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1. Introduction: Aims, context and topics of YouPrev Delphi survey

The aim of the YouPrev Delphi survey was to examine future societal changes and challenges and their implications for prevention and control of youth problem behaviour. Since any type of strategic planning necessarily presupposes assumptions on the future, the challenge is to put these assumptions on a basis as solid as possible. The Delphi survey undertook to go beyond the level of “implicit predictions” by including expert opinions and expert knowledge in a systematic and structured manner. The Delphi technique is a multistep interactive survey method using panels of experts (cf. Armstrong, 2006a; Powell, 2003; Rowe, 2007; Rowe & Wright, 1999; 2001); results of the first survey round are reflected and re-discussed with the same respondents in following rounds.

As the survey focussed on developments in the upcoming decade, the year 2025 was picked as time horizon for the respondents’ prospects. The survey was conducted in two waves. The first wave focused on anticipated changes and developments in society and in the field of youth crime. In round 2, core results from the first wave were summarized as a basis for new judgements and, additionally, experts’ recommendations for prevention in selected fields of juvenile problem behaviour were addressed.

2. Methodology

Our goal was to get the responses from all the experts that deal with young people and could give information about the current situation in Slovenia; professionals working in schools, therapists, police officers, social workers in Social Care Centers, experts in the field of law, NGO’s...

We found that a lot of the professionals that were the main “targets” for the Delphi rounds from the two regions we chose have already been interviewed in local expert interviews. Secondly, size of Slovenia and the two regions is so small, that we encountered a lot of problems trying to find 100 professionals in each round.

We experienced a very limited response to the first (expert) survey, also lacking was the response from the police officers, so we tried to improve the response rate with the two Delphi rounds. Only few participants in expert survey expressed the willingness to participate in Delphi survey, so we contacted the same experts as the first time, this time personalizing every outgoing message. We contacted 250 headmasters/ social workers/ psychologists in the primary and secondary schools for each round of the Delphi. 13 responded in the first round and 19 in the second round (5% response rate in the first round and 7% in the second round).

We received an official permission from the General police directorate for administering the surveys at the police stations. In the first round we distributed 60 surveys to eight police stations and in the second round another 60 Delphi surveys to another eight police stations. In doing so we ensured higher response rates and also received positive feedback from the respondents, because we included those police officers that usually deal with young offenders. We have collected 33 responses from the police officers in the first wave and 39 responses in the second wave of Delphi survey.

First Delphi round took us a little bit longer than we anticipated because we waited for the official permission from the police to conduct the first round with policemen. Answers from the school professionals were gathered from January to March 2012, the second round from March and April 2012. Police surveys were gathered in March 2012 for the first round and in late April and May 2012 for the second Delphi round.

All in all, we have gathered 46 valid responses for the first round and 58 valid responses for the second round. Some surveys were not completed at all or just one question answered. We excluded these surveys from further analysis.

3. Sample description

As mentioned in the previous section, the first Delphi round consisted of 13 school professionals (2 headmasters, 7 social workers in schools, 4 psychologists), 16 police officers from one region and 17 from second region. The second Delphi round included 19 school professionals (7 headmasters, 8 social workers in schools, 3 psychologists), 13 police officers from one region and 26 from second region. There was no overlap in respondents, since we deliberately contacted different people for each wave to gather more responses.

4. Findings

4.1 Anticipated social changes until 2025

We received most elaborate answers from the school professionals. Their vision of the future social changes was in general very bleak; we have mentioned prognosis of bad economic state, merging of middle and lower class into just lower class. This will, by their account, lead to lower birth rates and immigration of educated young people. They predict the further rise of technology, although three school representatives felt that the development will stop in the future. They were unanimous about the lowering standards of social policy. Two of the most prolific respondents from schools wrote that laws will in future give us additional restrictions, they will exert more surveillance and we will let

them, because the politics will convince us that it is necessary for the state to work. One of the school professionals pinpointed the future use of mediation as an evolution.

About the future lifestyle – they were almost unanimous that things will get worse; some said that families will spend less and less time together, since the parents will have to do find sources of income outside regular jobs. They expect the grey economy expanding. One of the principals commented that people will have more and more lifestyles to choose from, but some of the lifestyles will become unattainable.

The police officers were in general more positive or at least they did not report so many negative aspects of the future society as the forementioned group. Two officers mentioned higher rates of unemployment, the two other officers that the economy will lead to collapse of the whole system. Contrary to these negative predictions, three officers from the first region stated that they expect that the economy will be on the rise again, one even mentioned higher incomes.

A large group of the police officers think that we can expect lower birth rates and the population getting older. Three officers expressed a concern about people from former Yugoslavian countries immigrating, one expects the immigration of Chinese people. One of the officers noted that we will all mix with other ethnicities and countries (but in a positive way).

Almost all of the officers from the second region held the opinion that the technology will develop. One of the officers from the first region expects more technology-related crime and more surveillance, another that more technology will be available to public. A very negative aspect of future is given by one of the respondents from the second region, who feels that technology will develop and there will be more products on the market, but they will be pricy and we will not be able to afford them.

The police officers in general did not respond to the questions about social policy, laws, culture, laws etc., but those who did, had mostly positive things to say about the future; no changes in social policy; that the laws will be made clear, for everyone, without the possibility to interpret them differently. Only few expressed that there will be more laws, that will only address current situation and will not be applicable in the future. Some of the police officers mentioned that our lifestyles in the future will be more stressful and that the pace of life will be quicker. One mentioned possibility of ghettoization or rise of quarters in town that will not be patrolled. Three police officers held the opinion that in future there will be more alcohol, more drugs and more separated families.

4.2 Anticipated developments in the field of youth crime / youth violence

In general, participants of all professions expect the formation of new fields of delinquency. Police officers on one hand felt that crime rates in general will stay the same, but the acts will be more daring and ruthless. Field of juvenile delinquency will be more refined by their opinion and they expect rise in crimes, connected to the drug abuse. One of the police officers wrote that the rate of investigated crimes will drop dramatically because of the lack of police force in the future.

When asked who the future offender will be majority of all respondents answered »the same offenders as today«, meaning people from similar social background, with similar personal history. Social workers employed different phrasing, using »deprived young people« and talking about them and their crimes in more compassionate way. Some professionals from schools referred to future offenders as »young, spoiled people not used of not having things«. Majority of the participants of all professions shared opinion that offenders will be younger than today; one third of each sample held the opinion that the future offenders are youngsters from lower social classes. Three of the participants expect young girls to offend more in the future.

The victims will be the same too, judging by the answers of our respondents; three social workers expect more hate crimes, one participant more crime against old and helpless.

Only three police officers from the first region felt that crimes will stay the same in the future; other were of opinion, that there will be more violence, more crimes altogether, more petty crimes (done for survival). Six participants expect rise of really heavy offences, two participants predict more sex violence, another two participants more drug addiction and autoaggressive behaviour.

Committing of the crimes: respondents in majority expect the crimes to be more planned and committed in groups. Five respondents think that we will have to deal with more gang involvement, another five expressed opinion, that future crimes will be spontaneous and individual (petty crimes for survival).

4.3 · Information and communication technology. The changing face of juvenile crime

Answers to this question were ranging from »young people know about computer more than we will ever know« to »this type of crime will remain the domain of middle aged people that possess the knowledge and technology«. All in all, respondents were deeply worried by the lowering of the moral standards and expressed the need to instill some ground moral values, particularly through the school systems.

School representatives were sceptical of the influence school can have on young people to behave in virtual domain. They shared an opinion that cooperation with the people with knowledge (young students from faculties) that would explain to pupils, what they are doing and what this may bring to them would be beneficial. Some expressed that it will be too late for education in that field in primary schools, because they are avid users of the internet even before primary school.

Few of the school professionals expressed the need for education of parents; when we asked our experts from Social care centers in interviews, if that is a possibility, their answers were almost the same. Parents that seek help or would like to know more about parenting practices are usually the ones, that do not have (serious) problems with their children. When they try to make short introductions at parent meetings at school, they are usually greeted with a lot of anger from parents, because they are »wasting their time«.

Almost all participants have written that feeling of being anonymous on the internet is what fuels most of the crimes, even bullying. As we mentioned before, school professionals did not raise the subject of (cyber)bullying, which is perhaps just an oversight, or – as one of them explained in an interview; »this field is just so over publicized. Everybody is talking about it nowadays. I think young people know not to take for granted what is written on the internet,«

A large part of police officers wrote that they feel they are not equipped with enough knowledge and with enough technological assets to solve this type of crime, and that this will only get worse in time – »we are standing still, while they (young offenders) are improving every day«.

4.4 · Controversial issues

4.4.1 Family cohesion / changes in family structures

Majority of the respondents from all the professions felt that the pace of life does not facilitate normal family life, and that in order for the families to function, we as a society should rethink our values and return to a more family – oriented life. Two police officers from the first region mentioned that primary socialization processes evolve in the family circle, one police officers expressed the need for more responsibility from the parents. One officer even suggested we should coerce family members into participation in solving the problem with their youngsters. Two officers from the second region believed we should create a way to monitor the high risk families to prevent problems.

Few professionals from the school and the police force expressed the need for the education of the parents. Some expressed the view that today's parents were brought up with permissive methods

and are unable to cope with the problematic children, because they do not know how to discipline them.

Few participants shared the opinion that we as a society became so paranoid with sexual abuse of the parents, that some parents are afraid to hold their children in public or are afraid of possible problems they might encounter with the former spouses in the court battle over a child (three police inspectors out of five with whom we had interviews mentioned this in their interviews).

4.4.2 · Demography / culture / social gaps / urban distributions

In general, participants of all professions said that immigration will be a problem, that will generate hatred towards »other people«. Only few participants mentioned we should change our immigration policy, most of them responded that if we as a society would have the feeling that there are enough jobs for us and that economic situation is good, we would be more receptive and willing to accept immigrants. Also, some participants expressed very strong beliefs about how we should give people from other countries a chance, and not to, as one police officers said »think of them as cheap labour.« Problem with this economic situation is, almost one third of the participants said, that jobs are scarce so people's opinion are very negative towards the immigrants, since they see them as unfair competition on the labour market.

Majority of the participants think that we are heading for even greater divide between the rich and the poor, with slow degradation of the middle class. People with money will move (are moving) to the outskirts of the cities, and city centres will remain to poor people, who will be (are) forced into renting small apartments for a lot of money, this even adding to their poverty and bad status. Some participants (seven in total) even mentioned ghettoization of some parts of bigger cities, that is already happening and will continue to happen in the future.

Some police officers have written that when somebody has no means to support himself/ herself, he/ she will find another way to get the necessary money – even with crime. One police officer continued in this train of thought and added that »young people try to distinguish themselves from all the rest; if they have no money, no skills, no training, they will try to distinguish themselves with daring acts.«

Five participants, two from schools and three police officers, mentioned that Slovenia positively discriminates immigrants; two expressed, that this is a mistake, that fuels the tension between »natives« and immigrants, one elaborated, that »it is not first generation that is unhappy with what we are giving them. They are happy just to be here and have the opportunity to work. Second generation is problematic, since they see only what they are entitled to, and not the responsibilities.«

4.4.3 · Education, employment and social resources

Answers in this field were unanimous across the professions; employment for young people is the problem field with which we as a state would have to deal as soon as possible. Young people without jobs is by their opinion starting point of all crimes; young people see, that »normal jobs« are not worth the try and they are most likely not to succeed.

Majority of participants expressed the opinion that our school system is not effective. We should test the skills and competencies of each child and should guide him/ her to the best education, bearing in mind the needs for that particular type of employee. There is too many highly educated young people, that cannot be employed. On one hand, higher education means higher cost for employer. Employer wants for this young person applying for the job to have previous experience, which he/ she can not get, since jobs are scarce. Young people on other hand do not want to work in other fields than that of their studies. Also, they are all brought up expecting an »office job«, and are not prepared to work with their hands.

We would also have to instill new values to young people; not to see job as a necessity, but as a challenge. To shift the mentality to a permanent search of new knowledge, new skills – to try new fields, to be daring.

Another problem is that we will have to work longer; since less people will be retiring, there will be less and less job opportunities for youngsters. Over a half of participants expressed a need for new retirement regulations.

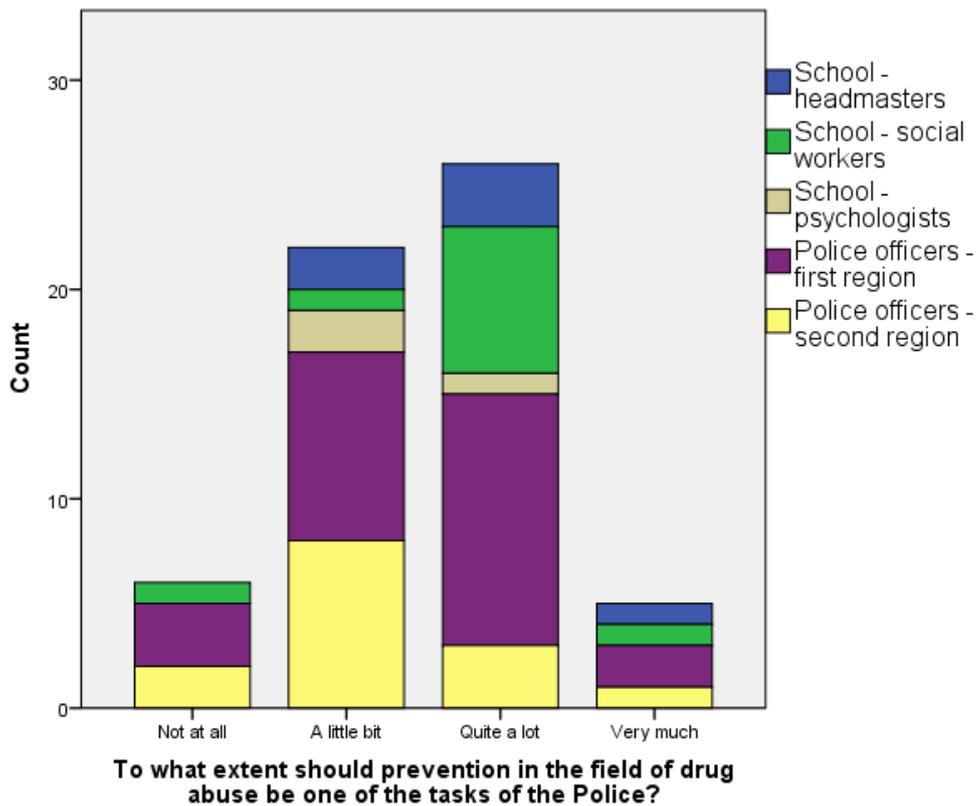
4.5 · Preventive approaches in selected fields of juvenile problem behavior

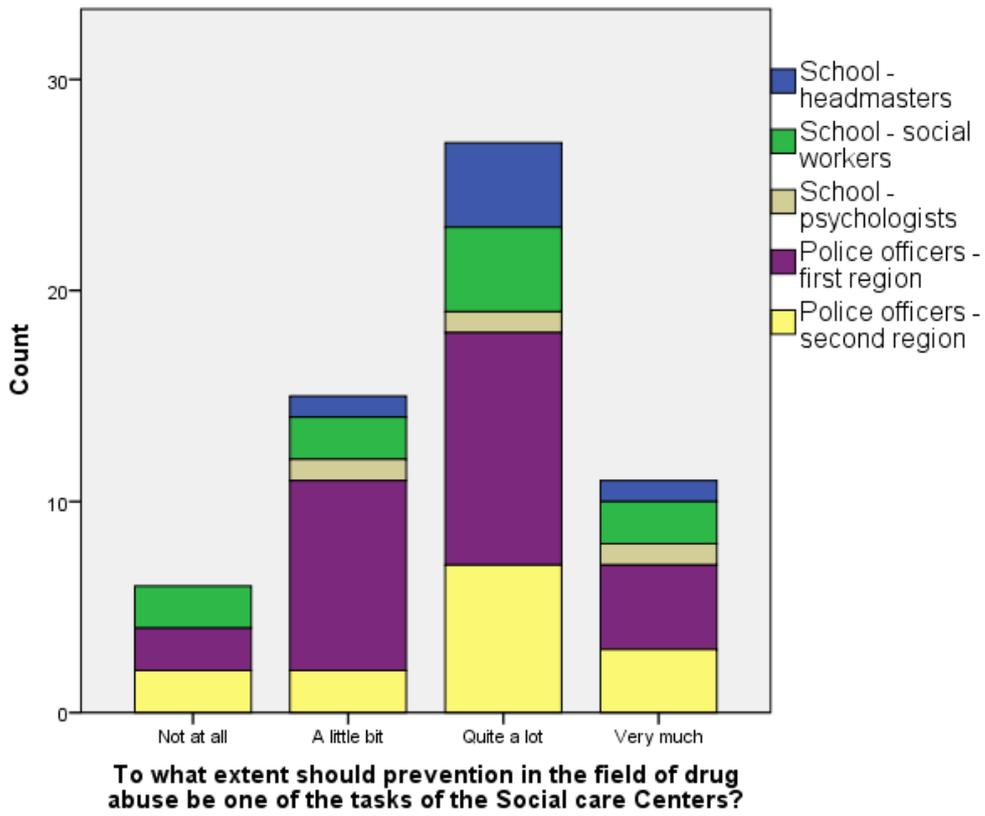
4.5.1 · Substance abuse

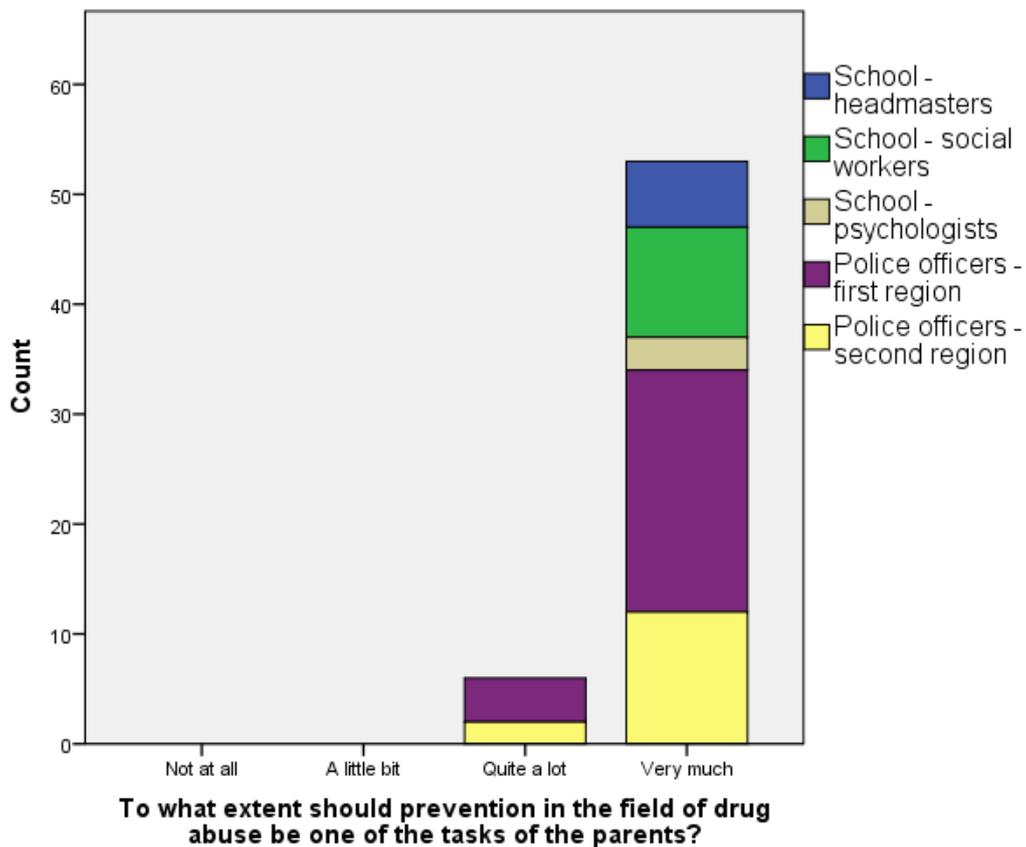
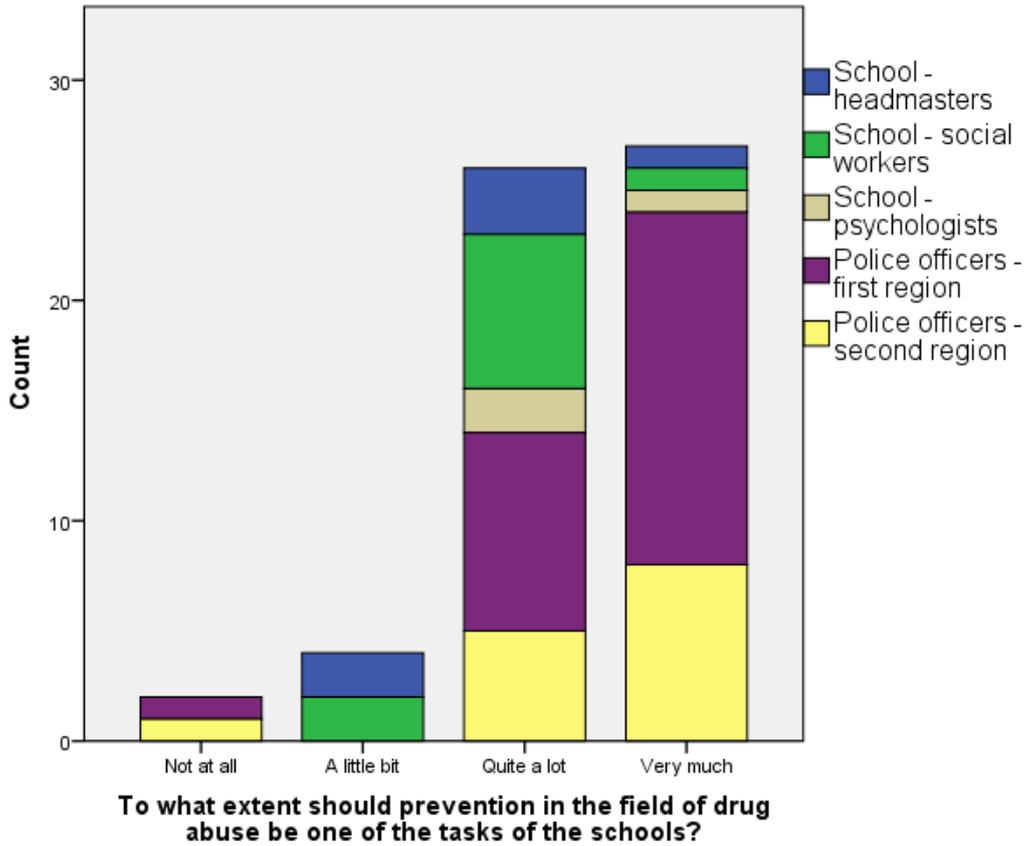
We have asked the participants to give an answer to questions about whose responsibility should prevention work in the field of substance abuse be. Respondents answered from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much). First we present the charts with frequency of responses. In the stacked bar graphs you can see the results, ranging from 1 (on the left) to 4 (on the right).

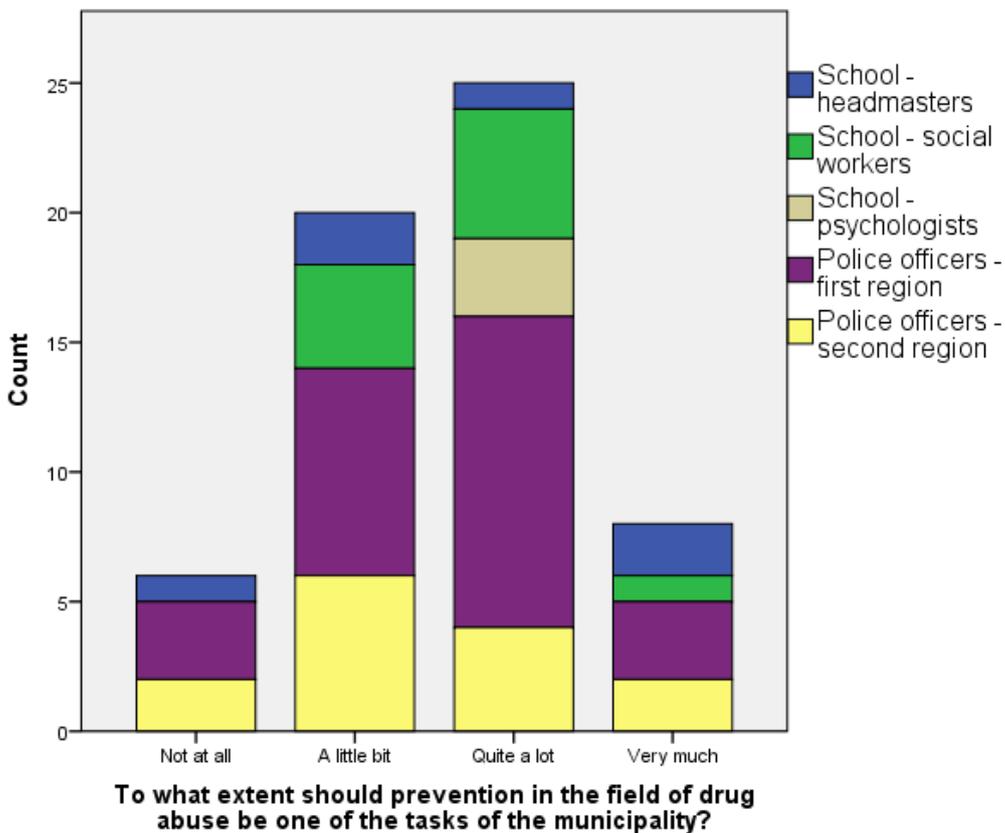
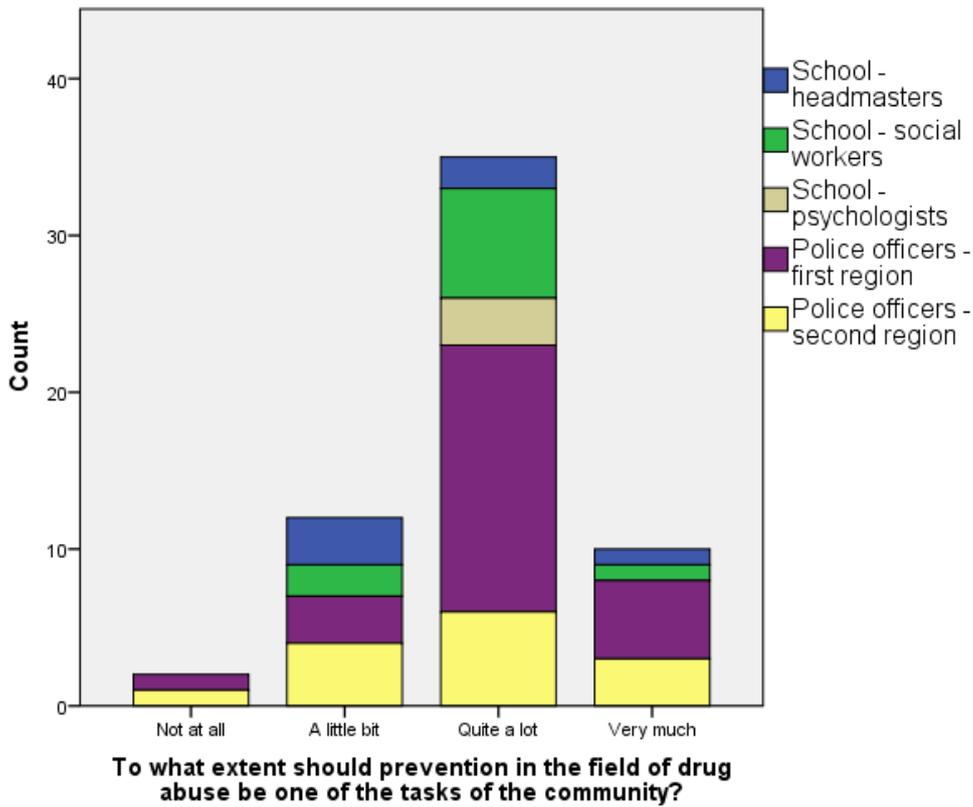
Six respondents held the opinion, that preventive task of the Police in this field is not important, 5 that it is very much; a little bit 22 responses and quite a lot 26 responses. When asked about Social care Centers, they were leaning more towards the positive side; 6 responded »not at all«, 15 »a little bit«; 27 »quite a lot« and 11 were of opinion, that their preventive work would be crucial. Picture was even more uneven with the questions about preventive work in schools and parents, with only six respondents saying that they do not feel that it is important, and 53 that it is for schools and *nobody*

answering that preventive work in family is not important, 6 saying it is quite important and 53 that it is very much important. Answers were again more aggregated around the middle with the questions about community and municipality; 15 respondents said it community is not at all or it is only a little bit important, while 37 respondents felt that municipality is not at all or it is only a little bit important in tackling drug abuse.









Majority of the respondents felt very strongly about the role of parents in preventive work in the field of substance abuse, next in the preventive role were schools, in the third place were social care centres and municipalities, then the police and community. One participant expressed that church should have a big influence on preventive work, two responded NGO's, but did not elaborate on the thought.

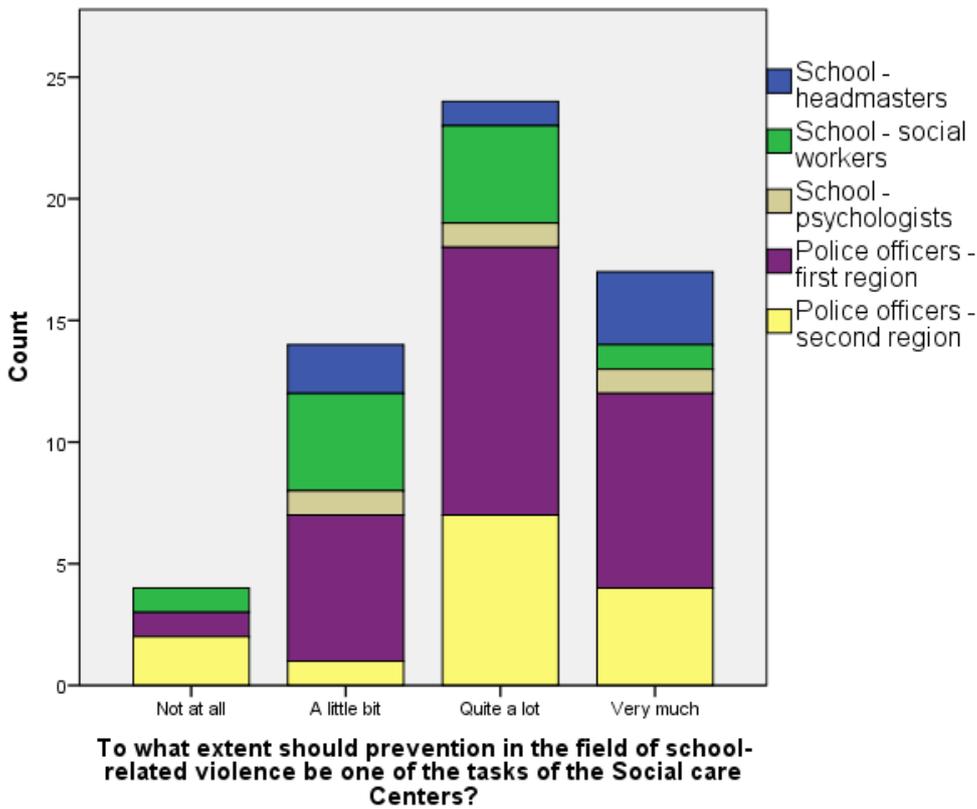
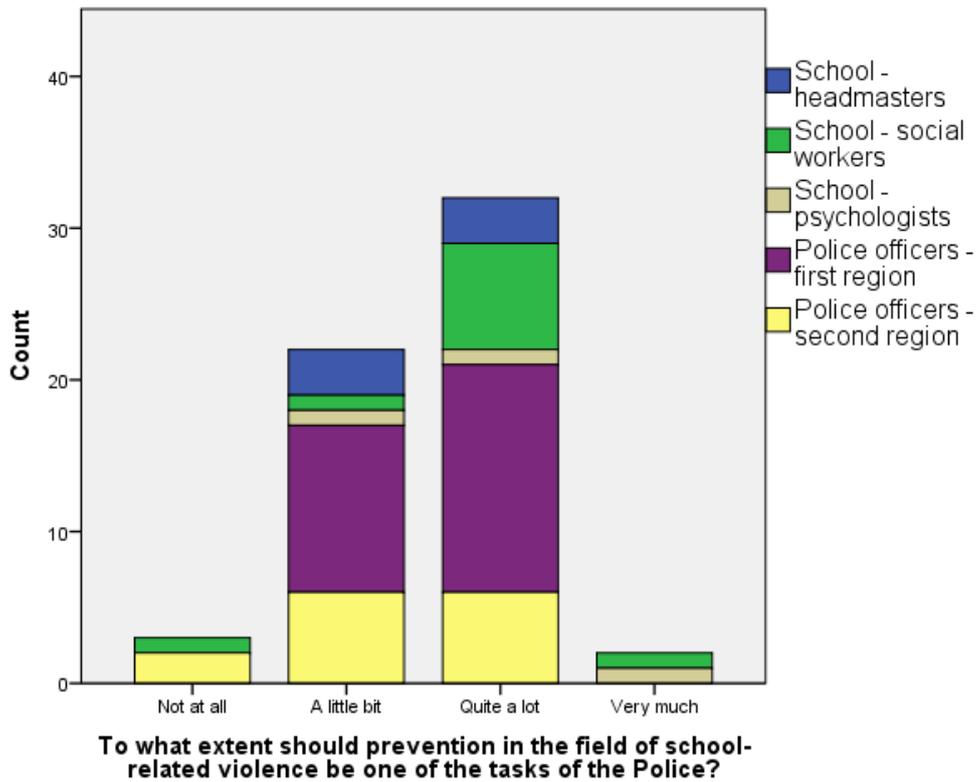
Proposed prevention work for the social care centres was usually the survey field with most ideas; the participants expressed the need for more active preventive work of this institution; targeting at risk population, bad neighbourhoods, working with young people as a group. Preventive work should be done on younger children that it is nowadays.

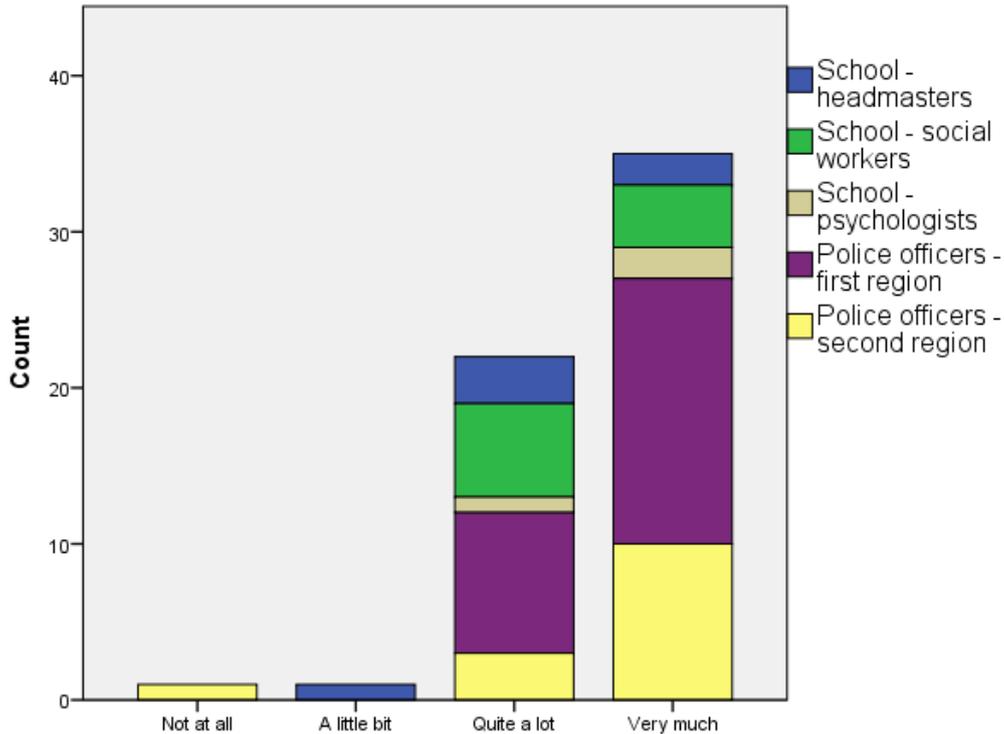
Proposed prevention work for the police: some expressed the need to contact young people with the notion that police is good – so they will grow up in this notion, that they can contact the police anytime. More cooperation between schools and local police officers- to strengthen the idea that police is not there to punish you. Police distributing brochures to teachers and parents was also mentioned, to give them statistical figures, give lectures to parents on how to detect if child is using drugs. As a side notice, better cooperation between the professions was mentioned.

4.5.2 · Youth cybercrime

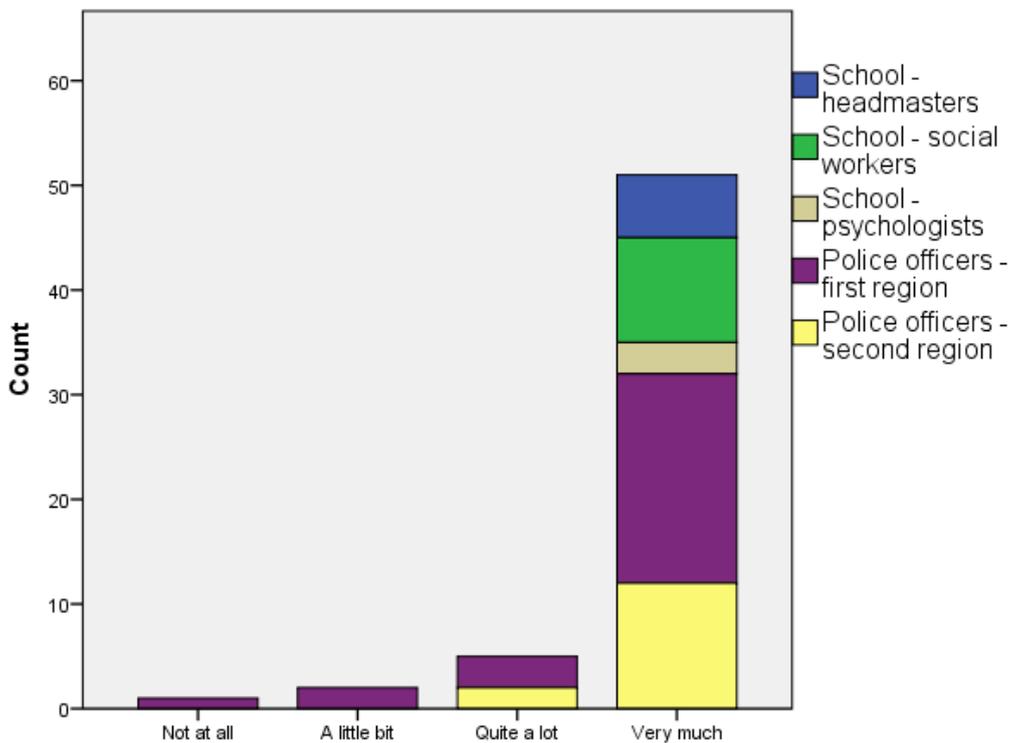
We have asked the participants to give an answer to questions about whose responsibility should prevention work in the field of youth cybercrime be. Respondents answered from 1 (not at all) to 4 (completely). In the stacked bar graphs you can see the results, ranging from 1 (on the left) to 4 (on the right).

Compared to the previous section, more respondents held the opinion, that preventive task of te Police in this field is important, 16 even said that it is very much their responsibility; a little bit 23 responses and quite a lot 16 responses. When asked about Social care Centers, they were leaning more towards the negative side; 12 responded »not at all«, 28 »a little bit«; 15 »quite a lot« and only 4 were of opinion, that their preventive work would be crucial. Again, respondents felt very favorably about the role of schools and parents in preventive work, with only four respondents saying that they do not feel that it is important, and 53 that it is for schools and 4 answering that preventive work in family is not important, 6 saying it is quite important and 53 that it is very much important. Respondents were more inclined towards municipalities cooperating in preventive work, with only two respondents saying that communities are »not at all« important, and 14 saying it is crucial. 38 respondents felt that municipality is not at all or it is only a little bit important in tackling drug abuse, and 5 were of opinion that it is very much important.

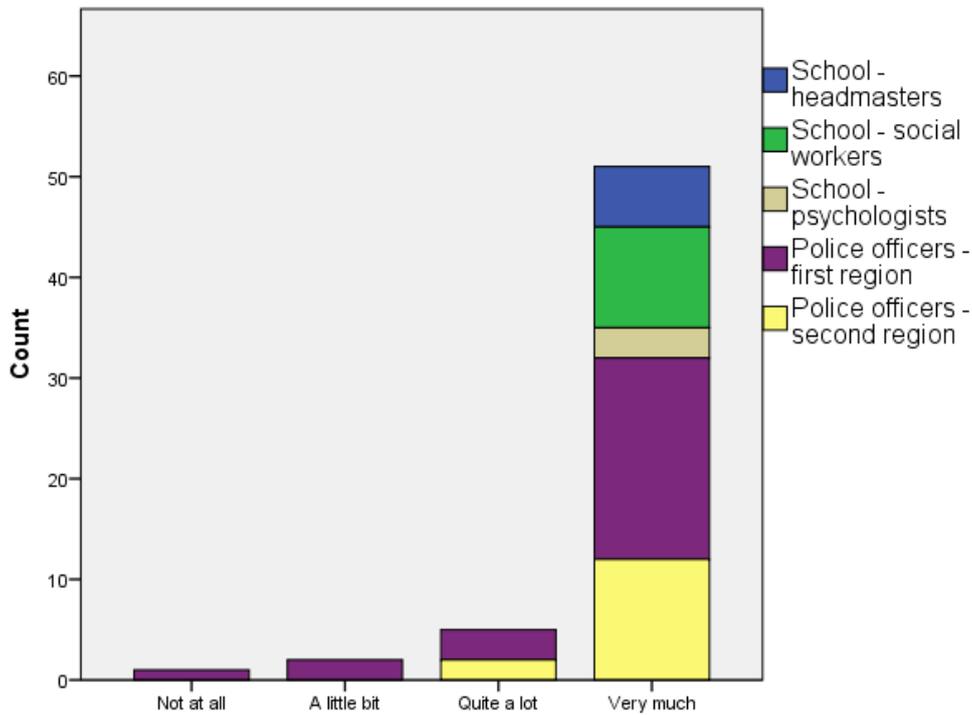




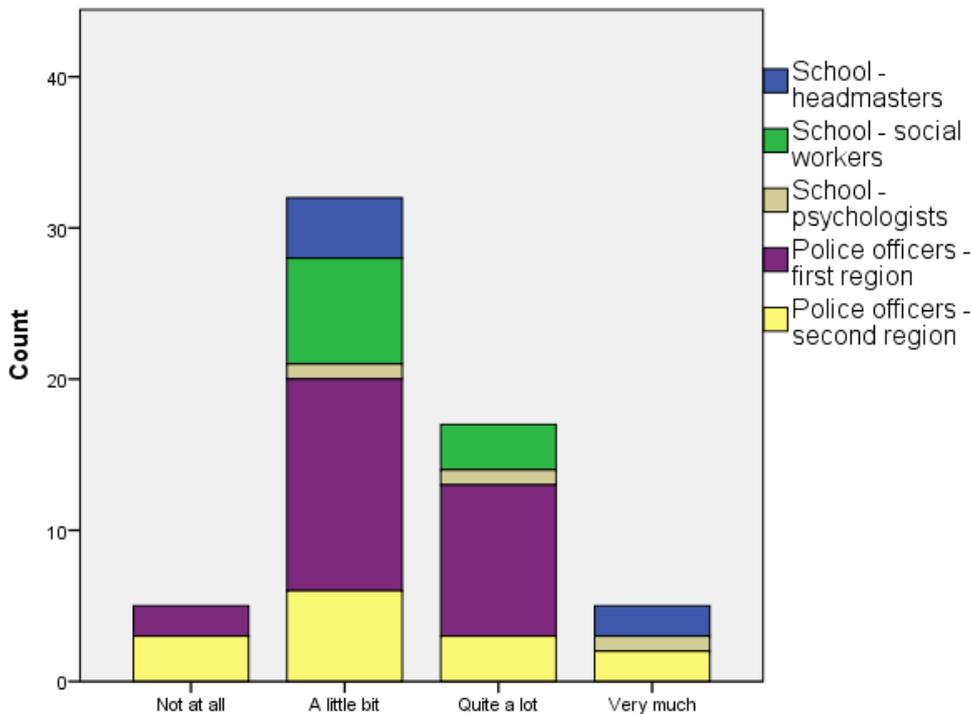
To what extent should prevention in the field of school-related violence be one of the tasks of the schools?



To what extent should prevention in the field of school-related violence be one of the tasks of the parents?



To what extent should prevention in the field of school-related violence be one of the tasks of the parents?



To what extent should prevention in the field of school-related violence be one of the tasks of the municipality?

The respondents expressed that this field of juvenile delinquency should be dealt with firstly in the families, then in schools. Some of the respondents wrote comments next to parents and school, mostly saying that this is where good parenting practices would show their effect. Communities could also contribute to preventive work in this field, respondents answered. Police, municipalities and social care centres could help only to a limited degree by their opinion.

Prevention work in the field of social care centres/ social workers should be concentrating heavily upon educating young people and their parents. Many respondents addressed the problem of young people having experience with ICT in their early youth, which means that some sort of education in using the internet and ICT should be given before primary school. Also, majority of respondents felt that some parents are completely unaware of what is happening with their child concerning ICT. There should be meetings (in the community), where these topics should be discussed and parents warned against some behavior in children.

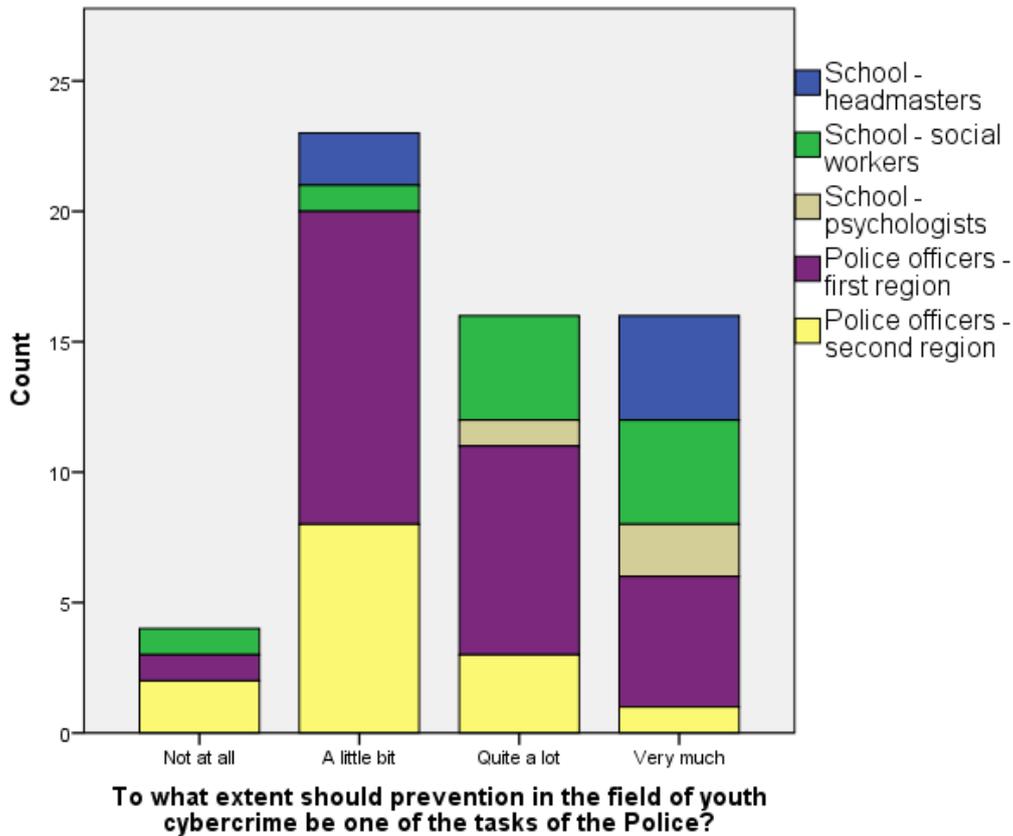
Police prevention work proved to be a difficult question; some of the respondents left the question unanswered, some answered with strategies, that are not preventive (or even police tasks – punish them more severely etc.). All in all, a lot of respondents (majority of police officers) expressed the feeling that police officers (and inspectors) are underqualified to work in this field. They have the experts, but they are only few, when on the other hand there is more and more cybercrime. Every police officer should have at least basic knowledge of ICT to help parents, that turn to them for help, was the prevalent thought among participants. Also, this basic knowledge would help them estimate the severeness of offence.

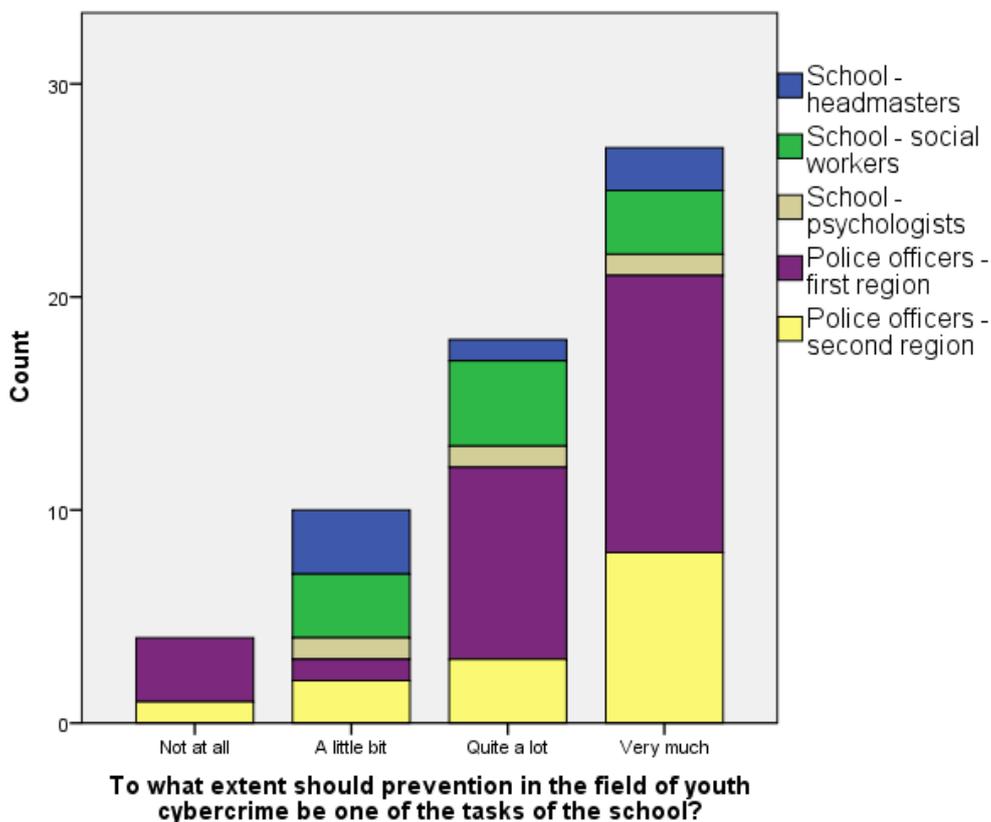
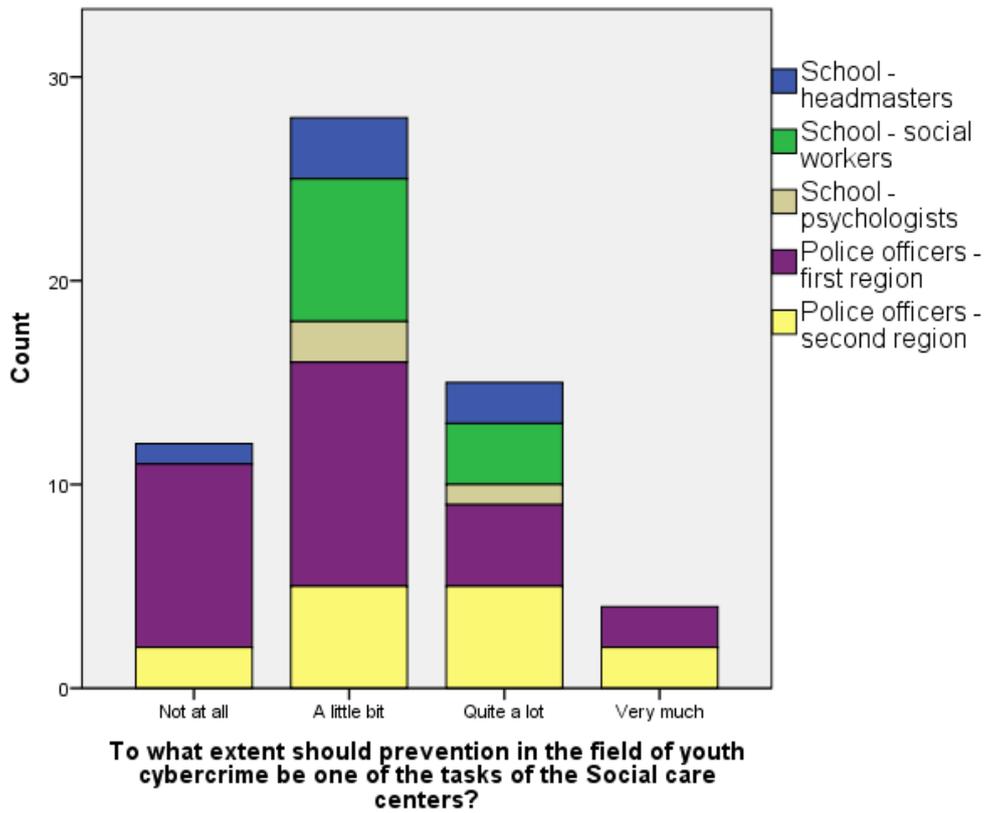
4.5.3 · Aggression and violent crimes

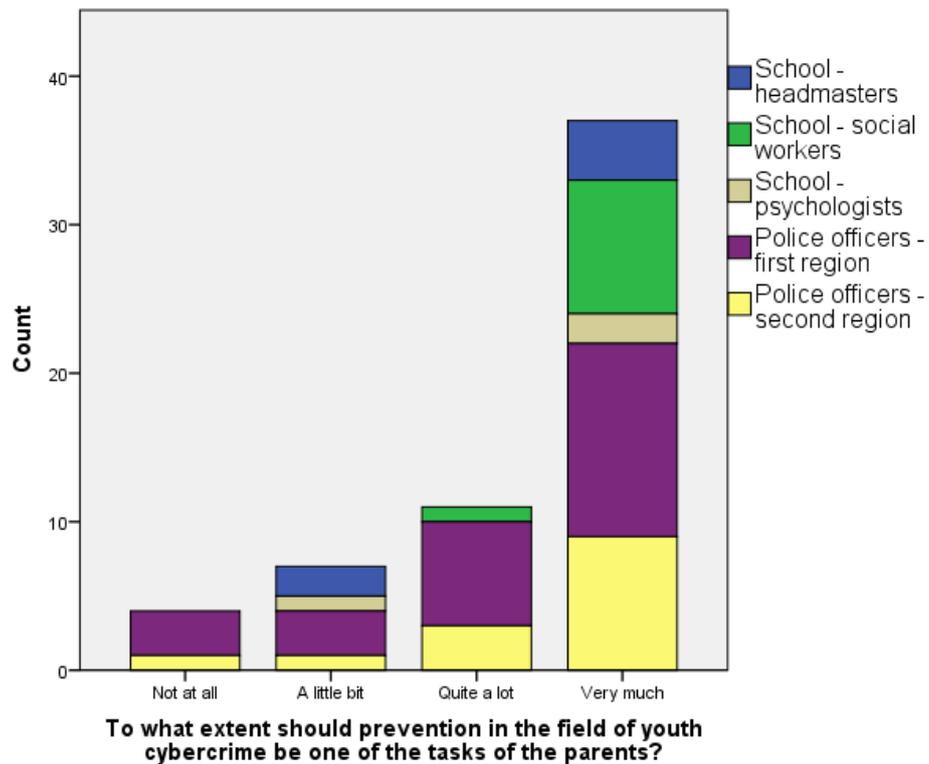
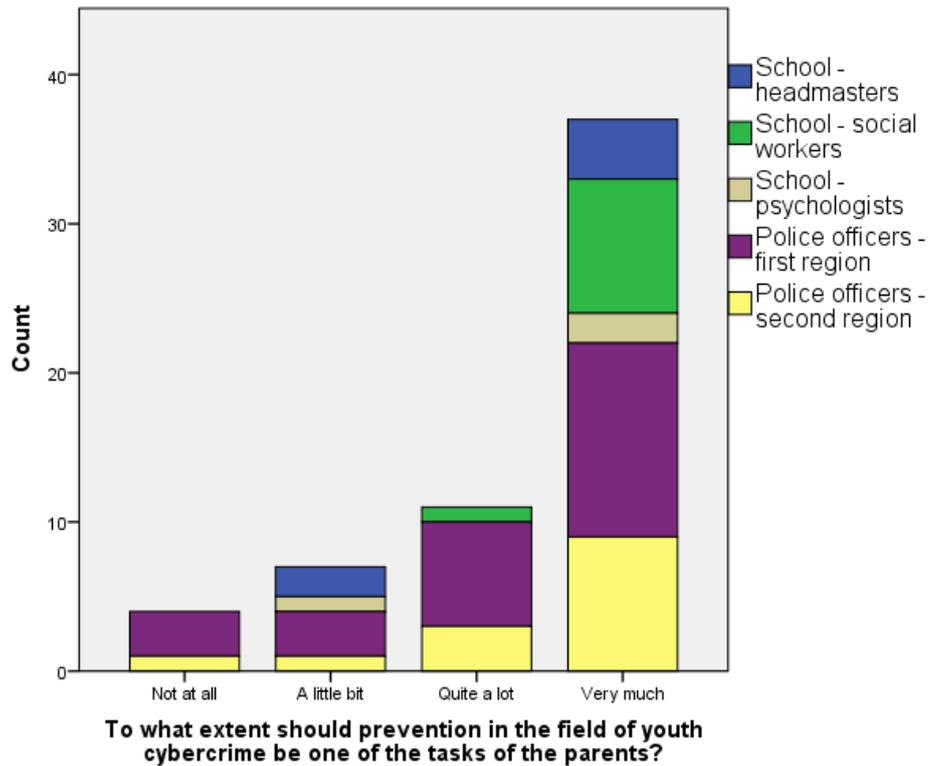
We have asked the participants to give an answer to questions about whose responsibility should prevention work in the field of youth violence be. Respondents answered from 1 (not at all) to 4 (completely). In the stacked bar graphs you can see the results, ranging from 1 (on the left) to 4 (on the right).

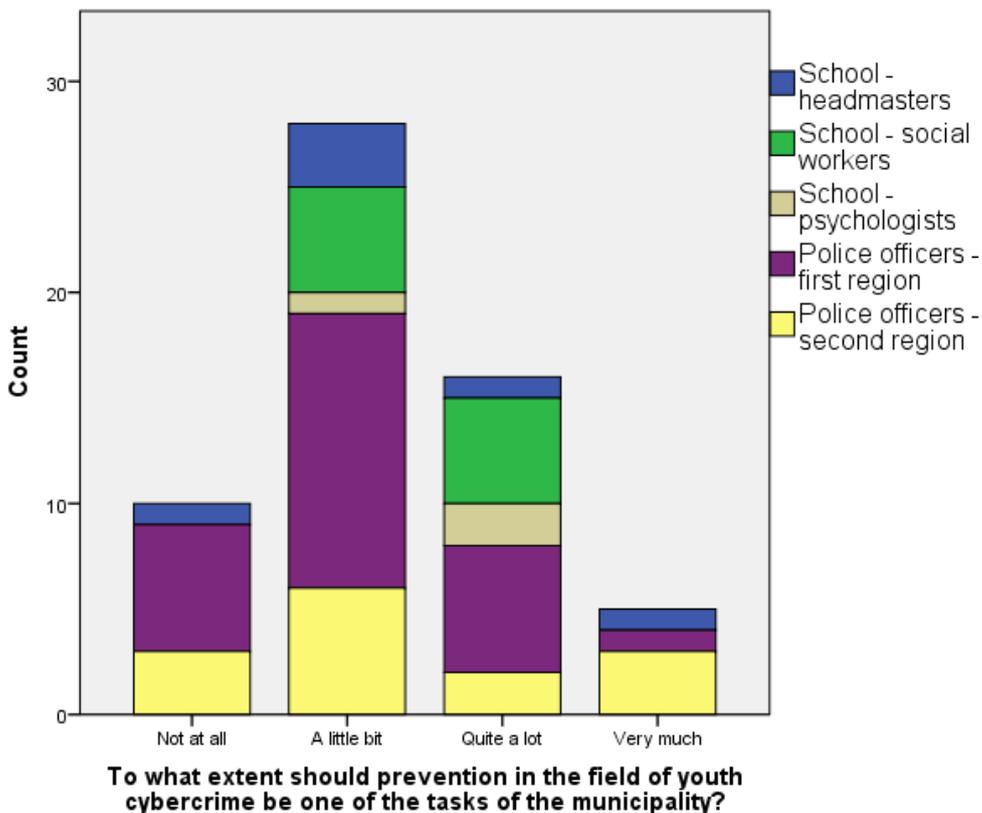
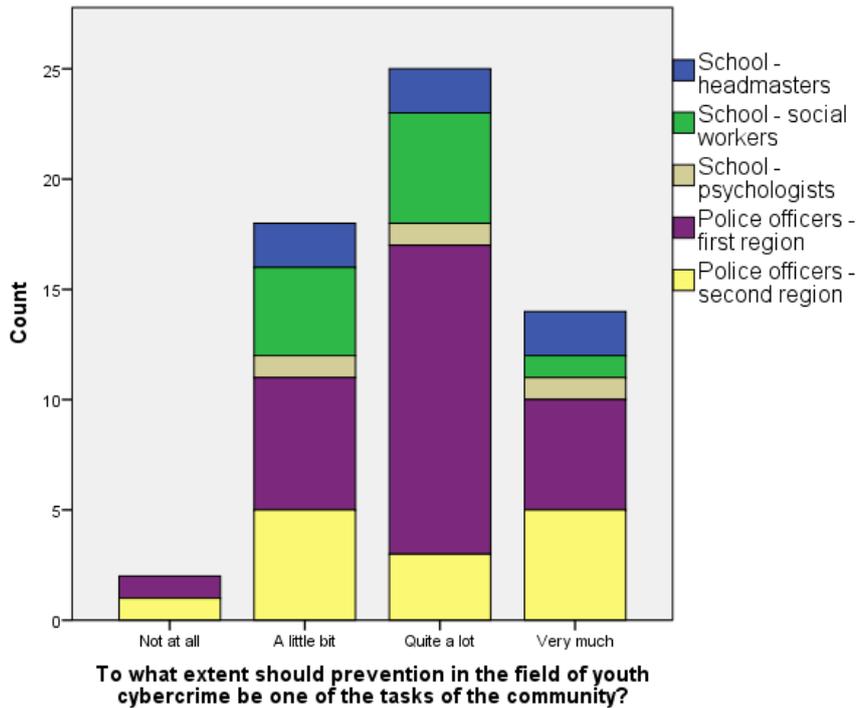
Respondents answers when asked about the preventive role of the Police in this matter was ambiguous; only 3 respondents said it is not at all their role, 2 on the other hand said that it is very much in their scope of work. When asked about Social care Centers, they were leaning more towards the positive side; only 4 responded »not at all«, 14 »a little bit«; 24 »quite a lot« and 17 were of opinion, that their preventive work would be crucial. Again, respondents felt very favorably about the role of schools and parents in preventive work, with only one respondent saying that they do not

feel that it is important, and 36 that it is very much important for schools and 1 answering that preventive work in family is not important, 5 saying it is quite important and 51 that it is very much important. Respondents were more inclined towards communities cooperating in preventive work, with only three respondents saying that communities are »not at all« important, and 13 saying that their role is crucial. 38 respondents felt that municipality is not at all or it is only a little bit important in tackling youth cybercrime, and 5 were of opinion that it is very much important.









Respondents across all profession reported that preventive work should start with families and in school, but did not exclude social care centres and police, then community and lastly municipalities.

We can see that except in the case of municipalities, respondents felt that all other mentioned institutions should be involved a lot (or even completely) into the preventive work.

Prevention work in the field of social care centres/ social workers should be concentrating heavily upon working with families, parents and whole communities. They should be reaching subjects of peaceful conflict resolution and mediation, they should try to instill new values, that oppose violence and inform people in the community about the different types of violence that someone could be subjected to for them to better recognize it.

Police officers should have more training in recognizing different forms of violence and appropriate response to the violence. Regular visits to school were mentioned as deterrence factor for young people, along with more patrolling on the streets. Police officers of specific neighbourhoods should know the habitants by name and should be able to intervene quickly and with more attentiveness than nowadays.

5. Summary and conclusions.

First a short commentary of the whole Delphi process. As we anticipated, problems with the questions about the future did arise; when we started sending questionnaires, we have received many answers that it is too difficult, or that nobody can predict something so far in the future. This happened every time we sent the emails to participants.

Also, we tried with pencil and paper version – sending the questionnaires to the professionals, that were willing to cooperate with us after expert survey. Unfortunately, only one questionnaire was completed and returned. Later, when we contacted those participants through emails, they answered that they are so burdened by the amount of post they get every day, that it often gets overlooked. This is why we have used only email correspondence for the second Delphi round.

If we divide our sample to school professionals and police officers, we can see that the first group expressed very pessimistic views of tomorrow – majority of respondents felt that the delinquency rates will go up for every crime, one psychologist in school even contemplated on the probability of mass killings in school happening in Slovenia. More than half of this group (school professionals) also predicted big decline in social policy, and greater divide between rich and poor in our country. One school principal predicted, that new laws will be made, but noone will be monitoring, if they are in fact obeyed. Another predicted the rise of two mentalities; the ambitious one, and the »anomic« one.

There were some school professionals (4) that were more positive; they have predicted that in this economy there is a possibility for the rise of new mentality, that is not so caught up in materialistic values; that we will have to re-think our values and re-define them and that this might save a lot of things we are perceiving as problems today. Those professionals were also more positive about the new generations to come and their delinquency, usually referring to the offenders as »deprivilged« or »from difficult background«.

Police officers in general were more positive; only a small percentage (12%) had the opinion that delinquency rates will be higher. We have to point out that in general, police officers (of both sexes) wrote only short sentences as a response to each question, so lower rates of predicted future negative things may be partly attributed to their method of answering with only short answers, but this does not have an impact on the question about delinquency rates, since almost all wrote down at least »will rise« or »will drop« or »will stay the same«.

Interestingly, police officers did not answer that juvenile delinquency rates will drop, even though police statistics show that the overall number of cases reported to the police went down quite a lot in the last 5 years. Some even noted that a lot of crimes are (and will be) undetected, because we are not keeping pace with the progress in ICT field.

Also (a little disturbing) is the notion that professionals from schools did not mention (cyber)bullying in their answers, event though this is highly debated subject and their schools had programs, that were aimed at recognize young people who are (cyber)bullied.

We have also conducted five interviews with police inspectors, five interviews with social workers from the Centers (regional coordinators, that are »in charge« of adolescents) and three interviews with representatives of NGO's that work in the field of juvenile delinquency prevention. Their answers were imbedded into the findings.

Some participants painted a really dark picture of tomorrow's society, with economy collapsing, »every man for himself« mentality, where there will be no social welfare, communities will slowly deteriorate into people not knowing or caring for another. Social care system will be there to help only those, who are on the threshold of poverty, and will not be able to do anything else for the rest of population. Schools will be in fear of their students, who will terrorise and break all the rules. Police force will be occupied with new forms of crimes, to which they will not adapt soon enough. Families not cooperating, being strangers because of little time spent together.

A small group of respondents are expecting a change in mentality of people, that will bring communities together, they anticipate change in materialistic values and essentially »back to the roots« values and ideas. Those respondents reported more positive thoughts about the future, expecting the same rates or even less crime, different agencies cooperating, laws getting clearer with less room for manipulation etc.

Almost all participants across the professions expressed the necessity of helping young people; giving them knowledge how to react, how to establish values, develop sense of empathy and altruism in them; "we should give young people education "for life"; give them basic knowledge, how to evolve, what to do with their feelings, how to cope with their problems". Higher education must be linked with jobs – no more faculties with graduates that are unemployable. Young people must have all the necessary commodities to see the future in having family and working hard. We as a society must help them educate their children to be less violent, more compassionate, to have better work ethics and to be more adaptable to different job requirements and tasks.

An important task that was not mentioned before in the results, but was frequently reported, was the necessary change in media. Respondents were often commenting how »it's no wonder that economy is collapsing, when all you can see in the media is just bad news. Even some things, that could be interpreted as positive shifts, for instance small decrease in unemployment rates, are always compared with the statistics from other, golden era of economy. This really discourages people.« This negative spin on the news leads people not to follow the news anymore, and many commented that if there were some positive leads in the news (young people succeeding on international level, businesses that are expanding) people would be generally more positive about the future. Also lacking in the media are positive role models for young people. Youngsters that have overcome difficulties and became best in their fields, or young scientists, businessmen, young people that chose unpopular careers for themselves and are happy with the decision.

Concerning cooperation between different professions; all participants expressed the need for more cooperation, some mentioned that it would be necessary to meet at semiformal occasions, so that the experts could get to know each other at a personal level. Nowadays this types of cooperations are only performed occasionally, usually only once per child; their prevalent opinion was that this meetings should be repeated regularly.

When talking about the serious cases of juvenile delinquents, respondents felt that our system is on one hand too lenient; reprimands and warnings by their opinion do not work, often because there is a large time gap between offending and court decision. They were generally against

institutionalization of juvenile delinquents saying »it is there where they learn all the tricks of the trade«, but were warning that some serious juvenile delinquents get rejected from all the facilities since in Slovenia, institutions themselves have discretion in accepting or rejecting. All these factors contribute to the overall feeling of juvenile delinquents and school authorities that if young person transgresses, nothing happens, no punishment is given, just reprimands and warnings, which do not serve to deter from future offending.

6. References

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