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REPORT, WORK STREAM II

What is girls' violence?

- *A presentation of statistics and the results of a questionnaire answered by professionals concerning girls using violence*



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Preamble

Media coverage has contributed to the common notion that girls are approaching the boys' level of violence. Reported violent crimes with girls as perpetrators have increased significantly over recent years and violent crime registered by girls' has increased faster than the data on boys. There are several possible reasons for a statistical increase, and it is crucial to be aware of the contextual conditions and changes that might affect changes like this. An increase in violence among girls that leads to court action may for example be explained by less tolerance towards their violence. Violence can be increasing in certain groups of girls while decreasing in others and any such changes will not be visible in crime statistics.

This report is a part of the “Girls using violence – intervention and prevention”- project, which is co-funded by Daphne III of the European Union. This report will present statistics and questionnaire data that the project partners listed below has gathered during the second phase of the project; work stream II.

The main objective of the project is to increase knowledge about girls who commit violence and to learn from good practices and experiences internationally. The main target group is people who work with girls between 10 – 19 years of age who have a violence and aggression problem. Another part of the project addresses girls with previous violent behaviour. The seven partners in the project are:

- Youth section, Sagene district, Oslo, Norway (in cooperation with Gamle Oslo and Frogner district)
- Instituto Alicantino de la Familia de Diputación de Alicante –Alicante, Spain
- Youth Offending Team -Swansea, Wales
- GUTS – a venue for girls, - Gothenburg, Sweden
- Harrow Council – London, England (in cooperation with Foundation4Life)
- Polish Association of Legal Education - Warsaw, Poland
- ZORA group – Munich, Germany

The project's four work streams have activities related to our research topic, which is “*girls as perpetrators of violence*”. Work stream II aims at providing an overview of the legislation in partner countries, exploring relevant professionals' perceptions about the extent of girl's violence and mapping of relevant statistics. GUTS – a venue for girls, Angered District, has been responsible for this work stream.

The seven project partners faced different challenges when trying to obtain the statistics needed for this part of our research. As an example, the project partners from Poland experienced a hardly transparent and user-friendly statistical record system. Furthermore, in Norway the statistics was very seldom divided between the genders, which made it almost impossible to find specific numbers on *girls'* use of violence. Also in England and Spain, they had challenges connected to data collection because of lack of statistical data on girls in the national database. We are aware of how these challenges might have effected and possibly confused the numbers presented in this report. In line with this, we do not claim to necessarily present any complete picture, but we have tried as far as possible to collect the most accessible of the statistics on girls' use of violence in the seven partner countries.

Statistics

Guide line

In order to aid in the collection of statistics in the different countries a guideline was created. The questions are based on what the project aimed to gain knowledge of. However, there was no expectation of obtaining all the information in the official statistics. The definition of physical assault here is “acts of physical assault (battery) that causes intentional bodily harm”. Murder and sexual violence is not included. The following guidelines were given to all partners to work from in compiling statistics. In order to see if the changes correspond to the group for boys or are specifically for girls, the partners were also asked to find these statistics for boys in the same age groups

1. At what age are people of criminal responsibility in your country?
2. How many girls under the age of 20 were suspected of assault between 2000 and 2012?
3. How many girls under the age of 20 were convicted of assault between 2000 and 2012?
4. How many girls under the age of 20 were sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault between 2000 and 2012?
5. How many girls with a history of violent behaviour have received institutional care?
6. How many are the victims of girl’s physical violence?
7. Identify the victims of girl’s violence –male peers, female peers, younger children or adults?
8. Do girls exercising violence on their own, together with male or female peers or with adults.

The complexity of statistics

Comparisons between countries’ crime statistics should ideally focus on trends over time, rather than direct comparisons between countries in the number of crimes in a given year. The reason for this is that the data can be affected by a variety of factors such as:

- influence by political or ideological agendas of the different countries
- various degrees of criminalisation
- various legal and criminal justice systems
- police procedures for notification of violations
- the criminal justice system efficiency
- differences in the time of notification for crimes
- differences in the rules for how multiple felonies are counted
- differences in the list of offences included in the total crime statistics
- tendency to report, unrecorded and hidden statistics

The first step towards a more comparable system of crime statistics was taken by the European Commission Communication (COM (2006) 437) for a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice: an EU Action Plan 2006-2010. The longer-term objective is to develop a harmonised methodology for the collection of EU statistics, which allows comparison of the structure and trends in crime between Member States.

When one wants to compare how values have changed over time, an index is often used. The index describes value development in relation to a specific point, often called a baseline. In this document, indexes are used in order to show the percentage changes over time and in relation to each other. Using an index, we can compare the statistics in a clearer manner.

The project partners have collected the statistics in this report. There is a large difference between the countries when it comes to the accessibility of statistics and hence the diagrams and tables are not complete. There is little or no official data to answer questions about the girls' accomplices or victims. Much knowledge can almost certainly be found with practitioners, police and researches in the local area. The information presented here should be interpreted with caution in reference to the previously stated reasons. Another important issue to consider when analysing the statistics is that the number of girls who commit violence is low. This means that small increases can cause a high percentage change, which can lead us to believe that violence is more prevalent than it in reality is. It is also of importance to keep the population growth in mind when comparing numbers for different years. The statistical value lies in giving us an overview of trends in different countries. The charts and tables can contribute to stimulating discussions and be part of efforts to raise awareness about girls who use violence.

Violent crimes recorded by the police

This Eurostat table shows the number of violent crimes, regardless gender or age, recorded by the police in the areas. It can be of interest to study the trend in crime in general before looking specifically at girls. All countries except Spain, have seen an increase. Germany 7 %, Sweden 44 %, England and Wales 17% and Norway 26 %.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Germany	188,413	197,492	204,124	211,172	212,832	215,471	217,923	210,885	208,446	201,243
Spain	121,094	120,581	109,798	108,820	112,426	114,205	113,473	116,324	113,060	106,509
Sweden	78,407	79,455	83,782	86,107	94,205	98,154	104,627	108,448	111,703	113,262
England and Wales	813,121	1,014,239	1,133,506	1,201,967	1,219,861	1,205,065	1,099,771	1,035,035	1,000,845	953,047
Norway	19,217	20,414	20,039	21,360	21,381	22,591	23,205	23,848	24,261	24,222

Age of criminal liability

The age of criminal liability is a legal concept entailing that a person is considered be able to distinguish between right and wrong and therefore can be held liable for violations. Those who have not attained the age of criminal liability cannot be prosecuted. Age of criminal liability varies considerably between countries and is based on a political opinion about when you think that young people should take responsibility for their actions. Countries that have very low minimum age do not give prison for the youngest children, but they may for example be sentenced to juvenile detention. The difference from countries with a higher age of criminal liability is that there is a trial and to a greater extent a coercive and a formal punishment. Actions that had led to prosecution if the person was of the age of criminal liability may lead to health care under the Social Services Law.

England and Wales: Children between 10 and 17 are dealt with by youth courts, given different sentences and sent to special secure centres for young people. Those over 18 sent to prison will be sent to a place for under 25year olds.

Sweden and Norway: Those between 15 and 18 cannot be sentenced to jail unless there are exceptional reasons. Those between 18 and 21 years are sentenced to imprisonment with consideration for the penalty for the offence or for special reasons.

Poland: The age of criminal liability in Poland is 17 or in particularly serious circumstances at the age of 15.

Spain: Young people between 14 and 18 are handled by the juvenile justice system

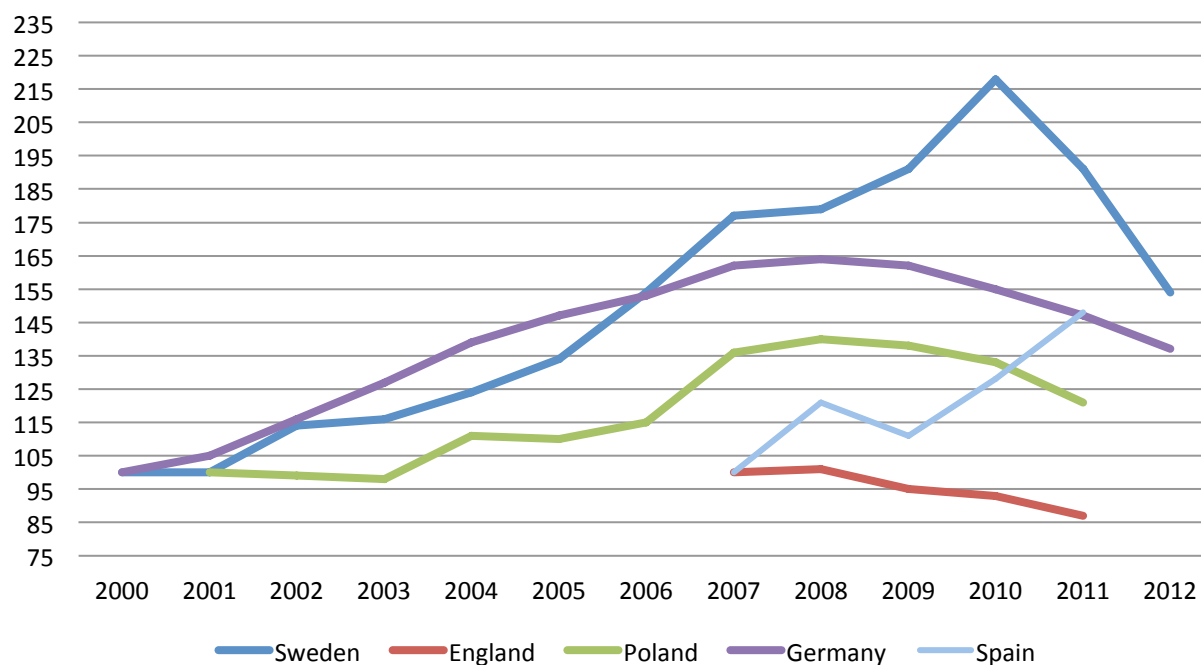
Germany: Young people between 14 and 18 are handled by the juvenile justice system. For the ages 18-21 they are treated either as an adult or as a juvenile depending on the circumstances.

Girls, under the age of 20, who were suspected of assault between 2000 and 2012

The number of girls under the age of 20 suspected of assault between 2000 and 2012

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sweden	428	430	488	498	532	572	660	757	767	818	935	820	657
Norway													
Wales													
England								87,043	88,168	83,035	81,379	75,664	
Spain								563	631	624	718	833	
Poland		1,455	1,436	1,421	1,621	1,598	1,666	1,976	2,039	2,005	1,939	1,761	
Germany	13,683	14,392	15,931	17,323	18,974	20,159	20,976	22,132	22,438	22,185	21,174	20,055	18,714

The percentage change regarding the number of girls under 20 years old suspected of violence during the years 2000 to 2012 with the first year indicated as index.



The diagram above shows the change in percentage. Sweden appears to have had an increase until 2010 and since then has experienced a drop in girls suspected of violence. England could offer statistics from 2007 to 2011 and are the only ones to show a decrease in those suspected of violent crimes. Poland showed the highest rate in 2008 and since then has seen a decrease. Germany also had its highest rate in 2008 and then experienced a decrease. It would appear that Sweden has had a significantly larger percentile increase, but please keep in mind that the number of girls is very low and the rise is only from 428 in 2000 to 935 in 2010.

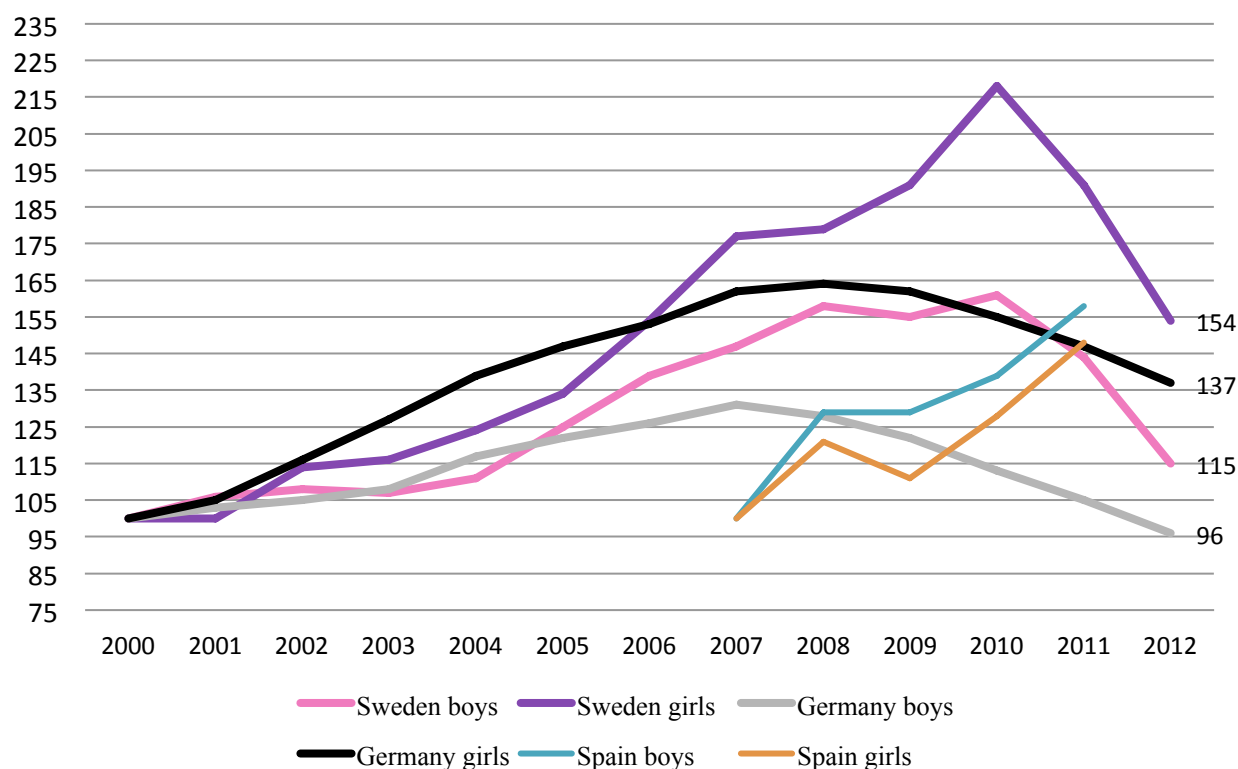
It is also interesting that the recorded crime rate among girls under the age of 18 in Oslo, Norway was halved in the period from 2009 to 2012.

Girls and boys, under the age of 20, who were suspected of assault between 2000 and 2012

How many boys under the age of 20 were suspected of assault between 2000 and 2012

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sweden	3,035	3,218	3,282	3,257	3,381	3,795	4,226	4,449	4,791	4,705	4,873	4,373	3,484
Norway													
Wales													
England													
Spain								2,536	3,264	3,276	3,513	3,999	
Poland													
Germany	81,974	84,310	85,937	88,770	95,789	99,921	103,391	107,746	105,121	99,759	92,635	85,891	78,835

The percentage change regarding the number of girls and boys suspected of violence during the year 2000 indicated as index.



The diagram above shows that the percentage changes for girls and boys over time follow each other. In all countries it is also clear that even though both genders have increased girls have a higher increase with Spain as the exception.

Norway does not have age-specific statistics, but in comparison with men, women have a 2.5% increase between 2000 and 2010. In Spain 3369 girls were suspected of assault between 2000 and 2012. This means that girls accounted for 19%.

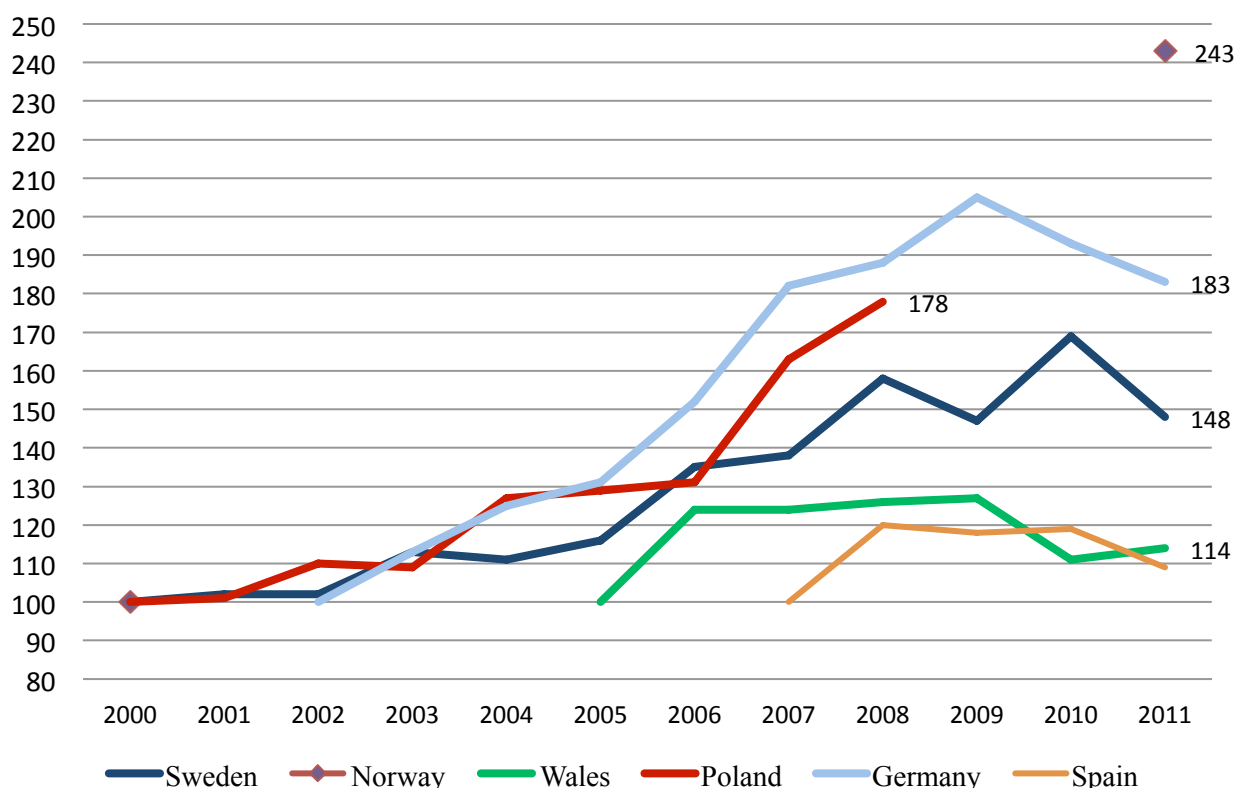
Girls, under the age of 20, who were convicted of assault between 2000 and 2012

How many girls under the age of 20 were convicted of assault between 2000 and 2012?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sweden	325	332	330	367	360	377	438	449	513	478	548	480	
Norway	82											199	
Wales 18-20		64	49	51	47	54	55	50	49	50	40	57	
Wales 10-18						540	682	685	702	705	617	610	370
England 10-17													665
Spain 14-17													
Poland under 17	516	520	568	561	654	668	678	840	918				
Germany			1,722	1,947	2,149	2,257	2,611	3,136	3,235	3,531	3,327	3,158	

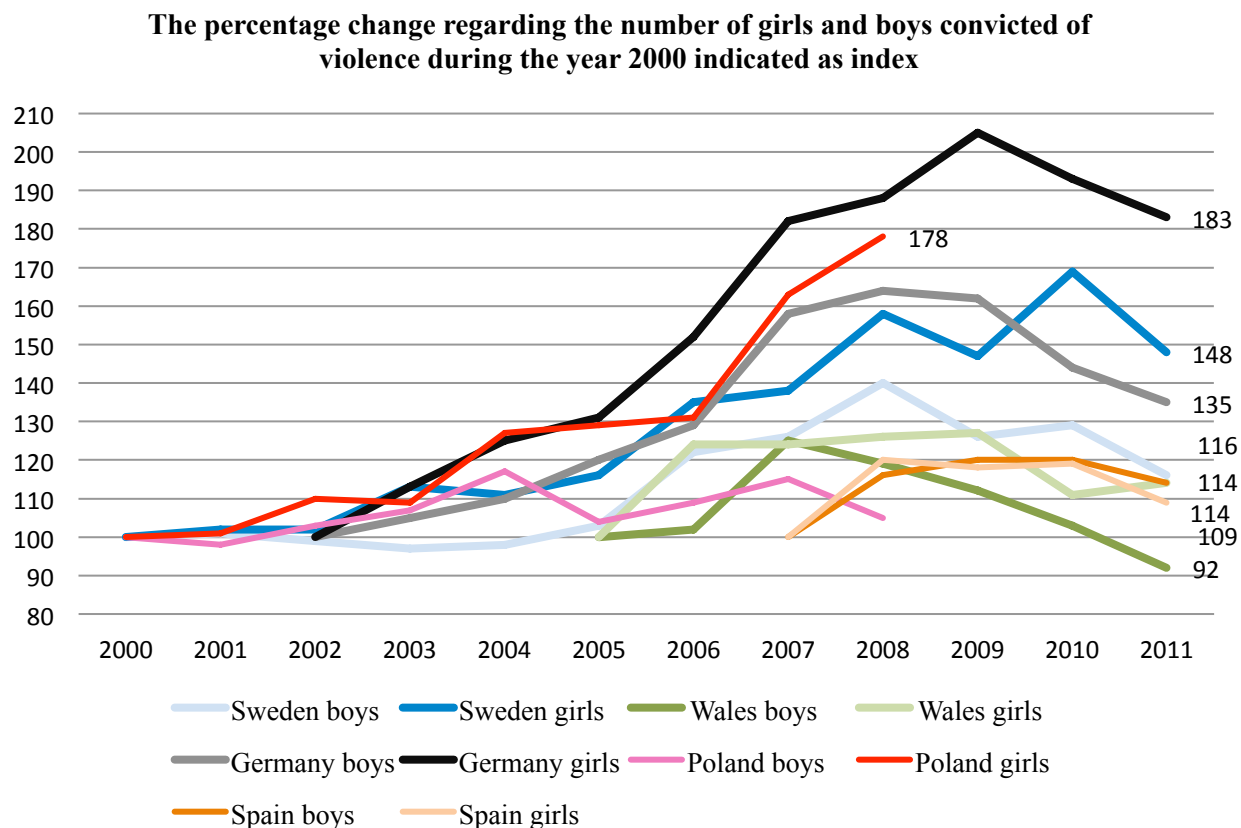
The countries difficulties of the countries in finding statistics are clear. Only Germany and Sweden could access data for all the age groups for a period of 10 years. Wales is missing data for the 10-18 age group for 2000-2004. England had one year available and Norway two. Poland and Spain could provide statistics for the under 17s.

The percentage change regarding the number of girls under 20 years old convicted of violence during the years 2000 to 2012 with the first year indicated as index.



The above illustrates how convictions of violent crime have increased in all countries, with Germany at the top and the smallest increases in Spain and Wales. This is the increase in percentage and not a graphic of who has most crime. Norway only has two year available, 2000 and 2011. A decline in recent years can be noted in Germany and Sweden.

Girls and boys, under 20, who were convicted of violence between 2000 and 2012



In this comparison between girls and boys in different countries, we can see that with the exception of Wales and Poland the two different genders follow each other. When girls are on the rise, so are boys. The increase in violence is higher in the groups for girls in four countries and slightly lower in Spain.

In Spain 2,290 girls were convicted of assault between 2007 and 2011. Girls thus comprise 23,4% of all convictions concerning assault. This is the highest number for all countries looked at.

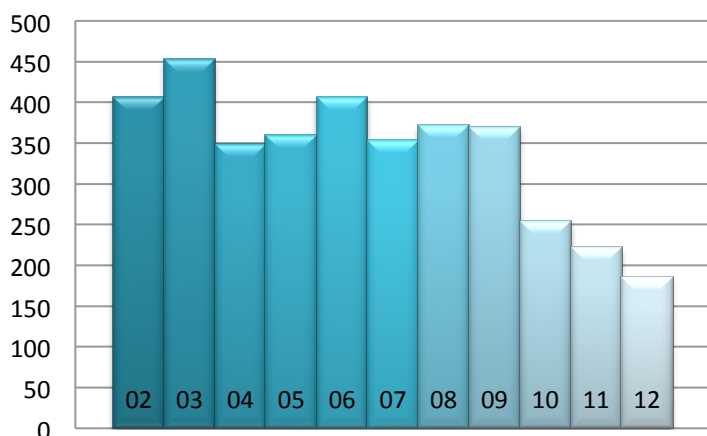
Girls sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault

In Spain 226 girls between the ages of 14 and 17 were sentenced to detention during the period 2007 and 2011. As seen below, the number of girls sentenced to imprisonment is very small in all countries and especially Wales and Sweden. England has experienced a decrease of 16%, while in Germany there has been a rise of 107%

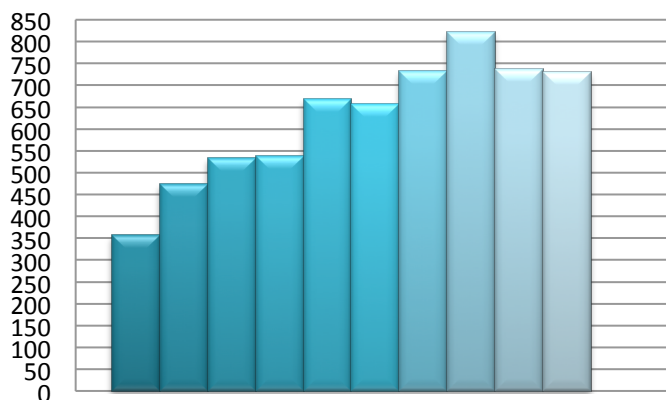
How many girls under 20 were sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault between 2000 and 2012?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sweden						1	2	2	6		1	3	2
Norway													
Wales			4	6	6	14	14	14	12	8	1	13	5
England			407	453	349	360	406	353	372	370	254	222	186
Spain													
Poland													
Germany			356	474	532	539	667	657	732	821	738	730	

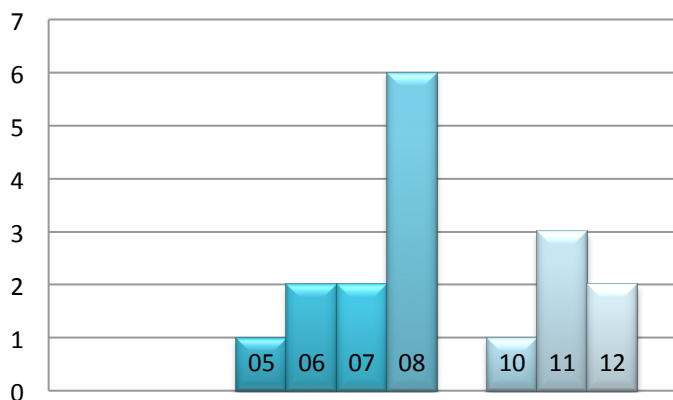
The number of girls in England age 10-18 sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault between 2000 and 2012



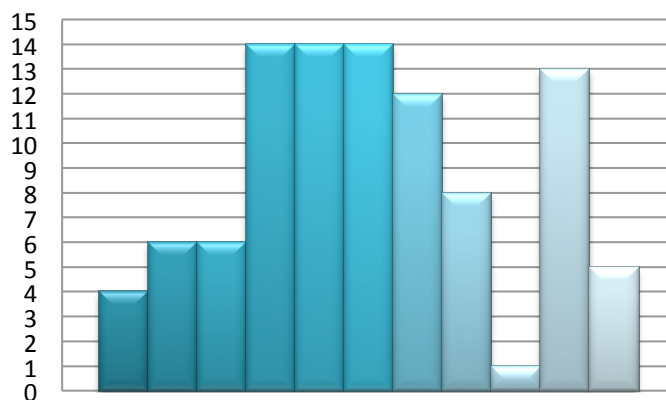
The number of girls in Germany age 15-20 sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault between 2000 and 2012



The number of girls in Sweden age 15-20 sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault between 2000 and 2012



The number of girls in Wales age 10-17 sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault between 2000 and 2012



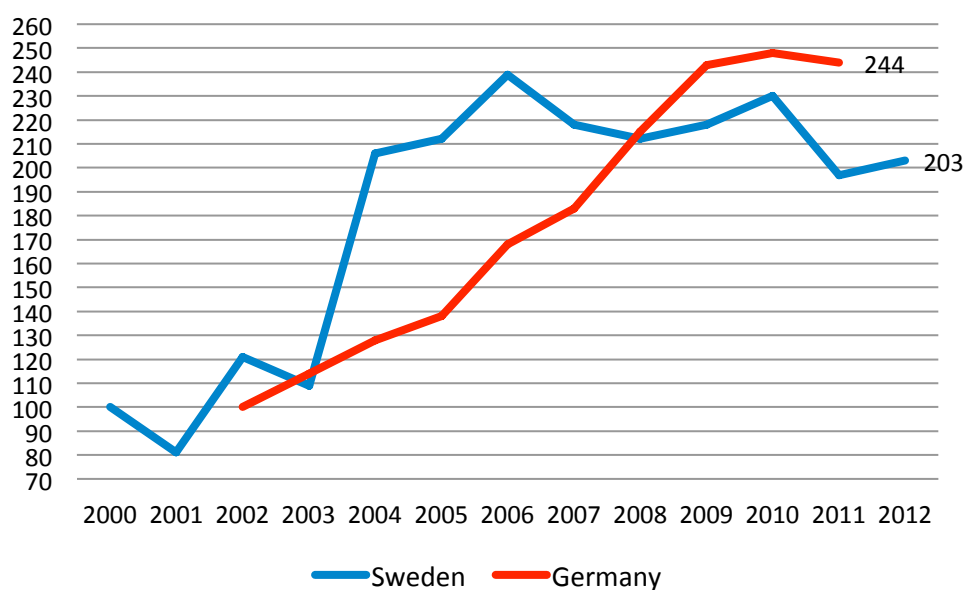
Girls with a history of violent behaviour that have received institutional care

How many girls with a history of violent behaviour have received institutional care?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Sweden	33	27	40	69	68	70	79	72	71	72	76	65	67
Norway													
Wales													
England													
Spain													
Poland													
Germany			554	630	710	762	933	1,013	1,192	1,375	1,375	1,354	

The data for Germany and Sweden is not within the welfare system but in juvenile justice.
In Spain 15,805 girls with a history of violence have received institutional care up to year 2007-2011.

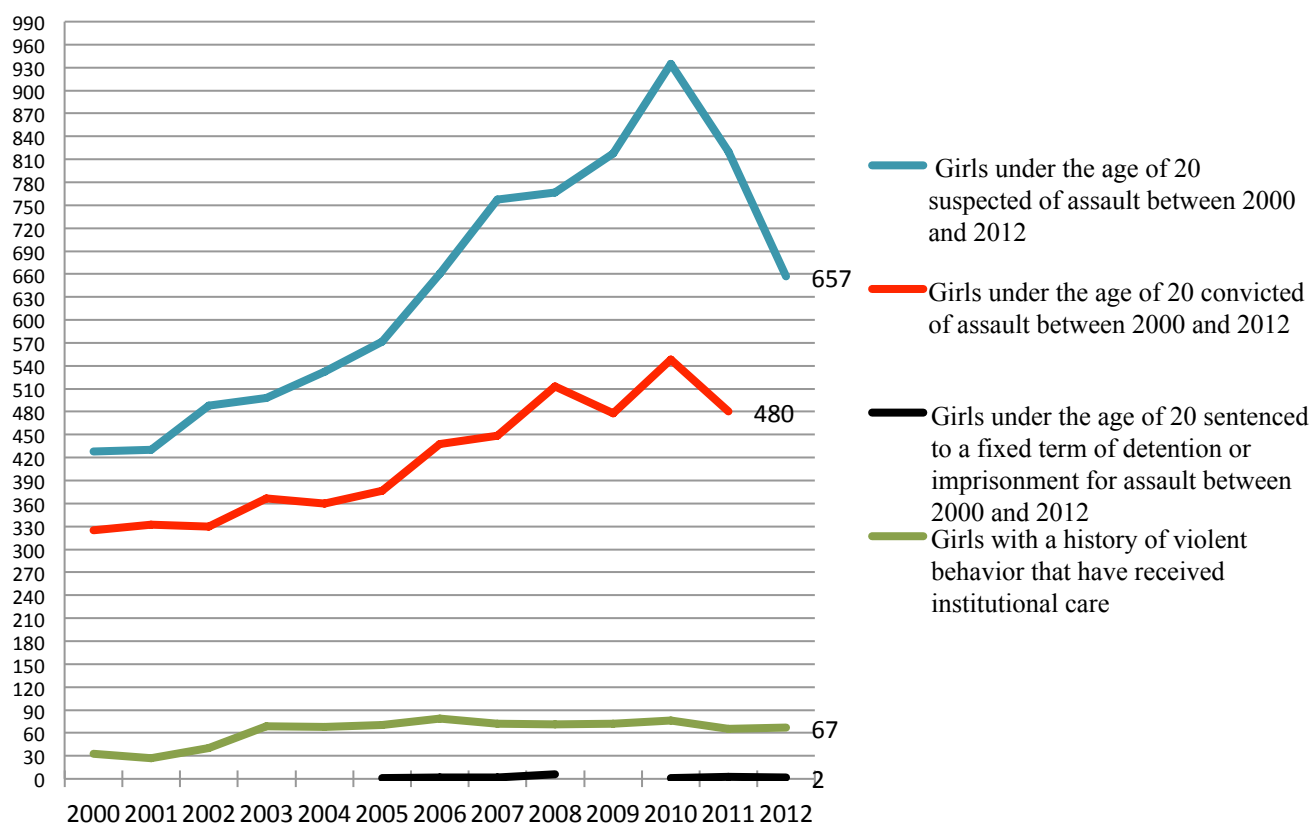
The percentage growth showing the number of girls with violent behavior that have received institutional care. Index the first year.



Sweden, an overview for 2000-2012 concerning girls under the age of 20

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
suspected of assault	428	430	488	498	532	572	660	757	767	818	935	820	657
convicted of assault	325	332	330	367	360	377	438	449	513	478	548	480	
sentenced to a fixed term of detention or imprisonment for assault						1	2	2	6		1	3	2
with a history of violent behaviour that have received institutional care	33	27	40	69	68	70	79	72	71	72	76	65	67

Girls and violence in Sweden



Sweden is the country with the most assessable statistics and hence is used here to exemplify the correlation between girls suspected, convicted, sentenced to imprisonment and in institutional care. It is visible that the numbers of girls suspected and convicted follow each other. The more girls suspected, the more convicted. The girls in institutional care also follow this trend. The number of girls imprisoned is too small to have any significance.

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be answered by qualified youth- and social workers who in their line of work meet girls 10 to 21 years of age.

This questionnaire is a part of an international EU Daphne project called VIP Girls using violence - intervention and prevention. The main objective of the project is to increase knowledge about girls who commit violence and to learn from good practices and experiences internationally. By filling in this questionnaire you will be a part of helping youth workers in seven different areas of Europe who are helping young girls. We will make sure you receive the results. Thank you for your participation and help!

How old are you?	Where is your place of work?	In which town to you work?	What is your occupation?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Institution		<input type="checkbox"/> Youth leader
	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth centre		<input type="checkbox"/> Qualified social worker
	<input type="checkbox"/> Field worker		<input type="checkbox"/> Other
	<input type="checkbox"/> Social welfare office		
	<input type="checkbox"/> School		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

1. Do you think that girls' practicing physical violence has changed over the past 5 years?

- ☐ It has declined
- ☐ It has increased (please now answer question 1b)
- ☐ I see no change (please continue to question 2)

Please elaborate your answer!

1b. what kind of violence do you believe has increased? (More than one option can be chosen)

- ☐ Violence between girls
- ☐ Violence between girls and boys the same age
- ☐ Violence between girls and adults (over the age of 21)
- ☐ Violence committed by girls within families

2. If you know girls who practice physical violence do you think something has changed in the last 10 years?

- ☐ It is milder
- ☐ It has become more violent
- ☐ It looks the same

3. How often do you speak about girls, who are physically violent, in your workplace?

- ☐ Every month or more often
- ☐ 6 times a year
- ☐ Once or twice a year
- ☐ Never or almost never

3b. If yes, in what context do you talk about girls who are physically violent??

- ☐ Mostly during informal chats
- ☐ Mostly as a agenda item at meetings

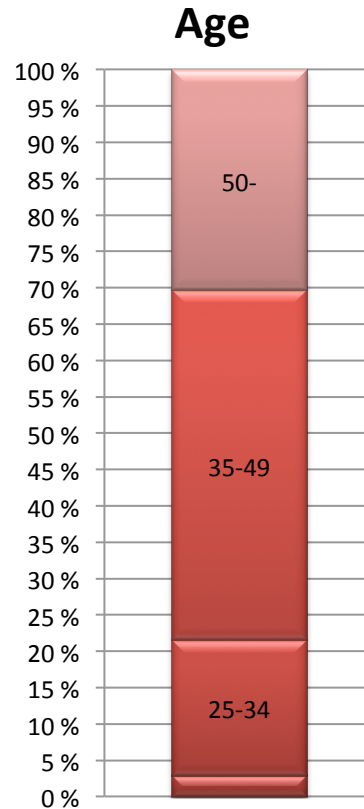
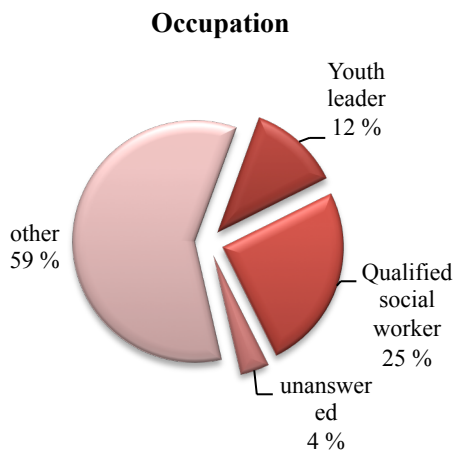
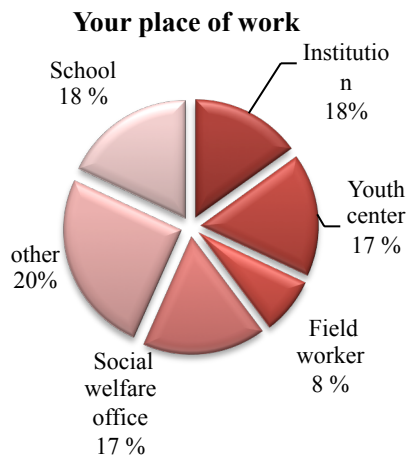
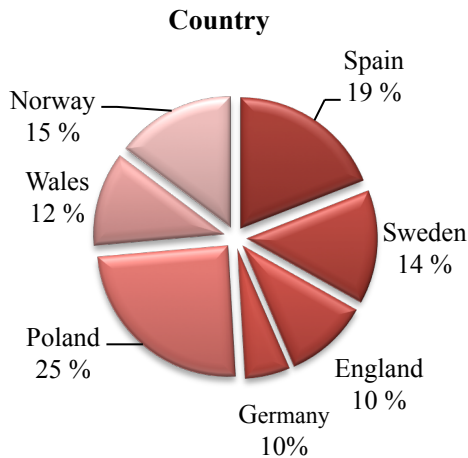
4. Are there specific interventions at your workplace for girls, who are physically violent?

- ☐ No and we do not need any
- ☐ No, but I think it would be useful to have
- ☐ Yes, which: _____

Please tell us more about your thoughts on girls who are physically violent:

Information about the questionnaire respondents

The questionnaire was sent out to all the partners in their native language with the exception of Norway, which received one in English. The responders in Poland filled it out on paper while the others used a link sent to their E-mail. A total of 167 people answered the questionnaire.



How can one's understanding of the topic, "girls who use violence" be influenced by one's occupation and education?

How can one's education and place of work affect the responses to this survey?

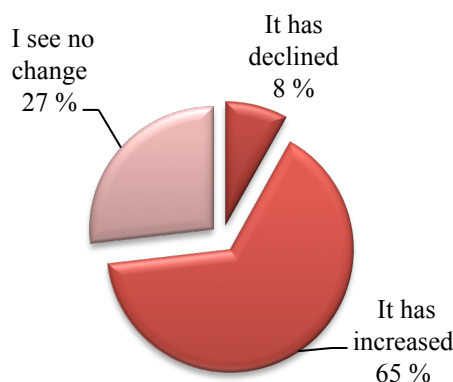
What factors influence your perspective on girls using violence?

Other: project manager, nurse, ASB project worker, ASB case manager, project worker for Social Services, counsellor, director, psychiatric nurse, new opportunities worker, environmental worker, new opportunities mentor, retired youth worker, now magistrate, youth justice worker, educator, psychologist, police,

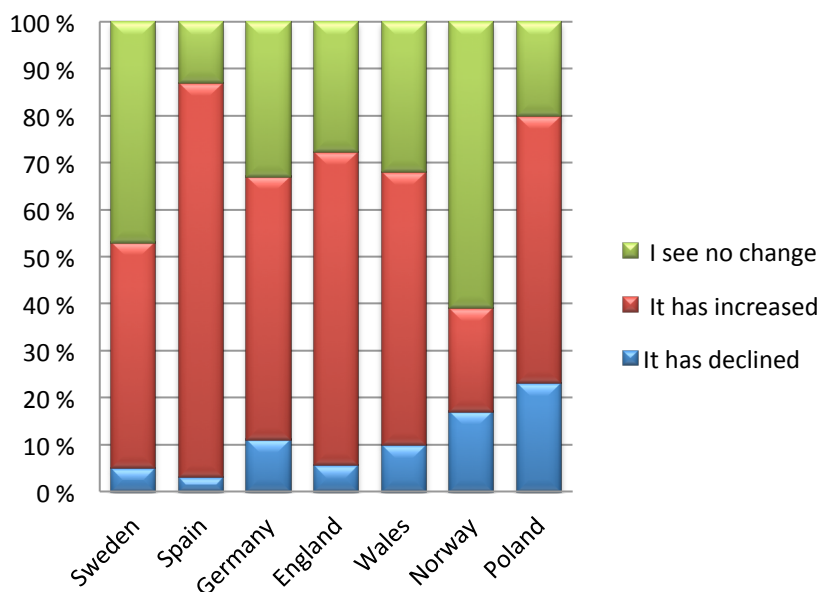
The extent of violence

Our conception of the extent of violence depends on many factors such as media coverage, popular culture, research and our own experiences. A total of 65 % of the respondents feel that violence has increased. In Spain the figure is slightly more than 80%. The professionals who answered from Norway are of a different opinion since only 20% see an increase.

Do you think that girls' practicing physical violence has changed over the past 5 years?

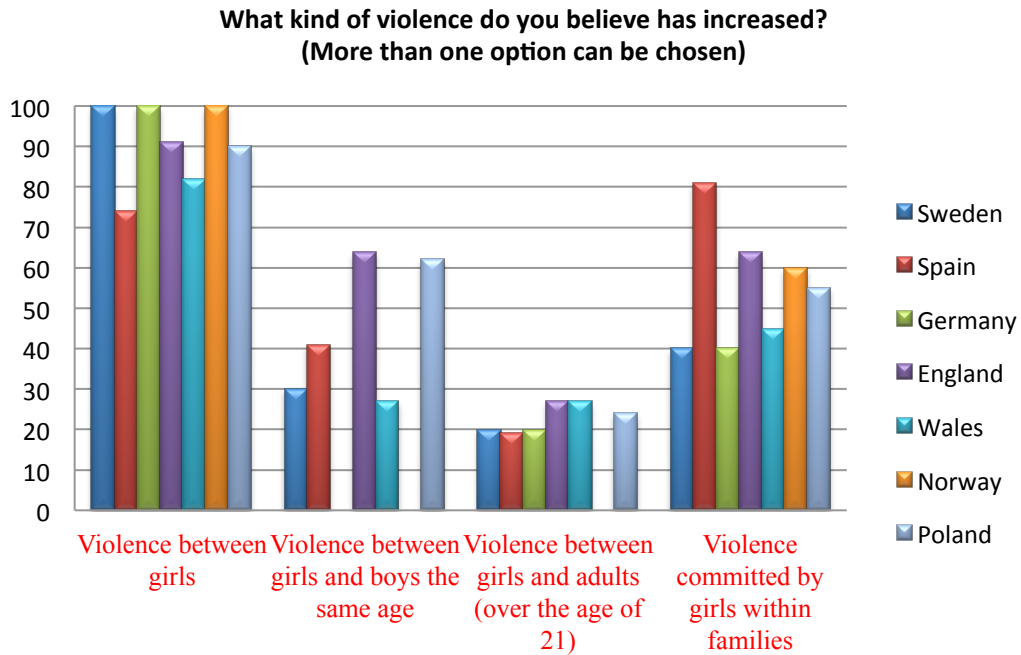


Do you think that girls' practicing physical violence has changed over the past 5 years?

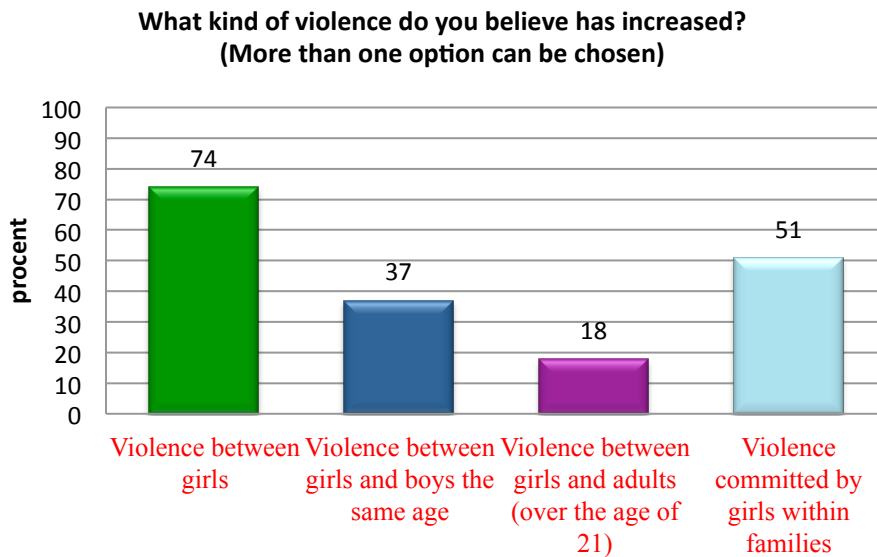


The context for violence

Those who answered that violence has increased were also asked in what context. The largest group is violence between girls. More than half believe that violence in families with the girl as the perpetrator has increased. This is a very high percentage in Spain.

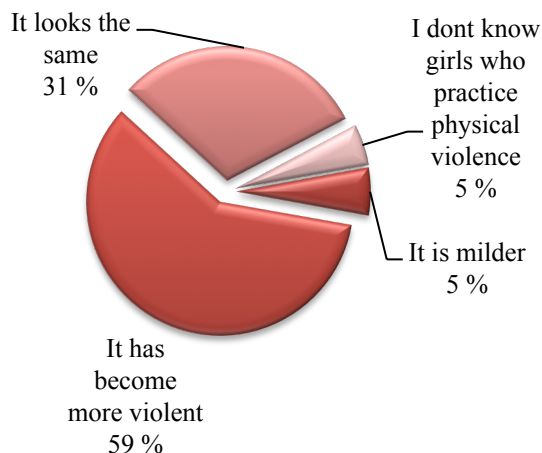


The following shows the result of the countries as a whole.



Regardless of whether girls' use of violence has increased or decreased, its character may have changed. A total of 59 % feel that it has become more violent and as many as 90 % when looking only at Spain. Only 5 % of all responders see the violence as being milder.

If you know girls who practice physical violence do you think something has changed in the last 5 years?

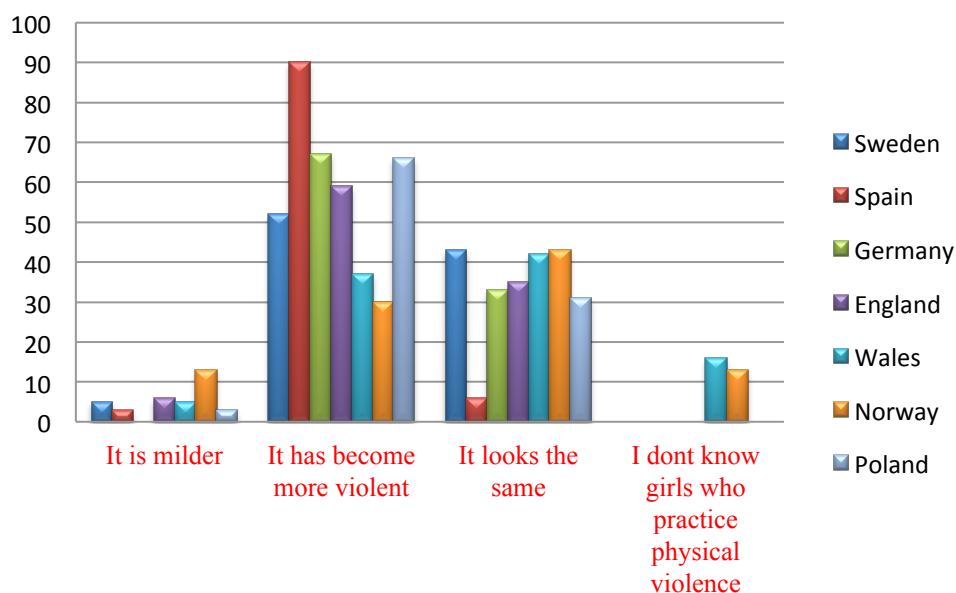


Are these results what you would have expected?

Do you see any interesting differences between the countries?

How can one understand the differences of opinions within countries?

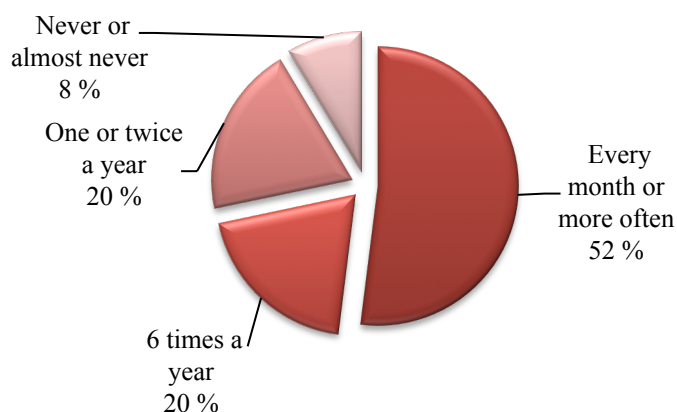
If you know girls who practice physical violence do you think something has changed in the last 5 years?



Regarding the frequency of discussions about girls who are physically violent.

Almost half of the respondents discuss this issue every month or more often. A fifth of the responders only address the topic at most twice a year. This gives the impression that the severity of the problem with girls who use violence is perceived very differently. On the other hand, important and topical subjects are sometimes overlooked and not given adequate space. Wales talks the least about this issue while England and Spain the most frequently.

How often do you speak about girls, who are physically violent, in your workplace?



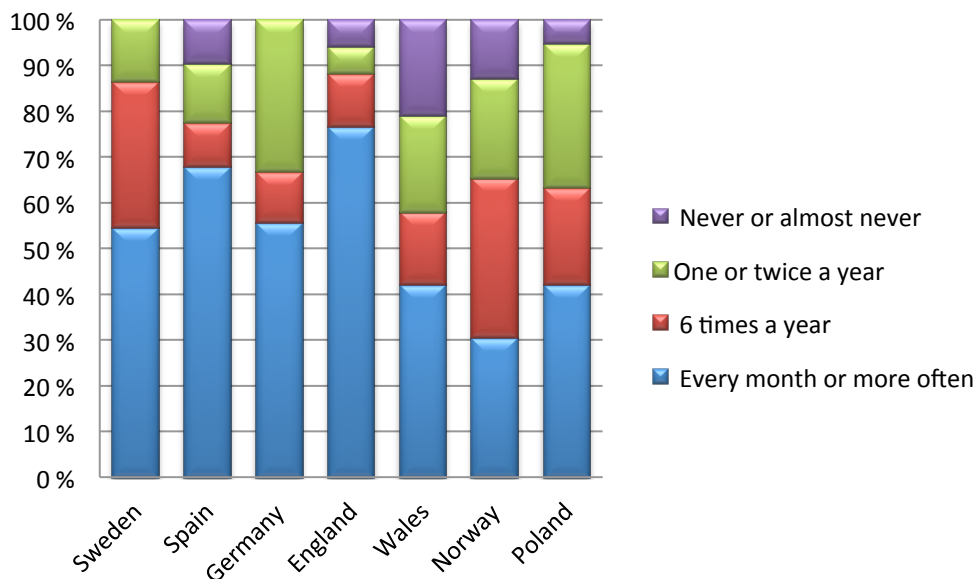
How much do you talk of girls and violence in comparison to other topics at your place of work?

What topics are prioritised and under-prioritised in your place of work? Why is this?

What factors affect how much girls who use violence are discussed at a workplace?

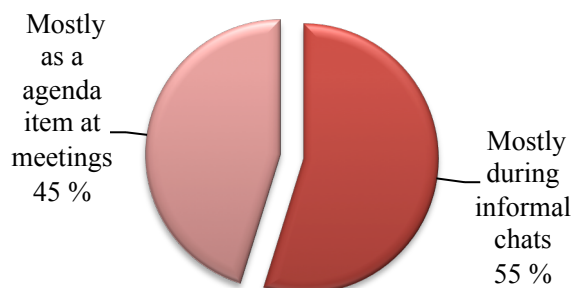
How can the differences between the countries be understood?

How often do you speak about girls, who are physically violent, in your workplace?



The charts show that the time we spend addressing the topic of girls committing violence is slightly higher in informal chats. In Wales girls using violence is discussed to a larger extent during informal chats. In Spain and Germany it is more often found as an item on the agenda. This is consistent with how often the topic is discussed.

In what context do you talk about girls who are physically violent?



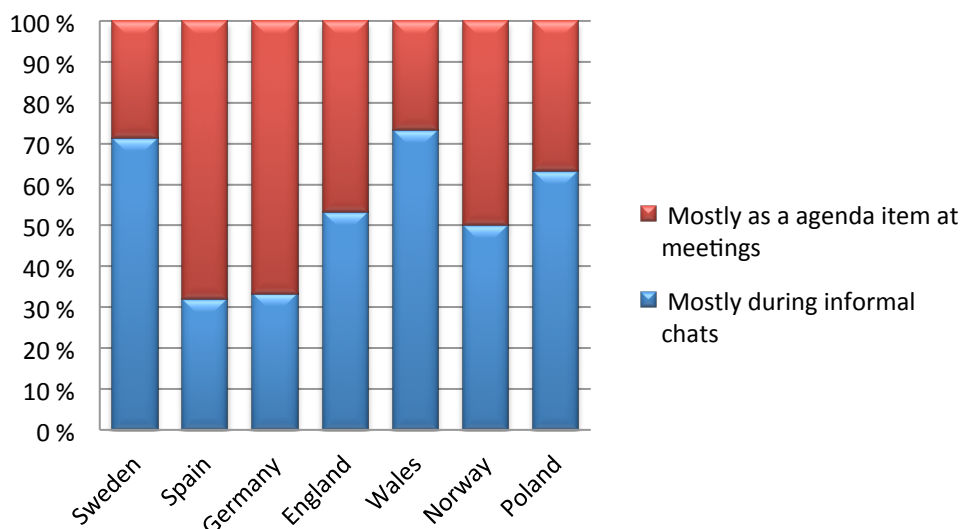
Is this what you expected?

Does it matter if the topic is raised in informal chats or as an agenda item?

Who and what determines which topics are covered during formal meetings?

How can the differences between the countries be understood?

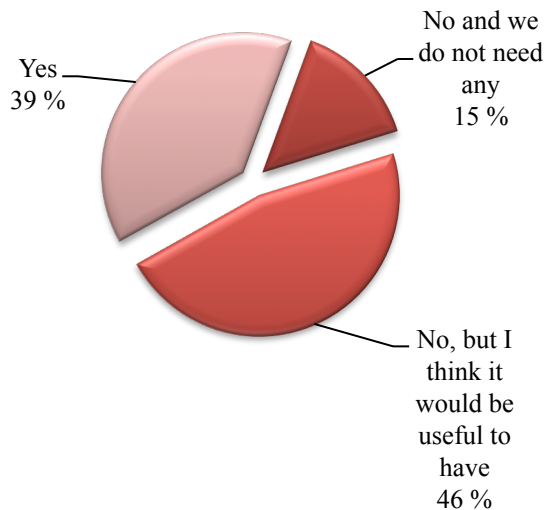
In what context do you talk about girls who are physically violent?



Specific interventions for girls who are physically violent

The percentage who state that they have specific interventions for violent girls is 39 % and almost half say they do not but would find it useful. According to the result, Wales and England offer the highest degree of adapted interventions. Sweden and Spain are most eager for adapted interventions while almost 40% in Germany say that they have no need. It is necessary to consider for whom programs and methods are designed, and for and in what context.

Are there specific interventions at your workplace for girls, who are physically violent?

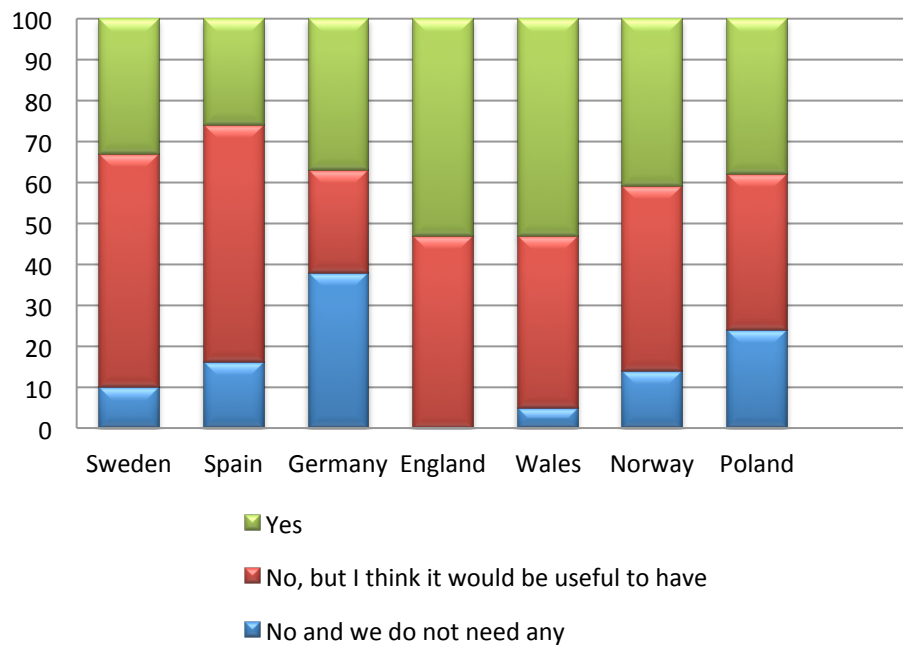


What factors determine whether a person perceives a need or not?

According to you, what criteria must be met in order for a measure to qualify as specific for girls?

How can class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. affect which specific measures are appropriate?

Are there specific interventions at your workplace for girls, who are physically violent?



Methods which are stated to be specific for girls are of preventive, educational, punishing or therapeutic character. Some are general measures, some for groups with identified needs and others directed towards an individual. The interventions mentioned are as followed:

Suited programmes

Preventive work concerning violent behaviour

- Safe Choices
- Nlp work
- Self-esteem groups
- School support groups
- Sexual education groups
- Secondary prevention of drug use
- Support and education in handling of conflicts

Interventions after violence has accrued

- Female focuses offending
- Mediations
- Heart programme
- Intervention programs for domestic violence group
- Anger management course / ART

Aimed organisations

Preventive work concerning violent behaviour

- Sisterhood (coaching and group work)
- GUTS (a youth centre for girls)
- Recreation and leisure for the target group

Interventions after violence has accrued

- Institutions

Individual methods

Preventive work concerning violent behaviour

- An assigned coach for the girl
- Lectures about the subject
- Educational talks
- Mentoring

Interventions after violence has accrued

- Individual counselling sessions
- Medical help
- Individual interventions specific to each child
- Isolation
- Disciplinary measures
- Statutory measures
- Consequences according to criminal code
- Instructions for court proceedings
- Meetings between the school, police, youth centre and the girl's parent Cooperation with other institutions
- Referral to social services or family oriented places

Final words

The number of girls who commit violence is low. This means that small increases can cause a high percentage of change, which can lead us to the belief that violence is more prevalent than it is in reality. The statistical value lies in giving us an overview of trends in different countries. The charts and tables can contribute to stimulating discussions and be part of efforts to raise awareness about girls who use violence.

When it comes to the findings that this report is based on, it is important to take into consideration the systematic challenges that the project partners faced when collecting the statistical data. This report offers a contribution to the field of study and research connected to girls and violence in Europe, but we do not in any way argue that the complete picture or the sole truth is represented in this report. To get a more in-depth picture of the forms of, causes for and consequences of violence by girls, we would recommend reading the project's other report (WS I report) which is available at our research project's official Web site.

As mentioned in the preamble, there are several possible reasons for a statistical increase in girls using violence. For example an increase in violence among girls resulting in court action, which may be explained by less tolerance towards their violence. When trying to answer the question of whether girls today are committing more violent crimes than before, it is important to take into consideration the importance of the systematic changes in the forms and circumstances surrounding the girls' violence and the apprehension about this. Violence can be increasing in certain groups of girls while decreasing in others and any such changes will not be visible in the crime statistics.

Girls' violence receives little attention in research. The extent of their crimes is marginal compared to boys, however this is an important group of young people who deserve more attention. If we do not fully understand the phenomenon of girls using violence we cannot effectively approach it. Girls' delinquency is an under-researched area and further studies on the development of violence among young women are of great importance for the girls themselves, their victims and society at large.