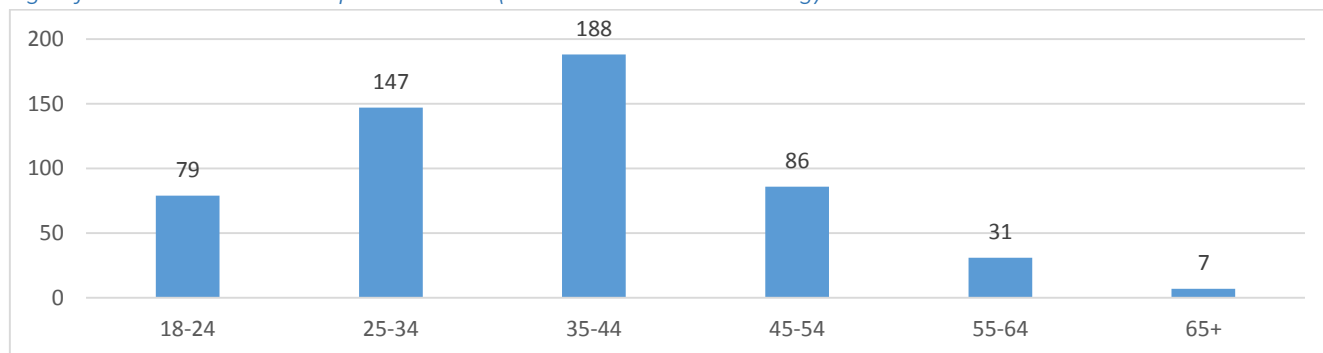
The sample goal was set to 1000 responses. The offline plan was to collect 100 questionnaires per week in paper form in order to achieve the goal in 5 weeks, 1 week 1 reporter in 2 municipalities in the Slovak language. Campaign on social networks was blocked between 12.-18. April on FB when the offline launch happened with asking relatives. 1 survey reporter for respondents worked in two Slovak villages - Kvetoslavov and Hviezdoslavov - daily 4 to 6 hours a day to reach 20 completed questionnaires (villages and towns). We contacted adults by phone and we asked related and cooperating partners through employees, zoom and other online meetings. Regarding inquiries, localization in parks, in front of public places (post office, town hall) and shopping places (in Slovakia there was a blockage during this period, so

interviews were done outside, therefore basically nothing was possible) 96 survey was collected during second week. The campaign was blocked in FB 1 in 3 villages between 19th -25th of April. The first reportage questionnaire collected data in Šamorín (small town), Miloslavov and in Stvrtok na Ostrove, we asked collectors to focus on male respondents. On week 3, the campaign ran simultaneously on Facebook, but the percentage of completed questionnaires was 0.000375, meaning that 8,000 impacts generated 337 clicks and 30 completed questionnaires, and after consulting with a marketing agency it was decided that an online questionnaire is not considered a suitable way to advertise after a year of online life affected by a pandemic. We decided that we would no longer sponsor advertising on FB, because the CTR rate was, for example, 60 euros for 30 questionnaires. We hired two volunteer reporters to achieve better numbers and left the online space. We contacted 50-60 people a day to generate 10 questionnaires, with an average response rate of 10% - which was ten times better than a social media campaign. In the period from April 26 to May 2, we had two types of questionnaires available, we collected data in Podunajské Biskupice (capital), Rovinka (Senec district) and Dunajská Lužná (suburbanized villages). 108 collected questionnaires were implemented. When data collection with the first week of May ended, our numbers were better than in the previous weeks. In the last weeks from May 3 to May 9, we have been collecting questionnaires in the Hungarian villages of southern Slovakia, e.g. (Dunajská Streda district, Topoľníky, Galanta district, Horné Saliby, etc.). In the period from May 10 to May 16, we collected data in Dunajská Streda among the Hungarian-speaking villages around the Dunajská Streda district.

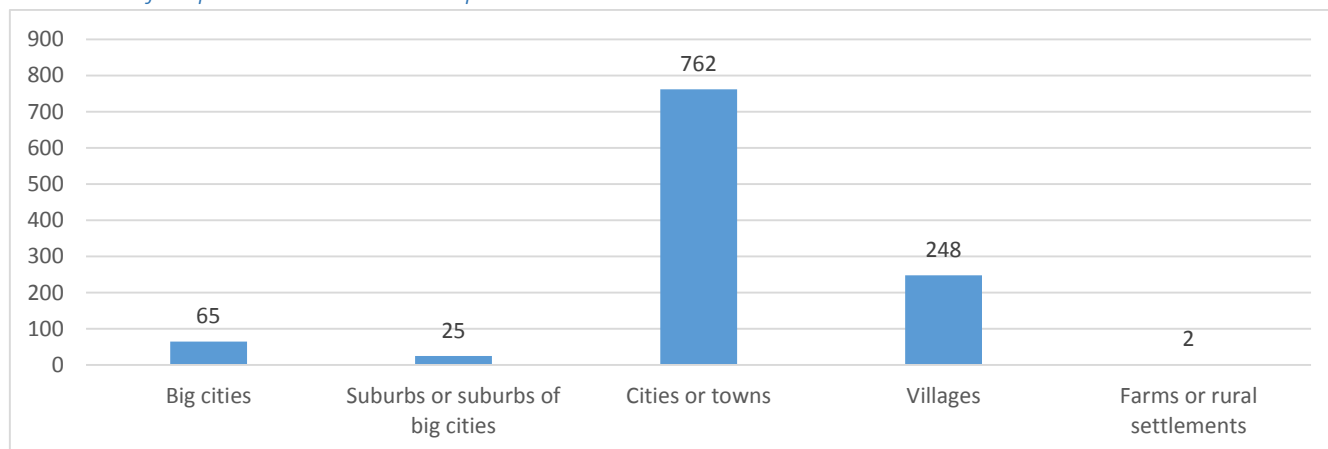
Demographic data

The research consisted of 44% women and 56% men, which is unusual and optional in the case of research.



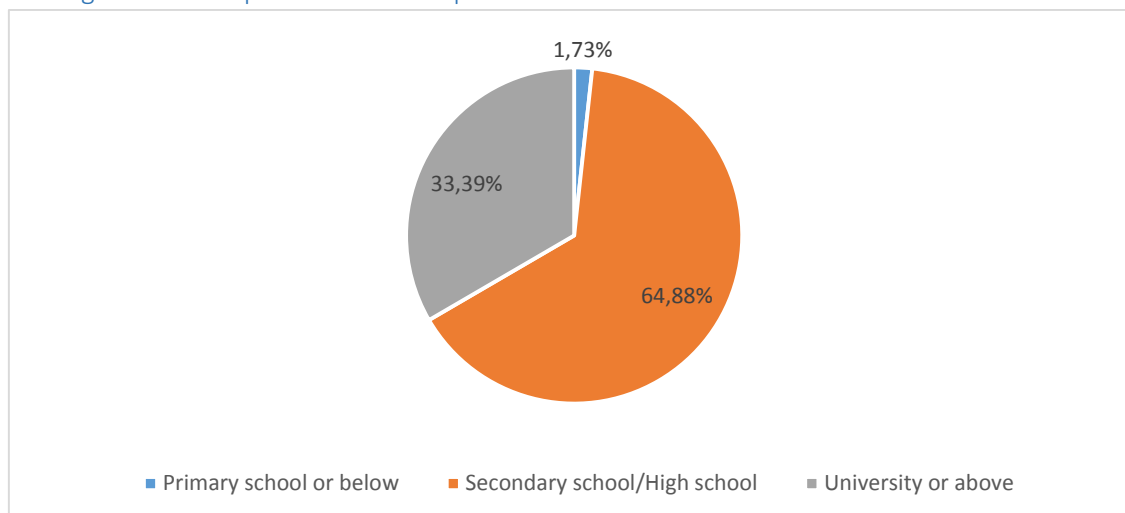
Age of adults who took the questionnaire (565 answers were missing)

The most frequently appears the age category of 25-34 year-olds represented with 147 respondents and the category of 35-44 year old ones with 188, following the category of 18-24-year-olds with 79 and the least represented group was 45-54-year-olds and above. The category of 65+ consisted only from 7 respondents, while the category of 55-65 year old adults was represented with 31 respondents.

Residence of respondents to the adult questionnaire

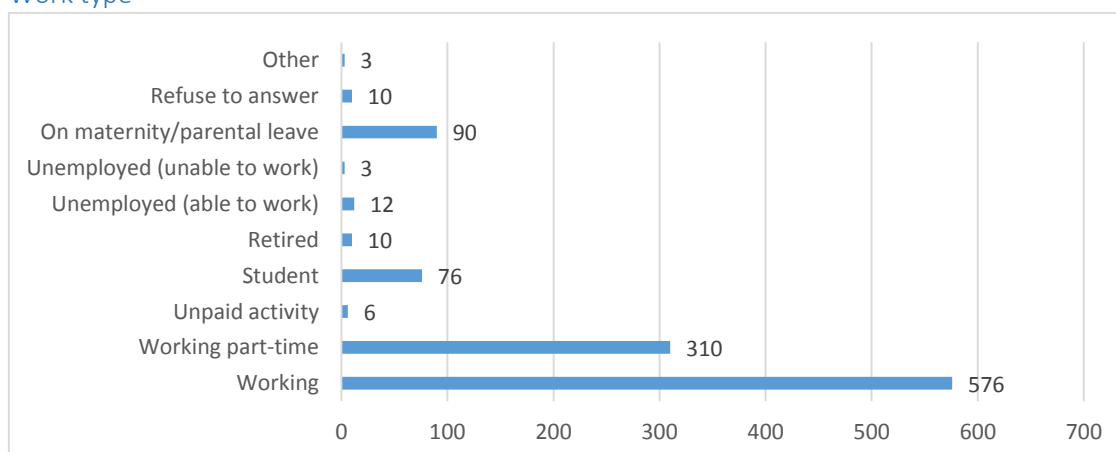
In the case of residence, the majority of the respondents came from cities and towns, 248 respondents were from villages, 65 from big cities/capitals (possibly meaning Bratislava) and 25 came from suburbs.

The highest school qualification of respondents



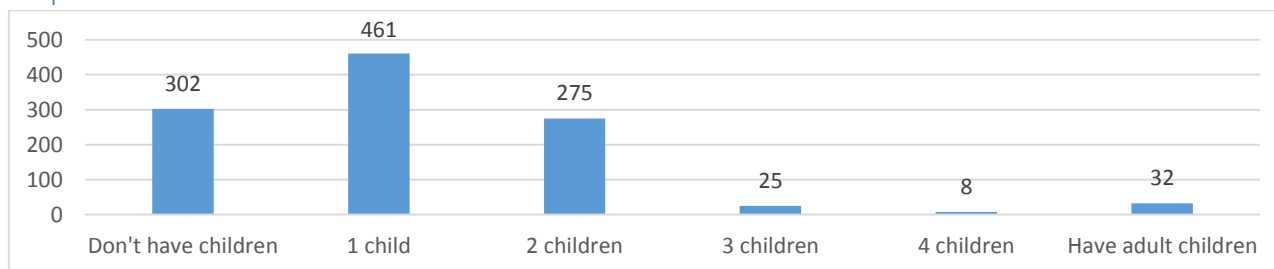
The highest school qualification was secondary school, on the second place was a university with 367 respondents, 19 respondents chose the answer *primary school*.

Work type



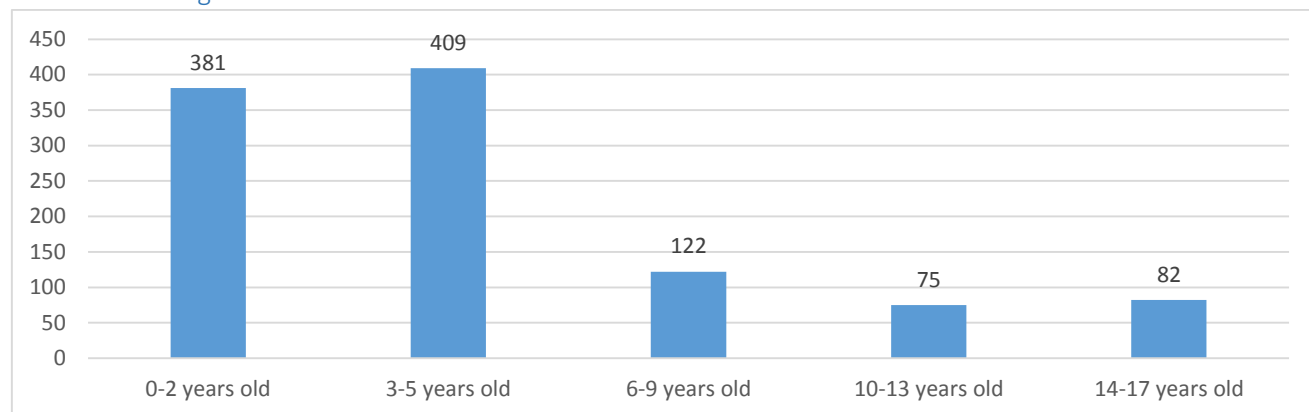
576 of respondents were working, 310 of them was working part-time and 90 were on parental leave; 76 were students and 10 of them were retired. 10 adults refused to answer, 90 of them were on maternity leave and 12 were unemployed, only 6 of them had an unpaid activity.

Respondents' child number



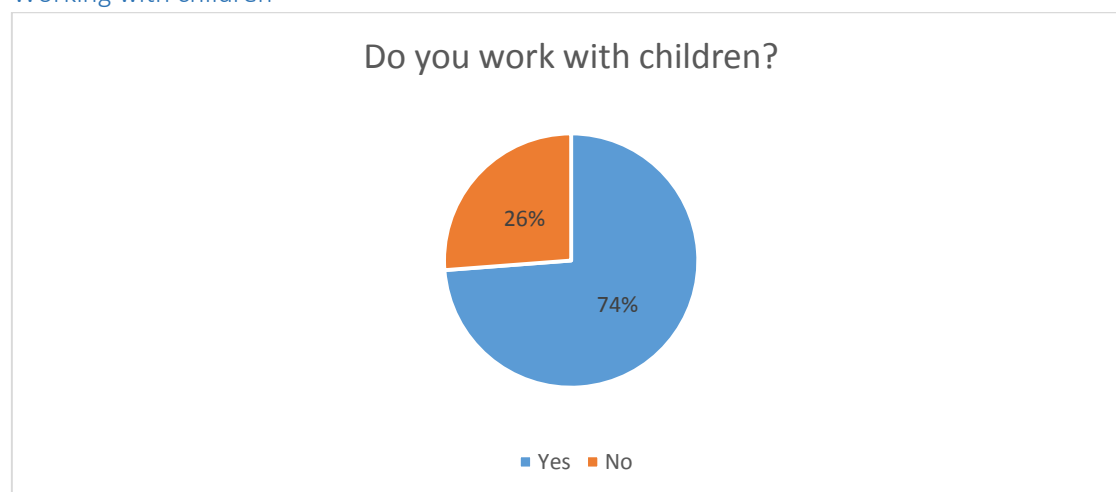
The majority of the respondents had only 1 child, 275 respondents had 2 children and 302 don't have any. 32 respondents had children who've already turned adults, only 8 respondents had 4 children and 25 had 3.

The children's age



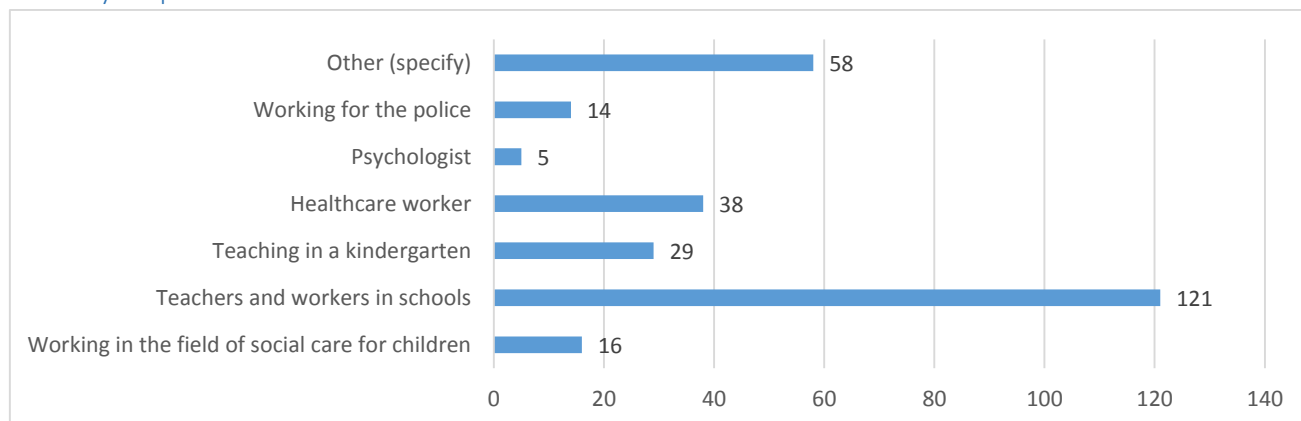
Almost half of the respondents had children in the age of between 3 to 5 and 381 had between 0-2 years old. We distributed offline survey to the group of mothers on playgrounds and posted it into public or closed groups of FB.

Working with children



74% don't work with children and 26% do.

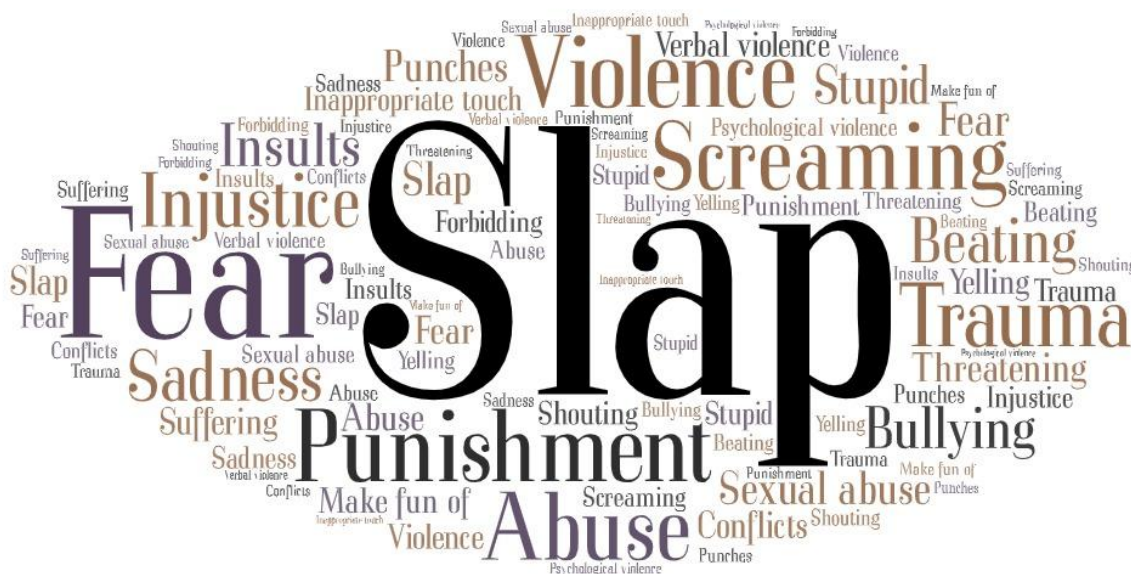
What's your profession?



The majority of the answers came from teachers with 121 responses, which was followed by the category of other professions and healthcare workers, 29 respondents worked as kindergarten teachers. Between the respondents, there were also people working for the police and people working in the field of social care for children.

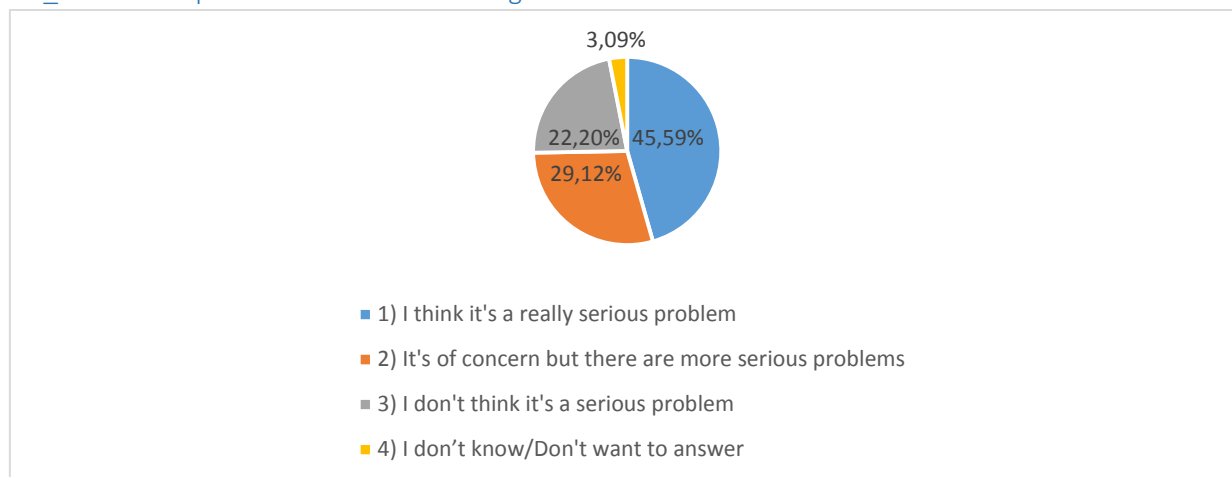
Analyses of questions

KN_1 Mental representation and violence



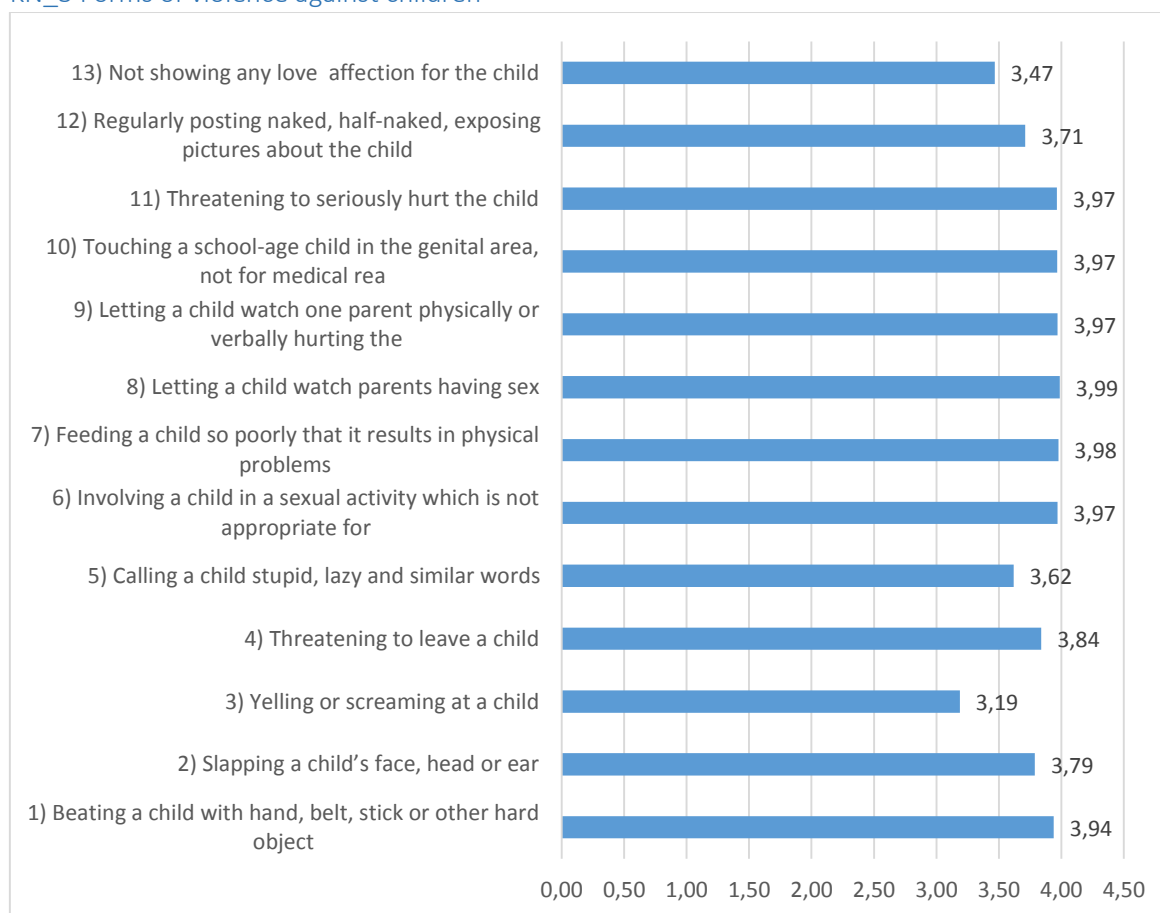
The mental representation of violence in the majority of time was referred to as the words battle, screaming, slapping – most of the answers is in the form of physical violence.

KN_2 Mental representation on violence against children



Almost half of the respondents think that violence against children is a really serious problem, 29% think that there are also more serious problems, 22% of the respondents don't think that it is a serious problem. 3% either said they don't know or didn't want to answer.

KN_3 Forms of violence against children

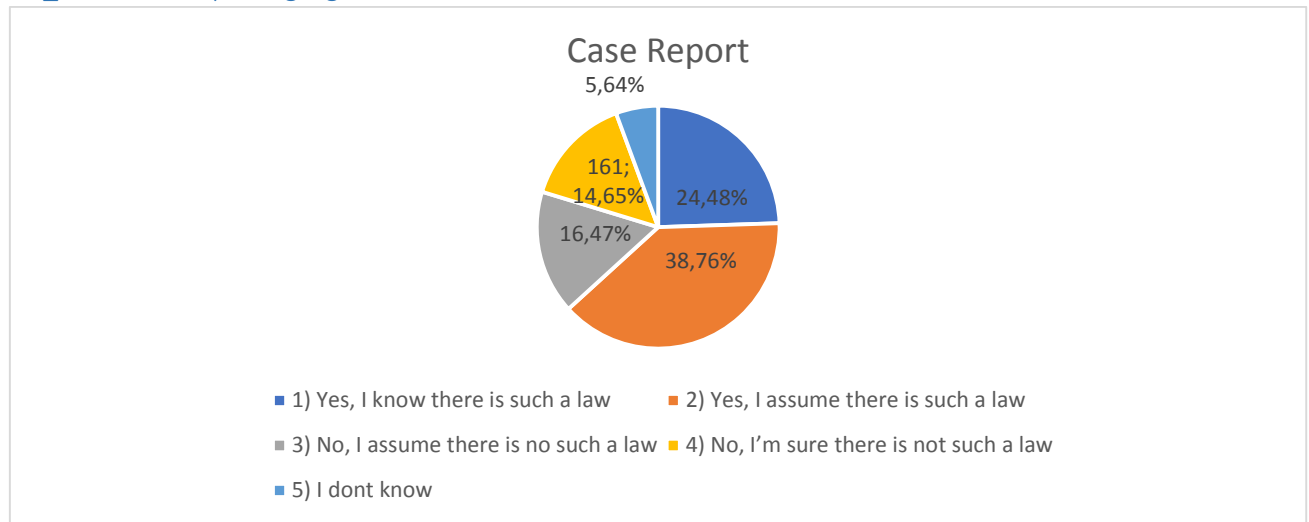


In the case of the KN3 question on knowledge, it was found that the respondents indicated a worse answer on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree". They did not interpret this answer well, the reason may be the lack of a

description of the question in the case of online questionnaires. These situations were forms of violence against children. In the case of forms of violence against children, the following answers were manifested as the most serious ones, e.g.:

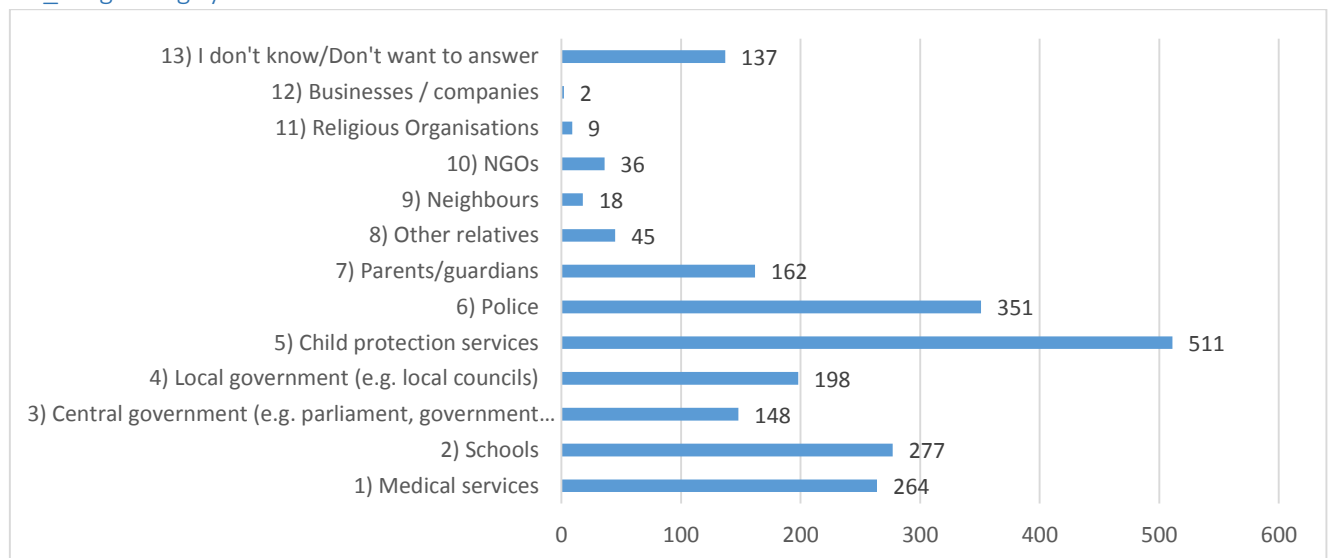
- Involving a child in a sexual activity that is not appropriate for them (3,96)
- Beating a child with a hand, belt, stick or other hard objects (3,93)
- Threatening to leave a child (3,83)

KN_4 Violence reporting legislation



When asked the fourth question, whether there is a law in Slovakia that obliges people to report cases of violence against children, 24% answered they knew that it existed, less than a quarter thought such a law doesn't exist, 15% were unsure and 6% did not know. 39% assumed that such a law existed.

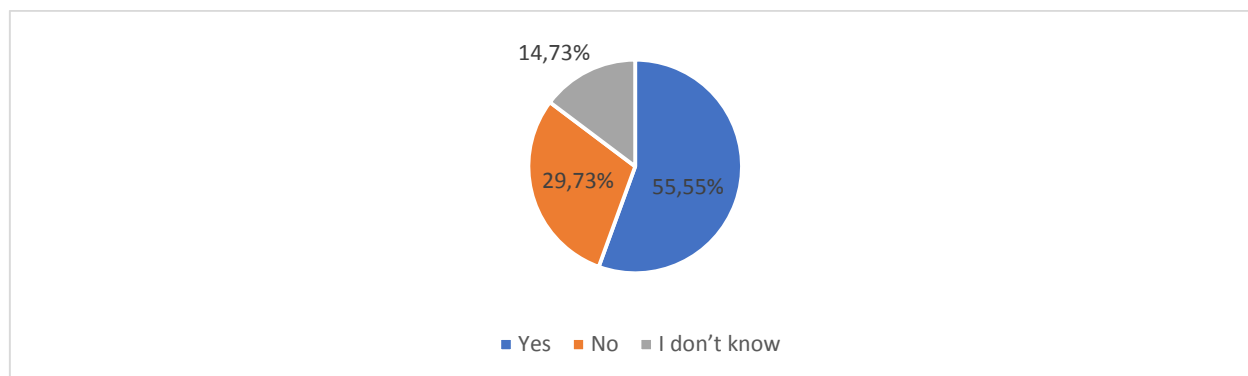
KN_5 Signalling system



Based on the respondents' knowledge, the respondents had to state which entities (persons/institutions) in Slovakia can report a case of violence/abuse of children. In the first place were: social protection facilities and the police, these were the most important in the chart.

KN_6 Signalling system

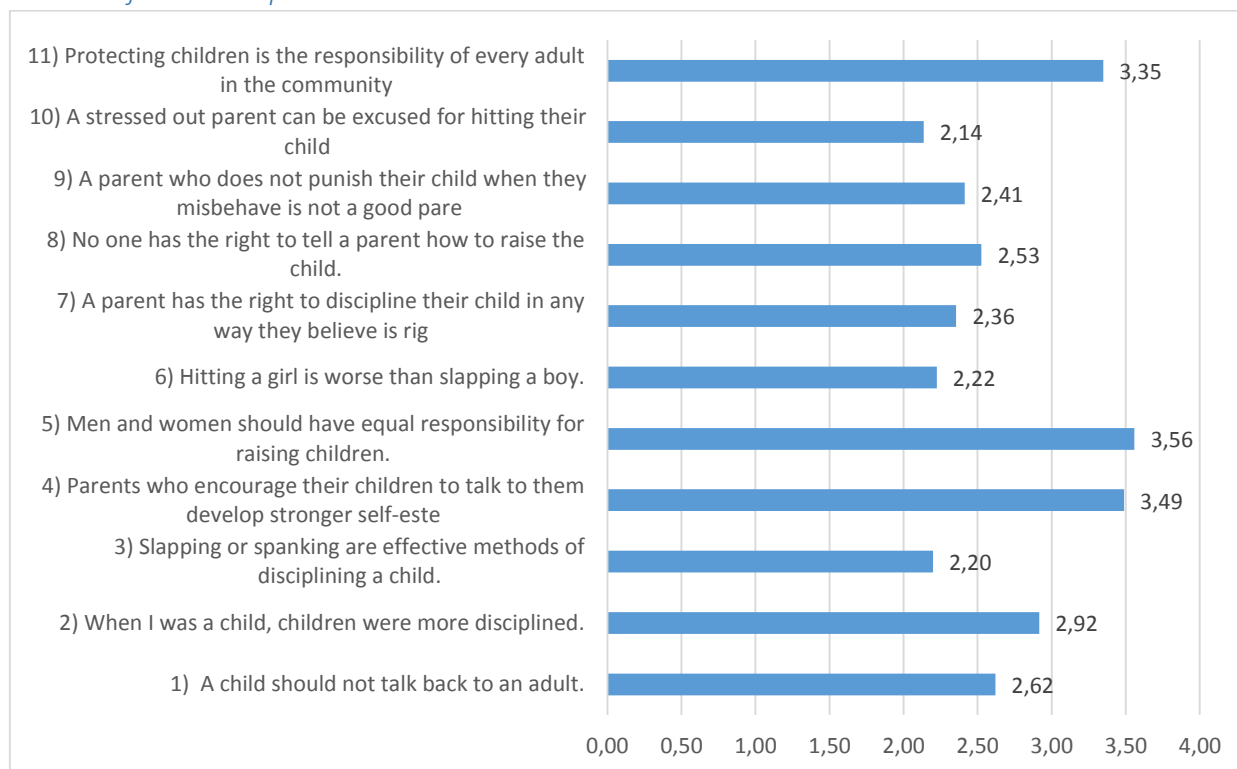
Based on the respondents' knowledge the respondents had also stated whether the children themselves can report a case of experienced violence in Slovakia. 55% thought yes.



Attitudes

In the parental role and behaviour, we looked at how much parents or adults agree with certain roles. We asked them how they agreed with the following statements.

A1 Level of consent in parental role and behaviour

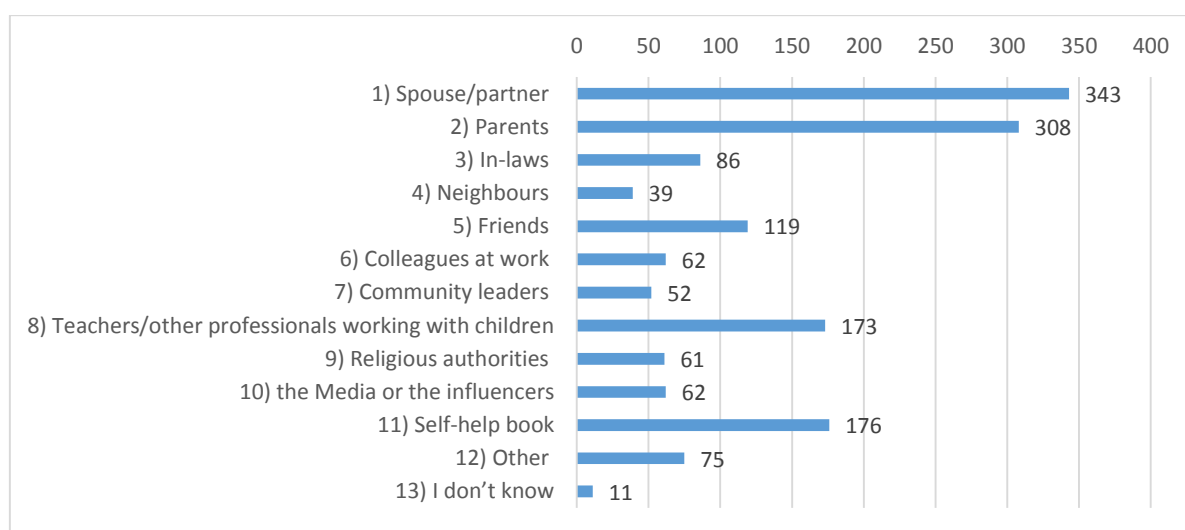


In the case of the most consensual consent, we received a response of less than moderate on a scale of 1-5 (average is below 2.5). Parents who encourage their children to talk to them strengthen their self-esteem. And equality between men and women also resonated as a priority. Most people think that protecting children is everyone's responsibility.

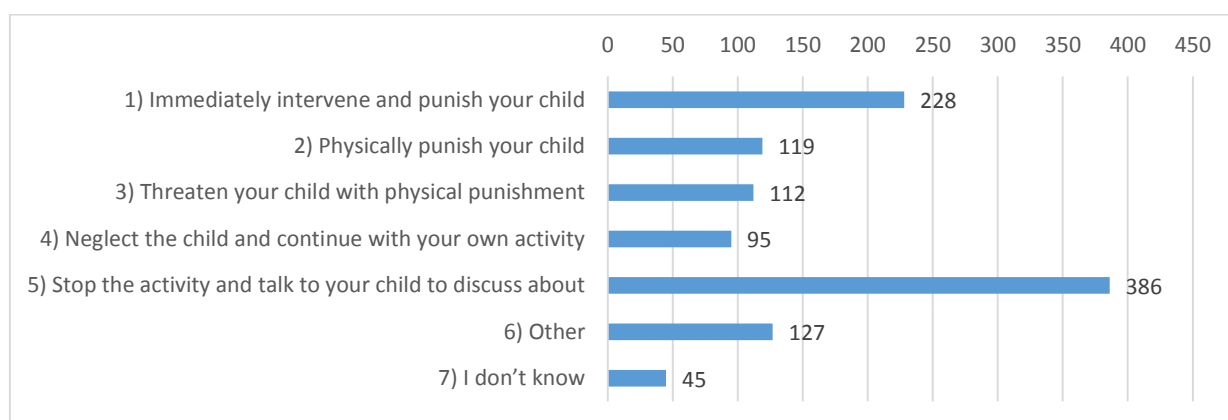
Parental responsibility and discipline

Discipline BF_1 P_1, P_2

Regarding the methods of leading children to the discipline, who has the greatest influence on adults, the three most frequent answers can be given:

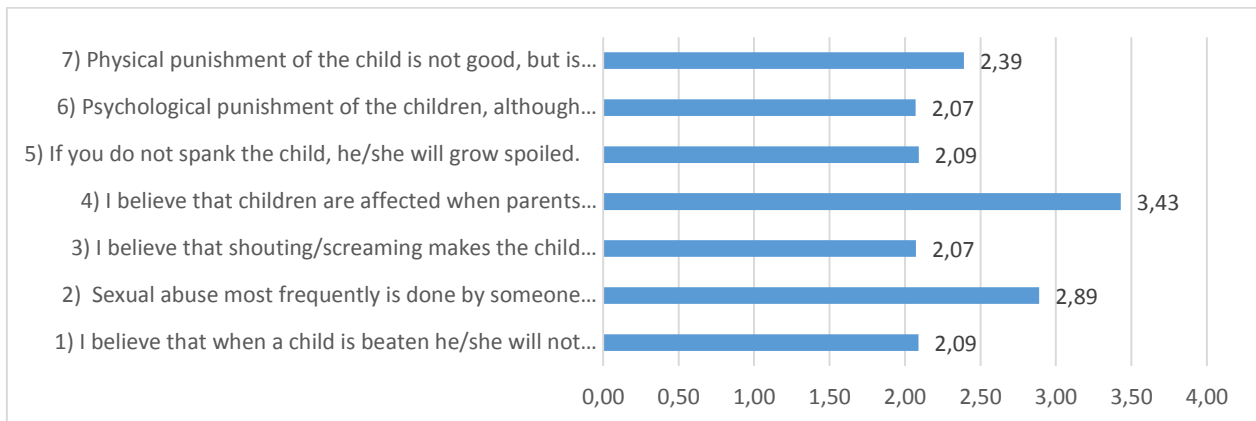


The fact that the majority is based on the partner's opinion speaks of how they would keep the discipline with children, the second most important was the parents' response, followed by development books and teachers.



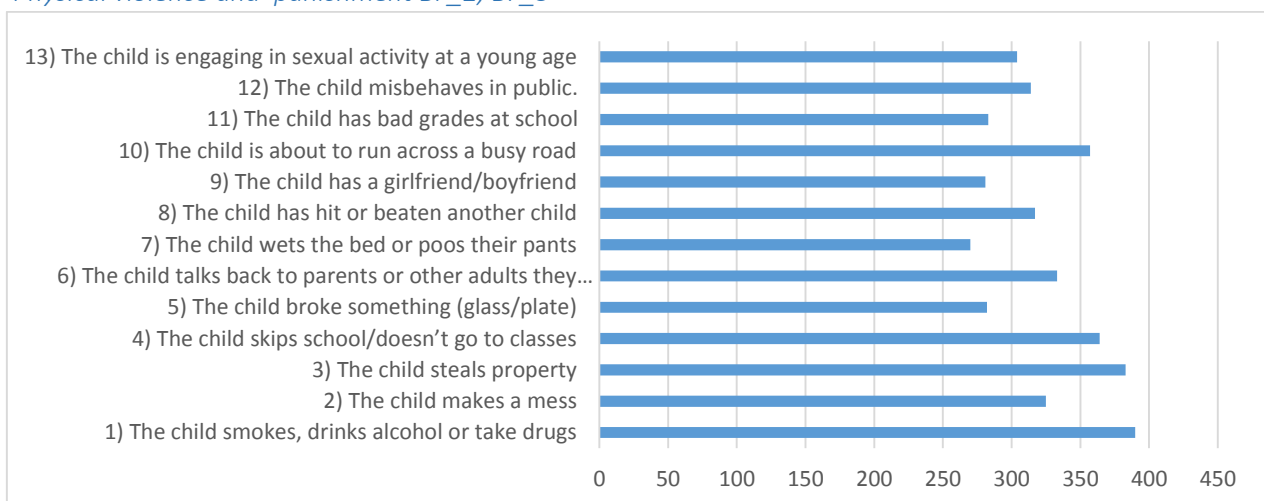
Apart from question number 2, they all focused on the fact that if a child behaves inappropriately, other parents/people in the community expect us to stop what we're doing and

talk to the child, the second most frequent answer was to punish the child immediately, the respondents also mentioned corporal punishment and threats.

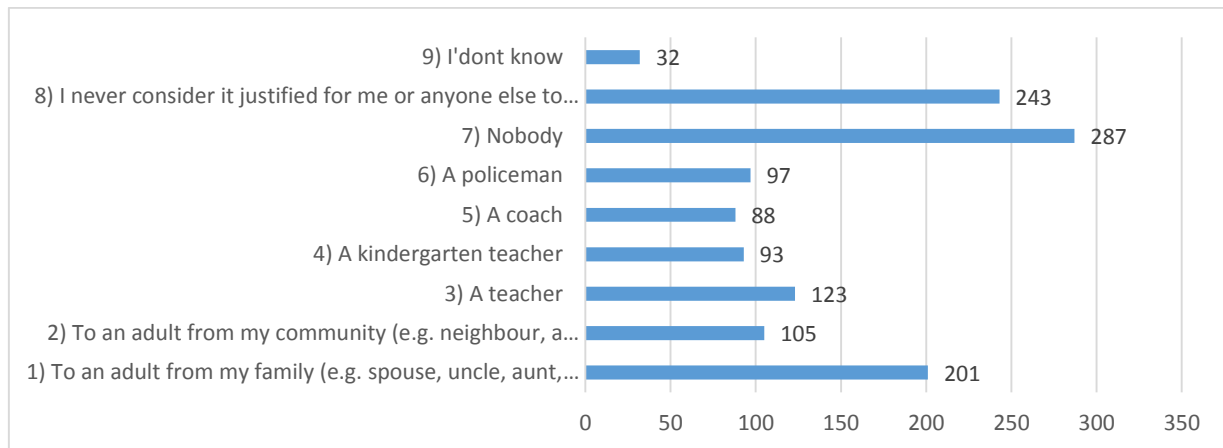


The second most frequent answer was to punish the child immediately, including corporal punishment and threats. Adults believe that if they scream in the presence of a child, a trace will be left.

Physical violence and punishment BF_2, BF_3



The second most frequent response was to punish the child immediately, including corporal punishment and threats.

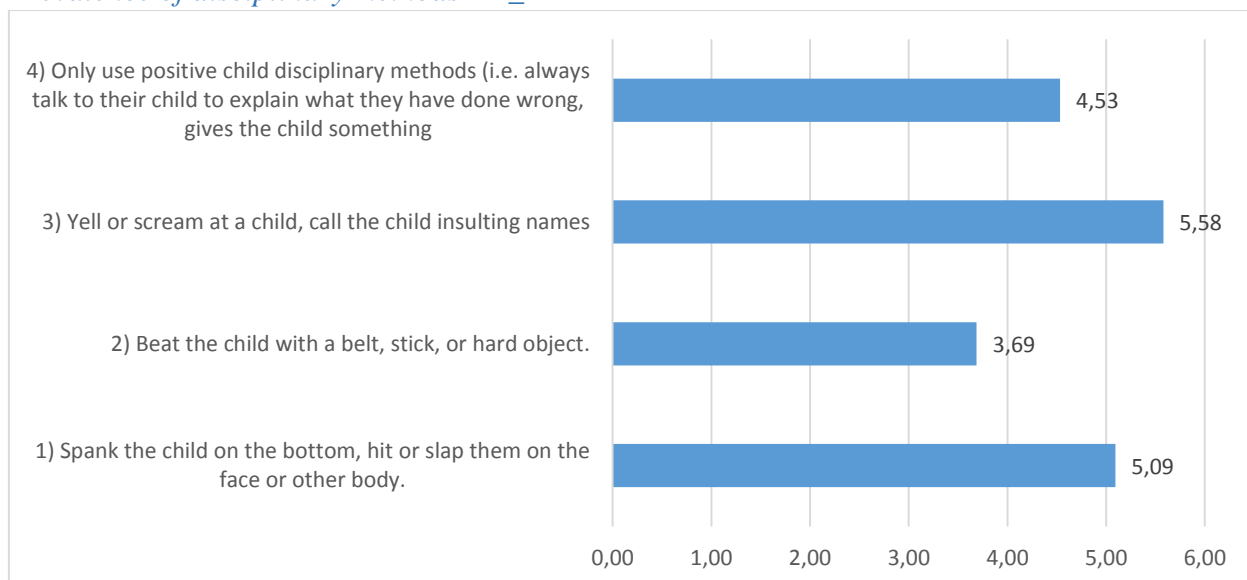


Respondents would not allow anyone to hit their own child or, in some situations when it's necessary, an adult in the family, e.g. the husband has the right to hit the child. Respondents would also allow another adult to do the same. 123 respondents would allow a teacher to hit a child and 287 didn't want to answer.

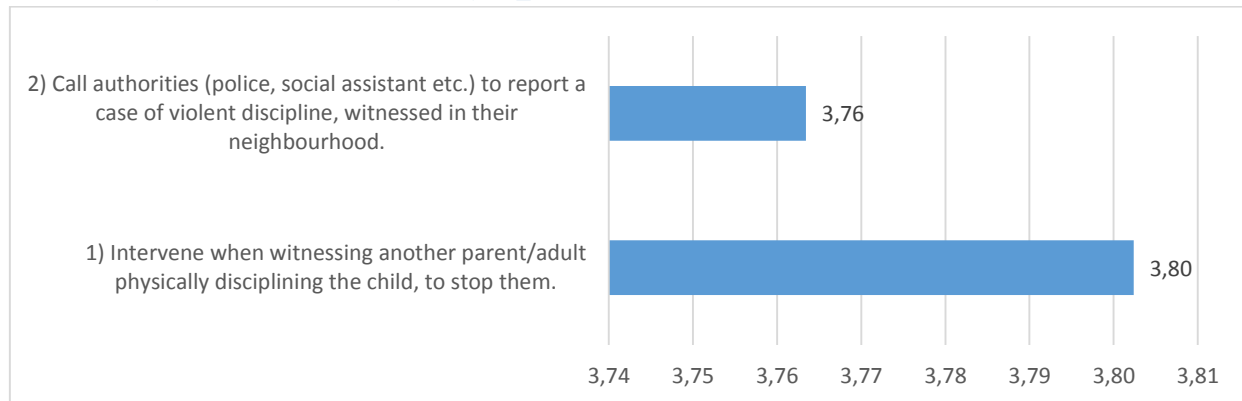
Beliefs – what do you think?

In the *Belief* section of the questionnaire, we asked about recognized and common social patterns. To illustrate the situation, we chose the example “*What do you think, most parents/guardians in Slovakia use the following practices when disciplining their children?*”

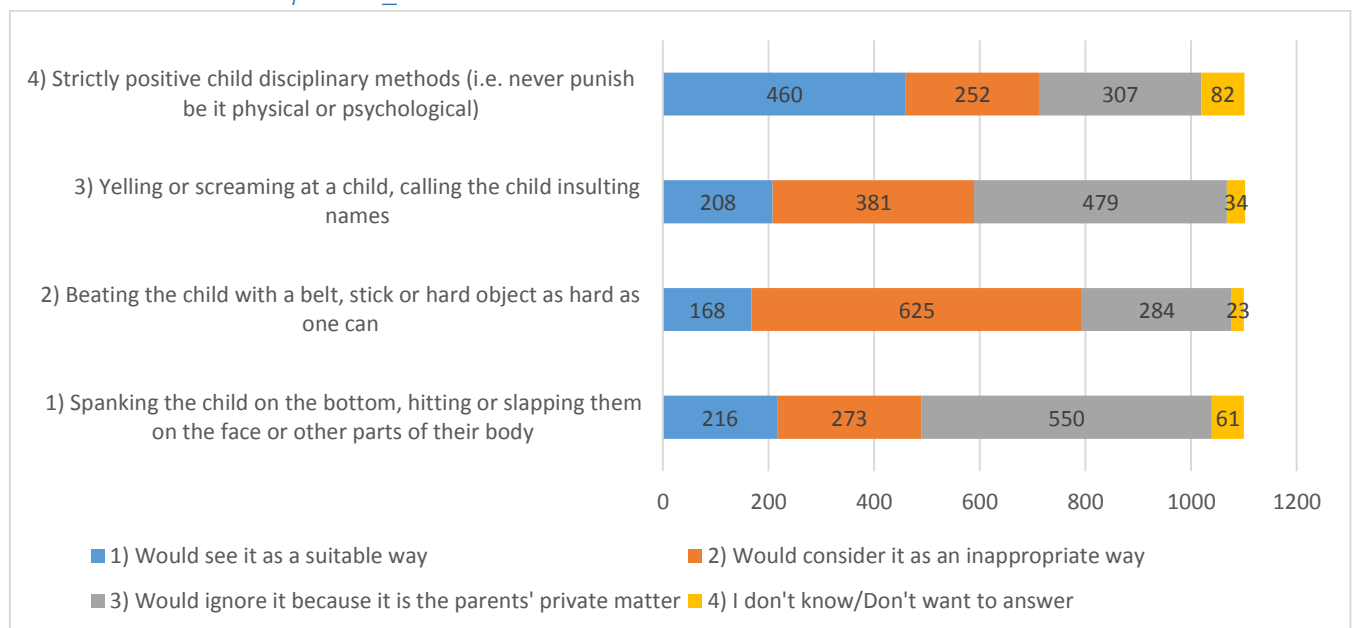
Prevalence of disciplinary methods BF_4



Out of 10 parents, more than half will start screaming or yelling, less than 5, specifically 4.5 would talk calmly, 4 would beat the children and 5 will spank them. In the questionnaire, they told us how many of the 10 parents/guardians use the following practices to discipline their children.

Prevalence of intervention and reporting BF_5

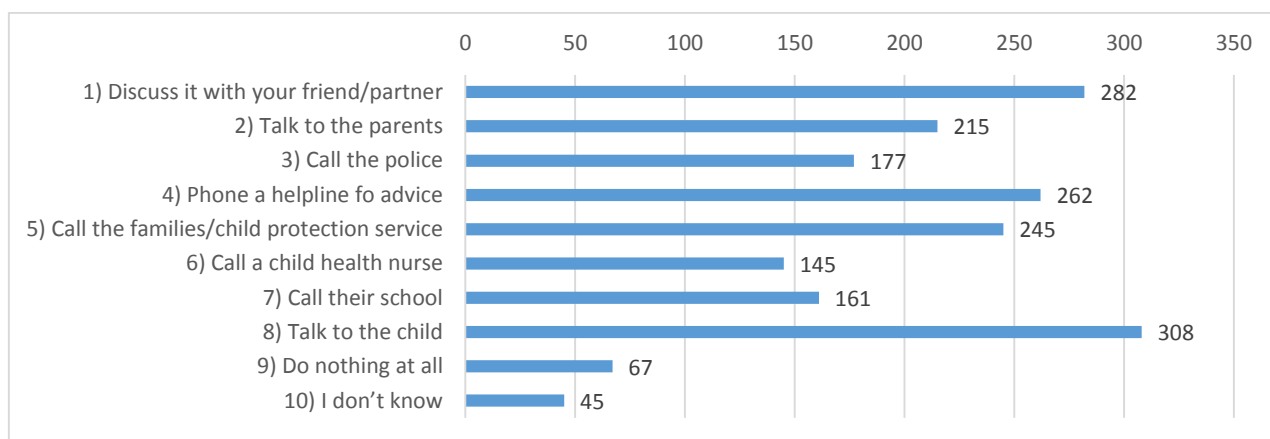
In the frequency of interventions by the authorities, we asked how many out of 10 parents/guardians would use the following practices would discipline their children. If someone would witness them they would call the police in almos 4 cases (3.80), in case 3.76 out of ten *they would intervene and would call authorities.*

Social norms about discipline BF_6

Social norms determine our perception and most parents/guardians in Slovakia would discipline their children in the following order, firstly the majority would never punish physically a child, 208 from 1099 of the respondents would scream and yell, a quarter (168) would beat the respondents with a belt amd 625 would consider beating with hard object as an inappropriate way. Another quarter would hit or spank a child on the bottom.

*Responsibility and reporting of violence RB_1, RB_2, RB_3**Who do you consider responsible for well-being and safety of children?*

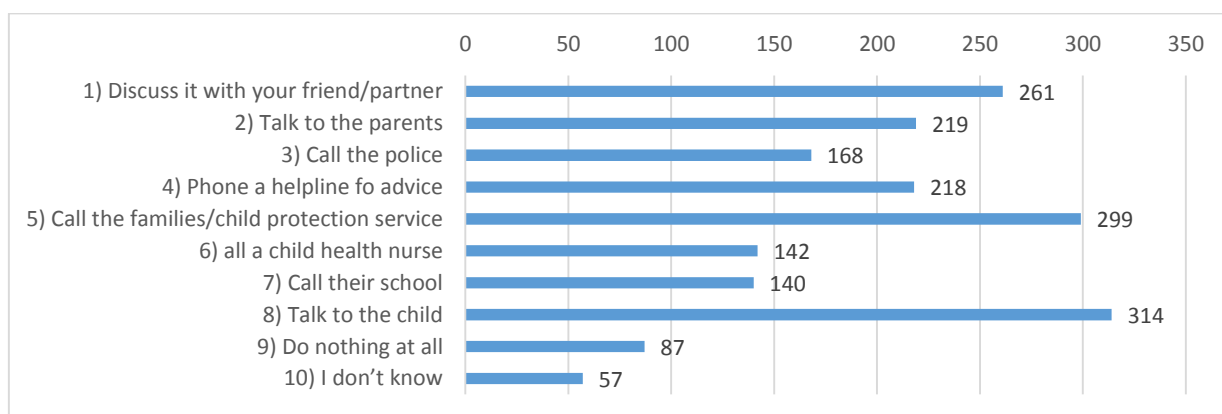
According to the respondents main responsibility belongs to the partners, parents or a person who is either fully or partially responsible for the child.



Adults, parents and children also appear to be the main ones responsible for the following two life situations.

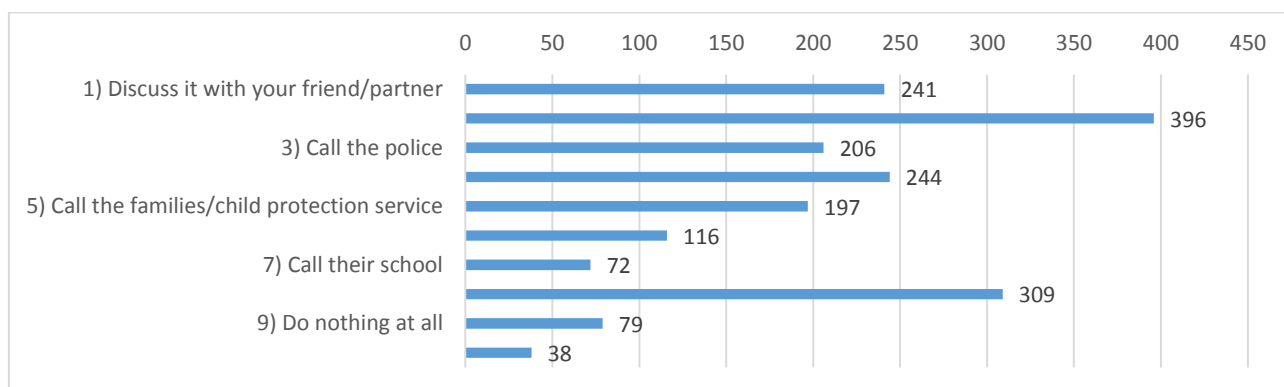
Responsibility of the report - Situation 1

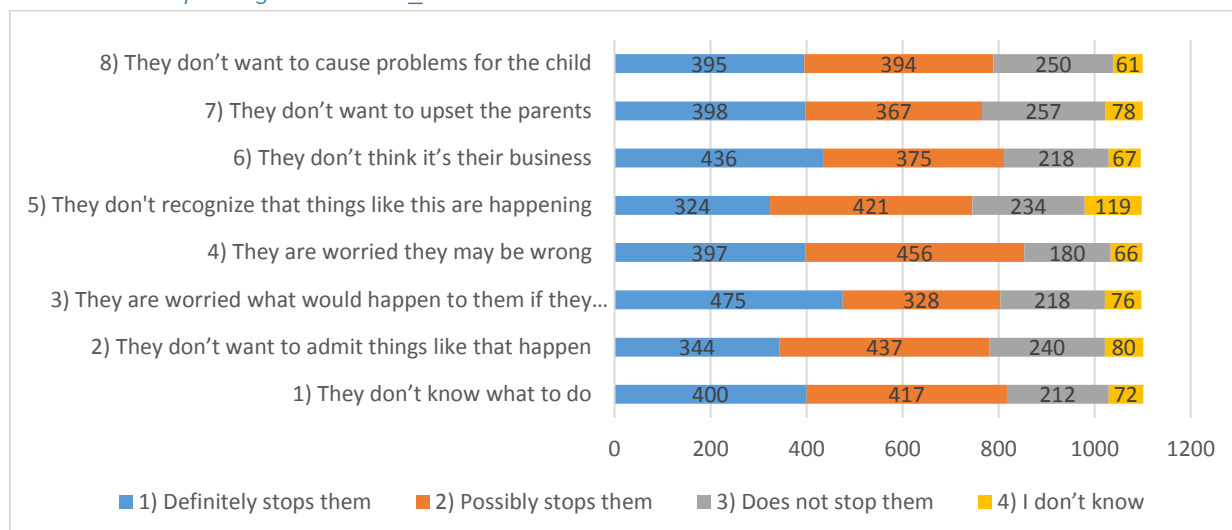
Your neighbour's seven-year-old child often has bruises. You hear a lot of screaming and yelling from the house. You see the child with a bruise under his eye.



Responsibility of the report – Situation 2

As you walk around near your house, you often notice 3 children in their front yard. They are poor and always look dirty. One of them, who is around the age of 10 regularly asks money from you for food.



Obstacles to reporting violence RB_4*Discussion to the adult survey*

Social acceptance of the topic is in general quite high. We expected more than half of the responses to be in favour of zero tolerance. The mental representation of violence was most often referred to as the words like a battle, screaming, slapping and, most of them is a form of physical violence.

In the case of the accepted form, only the extremely violent is proving to be very bad on a scale of 0-5. In the case of violence against children, the most serious was the option involving a child in sexual activity (3.96), the beating of a child with a belt (3.93) or the threat of abandonment (3.83). Almost half of the respondents think violence is a really serious problem, 29% think there are more serious problems, 22% of the respondents don't think it's a serious problem and 3% don't know because they don't want to answer. It can be said that the social acceptance of violence against children is rather liberal, they think, the worst physical violence is perceived as aggression, battle, harm and verbal aggression which are still not considered forms of violence. Personal and social forms of responsibility are not defined, there is no universal answer. Information on violence in the form of reporting would be provided most often. Reporting and social responsibility are at the level of a social norm and surprisingly ignorance and non-acceptance are at zero tolerance.

II. Questionnaires for children

Online campaign has been running since mid-May, and according to the feedbacks, those who are familiar with FutuReg's activities have identified themselves positively with the campaign. The surveys were available all the time online on the Facebook page. The FutuReg Facebook page had a little more than 200 followers at the beginning of the campaign, with the help of this campaign this number increased to 477. We evaluated the campaign very positively in terms of PR, but rather unsuccessfully in terms of the number of online questionnaires collected.

As a goal of the offline interviewers, we set out to balance this ratio and tried to distribute the questionnaires specifically for the missing groups. Due to the pandemic, we had limited access in some schools, so the maximum of two interviewers were allowed to work from home for a period of 4 weeks between June 1 and June 26, when the school year ended.

The very fact that we also visited high schools explains why most respondents were in the age group of 15-16 years. In the case of secondary schools, we tried to address 1-3. Grades, as in higher grades we knew that the age would not correspond to the research interval of 13-17 years. Volunteers who were properly trained also professionally assisted in the selection of specific classes and respondents. GDPR rules were kept, content and methodology of the questionnaire was tested.

From Slovakia 772 respondents took the online questionnaire from all the regions, both online and offline. Together 7 schools took part in the first questionnaire survey. Of these, 250 questionnaires were completed in Hungarian. In the case of the second survey named *Who do you talk?* contact, 846 children completed the questionnaire, of which 26 were completed in Hungarian. In the case of the last questionnaire, this number was 854, which means that this part was filled in by most respondents, even though this part was not sponsored online.

Table 4 Number of completed questionnaires in two language versions

Types of questionnaires in two language versions	Number of respondents	Number of HU	Number of SK	Number of Hungarian completed questionnaires offline	Number of completed questionnaires	Number of Slovak offline
Sample 1. questionnaire	772	32%	68 %	250	522	
Sample 2. questionnaire	846	31%	69 %	266	580	
Sample 3. questionnaire	854	35,9 %	63%	304	550	

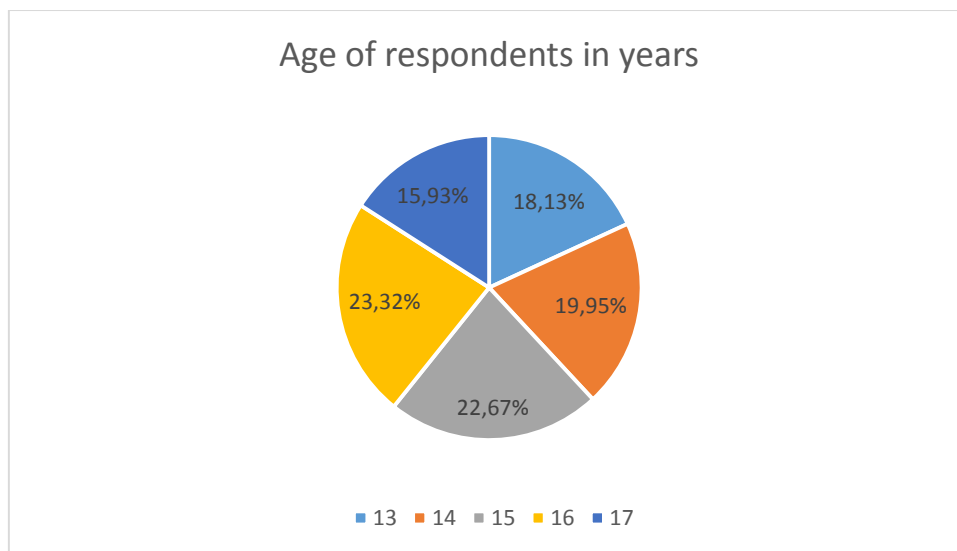
Source: Own processing

In case of the last questionnaire, this number was 854, which means that this part was filled in by most respondents, even though this part was not sponsored online.

II.I. Questionnaire for children 1 – Do you speak up?

In this chapter, we will look at the first questionnaire. 772 questionnaires were filled out. The most frequent age was the category of 16 and 15 year old students with very similar percentages of 23.3% or 22.7%.

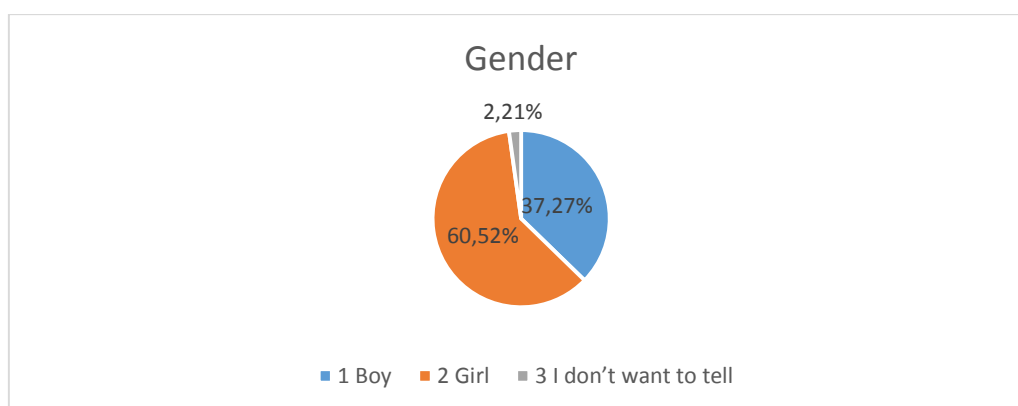
Graph 1 Age of respondents to the Questionnaire for Children 1.



Source: own processing, Typeform

Further, demographic distribution by gender were examined, where we found that the sample of the first questionnaire consists mainly from girls. For the most part, girls called us for the research, 60.5% of girls participated in the completion and 37% of respondents were boys.

Graph 2 Gender of respondents to the Questionnaire for Children 1



Source: own processing, Typeform

If we would have processed this data without targeted offline questionnaires in schools, the percentages based on the online campaign would be about 20 % of boys and 80 % of girls. We

used both qualitative and quantitative methods to interpret the results. First of all, we found out the frequency and percentage of distribution of individual answers. We also described the demographic composition of the respondents with descriptive statistics.

Reactions of children in abusive situations

In the reaction of children to specific situations, they would speak often. 88% of children answered that they would answer and only 12% did not. In order to justify why they did not respond actively, 50% said that it was not their problem and 18% thought that they did not know what to do.

Based on this proactivity of children, we can assess that youth policy is in the phase of activism, the facts lead to them being set to happen, but in reality this is not the case according to the study. *Your friends connect to one guy in public toilets. They make fun of him for being hot and take off his pants.* In this section, we defined in more detail how many children will respond if their physical violence in public space is affected.

Table 5 Reasons for children's activity in physical violence

Why would they speak up?	Number of respondents	Percentages
We have talked about it with my parents and adults, what should you do in these situations	229	34,0
We have talked about it with my friends and peers, what should you do in these situations	221	32,8
I read or heard about it	148	22,0
I just feel it	151	22,4

Source: own processing, Typeform

One third of the children would talk about the question of tolerance about homosexual fellow with their parents, another third with their peers, 22% heard about it and every fifth child just feels it to react in that way.

Table 6 Reasons why children do not respond in the event of physical violence

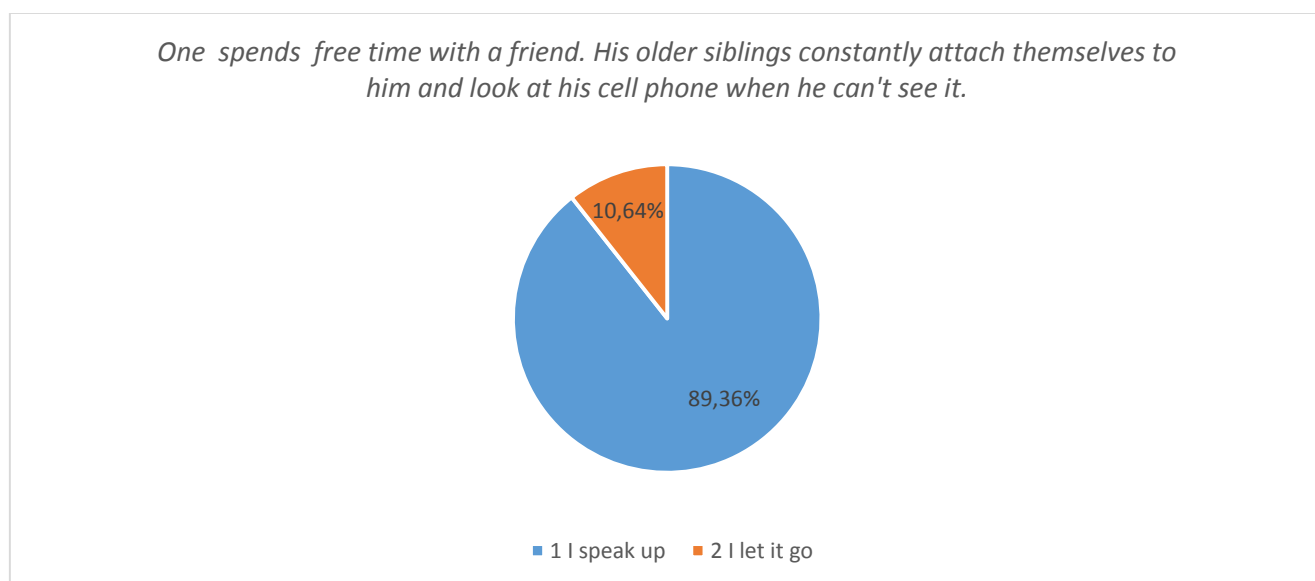
Why NOT?	Number of respondents	Percentages
I don't really care / It's not a problem	46	50,5
I don't know what to do	17	18,7
I don't dare to speak up	28	30,8
Total	91	100,0

Source: own processing, Typeform

In the case of negative answers more than half of the sample (50.5%) did not want to respond because of lack of interest, 18.7% did not know what to do and 30.8% think that it is not their business. *if after getting on the bus, passengers start picking them up and even pushing them.*

The second question in the first children's questionnaire was the story that *one spends free time with a friend. His older siblings constantly attach themselves to him and look at his cell phone when he can't see it.*

Chart 3 Frequency of answers, whether they will respond/speak up or not



Source: own processing, Typeform

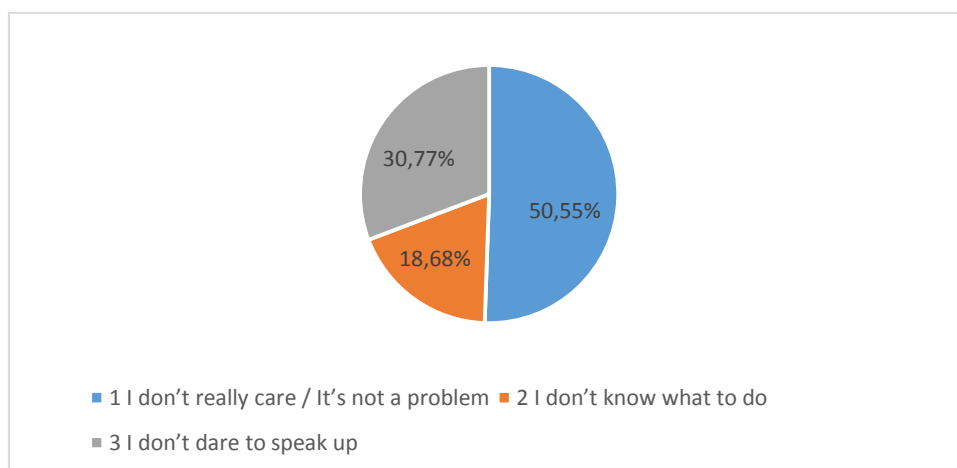
As many as 89.4% of children respond and speak up in the situation when they pick up and view their mobile phone, and 10.6% do not dare to speak. we see that 198 answers came to the fact that they talk about it with their parents, 30.1% of the answers prefer to talk to peers and friends, 161 children, so a quarter of the sample read heard about it, 23.7% just feel it inside .

Table 7 Reasons for willingness to speak up (mobile case)

Why will you call?	N	%
I have already talked to parents, adults about what can be done in such a situation	198	28,8
I have already talked to friends, peers about what can be done in such a situation	207	30,1
I read/ I heard about it	161	23,4
That's just how I feel	163	23,7

Source: own processing, Typeform

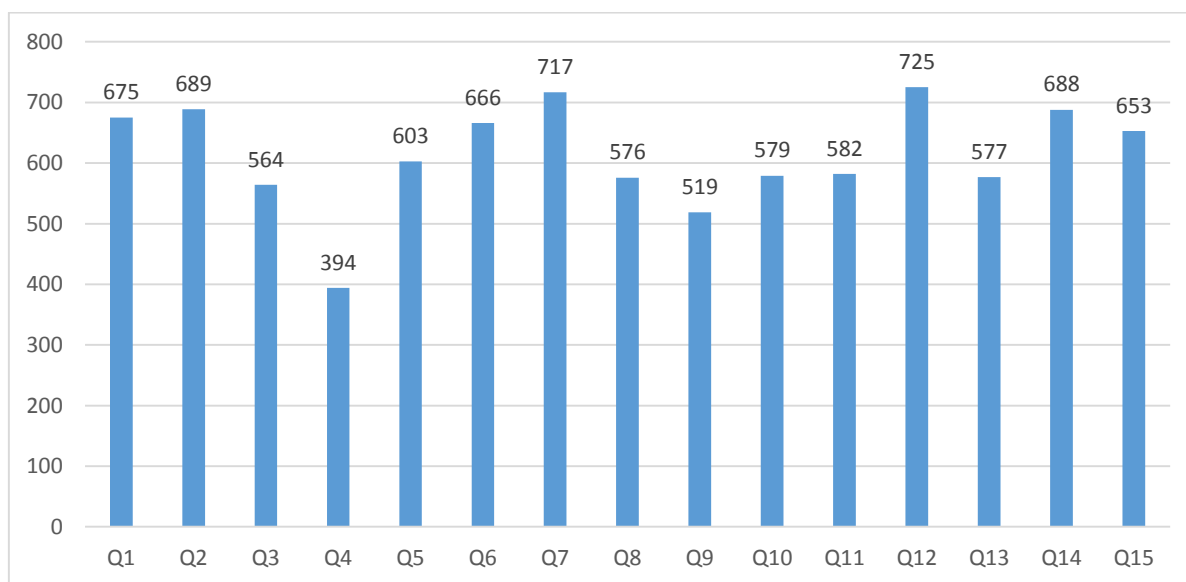
Chart 4 Frequency distribution of respondents in case of disinterest (mobile case)



Source: own processing, Typeform

Half of the children were indifferent in the answers, in the case of the second situation with screaming workers, they were not interested in this problem, a quarter do not know what to do and a quarter think that it does not concern them. If we compare situations involving verbal and physical violence, we can say that in the case of verbal violence, children are braver, as up to half intervene in some way.

CHart 5 Situation analysis Will you respond? Supportive factors of speaking up



Supportive factors of speaking In this chapter we analyze the answers based on similar situations, looking for similarities between the type of violence. We included the following categories in various groups such as verbal, physical, online violence. We color-coded the individual groups differently and looked for similar frequencies or reactions for similar groups.

Graph 5 Sorting the frequency of children's impact (when they respond) in specific situations

Source: own processing, Typeform

Children are most troubled by situations that effect their friends and want to stand up for them. They respond not only in their own defense, but also on behalf of someone, if they are sown to someone, then physical violence ended in second place, in the case of a girl, where a smaller boy is hurt by a larger boy. The story of the mobile phone ended with the third most frequent response in the case of active calling, when they look at the other's privacy and online violence is expected.

Table 8 TOP 5 analysis of the most common answers

Your friends connect to one guy in public toilets. They make fun of him for being hot and take off his pants..	Verbal violence
You were going to take the dog to the park when you saw a bigger boy ripping a bag out of the hands of a little shy girl. There are no other people around.	Physical violence bullying
You spend your free time with a friend. His older siblings constantly attach themselves to him and look at his cell phone when he can't see it.	Cyberbullying
You go to the cinema with your friends, and when you stand in line at the popcorn, an acquaintance from one of you will grab your back.	Sexual harrasment
When boarding the bus, one of the passengers starts steaming at you, even rubbing into you.	Physical violence bullying

Source: Typeform

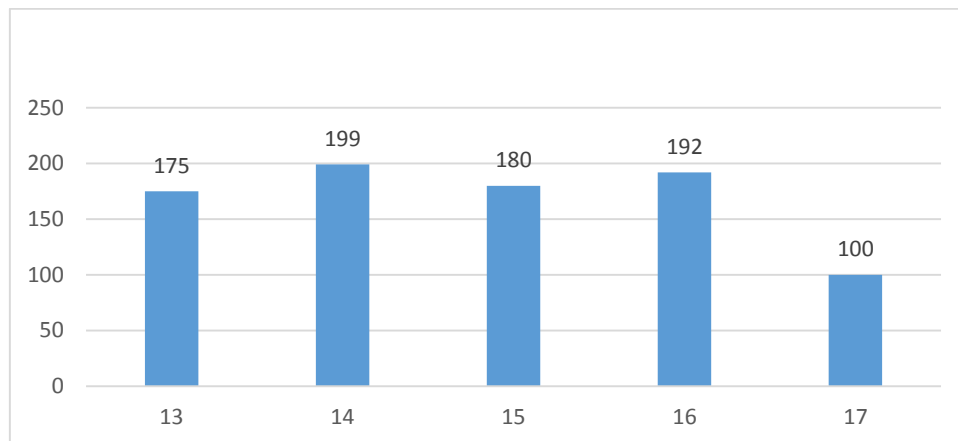
As the fourth ended the sexual harassment, the story with popcorn and grabbing back, when in a cinema in a row an acquaintance grabs his ass. The story of the bus ended with the fifth of 15 situations.

In the case of the first questionnaire, we saw that physical harassment and aggression are the most important driving forces when a child finds the courage and strength to act, sometimes he does not know how to do it. In the next chapter, we'll look at whether to trust someone with a problem to help themselves.

II.II. Questionnaire for children 2B: Will you tell others? Who would the children turn to?

In the case of the second type of the questionnaires entitled “Would you tell others? we see that 14 and 16 year old kids appeared in the sample more often, the respondents from the 17 year old sample occurred the least.

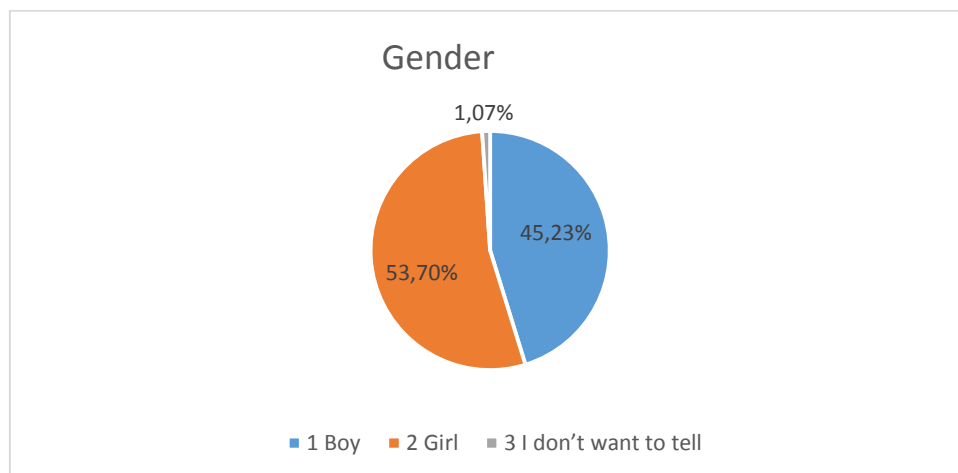
Chart 4 Distribution of respondents by age



Source: own processing, Typeform

After dividing age groups, we can see that up to 23% of 15-year old children and 21% of the 13-year-old group, 23% of the youngest 13-year old ones were also represented as 23% of the 16-year-old group and only 12% of the oldest, ie 17-year-old children. In the distribution by gender, we see that more than half of the sample was represented by girls, 45% of boys, 54% of girls and 9% did not want to say (only 2 answers).

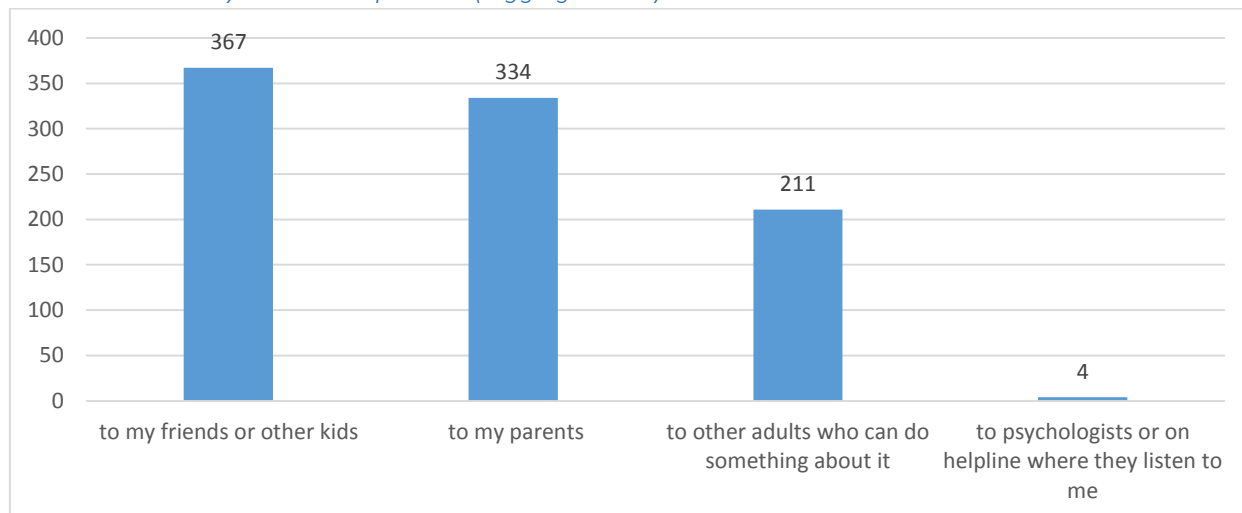
Chart 5 Demographic distribution of respondents in the case of questionnaire 2B



Source: Typeform

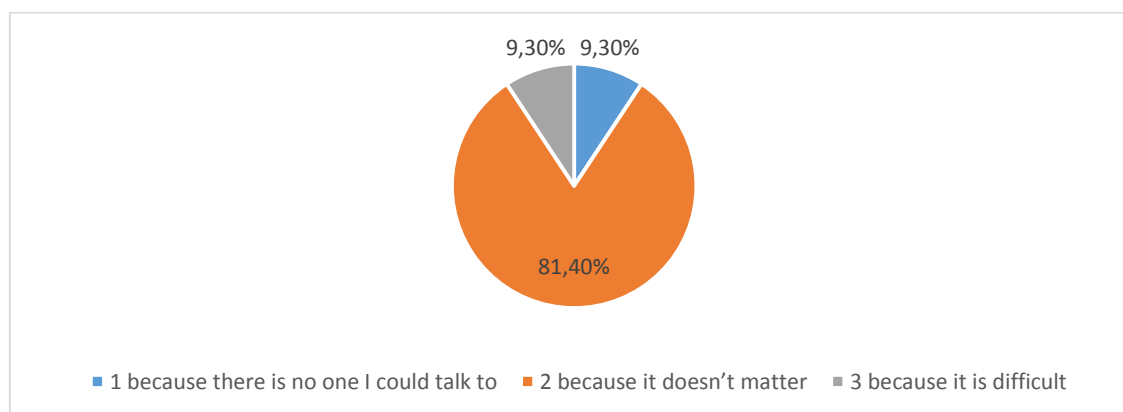
In response to the question „whom would you tell about your troubles“, the most frequent answers were given to the category by friends or other children. As we can see in *Chart 6*, less than half of children trust a minor and more than half trust a parent or another adult.

Chart 6 Whom they tell – First question (digging on bus)



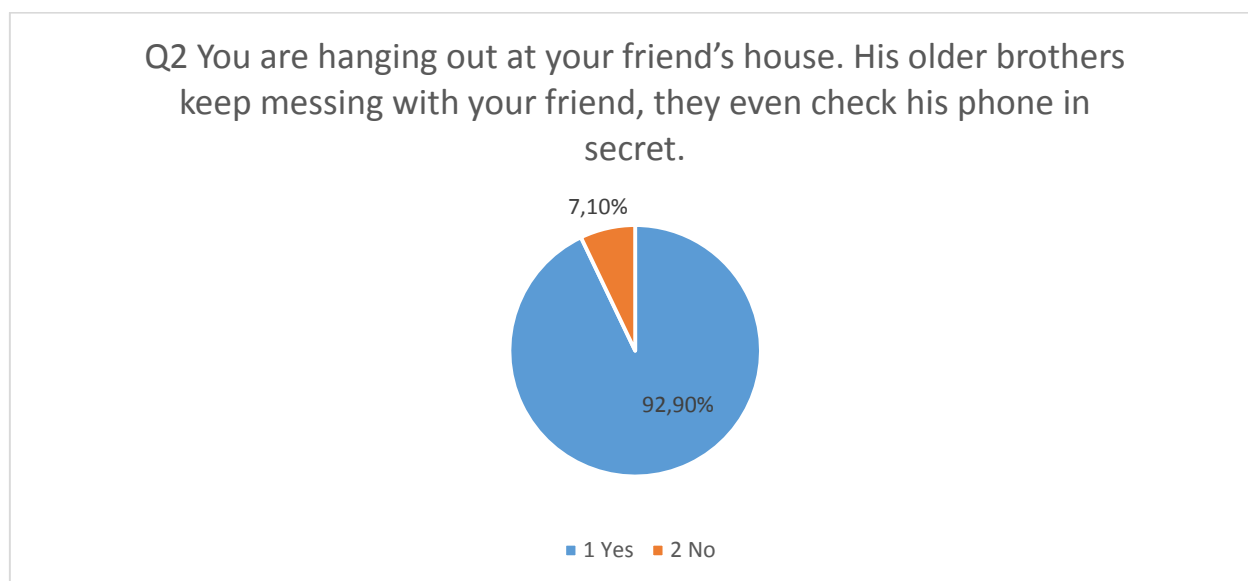
40% of children tell their friends about a situation on the bus that someone is kicking them, 37% tell their parents, 23% tell other adults and not as much as 1% confide in a psychologist on helpline.

Chart 7 Q1 Why they do not tell it to others



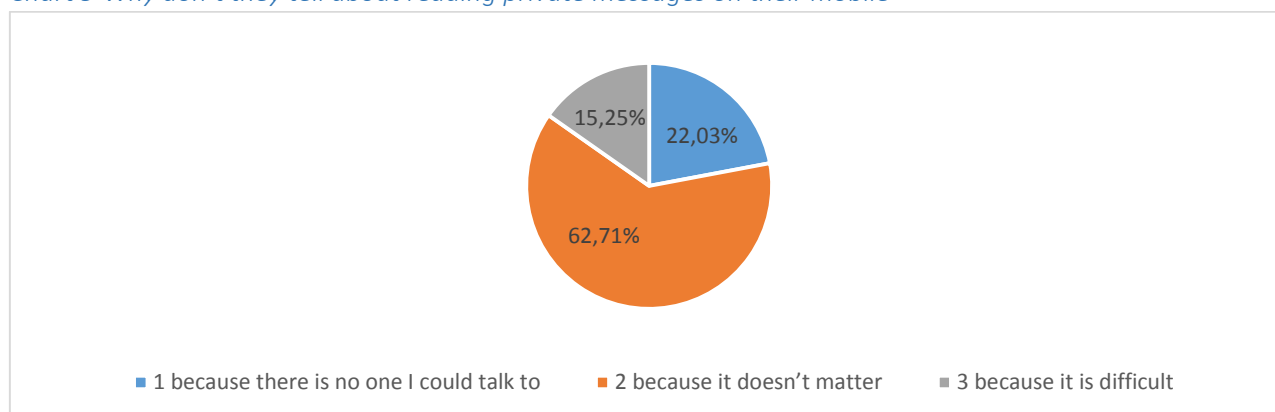
When we asked why and what the exact reason is, they said that no one would tell 82% of children, 9% said they didn't care and 9% thought it was hard to talk about. The second issue in turn was more focused on online security. It sounded like this: *You spend your free time with a friend. His older siblings constantly attach themselves to him and look at his cell phone when he can't see it.*

Chart 8 Whom they trust?



5% of respondents, which is 802 children, would rather tell someone about this situation.

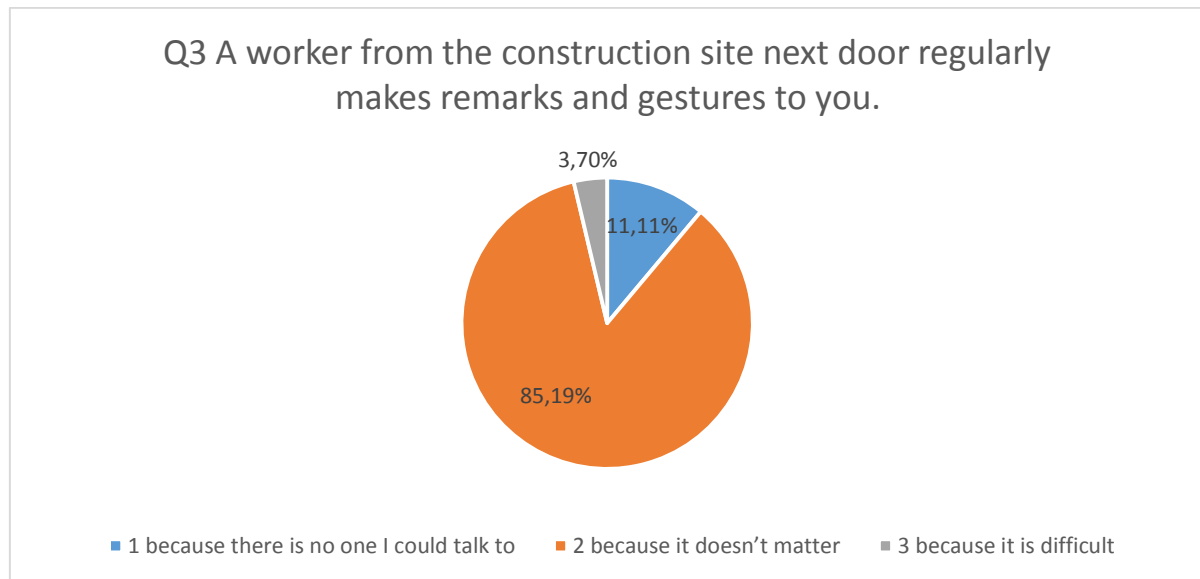
Chart 9 Why don't they tell about reading private messages on their mobile



In this case, we identified the reason for 63% of the answers that children do not care, only 15% have no one to confide in and 15% think it is difficult to do something about it.

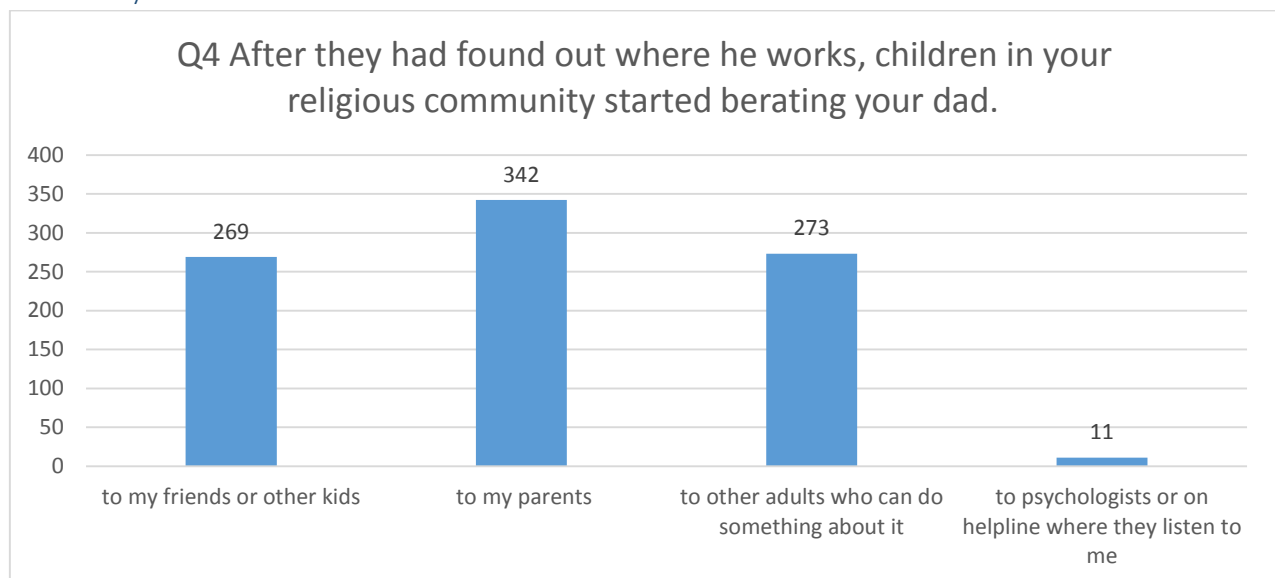
The **third question** of this section read as follows: ": *"One of the workers from the neighboring construction site regularly speaks to you and at the same time makes special gestures."*

Chart 10 Why don't they talk about sexual bullying and harassment



In case of the **fourth question**, (*“After they had found out where he works, children in your religious community started berating your dad”*), children were more conservative. Logically, answers showed that they would tell the parents affected by the problem.

Chart 11 Why don't they tell their parents about how they slandered their parents in the religious community komunita

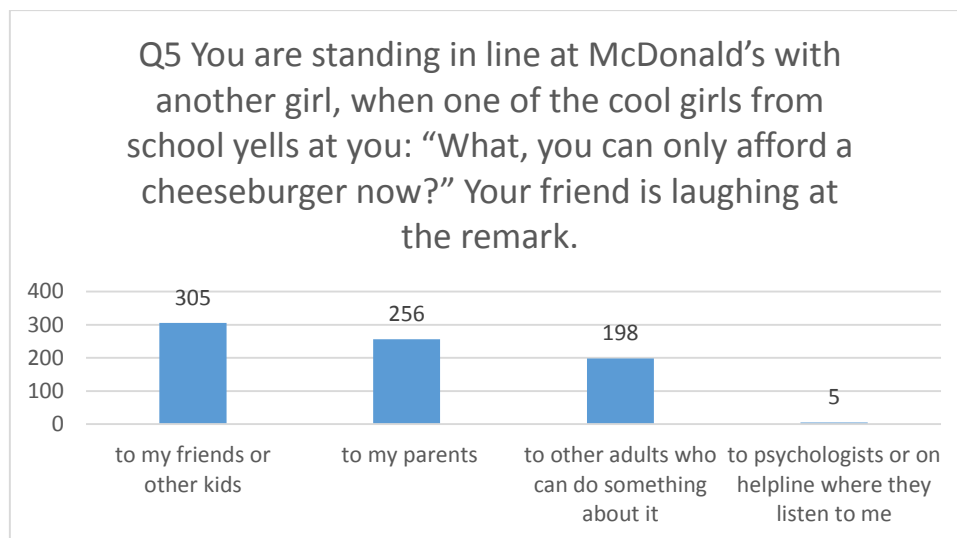


Source: Typeform

As we can see in *Chart 11*, 342 children talk about the situation with their parents, 273 tell other adults, 269 tell the friends and 11 would seek psychological help.

The fifth question focused on verbal violence. The situation was as follows: *“You are standing in line at McDonald’s with another girl, when one of the cool girls from school yells at you: “What, you can only afford a cheeseburger now?” Your friend is laughing at the remark.*

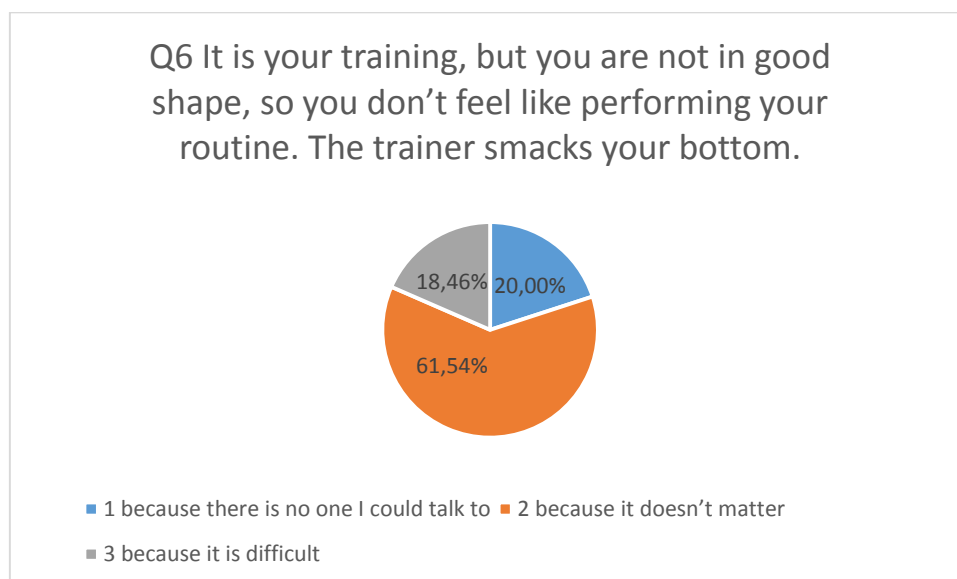
Chart 12 Whom will they tell about how they were slandered in public because of the economic situation



Source: Typeform

In the **sixth question**, we looked at how children behave when sexual harassment occurs. We have confronted the respondents with the following situation: "It is your training but you are not in good shape, so you don't feel like performing your routine. The trainer smacks your bottom. „This story is a typical example of sexual harassment. 92% of respondent children would tell someone about it. The majority of those responding negatively said that it was not important.

Chart 13 Why don't they tell their parents about sexual harassment



Source: Typeform

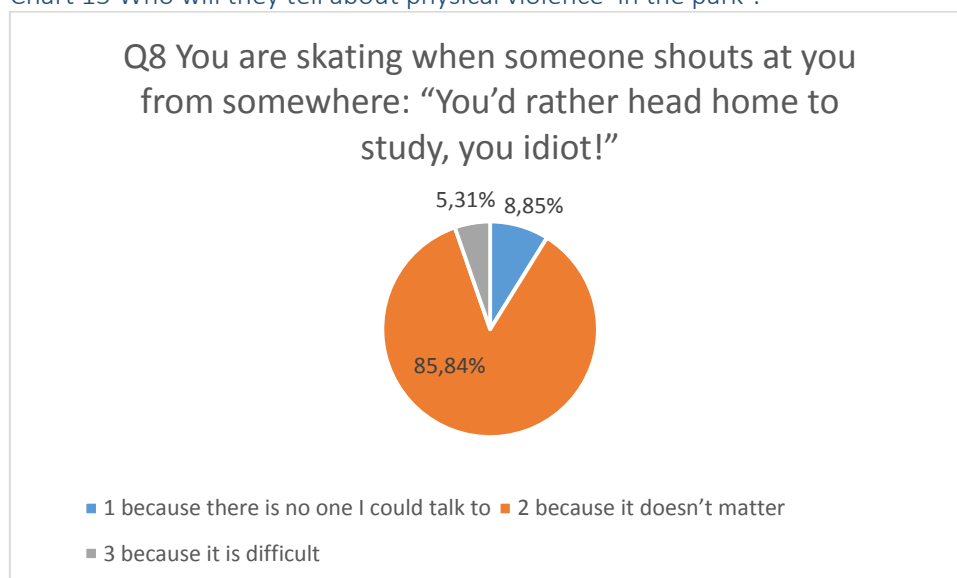
In the **seventh question**, we asked the children if they would intervene in a public place. The situation was explained as follows: *“You went out to the park when you see a bigger guy ripping a bag out of the hands of a little shy girl. There are no other people around.”* The reaction of those who would confide in them is interesting, in the case of physical violence most often parents, the second most frequent group is other adults and the third are friends. Reakcia kom

Chart 14 Whom will they tell about physical violence and in the park and theft



In **eights question**, we focused on the negative answers, there were 113 of them, while 713 would be considered to tell someone. 115 children thought. In question number 8, we focused on the negative answers, there were 113 of them, while 713 would be considered to tell someone. 115 children thought.

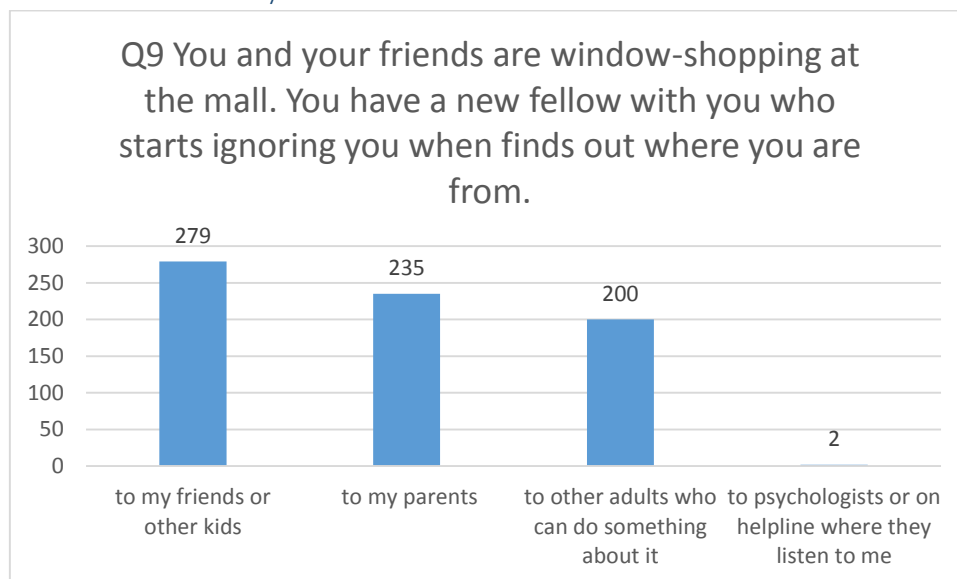
Chart 15 Who will they tell about physical violence in the park ?



The **ninth question** stated that children would confide in friends or other children with verbal aggression and disrespect, and then their parents, and the third place in the order were the answers declared by the interest in confiding in other adults, only 4 would be entrusted to a psychologist. The situation that best illustrates bullying and bullying is this: *“You are chilling*

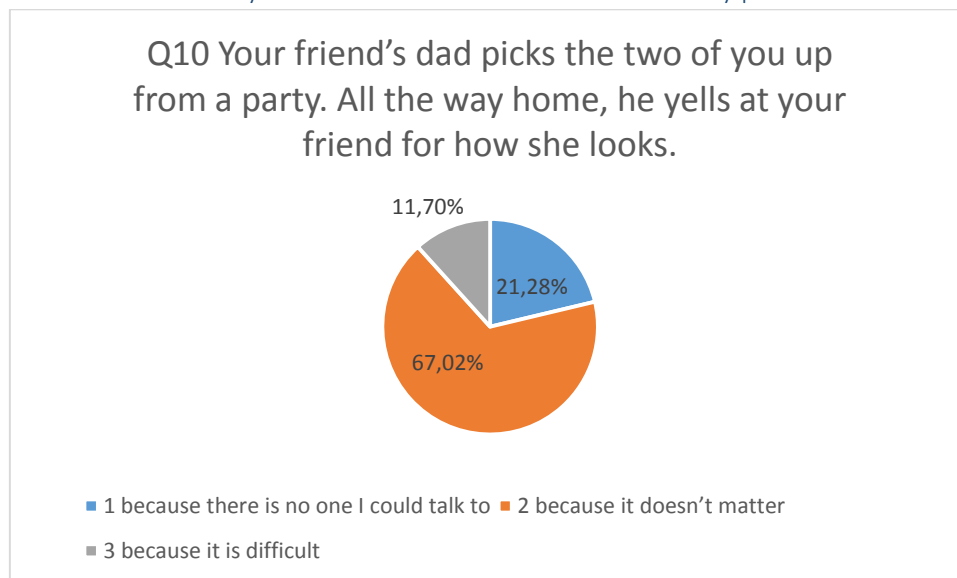
with friends in a mall. There's a new guy with you who, when he finds out where you live, starts ignoring you

Chart 16 Who will they tell about ridicule



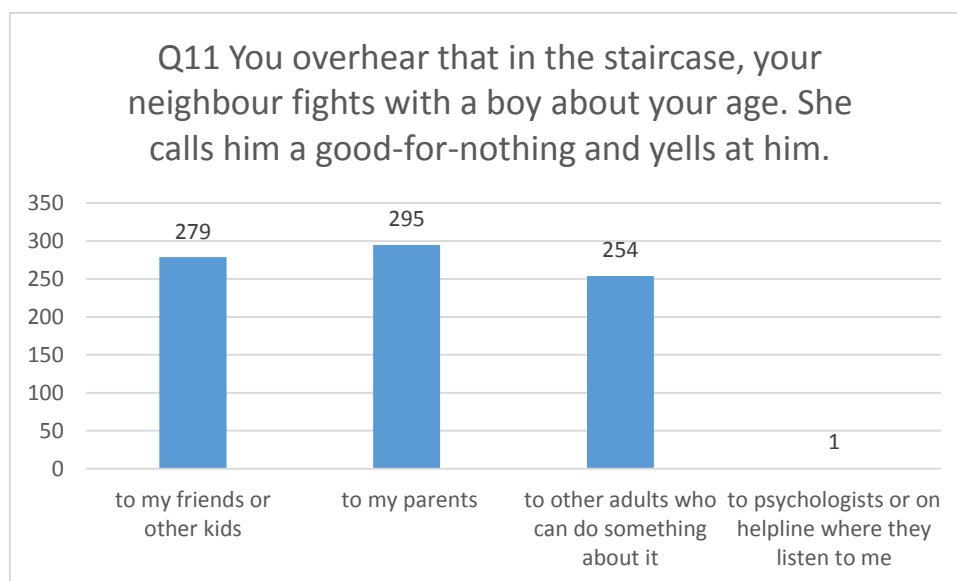
In the **tenth question** we asked why they don't want to do something in this situation and found out that two third of them . *"Your friend's father comes to the party for you. He screams at your friend all the way home. "*

Charft 17 WHon they will tell about verbal violence caused by parents



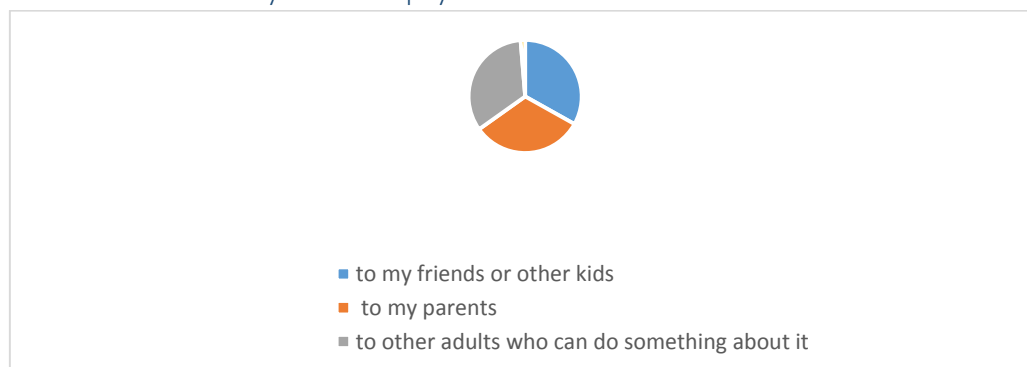
In the case of **the 11th question**, 295 children would tell the parents, 278 friends and 254 another adult about the situation. Oout of the 846 responses, 87 more than 10% answered in the negative. *"You hear a woman from your neighbors arguing on the stairs with a guy who's about your age. She calls him a loser and yells at him. "*

Chart 18 Whom will they tell about verbal violence on the stairs ?



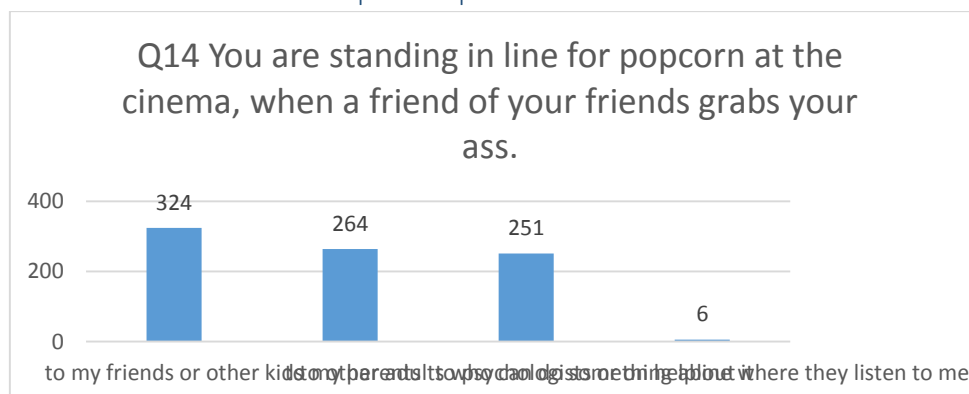
In the case of the **twelfth question**, the type of otherness and bullying. *Your friends connect to one guy in public toilets. They make fun of him for being hot and take off his pants.*

Chart 19 Who will they tell about physical violence due to intolerance



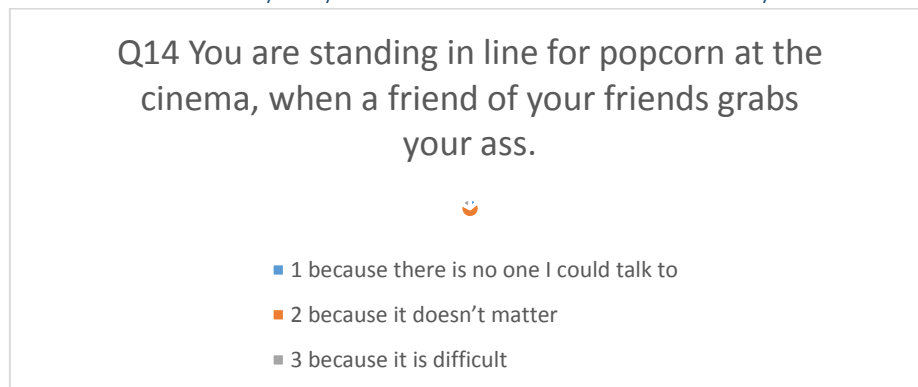
In the **thirteenth question**, we asked the very sensitive issue of sexual harassment. See a doctor for an examination. When you undress, the doctor remarks, *"Well, I see you like eating!"*

Chart 20 To whom will of the private sphere tell about internet violence



In the **penultimate, ie fourteenth question**, 271 children would tell their friends, but at most 309 parents. 223 would tell another adult, *"You spend your free time with a friend. His older siblings are constantly attached to him and looking at his cell phone when he can't see it."*

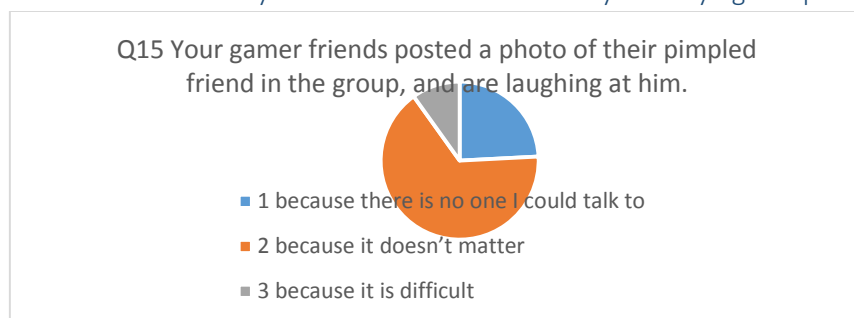
Chart 21 Reasons why they will not talk about the situation of cyber violence and privacy



Source: Typeform

In the last question, we asked about the following situation. *Your Gamer buddies shared in a common group a picture of their acquaintance, whose face is studded with rashes and they roar from him.* 751 answered in the affirmative and 92 in negative. 9 children do not talk about it because they find it difficult to talk about it, 60 children were indifferent and 22 did not have anyone around them to tell.

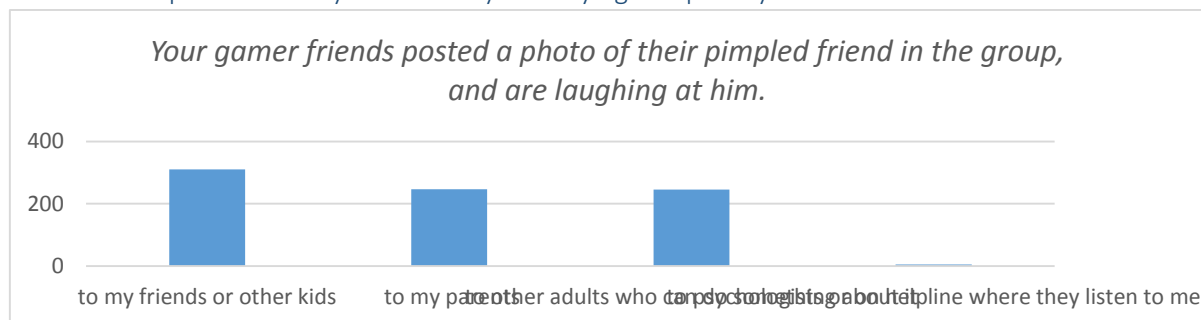
Chart 22 Reasons why children do not talk about cyberbullying and privacy



Source: Typeform

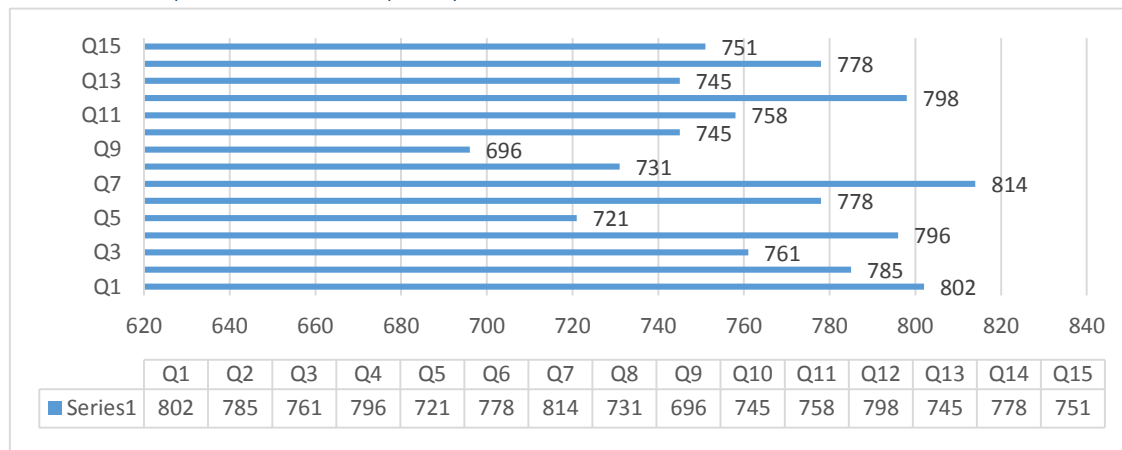
This issue also examined the most important people the children confide in, and to find out who the children would tell about their stories if they did not behave indifferently. *Q15 Your gamer friends posted a photo of their pimpled friend in the group, and are laughing at him.*

Chart 22 People whom they tell about cyberbullying and privacy



In the group, your Gamer friends shared a picture of an acquaintance whose face is studded with rashes and they roar from him. Reasons for not informing others about abusive situations. Most common answer was that they did not care, it was not their business and it was difficult.

Chart 23 Comparison of the frequency of occurrence of individual situations of the Questionnaire 2



In the case of the most active interventions by children and reactions, 814 would tell someone about it, and 802 in the case of physical violence, the third in the order of Q1 is a situation of a similar nature, the fourth and fifth is verbal violence/

Table 9 Circumstances and method of reaction Questionnaire 2

Otázky	Circumstances	Whom would children tell?
Q1	Fyzické násilie šikana	Pri nastupovaní do autobusu začne jeden z cestujúcich do teba zapárať, dokonca do teba sotí.
Q7	Fyzické násilie šikana	Išiel / išla si vyvenčiť psa do parku, keď uvidíš väčšieho chalana, ako vytrhol tašku z rúk malého plachého dievčatka. Na okolí nie sú žiadni iní ľudia.
Q12	Verbálne násilie zosmiešňovanie	Tvoji kamaráti sa na verejných toaletách navážajú do jedného chalana. Vysmievajú sa mu, že je teploš a stiahnu mu nohavice.
Q4	Verbálne násilie	Deti v náboženskej komunite začali tvojmu otcovi nadávať potom, čo sa dozvedeli, kde pracuje.
Q2	Sexuálne násilie,	Idete s kamošmi do kina a keď stojíš v rade na pukance, známy z jedného z vás ťa chytí za zadok.
Q14	Sexuálne násilie,	Tráviš voľný čas u kamoša. Jeho starší súrodenci sa doňho neustále navážajú a prezerajú si jeho mobil, keď to on nevidí.
Q6	Sexuálne násilie,	Na tréningu nie si zrovna v najlepšej forme, nechce sa ti predviesť predpísaný cvik. Tréner ti capne po zadku
Q3	Sexuálne násilie	Jeden z robotníkov zo susedného staveniska sa ti pravidelne prihovára a pritom zvláštne gestikuluje.
Q11	Verbálne násilie zosmiešňovanie	Počuješ ženu od susedov hádať sa na schodisku s chalanom, ktorý je asi v tvojom veku. Nazýva ho lúzrom a kričí na neho
Q15	Kyberšikana	Tvoji gamerskí kamoši zdieľali v spoločnej skupine obrázok svojho známeho, ktorého tvár je posiatá vyrážkami a rehocú sa z neho.
Q10	Fyzické násilie šikana	Otec tvojej kamošky prichádza po vás na párty. Počas celej cesty domov na kamošku kričí, ako to zas vyzerá.
Q13	Sexuálne násilie,	Si u lekára na vyšetrení. Keď sa vyzlečieš, lekár poznamená: „No, vidím, že ti chutí jesť!“

Q8	Kyberšikana	Jazdíš na board, keď na teba odniekiaľ zakričia: „Radšej padaj domov učiť sa, ty ***!“
Q5	Verbálne násilie zosmiešňovanie	V mekáči čakáš so svojou priateľkou, keď sa ti prihovori jedna zo superštylových spolužiačiek: „Čo, už máš len na cheeseburger?“ Tvoja priateľka sa nad hláškou zasmieje
Q9	Verbálne násilie zosmiešňovanie	Chillujete s kamošmi v nákupnom centre. Je s vami nejaký nový borec, ktorý, keď sa dozvie, kde bývaš, začne ťa ignorovať.

Zdroj: vlastné spracovanie

Overall, respondents feel the lowest level of support from their families: the least interviewed children and young people agreed with these statements. This phenomenon is also evident from the graph presented below, which expresses the average value of agreement with statements on the original 5-point scale, where statements concerning the family reach the lowest h nezasahovania

II.III Questionnaire for kids – Whom you can talk to?

The purpose of the third questionnaire, which was meant for children and teenagers between the age of 13 and 17, was to examine the support network of respondents – if they feel themselves being surrounded by people who care about them, they can lean on and with who they can share their joy and sadness. The questionnaire form was filled in by 854 children and teenagers. More than half of the respondents were girls represented by 55%. According to age, the distribution of the respondents was approximately even, except for 17 years old ones, who were underrepresented compared to other age groups.

Chart 24 Distribution of the respondents by gender (%)

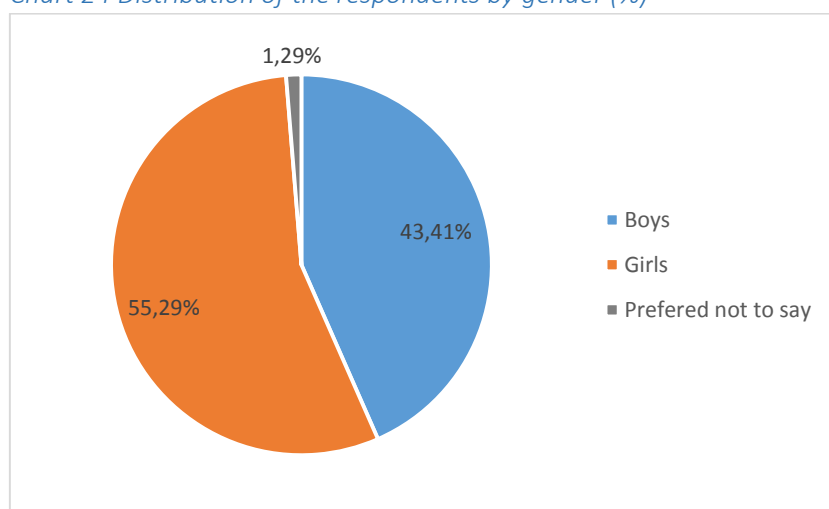
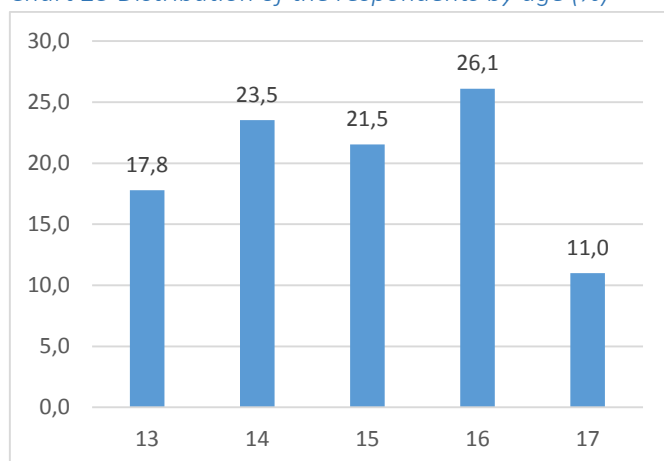


Chart 25 Distribution of the respondents by age (%)



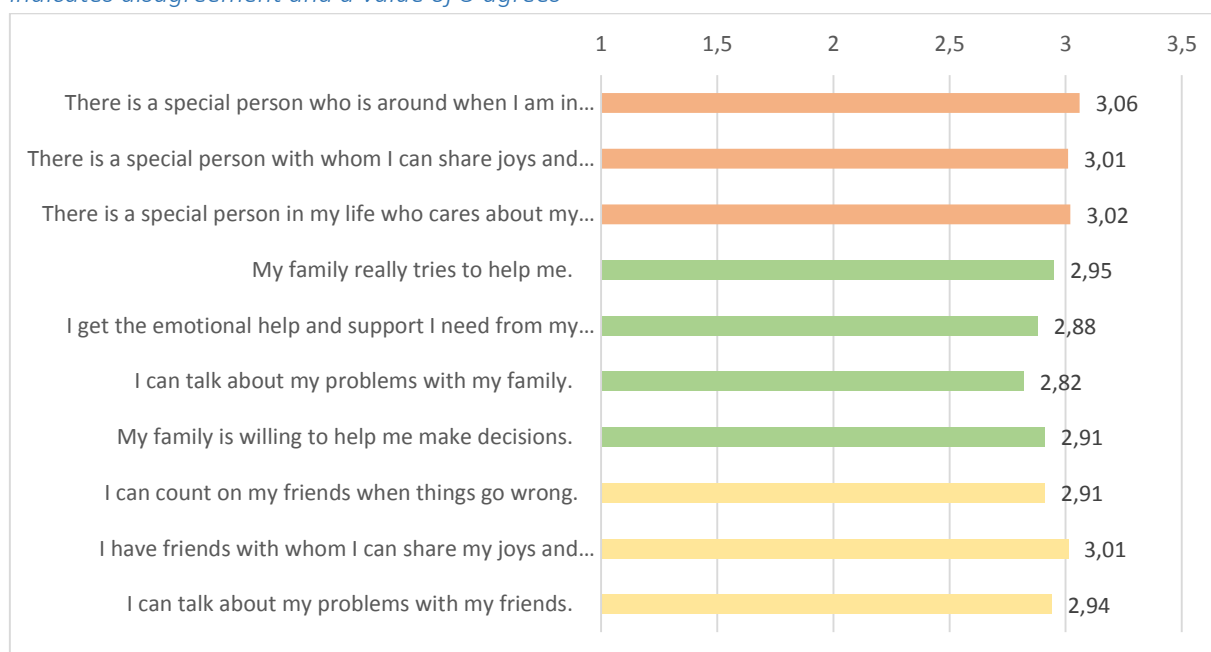
The questionnaire consisted of statements, which the respondents could respond to on the scale from 1 to 5 - 1 being disagreeing and 5 being agreeing. Individual statements can be divided into three categories depending on which group they relate to family, friends or significant others.

Chart 26 Agreeing with individual statements

		Don't agree	Partially agree	Agree
Significant other	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	39.1	18.0	43.0
	There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows.	39.9	18.9	41.2
	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	38.4	21.0	40.6
Family	My family really tries to help me.	37.7	22.8	39.6
	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	40.0	24.9	35.1
	I can talk about my problems with my family.	42.3	22.8	35.0
	My family is willing to help me make decisions.	37.5	26.7	35.8
Friends	I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	38.3	23.4	38.2
	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	38.5	18.6	42.9
	I can talk about my problems with my friends.	37.8	23.7	38.4

For better clarity of the results, the first and last two steps of the 5-point scale were combined, creating three categories of responses. As it can be seen from the chart, most of the respondents (43%) agreed with the statement that there is at least one exceptional person around them who they can rely on if they need. On the contrary, most respondents disagreed with the statement that they could talk to their family about their problems. It is also noteworthy that more than half of the respondents disagreed with any statement. Overall, respondents feel the lowest level of support from their families: with these statements agreed the least children and teenagers who were interviewed. This phenomenon is also evident from the graph presented below, which expresses the average value of the agreement with statements on the original 5-point scale, where statements concerning the family reach the lowest values.

Chart 26. The average value of the agreement with statements on a 5-point scale, where a value of 1 indicates disagreement and a value of 5 agrees



Respondents feel more support from their friends than family, especially when it comes to the opportunity to share their joys and grief with them. Overall, however, we measured the highest level of agreement in the case of statements that moved on to significant/exceptional others. The reason is probably that these statements did not apply to the group (family or friends in general) but examined whether the respondents have at least one person in their life whom they can rely on. However, for most of the respondents, this exceptional person is a friend or family member, which results from a high correlation of responses. Correlation coefficients are shown in table, which shows that the answers to all three categories of questions are highly correlated. This means that respondents who felt supported by one group were more likely to feel supported from the another group, as well.

Table 10 Correlation of responses to individual groups of statements

		Significant/ exceptional other	Family	Friends
Significant/ exceptional other	Pearson correlation coefficient	1	,555**	,666**
	Bilateral significance		.000	.000
	Number of answers	846	840	843
Family	Pearson correlation coefficient	,555**	1	,511**
	Bilateral significance	.000		.000

	Number of answers	840	847	844
Friends	Pearson correlation coefficient	,666**	,511**	1
	Bilateral significance	.000	.000	
	Number of answers	843	844	850

** The correlation is significant at 0.01

Based on the results of the third questionnaire for children and teenagers aged 13 to 17, we can state that respondents do not have a clear opinion on whether they can rely on friends, family members or other close people. Just over a third of them said that family was trying to help them, that they could talk to family members about their problems, or that the family was giving them emotional support. Slightly more respondents agreed with the statements concerning friends and 43% of respondents said that they have at least one person around them that they can rely on. However, the high correlation between groups of statements suggests that support from friends or other important people that young people have in their neighbourhood does not replace family support, but that those respondents who feel support from one group feel support from others too and vice versa.

III. Focus groups - Responsibility for child protection at a community level - interviews in focus groups

Introduction of the target community

We have defined the community of the Hungarian minority living in southwestern Slovakia as the target community of our focus groups. The choice of this community is based on the similar experience of Hungarians living in this area, which is given by the ethnic, demographic, economic, social, and cultural characteristics of this region. Thus, we perceive the community not only as a narrower circle of people living, for example, in one neighbourhood or community but also in a broader sense, as a group of people who have similar experiences based on their similar socio-cultural characteristics and lived reality. This similar experience was clearly visible during the interviews in the focus groups and the dynamics of the functioning of these groups.

In addition to membership in the selected community and the above-mentioned characteristics, the addressed respondents also had another common feature: all of them have been involved with the Minority Kids project in the past, which deals with children's issues, children's rights, etc. in various forms. This means that the respondents showed interest in these questions outside of this project.

Participants and the course of focus groups

Respondents of the focus groups were recruited by direct contact based on the requirements of the project: respondents who raise a child were addressed to the group of parents and experts who professionally care for children were addressed to the group of experts. The group of parents consisted of respondents with children, mostly under the age of 7, and the group of experts were teachers, a school psychologist, a social worker, an expert on women's and children's rights, a special pedagogue, and a lawyer. Some experts were also parents themselves. All the parents as well as experts participated in the focus groups pro-bono.

The interviews were moderated by a sociologist Marianna Mrva, who has many years of experience in conducting focus group interviews. The course of the interviews took place according to the scenario prepared by the Hintalovon Foundation, but it also depended on the

dynamics of the given group and on the extent to which the given thematic area resonated in the group.

Interviews in the focus groups took place at the end of May online, via the Zoom application. The online form of the interviews was used for several reasons. Firstly, because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, during which the recommendation to limit contacts and keep away from other people was valid, but also given the simpler organization and time possibilities of the participants. All participants in the focus groups agreed in advance to record and make a recording of the interview, which served as a basis for the analysis of the interviews and the preparation of the final research report.

The dynamics of all the four focus groups were very good, the atmosphere was very relaxed, the participants after the introductory meeting mostly responded to questions spontaneously, without being invited by the moderator, and responded to each other, discussing with each other, which made conversations very valuable and enriching.

Findings of interviews in focus groups

Group of parents

The first focus group consisted of parents, aged approximately 30 to 40 years. Most of them had two children under the age of 7. Some participants were on parental leave at the time of the interview, others were working in different sectors. All of them had Hungarian nationality, came from southwestern Slovakia and lived in a village or a small town.

During the interview, which lasted about one hour, after the initial introduction of the participants, three main thematic areas were discussed: 1. Ideas and belonging to the community, 2. Willingness to help in the community and 3. Ideas about responsibility for children in the community.

Belonging to the community

The topic of belonging to the community was opened by the question of ideas about the community. Respondents mentioned characteristics such as a sense of belonging, mutual support, and help. According to them, communities mostly share the common interest of their members, or common values and goals. None of the respondents thought of the community as a physical space, or a group of people united by physical proximity given, for example, by their place of residence. Such a perception of the community prevailed throughout the interview,

respondents repeatedly emphasized the variability and fluidity of communities, which arise, for example, based on common life situations (e.g., an association of Hungarian students in Bratislava), common goals (helping the dependent in the community), shared problems or values. However, when these situations or problems disappear, the set goals are achieved, or disagreements in ideas and values appear, these communities usually disappear.

Respondents mentioned not only informal communities but also formal ones, such as civic associations. The interview also revealed that many of respondents' ideas and experiences with the community and the associated sense of belonging are linked to online communities, online forums and groups that bring together, for example, people working on similar issues. One respondent mentioned, for example, a group on Facebook that focuses on problems with breastfeeding newborns. As she says: *"... this group helped me a lot when I had a question and I have found answer to my questions there. Either someone has asked it before, or there is someone who knew how to answer it."*

The same respondent also drew attention to the phenomenon that the same life situation is often no longer enough for the emergence of communities, but that members must share common values. She mentioned, for example, mothers with children, whose groups are formed not only based on having a child of a similar age, but also whether they also share common ideas about upbringing.

Accordingly, the interview about the community showed, that the respondents mostly think of the community as a group united by common values, interests, goals, or life situations, and which are not constant, but arise and disappear. It follows that physical proximity alone does not necessarily create a community, to which the online world, increased mobility (detachment to one physical place) and value heterogeneity also contribute. Only one respondent mentioned the local community, a group of several mothers with children who meet on the playground and talk while their children play together.

Willingness to help in the community

Another topic discussed by the respondents in this focus group was the willingness to help other members of the community. Since in the first part of the interview the respondents mentioned the local community only exceptionally and did not identify spontaneously as members of the local community, the moderator called on the respondents to focus their attention on the locality in which they live. She then presented them with a hypothetical situation that in their village or neighbourhood where they live, they notice siblings who are often alone on the field, without

adult supervision, and are often hungry and dirty. Respondents were to discuss the need to intervene and resolve the situation, the personal and group responsibility of neighbours, respectively, other inhabitants of the municipality or locality.

One of the respondents had a very similar personal experience with a family with children from the village where she lives. She described the situation from the point of view of a member of a civic association, which regularly organizes collections for poor persons and dependents in the village around Christmas. According to her, however, the civic association's attempt to help the low-income household of a mother who is raising three children herself was sharply rejected by the mother and assessed as an insult, despite her apparent reliance on help. The respondent summarized her opinion on the responsibility of others in the described situation as follows: *"... first we need to ask the persons concerned, i.e., the parents of the children, that they would take if they wanted to help, that is, ask if we could help. It was a very bad experience that the person in question refused our help very sharply, although everyone, indeed, was led by only goodwill and an effort to help because we saw what the children looked like."*

A similar experience was shared by another participant of the interview, who tried to regularly help for some time a classmate of his daughter who came from a low-income family, but according to them, this help was declined by the girl's family.

Another member of the focus group also emphasized in his response the need to ask in advance what form of help someone needs and not to examine the situation of others through their own values and needs, but through the needs of the specific people concerned. According to him, *"... it is possible, for example, that they do not need new clothes, because it is not so important in their value list, but for example, they would accept an offer to pay a kindergarten allowance for them."* The respondent also drew attention to the role and responsibility of institutions in helping dependent families. According to him, for example, the municipality could pay a contribution for kindergarten or lunch to children from low-income families.

Another dimension of the discussed issue was opened by another respondent who spoke about cultural norms and education, because of which we often perceive problems other than something that does not concern us, in which we should not interfere: *"... is a certain block, a certain barrier ... I don't know, they raised us so that everyone has a certain family background, an intimate realm that - even if there's a case you mentioned with that playground - you don't interfere, or you can't interfere."*

The topic of assistance to the dependents was perceived by the respondents of the focus group mainly through the optics of the aid provider and less through the optics of the dependents. They perceived the situations they encountered mainly as individual stories and less than structural problems that needed to be addressed at a supra-individual level. Although in the reaction of one participant the responsibility of the institutions for the identification of the dependent as well as for the assistance itself appeared, this topic did not spontaneously resonate with the other respondents. However, the topic of socialization and cultural norms has emerged, which can play an important role in the perception of responsibility and the limits of aid. During the discussion, the fact resonated, which is also confirmed by international research, that in our society it is a cultural custom to solve problems primarily within the family, friends and loved ones.

Ideas about responsibility for children in the community

In the third part of the interview, the topic of responsibility for children in the community was further developed. Respondents discussed the individuals responsible for helping and how communities should address issues. The discussion was started by the respondent, according to whom, for the most part, *"everyone just relieves responsibility, shifts it to another, who also feels that it should not be solved by him, but by someone else."*

Another participant mentioned the police, which would be responsible for intervening in some cases, but the participant emphasized their inability to solve problems and reluctance to act. Another respondent mentioned state authorities responsible for the social legal protection of children, which are obliged by law to act based on an anonymous initiative. However, several respondents expressed their distrust that these offices would help and emphasized the bureaucracy involved in their actions.

When asked by the presenter whether the paediatrician is responsible for the children, many responded in such a way that the paediatrician has limited options, especially for older children, whose parents no longer have to attend to the doctor with their child. In addition, as they emphasized, most paediatricians are overwhelmed and have limited capacity to deal with, for example, children's neglect. The current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic also appeared in the interview, because of which the institutions have a difficult opportunity to identify and deal with similar situations.

The last round of questions concerned the ideal community and how the ideal community would act if it involved, for example, child neglect. Respondents agreed that in such an ideal world,

an awareness campaign would work to inform people that they could turn to if they witness neglect and that the relevant authorities or institutions would act immediately while protecting the notifiers too. The whole help system would be clear, simple, and accessible. One respondent added that the assistance system would need to be comprehensive, linked to each step, and problems with children could be addressed in all its complexity.

In this part of the interview, the respondents mentioned the institutions that are responsible for children. However, there were mostly opinions expressing dissatisfaction and distrust in the ability of existing institutions to solve problems. At the same time, they were based on their own experience and on the overall impression of these institutions, which, according to them, are often over-bureaucratic, slow, and unable to solve problems in their entirety. There was also a certain degree of uncertainty in the respondents' reactions as to which authority or institution they could contact if they witnessed child neglect or violation of the child's rights. Concerns about confrontation with the parents of a neglected child have also arisen in connection with the reporting of such cases.

Overall, it can be stated that the respondents of the focus group were mostly attentive and sensitive to the problems associated with the well-being of children, but when thinking about the possibilities of help, they focused on what they can do as individuals, so they did not think about community intentions. This may be related to their idea of the community, which in the first part of the interview they characterized mainly as a group united by common values, goals, etc., and not as a local community, which is formed based on the physical proximity of neighbours or residents of one community.

From the beginning, they also perceived the problems associated with children mainly as problems of specific children, families, and less than the structural problems that need to be addressed systemically. However, in other parts of the interview, the responsibilities of the institutions also emerged, from which they spontaneously mentioned the municipal authority, the school/kindergarten, the police, and the authorities responsible for the social and legal protection of children. However, in connection with these institutions, distrust prevailed in their ability to solve problems and the opacity of their functioning and competencies. In an ideal world, however, they would be the ones people could turn to and deal with reported cases.

Overall, it can be said that in terms of safety and well-being of children, the respondents of our focus group would look for a solution primarily individually, or through institutions and less through the local community, with which they felt only a small degree of belonging.

Group of experts

The second focus group consisted of experts who deal professionally with children, whether as teachers, special educators, lawyers, psychologists, etc. All of them, like the members of the group of parents, belonged to the Hungarian community in Slovakia and came from southwestern Slovakia. However, some of them also had work experience abroad, which they also shared during the interview.

After the introductory round, when everyone introduced themselves and the moderator informed the participants about the course and goals of the focus group, three thematic areas were discussed, namely: 1. Protection of children in the community, 2. Network of professionals and 3. Relationship between professionals and residents.

Protection of the children in the community

The topic of child protection in the community was opened by the moderator with questions of who are/should be those people who are responsible for child protection and how does child protection work in the community?

The first respondent who responded to the moderator's question, emphasized in his answer the role of the community and the (lack of) education about the protection of children in the community. According to him, the municipality could be responsible for education. Another participant pointed out the signalling system that should work, which includes a paediatrician, nurse, social worker, social protection office and guardians, but also, for example, neighbours, who can be the first to be warned of child abuse. The respondent, who works as a lawyer, pointed out that the signalling system often does not work because - especially in smaller communities - people who witness child abuse consider this matter to be a family matter that they do not wish to intervene in. She mentioned as the second barrier the inability of adults to identify abuse and the fact that they do not believe the child what he says.

Other participants, a teacher, and a school psychologist opened the topic of the responsibility of teachers and the school/nurseries for child protection. As the participant, who acts as the deputy principal of the primary school, said: *"... for example, bullying of children often takes place during breaks, in the toilet or the yard. And when one teacher must supervise 70 children to conceive in the yard, they have no chance of catching all cases of bullying."* The respondent further pointed out that most schools do not employ a full-time school psychologist and therefore the school psychologist is present only once a month, or in some cases, once every

six months, although it would be needed to be available every day and the teachers or students could turn to him at any time.

The participant, who works as a school psychologist, added that if the teachers had training on how to recognize that a child is being abused or bullied, it would help the situation. Another teacher in the group responded by saying that even though a teacher is aware that a child is being abused, he or she often has no one to turn to because psychologists are very busy and the authorities in charge of protecting children often do not work as well as they should.

Therefore, the conversation about the protection of children in the focus group was characterized mainly by feelings of disappointment, helplessness, and unavailability of solutions. These feelings were most presented in educators who identified themselves as responsible for dealing with abuse or bullying but often felt that they were alone in the problem and lacked professional help. The lack and unavailability of school psychologists resonated as a major problem. During the interview, it was stated several times that school psychologists and other professionals are often replaced by non-profit organizations, mediators, etc., who can respond more flexibly to the needs of schools than public authorities. In addition to the responsibility of teachers, the role of neighbours and other members of the community was discussed. However, these categories often do not feel responsible for protecting other children.

Network of professionals

The issue of the network of professionals resonated in the first part of the interview, especially in connection with the lack of experts, the confusing network of support and distrust in some state offices. In the second part of the interview, this topic was further developed.

The participants of the focus group, who had foreign work experience, especially from Hungary, emphasized the role of the signalling system and the precisely defined responsibilities of the individuals of this system. The respondent, who worked as a special pedagogue in Hungary, emphasized that reporting abuse to competent authorities was not an option but an obligation. Another participant who had experience with this system, however, pointed out that in practice it does not work so often, many times adults do not know how to identify the abuse, do not believe the child, or do not move the case competently, but solve it in another way.

During the interview, several experts pointed out that the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated online teaching and lockdown worsened the possibilities for child protection, as contacts between children, teachers, and other professionals, but often with bigger families and communities any neglect or abuse could go unnoticed.

Participants who have experience with the Slovak child protection system spoke mainly about the non-existence, malfunction of the signalling system and that, as experts, they must deal with situations themselves. Their narration showed that this is often due to the unavailability and busyness of experts, as well as their distrust of state authorities, which they turn to only in extreme cases, in some cases they do not know exactly to which authority they could turn for help.

However, another participant added that in addition to professionals, children, friends, and classmates should be responsible for protecting other children, for whom there could be lectures explaining to them what their role is in protecting their peers. As he says: *"... in my opinion, the most important thing is to tell children what consequences it can have when he is an aggressor who bully other children, or when he learns that his friend is being abused or bullied, but he does not tell anyone about it."*

Another participant, a teacher, pointed out that solving problems is just as important as their prevention, for example through various lectures for children. However, according to her, it is often very difficult to find the right experts. She mentioned, for example, the issue of internet safety, which is linked to many child safety issues, and drew attention to a very important dimension of child protection - the limited number of professionals who speak Hungarian and can therefore help Hungarian children. The participant, who works as a lawyer, added that the police also have prevention programs and can be contacted with such a request. The police can also explain to children what is considered a crime or an offence, whether it is a relationship between children or a relationship between adults and children.

Relationship between professionals and residents

In the next part of the interview, respondents discussed the relationship between professionals and residents, how the community plays a role in protecting children, and how community members and professionals come into contact.

The respondent, who works as a special pedagogue, emphasized the importance of raising children and spreading enlightenment among them. She mentioned the importance of developing legal awareness, prosocial skills, empathy, and the ability to resolve conflicts so that the children themselves can help their peers and identify their problems. Another respondent added that the peers, friends of the child are very often those to whom the child entrusts his experience with ill-treatment, bullying, etc.

Other participants also emphasized the importance of spreading awareness of who a member of the community can turn to if he or she witnesses child abuse, or what procedures await him or her if he or she does so. Like the group of parents in the first focus group, the experts drew attention to the transparency and simplicity of procedures for dealing with child protection issues.

Based on an interview with child protection experts, it can be concluded that the group agreed that there is a wide range of institutions responsible for child protection, but the group resonated most with the responsibility of teachers whose contact with children is most intense. This view dominated during the interview also because among the participants of the focus group were several experts who meet with children in the school environment, whether as teachers, special educators, or school psychologists.

Another interesting aspect of the group interview was the fact that in connection with the protection of children, respondents more often mentioned bullying or abuse of children by other children, such as abuse that takes place in a family environment. Although, as one participant mentioned, children who behave inappropriately towards other children are often victims themselves.

Experts said that the child protection system that operates in Slovakia is often inefficient and confusing. This is due to the unavailability or busyness of child professionals, the unconnectedness of professionals, the absence of a single protocol to determine how to proceed in individual situations, and distrust of other child protection authorities. During the interview, the participants also pointed out that few professionals speak Hungarian and are therefore able to communicate with Hungarian children in their native language.

Respondents further emphasized the need for awareness-raising activities among the public, which could raise awareness about child protection and who anyone can turn to if they are witnessing child abuse. They highlighted the role of friends, who are often the first to be trusted by a child, or who can identify a problem and inform adults.

Overall, it can be said that the interview showed that the child protection system would need to be significantly improved because many times the experts themselves feel that they can rely only on themselves and their acquaintances.

[A mixed group of parents and experts 1](#)

The other two focus groups consisted of parents and professionals who participated in the first two group interviews, but in this case, they did not discuss separately, but the experts and parents discussed together, in two groups. The assignment to the group was random, it took place mainly based on the time possibilities of the participants. The scenario of the interview for both groups was the same, the participants discussed two main thematic areas, which were as follows: 1.) problems affecting children in the community and 2.) possibilities of community programs where residents and child protection experts meet and interact.

Problems affecting children in the community

In the beginning, the moderator, as in the case of the first two focus groups, invited the respondents to introduce themselves to each other. As a result, the atmosphere was relaxed, and the conversation began in a friendly atmosphere. The first topic presented by the moderator concerned the issues that most affect children, which pose the greatest danger to them. She asked the participants to name what they thought these problems were.

The group agreed the most with the answers about children's use of computers and Internet security, which, according to the participants, are associated with problems and threats to which virtually every child is exposed from a certain age. The participants mentioned as a threat the exposure to inappropriate content and cyberbullying, which may come from strangers who contact children through social networks, but also from friends. One of the participants in the group, a teacher, pointed out that cyberbullying by classmates was a very big problem during online teaching. As she pointed out: *"... the rules that apply in the real world will disappear in the online space. It's awful what [the kids] can write to each other or how they can treat each other. "*

Other members of the group, who also deal with the protection of children professionally, mentioned other threats in addition to safety, especially related to the neglect of children by parents and lack of interest, which results in, e.g., children escaping.

Possibilities for community programs during which residents and child protection professionals meet and interact

Another issue, or rather the role that the moderator presented to the group, was focused on planning a program or system that could address the challenges related to child protection. The group first discussed the people that such a system should or could include at the local level. The first respondent to take part in the discussion named parents, teachers, experts, and the children themselves, who he said must also be part of such a system. When asked what kind of experts they could be, another respondent answered that churches and church associations could

also be involved. Furthermore, teachers, social officials, non-profit organizations, the children's ombudsman, the police, social workers, and lawyers were appointed. One respondent noted that a list and contact with experts could already help, for example, a teacher, social worker, or other members of the community to know who to contact if he needs to solve a problem.

When asked who should be part of the network experts, many mentioned non-profit organizations, but one respondent noted that the responsibility for ensuring an effective system of assistance and protection of children ultimately lies with the state and state institutions.

Furthermore, the moderator led the group to think about in which forums all the named people could meet and interact, and what form such meetings could take. In its answer, one respondent noted that such a personal meeting or a forum would certainly be useful, but, as she says *"... when I return home from such an event, it would be good if I had something in my hands, such as a brochure that I can pull out when I encounter a situation where I can see who I can ask, for example at the community level ... "*

Another participant in the focus group came up with the idea of addressing a local company or organization that could be a sponsor and to make the topic of child protection more visible, for example on community days or family days, which are regularly held in municipalities. Another respondent further developed this idea. According to her, already existing events, such as family days could be thematic and focus on a different topic each year, such as cybersecurity, which would be discussed, for example, in lectures and educational materials on the topic would be distributed. In this way, according to the respondent, the project could reach a wide range of people and could combine a serious topic with a good mood.

Overall, it can be said that this focus group has identified threats to social networks and online safety as the main threats to children. According to her, it would be necessary to involve a wide range of experts in solving this problem, but also parents, other members of the community, as well as the children themselves. They suggested that first and foremost, a network of different experts in the field should be set up, to which members of the community, or even the children themselves, could turn. They also emphasized the need for education and the program, the implementation of which they proposed at the community level, focused on education and the widest possible impact.

A mixed group of parents and experts 2

The second group, consisting of parents and experts, was organized in a similar way to the first and was to discuss the same topics.

Problems affecting children in the community

After the introductory round, the presenter opened the group discussion by asking what the main problems or threats that affect children in their community are. The first participant in the group to respond to the question named harassment, which happens mainly between children. She emphasized that this phenomenon could be observed both offline and in the online world. Another respondent, who works as a psychologist, added that the problems of harassment are further exacerbated by the distrust that children feel towards their parents. According to her experience, distrust is also a problem in general, which stems from insufficient communication between children and their parents. As a result, the child is afraid to turn to his parents. Another participant in the group confirmed this experience as a psychologist, adding that in many cases their family is not a safe environment for children, and they are afraid to go home because they fear punishment.

Other respondents mentioned the problems associated with children spending too much time in front of computers and mobile phones, because of which they often have difficulty making and maintaining friendships in the real world. Another related problem is Internet security. According to the respondents, parents often do not even know what the threats of the Internet and social networks are, or they are not technically capable enough to provide a safe online environment for their children.

Overall, it can be said that the main problems identified by this focus group were harassment of children with each other, an atmosphere of mistrust between children and parents, and the fact that parents often do not know their child and, finally, internet safety.

Possibilities for community programs during which residents and child protection professionals meet and interact

The discussion continued with an attempt to identify those people who are or should be responsible for protecting children, preventing, and addressing the above-mentioned issues affecting children within the community. Respondents named a wide range of experts, such as educators, special educators, psychologists, and the social field. One respondent also pointed out the importance of involving all members of the community. As she said, "*... perhaps family friends or acquaintances will be the signalling system that alerts the persons or authorities responsible for child protection who can take action in such situations.*" Another respondent added that "*... social unions, for example, are everywhere. So, there is a system, but it often*

doesn't work as it should because these people aren't sensitive. Then there are the police, the courts, which are often also insensitive. Then a lawyer, a doctor who should recognize the abuse, report it, and who should know how to cooperate. So, such a system exists, it just doesn't work as it should." She also mentioned the helplines but pointed out that these are mostly Slovak, and that the language barrier may discourage many from turning to them.

Respondents after the discussion about the people responsible for child protection on micro and on a macro, level continued to discuss what program could be organized at the community level to raise awareness for child protection issues and to bring together all stakeholders. One participant emphasized that such a program should focus primarily on raising awareness so that each member of the community realizes what and how they can do to protect children. Such an awareness campaign could take the form of, for example, educational lectures. Another respondent pointed out that the lectures would capture only a limited group of people and emphasized that each target group should be addressed in a way and language that she understands. According to her, therefore, the topic of child protection should be elaborated, and education led creatively, for example through exhibitions, influencers, applications, etc. As she said: *"... it is important that the same information reaches everyone, but through a language he understands."* According to her, it would be possible to involve children in such a campaign and create a network of children's ambassadors who could spread awareness between their peers, whether for example in the form of vlogs or other communication channels.

Another respondent emphasized that for such an awareness campaign to be effective, there needs to be a network of professionals in the area to whom community members can turn to. He pointed out that many regions do not have enough experts, whether they are social workers or psychologists.

As a result, in this focus group of experts and parents, similar problems concerning children resonated as in the first group, and similarly, a problem arose in the disconnection and unavailability of experts, either at the local or regional level. Also, as in the first group, participants emphasized the importance of education, which should be aimed at all members of the community, including children and adults. To the question concerning a possible solution in a program that could focus on children's issues and threats, respondents suggested highly innovative solutions that are not limited to the local level. They agreed that each target group needs to be approached separately and their information communicated in a form and language that they understand.

Conclusion

Our research proved that children are rather sensitive to violent situations. They are most active when it comes to their own protection, as well as in situations that effect their friends – in these cases they are ready to stand up for them. Respondent children were prepared to speak up not only in their own defense, but also on behalf of someone else, such as a friend or a relative.

Almost half of the respondents of our sample thought that violence against children was a really serious problem, however, some 29% of them maintain that there exist more serious problems, while 22% of our research sample did not think it was a serious problem. Only 3% have no opinion or do not want to answer.

According to our findings the public opinion is rather negative in terms of beliefs, knowledge and responsibility. Parents who encourage their children to talk to them can mainly strengthen their self-esteem. Equality between men and women also resonated as a priority for adults and most people think that protecting children is everyone's responsibility, protecting a girl is even more important (56%).

The fact that the majority is based on the partner's opinion speaks of how they would keep discipline with children, the second most important leading idea was the parents' response, followed by various motivational development books and just as fourth place players follow the teachers. The most responsible adults also appear by demanding two life situations (hunger and neglecting), adults, parents and children. They give attention to the opinion of their partner, neighbor, family, loved ones.

In response to the questions „Do you speak up? Will you tell others? Who can you talk about with?“, we learned that physical violence along with sexual harassment became the most seriously considered situations when a child respondent would speak up or react proactively by telling others or talk about it with others, mostly with friends or parents or other credible adults. In general, helplines are not commonly used services in our survey sample, unfortunately. But children are informed about this possibility.

Based on the results of the third questionnaire for children and teenagers it is possible to state that respondents do not have a clear opinion on whether *they can rely on friends, family members or other close relatives*. Just over a third of them said that family was trying to help them and that they could talk to family members about their problems, or in that critical situation the family gave them emotional support. Slightly more respondents agreed with the statements

concerning friends and 43% of respondents said that they have at least one person around them that they can rely on. However, high correlation between groups of statements suggests that support from friends or other important people that young people have in their neighborhood does not replace family support, but that those respondents who feel support from one group feel support from others too and vice versa. In the case of the most active interventions by children and reactions, altogether 814 respondents (out of 1099) would tell someone *about verbal violence*, and 802 interact in the case of physical violence.

Thirdly and lastly, in our focus group of experts and parents, similar problems concerning children resonated as in the first group, and similarly a problem arose in the disconnection and unavailability of experts, either at the local or regional level. At the end, all the participants of the focus group maintained that the system of support and help was inconsistent and incomprehensible. When it came to reporting they would not exactly know what to do. They considered that the devotion to the topic on the part of public authorities and state institutions was not sufficient.

From our part, we consider a number of aspects as an added value to the issue of combatting violence against children in Slovakia:

- Being a primarily minority-focused and minority-based organization, we successfully realized nationwide research set in an international framework, fairly representative from the point of view of both the ethnic composition of the country and regional/geographic distribution, as well as gender balance and types and forms of schools.
- We have contributed to raising awareness about the issue of the violence against children among the minority populations in Slovakia, where this issue is even more neglected, underestimated and covered with a veil of ignorance as with the majority population.
- We found that the public authorities and the state should step up their efforts in combatting violence against children by various means – through education and enlightenment, by raising public awareness, by empowering children and women, by strengthening the supporting and helping services and institutions in an inclusive way, being able to help children coming from various cultural, social or language groups.
- Much more should and could be done at the community level – “Community Safeguarding” involving local institutions, NGOs, volunteers, formal or informal groups of parents and engaged adults, as well as active, self-conscious, sensitive

children raised in an atmosphere of empathy, care, love and solidarity should be our common aim.

The aim of the national report by measuring the extent and depth of social perception of violence against children in the community is complicated by the fact that it can take many forms (physical, sexual, emotional). Violence can take place in different settings (at home, at school, at work or over the internet) and can be perpetrated by individuals (parents and other carers, peers, partners, authorities and foreigners) and groups. Experiencing such traumatic events internally is challenging and painful. Talking about experiences itself requires great courage and requires significant support from others – from the community.

Annex 1

Legal background at international level

Under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child⁶, children are entitled to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence. States Parties are required to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of violence. General Comment No. 137 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child provides interpretation and recommendations to the States Parties on how to implement Article 19 of the Convention. Article 34 of the Convention requires States Parties to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and through this it defines children's rights to be protected from sexual abuse.

Legal background at regional level:

One of the most significant human rights instruments of the Council of Europe is The European Convention on Human Rights. Its general provisions apply to everyone within the jurisdiction of the Council of Europe, including children. Another relevant human rights instrument is the European Social Charter⁸. Under Article 17, the Charter lays down the right of children to be protected against negligence, violence, or exploitation.

The European Court of Human Rights has a vast jurisprudence⁹ on children's rights, in which the Court condemns violence against children. Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union (Treaty of Lisbon)¹⁰ and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights¹¹ lay down the legal basis for the promotion and protection of children's rights in EU law. The Treaty of Lisbon established the promotion and protection of children's rights as one of the EU's main objectives. The Charter of Fundamental Rights refers to children's rights at EU constitutional level (Art. 24), and it specifically mentions certain rights.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU¹² also contains specific references to children, enabling the EU to enact legislative measures aimed to combating sexual exploitation and trafficking in person, in particular women and children. This has led to the adoption¹³ of several

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

⁷ https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.13_en.pdf

⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/the-european-social-charter-treaty-text/1680799c4b>

⁹ https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Minors_ENG.pdf

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012P%2FTXT>

¹² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

¹³ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-ecthr-2015-handbook-european-law-rights-of-the-child_en.pdf

directives, namely the directive on combatting child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and child pornography¹⁴, directive on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims¹⁵ and directive on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime¹⁶.

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, Member States have the right to create legislation related to child rights protection at national level, although they must consider their international commitments regarding the protection of children's rights.

Furthermore, the EU Institutions adopt Communications from the Commission on the promotion and protection of children's rights within the EU, which have direct impact on the creation of legislation and policies of the Member States. These are for example the EU Strategy on the Rights of the child¹⁷ and the EU Child Guarantee¹⁸.

Legal background at national level

In accordance with its international obligations Slovakia has adopted Government's resolution No. 632/2019¹⁹, 474/2017²⁰ and No. 24/2014²¹ and established the National Coordination Centre for Resolving the Issues of Violence against Children as an organisational unit of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family²². In addition, it adopted the National Strategy on the Protection of Children against violence.²³

The aim of establishing the Coordination Centre and adopting the National Strategy was to harmonise, evaluate and update existing legislation within different law areas (such as in Criminal Code, in law on public education or law on the protection of the social rights of children and social welfare, etc.), and to support their implementation.

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32011L0093>

¹⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32011L0036>

¹⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012L0029>

¹⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0142>

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10024#navItem-1>

¹⁹ https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/web_data/content/upload/subsubsub/1/uznesenie-vlady-sr-c-632-z-2019-1.pdf

²⁰ https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/web_data/content/upload/subsubsub/1/uznesenie-vlady-strategia-474-2017-1.pdf

²¹ https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/web_data/content/upload/subsubsub/1/uznesenie-vlady-sr-c-24-2014-1.pdf

²² <https://www.employment.gov.sk/sk/ministerstvo/NKSpreRPNd/>

²³ https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/web_data/content/upload/subsubsub/1/2019-aktualizacia-narodnej-strategie-na-ochranu-deti-pred-nasilim-1.pdf