

„Discrimination at junior high schools : experiencing the phenomenon and ideas of prevention. The perspective of students and teachers”

Key objective of the country report

- provide insight into what is perceived by young people as discrimination - what they consider discriminating and how they feel about it
- elicit the imagined reactions against discriminatory practices
- find out what the youngsters` training needs are and what kind of actions should be undertaken to counteract discriminatory practices in their opinion

- investigate if pedagogues are able to recognize discriminatory practices
- find out about remedial practices they use and ideas how to counteract discriminatory practices

Study conducted with both students and teachers:

- four focus groups with 30 youngsters (in total)
- 4 interviews with pedagogues

Methods

Focus groups with youngsters:

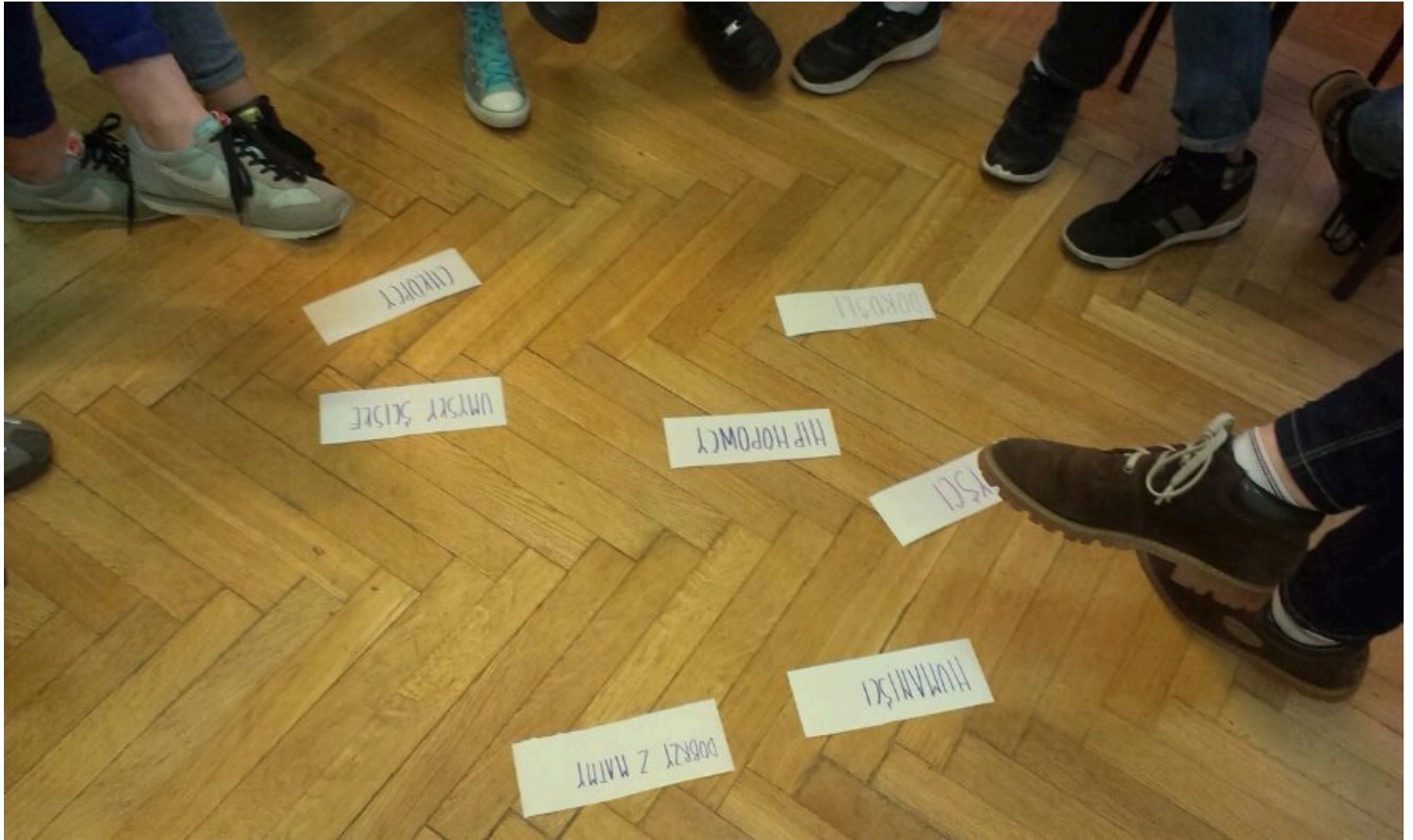
- creating a group interview scenario which consisted of several active methods and exercises
- the interview was mostly story-based, depicting a boy discriminated against based on his nationality, a girl excluded from the peer group due to her economic status, and a girl discriminated against based on her gender
- follow-up questions, e.g. about the motifs of the perpetrators, the possible reactions of the person in question or a hypothetical course of action

Interviews with pedagogues:

- questions about general situation at school – how common discriminatory practices are, to which of them young people are exposed the most, what reactions to discrimination are the most relevant ect.
- analysis of several short stories of students discriminated against based on economic status, nationality, apperance, gedner



Focus group with girls



Focus group

Key findings from the field research

Youngsters

Knowledge about the phenomenon

- discriminatory practices are commonly encountered by youngsters in their daily lives:
it is so common that it is not even worth speaking about it
- theoretical knowledge about discrimination and ability to recognize it in simple given examples
- lack of full understanding of discrimination mechanism and lack of ability to recognize it around them

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- discrimination based on gender as the easiest to recognize; topics related to discrimination based on ethnicity notably absent from the schools located close to asylum centers
- discrimination based on gender triggered the strongest emotions and unwillingness to work with this topic was significant

Reaction to discriminatory practices

- no role of adults in helping youth to deal with the discrimination they experience; noticeable distrust of teachers; conviction that their reaction will worsen the situation
- young people convinced that they should deal with discrimination themselves: find ways to show the group other aspects of their personality or ignore the assaulting and offensive behavior of their peers:

Janek took it too personally. He should have been more cool about it, then maybe they would have just let go, they would have stopped doing it, the teasing, the laughing, you know. The more angry he was, the more he shouted, the more mean they became.

- effective reaction to discrimination practices should come from the peer group.

Pedagogues

- in most of the cases recognized the discriminatory character of situations which happen among teenagers
- seemed to be helpless about the phenomenon, which resulted in partial acquiescence and acceptance of these practices; underestimate the significance of the phenomenon: *it is typical of junior high students or it is a universal behavior*

- Using „traditional” remedial practices: disciplining talk, summoning parents, a referral to a psychologist, sending for the police dealing with juvenile delinquency
- sometimes best reaction is just to “grin and bear it”
- believed that students should be more assertive and able to secure their well-being themselves

Next steps and recommendations

In designing training for students

- In anti-discriminatory actions strong impact has to be placed on showing students the mechanism that governs discrimination
- Anti-discriminatory actions conducted in student groups should refer not only to the general societal context but also to the situation in school to help students to recognize discrimination in their environment
- The efforts counteracting discrimination should encompass the entire school community, not only the perpetrators and victims of discrimination

- The efforts should concentrate also on discrimination based on gender and show the structure and expressions of such form of discrimination, which are often not apparent and difficult to recognize

In designing training for pedagogues

- showing the complexity of the problem of discrimination and need to involve all students in counteracting actions
- Encourage teachers to pay more attention to the environment where discrimination appears
- Showing inadequacy of methods of intervention currently accepted and used by teachers

- Giving new ideas, methods and tools to prevent discrimination
- Propose methods, exercises ect. which will help teachers gain students` trust

Thank you for your attention 😊

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