



Sports activities for the prevention of youth violence and crime

Sports related activities play a key role within the scope of preventive approaches directed at young people at risk. Due to their high attractiveness, sports are regarded as a medium facilitating access to excluded youth scenes which are characterized by violent behaviour. Besides, sports related projects offer an area that allows to try out socially desired behaviour like fairness and respect within a playful margin.

Sports clubs and youth organisations, but also the police and penal institutions such as youth detention centres, are fond of stressing the preventive effect sport can have on violence and delinquency, for instance when it comes to “midnight sports” projects or street football. Yet the number of critical voices is on the rise, warning that the effect of these sports activities may be overestimated, particularly if they are not integrated within an educational framework. Although it is often claimed that sport may prevent violence, this has yet to be proven. A great deal of experience shows that the context within which the sports activities are integrated is a decisive factor, as well as maintaining certain conditions and standards

The project “Sports activities for the prevention of youth violence and crime” – financed by the EU-programme AGIS – aims to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the different practices and experiences in Germany, Spain, and Portugal, which in turn is to form the basis for developing quality standards across the board. The results will be presented at international conferences in autumn 2006 and spring 2007.

The central methodical approaches are: internet and literature research, interviews with experts and target groups, questionnaires, telephone interviews and – in so far as is useful - observation on site.

The results of the project will be:

- expertises that give an overview of degree and realisation of sports related violence prevention measures in Germany, Spain, and Portugal,
- a list of good practice,
- a guide containing standards and central conditions for the successful implementation of sports related measures.

The project started December 2005 and will end in June 2007.