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Evelyn Dawid; Jutta Elz & Birgitt Haller (eds.)

Cooperation between Child Care and Criminal Justice Agencies in Case of Sex Offences against Children

Developing a Model Concept for the Implementation of Children's Rights to Criminal Procedure

– Abridged Version –

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Wiesbaden 2010

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Preface

“The cooperation between justice and youth welfare nowadays still meets too many barriers and borders. We have to not only stop denying these problems [...], we have to work on overcoming them. By an optimised cooperation we must succeed in our common target to protect children even better.”

With this quote, taken from the welcoming speech of the previous Federal Minister of Justice, *Brigitte Zypries*, the interdisciplinary conference of the Kriminologische Zentralstelle (KrimZ) on *Cooperation between youth welfare and justice in case of sex offences against children* began in 2006.

The lectures at this event showed that in Germany there are already a number of successful projects and practical models for interdisciplinary and institutional cooperation existing – and they are even permanently aligned. But it was also clearly shown that those best practice models are often unknown even among experts. As a result when such cooperations start anew, the founders are reinventing the wheel: Mistakes that others have already made get repeated; issues that others have already solved threaten the existence of work alliances; conflicts that others have already settled let participants leave the group.

This was the starting point and catalyst for the KrimZ to apply for financial assistance from the European Commission for a research project *Cooperation between child care and criminal justice agencies in case of sex offences against children*, out of the resources of the program “Prevention of and Fight against Crime” in the summer of 2007. Once the funding was granted, the study began in June 2008 and ends now, in October 2010, with the submission of the final report.

This short report also is released in German; the full version however is only issued in German. The latter, which is published as volume 60 in the series of *Kriminologie und Praxis (KUP)*, is characterised primarily by much larger country reports and to a much broader representation of the data collected.

All three versions are available on the website of the project (www.netzwerk-kooperation.eu).

KrimZ was able to win the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and the Institute of Conflict Research in Vienna as project partners. *Evelyn Dawid* and *Birgitt Haller* from Vienna, *Paula Krüger* and *Susanna Niehaus* from Lucerne and *Melanie Spöhr* and the signatory of Wiesbaden made up the researchers and authors team – in the spirit of the project – interdisciplinary, engaged with lawyers, psychologists and social scientists.

Many thanks go to these scientists and co-authors. Experience has shown that interdisciplinary cooperation is not easy in the field of research as well, especially when it exceeds national boundaries, and has the claim for not only leaving things at a "co-existence". Thus it makes me even more happy that we managed to finish this project with a summary of the country-specific results as well as the development of a cross-boarder "basic model".

For the KrimZ team the cross-national approach was combined with some previously unknown difficulties, particularly in the context of being partially funded by the European Commission research project. I thank everybody, especially *Axel Dessecker* and *Linda Suhens*, for the commitment in the search for new solutions to new problems.

In addition, I thank several students who in many ways have engaged in the KrimZ during the project – by entering the collected data, transcribing the interviews and maintaining the website – as well as *Gabriele Adler*, who was not scared to prepare the volumes, even if three different versions were existing.

The success of the project though was only possible because many professionals in youth welfare and criminal justice were willing to give us some of their time by completing our comprehensive questionnaires and/or took part in the interviews, sometimes lasting several hours, or the round of experts. Thanks to all of you for sharing your knowledge and experiences with us. I hope that you find yourself and your work in the present report, and on the other hand can take one or the other assistance for your continued commitment out of it.

Wiesbaden, October 2010 Jutta Elz

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I. Introduction

Children that become victims of sex offenses are entitled to protection and assistance, not only from children and youth services but from police, public prosecution and court – therefore from a large number of institutions with different (legal) contracts, organisational structures, self-conceptions, interests and terminologies. It can be assumed that a co-ordinated approach of the participants unfolds a better effect for the victims than a juxtaposition of individual measures, whereas permanent interdisciplinary alliances are probably more efficient than one-time ad-hoc contacts. The target of the research project therefore was to develop a model concept for interdisciplinary cooperations on sex offences against children with the participation of public children and youth services and criminal justice.

Since the legal, conceptual and actual characteristics of the participating countries – Germany, Switzerland and Austria – should be taken into account, they will be made clear below at the respective points. Determined, however, was that the term “child” – in terms of European law regulations, but also the UN Children's Convention – includes all persons having not yet completed their 18th year of age and are therefore referred to (also in the project countries) as “minors”. Regarding the surveyed workgroups it was therefore only given that they (also) have to deal with sex offenses against under 18 year olds. Whether they are limited to offences against individuals who are treated under the law of the country as “children” (Germany and Austria: under 14 years, Switzerland: under 16 years), whether they also take older minors (“adolescents”) into account or whether they do not impose any age limits regarding the victims was thus deliberately left open. This goes without saying that no elements of a crime that the workgroup has to deal with were given, especially since it was assumed that such pre-conditions would scarcely correspond to the approach of work of the groups. In this respect, it was largely up to the participants of the written survey and the interviewees to define their interdisciplinary cooperation as one concerning “sex offenses against children”.

When preparing the project's data collection it was, first of all, necessary to determine the current state of research concerning forms of cooperation in sex offenses against children, to research findings on beneficial and hindering conditions for cooperation, and to put up with the level of knowledge about decision making in groups (see chap. II).

The subsequent survey was conducted in two phases, which ran simultaneously in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They served to gain information about interdisciplinary cooperations on sex offenses against children: about concrete barriers, established limitations, actual failures – but also about actual solutions, real opportunities and tangible results. For this, first of all a written survey of the country-specific agencies of public children and youth services was conducted, using a standardized questionnaire. The resulting data had – beyond their own significance – the purpose of leading to existing workgroups in which public youth services and criminal justice are represented. In the second step, guideline-based expert interviews were conducted with members of cooperations that were determined in the way just described. At the same time written policies and arrangements – if available – were analyzed (see chap. III).

Nevertheless, the findings are presented separately in Chapter IV, according to project countries. Because of the survey instruments initially developed together and an ongoing exchange of information during and after collecting data, it was however possible to already align the reports on common issues and to explicitly address parallel or divergent viewpoints.

In addition, the project team used the collected final results to show – on the basis of five “actual models” – which specific forms of institutionalized cooperation between public youth service and criminal justice in cases of sex offenses against children occur in the participating countries. These models were discussed with a group of experts and finally, based on all findings, an “basic model” was developed (see chap. V).

At the same time, in November 2008, a website (www.netzwerk-kooperation.eu) was established. Especially experts in the disciplines involved will be informed not only on project results, but also on thematically relevant online material and corresponding events, organisations and print media. This offer will be maintained until at least late 2011.

II. Empirical Knowledge on the Interdisciplinary Cooperation in Cases of Sex Offences against Children[1]

1 Translated by *Katharina Kossatz.*

In general, in a case where sex offence against children is suspected, representatives of different institutions from different distribution systems (health, child and youth services) and representatives of the law enforcement are partially involved. According to *Ziegenhain, Schöllhorn, Künster, Hofer, König and Fegert* (2010, 39) it is "confirmed that functional cooperation and networking of [the parties involved] is essential for functioning child protection" (cf. *Institut für soziale Arbeit e. V.* 2008; *Fegert* 2008). In Germany and Switzerland, the relevance of interinstitutional and therefore usually interdisciplinary working alliances is even emphasized by law: In Germany in § 8a of Social Law VIII (SGB VIII), in Switzerland in Article 317, Civil Code (CC). The explicit goal of interdisciplinary cooperation[2] is improved child protection through a targeted and coordinated cooperation of the acting parties, both in the field of prevention and intervention. First this will lead to an optimization of the processes involved in case management (*coordination*) – for example to avoid secondary victimization of child victims – and secondly, to the common work for child protection (*cooperation*).

Despite the common target however, the cooperation of several institutions and different professions is not always easy. Meantime, there are several studies in which typical problems and conditions for the success of interdisciplinary research alliances in the area of child protection have been identified. Following, previously known and studied forms of cooperation in sex offences against children will be presented before major problems and conditions conducive to cooperation and – in terms of interdisciplinary case consultation – key knowledge to decision-making will be discussed in groups.

2 "Interdisciplinary" here corresponds to "a cooperation *between* (many) disciplines", where out of this cooperation "a new view of problems and new methods and objectives should be produced" *(Schaller* 2004, 38, emphasis in original). In contrast to this, the notion of "Multidisciplinarity" according to *Schaller* (2004) describes a juxtaposition of disciplines; methods and targets of the disciplines will remain. In a trans-disciplinary cooperation the boundaries between disciplines, by contrast, would be repealed.

1. Popular Forms of Cooperation between Public Children and Youth Services and Criminal Justice in Cases of Sex Offences against Children

In **Germany**, interdisciplinary or multi-professional forms of cooperation in cases of child abuse and maltreatment[3] have been examined and described many times. Thus *Fegert* and a number of employees presented some studies on cooperation between medicine and children and youth services in cases of violence against children (inter alia *Fegert* 1999, 2008; *Fegert & Schrapper* 2004; *Kölch & Fegert* 2007; *Ziegenhain et al.* 2010). On the issue of cooperation between public children and youth services and criminal justice for sex offences against children so far mainly reports of individual workgroups[4] have been collected (inter alia *Bormann* 2007; *Freudenberg* 2007; *Modellprojekt Kooperation Polizei – Jugendhilfe – Sozialarbeit – Schule* 2003; *Raack* 2007; *Stadt Wuppertal* 2003, 2010). An exception here is *Frenzke-Kulbach* (2004), who investigated three workgroups in Göttingen, Kerpen and Bochum. For all groups individual reports exist as well (*Bormann* 2007; *Freudenberg* 2007; *Raack* 2007). A nationwide study, which provides information on the number of workgroups existing in Germany and where they operate, is so far still missing.

The surveyed workgroups *Frenzke-Kulbach* (2004) looked at are prime examples of how different groups can be created – both in terms of targets and in terms of the topics within the workgroups. While the so-called Kerpener model contributes to a better understanding between the various disciplines and thus is supposed to lead to an improvement of cooperation on cases, the "Göttingen Model" is trying to find a way to keep the burden of the victims lower throughout the investigation (by as few interviews of child victims as possible). Over time, the Göttinger workgroup developed into an information and networking opportunity and contributed to the improvement of networking between relevant institutions and professional groups – not only in cases of sexual abuse, but also physical violence against children (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004; *Freudenberg* 2007). This was a target that – besides the mutual information and publicity work – is also a major goal of the workgroup in Bochum, referring to the cases of sexual abuse. "There it was possible to start a workgroup together with the main institutions that deal with sexual abuse according to § 78 KJHG" (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004, 96).

3 Under the heading of child abuse according *Deegener* (2009, 346) following forms of maltreatment are seen: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and neglect of children by the parents or guardians or other persons.

4 The following terms "workgroup" and "working alliance" are used interchangeably.

Thus proposed measures will be coordinated better and should complement one another. Meanwhile, *Bormann* (2007, 212) says, "a pretty good support structure in the field of children and youth services and law enforcement" was established this way. To improve the situation for victims who testify, a special interest day was carried out ("Children as witnesses in court"). Based on this, specific actions for the witnesses help as well as an information brochure for patients in Bochum were worked out. The functioning of the witness help, however, led to a reduction in the workgroup participation, says *Bormann* (2007, 212), therefore the number of meetings went down from twelve to six per year.

An exception to the above-mentioned workgroups is the actual casework. The "Bochum Model" is not supposed to be part of the workgroup, because of the investigation force of the law enforcement authorities (*Bormann* 2007). The Göttinger workgroup though do meet for so called "clarification help" appointments besides the regular half-year meetings in specific cases. If the prosecution participates, however, "only abstract anonymous problem situations and probable procedures can be discussed because of the legality principle" (*Freudenberg* 2007, 201). In Kerpen the participating parties agreed that the youth welfare office informs family court when suspecting a current case and together those two institutions could plan a "round table", attended only by those members of the workgroup who are involved in the specific case through their profession (*Raack* 2007, 120).

In **Switzerland** in almost all Cantons interdisciplinary alliances involving the police and/or criminal justice exist (child protection groups), that deal with child abuse and maltreatment (inter alia *Jud, Lips & Landolt* 2009, *Metzger* 2011), which can mostly by researched online. However, cross-canton, or even all-Swiss studies are missing. This applies to both the ambulant and the so-called "stationary" child protection groups who are not related to consulting or professional bodies, but belong to clinics or hospitals. In relation to individual child protection groups however, there are concepts or guidelines for cooperation existing (e. g. *Amt für Jugend und Berufsberatung Kanton Zürich* 2006, *Einwohnergemeinde Baar – Kinderschutzgruppe* 2001). In addition, *Siegrist* (2005) examines the impact of the establishment of regional child protection groups in the Canton Zurich in relation to the patients at the Children's Hospital Zurich, and *Metzger* (2011) analysed the decision-making processes of (ambulant and stationary) child protection groups. Based on these publications it can already be stated that the child protection groups in Switzerland are a firm and recognized institution in the field of child protection today, which are perceived as helpful by all participants (*Metzger* 2011; *Siegrist* 2005).

Not all child protection groups, however, have representatives of the police and/or criminal justice involved. Whereas for the ambulant groups members of police and/or criminal justice are most of the time participating next to representatives of public children and youth services, psychiatry and medicine (*Metzger* 2011), this is rather an exception in the stationary child protection groups (cf. *Jud et al*. 2009; *Metzger* 2011; *Siegrist* 2005). The main tasks of the groups are usually interdisciplinary case discussions. The ambulant child protection groups serve as a contact point for professionals from the social, education and health sector, working with children and young people. The statinary groups on the other hand are there for parents, relatives or acquaintances of affected children involved.

In contrast to Germany and Switzerland there are currently no studies of interdisciplinary cooperation of the so-called youth welfare with the criminal justice rsp. criminal investigation department existing in **Austria**, which can be interpreted as indicating that such alliances, unlike in Germany and Switzerland, do not have a high priority.[5]

But even if the cooperation has a high priority, this does not guarantee that it actually works. This requires certain conditions.

2. Major Problems of Interdisciplinary Work Alliances and Conditions for Success of Interdisciplinary Cooperations

Ziegenhain et al. (2010) and *Mahrer, Meier, Mögel, Pedrina, Ryf and Simoni* (2007) mention several factors that are obstacles to good cooperation. Primarily, these are:

1. Mutual ignorance for the operation, the requirements and procedures of the other institution
2. Poorly developed “cooperation pathways” (unclear responsibilities, no mandatory process paths)
3. Different professional self-understanding, different “languages”, institutional orders and legal principles

5 However, in Austria the process support is well-developed. Children in particular are cared for in the case of sexual violence in victim protection facilities, especially if contact with police and justice is proceeding (*Haller & Hofinger* 2007).

The **mutual ignorance of the working methods, guidelines and procedures of the other processes** can not only lead to unrealistic expectations of the other professions, which are inevitably disappointed in the cooperation. But different working patterns can also lead to misunderstandings.

> *While [that is, for example] clear hierarchy and hierarchical decisions of individuals are the prevailing approach on the health care sector, in the field of child and youth services in particular, serious decisions [...] are usually taken in the team (Ziegenhain et al. 2010, 41, emphasis in original).*

In addition, mutual acceptance and trust in the will and the ability of others to work together are necessary (*Lüssi* 1992, according to *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004, 58). Both usually have to develop slowly; the basis for this are getting to know the working processes and burdens of others and the limitations of their working field. In this way, "personal accusations of [alleged] deficits in the work" should be avoided (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004, 58).

This applies to the legal framework in which the cooperation partners move as well.[6] A central issue in the interdisciplinary cooperation with sex offences against children is data protection (*Meysen* 2007; *Ziegenhain et al.* 2010), particularly when public children and youth services and criminal justice are cooperating. On the one hand, the investigating authorities and criminal justice in all three project countries have the task "to care of information by which they can track crime, resolve, and sanction it" (*Meysen* 2007, 52). On the other hand the data protection legislation in the SGB gives "a functional protection of the trust relationship in the child and youth services" (*ibid.*, 52). Police and criminal justice are interested in the information according to legal processes. If they get to know of a offence they have to initiate a criminal investigation[7], at least if it is – as usual with sex offences – an official offence[8].

Such a method may, however, harm the trust between the parties concerned and the staff of the youth services or medical therapeutic devices. Therefore it is not surprising that according to a study of *Fegert* (1996, according to *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004, 62) in 93 % of the surveyed institutions *no* criminal charges were laid in cases of sexual abuse of children, because of child protection and the suspected risks of therapy success (see also *Fegert* 1999). If at a later time an investigation is started, the child's testimony is influenced by the (therapeutic) conversations, because "psychological therapies [...] [meet] conditions which

6 For details of legal requirements of public children and youth services, criminal justice and police in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, see the individual country reports (chap. IV.1-3).

7 Germany: §§ 152 II, 160 I CCP; Switzerland: Art. 7 CCP Swiss ("Prosecution Pressure"; from 01. 01. 2011), formerly § 51 I CCP of the Canton Lucerne (see also chap. IV.2), Austria: § 2 CCP 2008th.

8 An "Official Offence" is described if the criminal sanction is not dependent on an authorised person (usually the alleged victim or his legal representatives) to request it.

allow memory distortions (like repeated conversations to a trusting person)" (*Greuel, Offe, Fabian, Wetzels, Fabian, Offe & Stadler* 1998, 201) (see also *Volbert* 2010). If the first statement has not been documented before the beginning of the therapeutic process, a meaningful psychological report of the victim may no longer contribute to substantiate a suspicion (*Niehaus* 2010). Additionally the evidence must be secured (medical examination of the victim, evidence at the crime scene, etc.), because regardless of "whether immediately after the act or not until years later, when a criminal investigation takes place all available evidence must be identified" (*Freudenberg* 2007, 199).

If one is aware of the requirements and concerns on both sides and knows the possibilities and limitations of the other, misunderstandings and conflicts throughout the cooperation can be prevented. Also **responsibility is resolved quicker and mandatory procedures roads are set easier**, so that confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the other can be avoided during cooperation.

The third essential factor in interdisciplinary cooperations is, according to *Ziegenhain et al.* (2010) the **different disciplinary socialisation of the participants**. They speak different "terminology languages" and have a different view and different approaches to a case. When working in suspected cases of sexual abuse of children another factor is the meeting of representatives of the traditional professions (lawyers, doctors) and those of newer professions (social workers), so-called semi-professionals. Unlike the former, disciplines such as social work are still trying to define and establish themselves as a profession (inter alia *Staub-Bernasconi* 1995, 2007), which causes the missing of "a socially distinct enforcement capability" (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004, 19). This corresponds with the experiences of *Armbruster* (2000, 36) as part of the Heidelberg model of cooperation between medicine and social work in cases of child abuse. This included tensions in the cooperation, "when social workers did not see their professional identity respected enough" or when doctors or psychologists ignored social work intervention.

To ensure the functioning of cooperation and the stability of relations, moreover, the structural framework has to be taken into consideration – not only at least to relativise the dependence of the success of the cooperation of individuals (*Fegert & Schrapper* 2004; *Santen & Seckinger* 2003). A structural basis of cooperation, however, needs the allocation of appropriate time and financial resources by the participating institutions and authorities (inter alia *Fegert* 2008*; Ziegenhain et al.* 2010).

It can be said that the success of interdisciplinary cooperation is both dependent on individuals and the **structural framework.** Meanwhile, there are a number of publications in which such terms are listed (inter alia *Darius & Hellwig* 2004;

Deinet 2003; *Die Kinderschutz-Zentren* 2009; *Fegert* 2008; *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004; *Santen & Seckinger* 2003; *Ziegenhain et al.* 2010) which relate mainly to three aspects: structure and organisation, contributors and measures for group formation and quality insurance (see table II.2.1).

Basic **structural and organisational conditions** for the success of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation are a legal basis (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004) and an official cooperation agreement between the parties (*Santen & Seckinger* 2003; *Ziegenhain et al.* 2010). Such an agreement is both a sign of recognition of the common work, as well as it provides clarity about targets and tasks of the workgroup. Common goals help to promote the cohesion of a group and thus increase the likelihood of achieving the objectives (*Bierhoff* 2002, 113). Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of each member have to be set straight, so that role confusion can be avoided. Since continuous changes in the composition by exchanging participants or absences prevent the building of trusted working relations and thus can affect the work of the group in a negative way, membership in the group should be binding (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004). Clear parameters, such as regular appointments, fixed session duration, and the providing of a suitable space is a relief for the participants, since they do not have to be negotiated afresh at every meeting. Therefore the participants are enabled to estimate the additional working effort that is needed. At the meeting the participants can fully devote to the substantive work of the workgroup. Furthermore, a fixed line and facilitation of meetings, a clearly defined lecture and discussion course of the target-oriented discussions can also help to prevent only the same participants contribute to the talks (*Metzger* 2011). The use of standardized tools, for example in risk assessment, is useful for a good structure of the meetings. It also ensures the quality of the workgroup (*Fegert* 2008).

The **measures of group formation**, which contribute to the success of interdisciplinary cooperation, include the above requirements: Creating a common basis and a common "language" and clarify the intentions and expectations of individual members. This creates an environment where everyone can contribute with his/her skills to the success of the cooperation. Another way to increase the identification with the group and its tasks and targets are further educational meetings, which not only help for knowledge acquisition but also assist the group to become a team (inter alia *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004). The development of standards and the development of standardised instruments for the joint work are useful to cover **quality assurance**. On the other hand they are important for the legitimacy of the cooperation to the outside (for example when obtaining funding) (*Ziegenhain et al.* 2010).

The third and last aspect refers to **personal conditions** for the success of interdisciplinary cooperation. This applies primarily to the rule "cooperation is

only possible between equals" (*Fegert & Schrapper* 2004, 23). For this purpose, mutual recognition, acceptance and appreciation are required, as well as mutual trust and reliability. Everyone should take responsibility for the success of the cooperation so that the failure of the workgroup is prevented when so called "driving forces" (*Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004) are leaving (also *Fegert & Schrapper* 2004; *Santen & Seckinger* 2003). If the cooperation is worth it for all parties the probability that everyone works for the joint success increases (inter alia *Santen & Seckinger* 2003). The following table II.2.1 lists the known key conditions for successful interdisciplinary cooperation.

Table II.2.1: Conditions for the success of interdisciplinary cooperation

Structural and organisational conditions	**Measures for group formation and quality assurance**	**Personal conditions ("attitude")**
Legal establishment, cooperation agreement	Providing a common basis, a common "language"	No status differences, mutual acceptance and respect
Recognition of the work by the employer	Clear intentions and expectations	Solution orientated cooperation
Defined roles and functions	Develop common standards	Reliability
Mandatory membership in the group	Mutual support using the respective competences	Mutual trust
Clearly defined session proceedings and decision-making processes	Joint training	Benefits of cooperation for all parties
Standardised instruments	Standardised instruments	Taking over responsibility for the success of the cooperation
Guidance and moderation		
A defined, reasonable time frame		
Regular meetings		
Organised room		

A cooperation perceived as satisfactory by the parties does not imply an increase of quality of work though. These conditions are a necessity but not a sufficient basis for this. The following section will show which conditions have to be met to maintaining a high quality in interdisciplinary case or helper conferences hat were carried out in quite a few research groups in Switzerland and Germany.

3. Interdisciplinary Case Conferences: Decision-finding in Groups

Like *Munro* (1999) showed, even professionals tend to often be fixed at a particular point of view on a case in the field of child protection, even if the present evidence shows contrary proof. This is not only due to the fact that they do not use all information available (information selection), but also due to their interpretation of new information which influences them as well. The effect of this "confirmation bias" has already been studied, for example with different occupations such as police investigators (*Ask & Granhag* 2005) or tax advisers (*Cloyd & Spilker* 1999). Since clear evidence is given rather rarely in cases of the sexual abuse of children these mechanisms can reach very easily. Important here is:

> *The stronger one is [...] convinced of the correctness of the hypothesis, the more the information is hypotheses-consistently encoded [in the memory] and called [...], the stronger will ambiguous evidence be interpreted in favour of the hypothesis [...], contrary evidence is analysed more critically [...], the more likely a test strategy is chosen, which may confirm the hypothesis than refute it [...], and the higher the threshold for rejection of the hypothesis is set (Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken 2000, 75).*

These self-confirmation bias do no only occur when one person alone thinks about suspected abuse; social factors can weaken or increase those mechanisms (*Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000). If current suspected cases of (sexual) violence against children are discussed in workgroups, as is the case for example in the Göttinger workgroup or in the Swiss child protection groups, this happens because of the assumption that the collective resolution is superior in quality to that of the individual, since the case is considered and discussed from various (disciplinary) perspectives (*Metzger* 2011). Therefore several "alternative hypothesis" should be considered, if possible. Other psychological mechanisms – primarily group polarisation and "group thinking" – may lead to the group performance getting a worse result than those of the individual members ("process loss").

If there is a **polarisation of the decision**, the discussion in the group leads to

> *the tendency that the initial opinion of the individual is intensified. If they are mostly careful in forming their opinion, then they will be even more so after a group discussion. and if they are risky, this is polarised in the group as well. [...] The direction of polarisation depends on the opinion among the participants that was most common from the beginning on (Bierhoff 2006, 499 f.).*

In other words, in the "social comparison with the other group members the accuracy of the common position is validated so that subjective conviction is growing" (*Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000, 79). One explanation for this is that the shared (cultural) arguments which are shared in the discussion are known

by most group members, but they have not thought of those before they were pushed onto them during the discussion (*Bierhoff* 2006). An increased risk-taking-attitude is also explained by the perceived responsibility diffusion. No one is solely responsible for the consequences of the decision.

In highly cohesive groups in which members identify themselves strongly with the group, it can also happen that they are more willing to accept a group decision without hesitation (*Fischer & Wiswede* 2002). If the group furthermore is isolated from external influences, under pressure to decide and has a group leader, "who is directing the work towards the achievement of group consensus" (*Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000, 80), the likelihood of corrective influence from the outside or from group members gets even smaller. Statements that run counter to these group decisions or question them might then be suppressed "either by 'self-censorship' or by the pressure to conform. Overall, this process is a very one-sided one" (*Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000, 80).

Furthermore, referring to decision-making in groups one has to consider that the information of other people (explicitly expressed information and perceptions of the participants) can influence the individual contribution of other group members. Supposing that information of the others can result in a reduction of the individual "search area" (such as in the so-called brainstorming), this can lead to a loss in the process as well (*Schultz-Hardt, Greitemeyer, Brodbeck & Frey* 2002). On the other hand, the information can of course also expand the "search area" (e. g. in *Paulus & Yang* 2000, according to *Schultz-Hardt et al*. 2002).

Schulz-Hardt and Köhnken (2000) did show in a series of experimental studies that "unloaded, unbiased and normally intelligent people [...] tend to use objectively harmless material as evidence and mistakenly saw the suspect as being guilty when dealing with suspicion of sexual abuse of children" (*ibid.*, 76). In one of these studies they "specifically investigated on the influence of group-thinking on the testing of suspected abuse" (*Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000, 82). For this purpose, the test subjects got shown a short video film of a gym class with kindergarten children and a teacher (that was hired for this study). After the film presentation the test subjects got told that the film was evidence in an investigation against the teacher. Finally, they were asked a series of questions – initially neutral, then abuse-specific, including whether they think the teacher was guilty. Part of the test subjects participated in the study under conditions that promote group-thinking (high group cohesion, directive leadership, etc.), a second group under opposite conditions. Other participants, which served as a control group like the last were interviewed to the material individually (*ibid.*, 82). Interestingly, it turned out here that the group-thinking did not – as expected – lead to the belief that the teacher was felt to be guilty by most members. But it created an increased security of a judgement among the

people who thought the suspected man was guilty. This increased judgement security in turn had an impact on the evaluation of new information. After the respondents had given their verdict, two expert reports about the material were given to them – one that stated the seen material as clear evidence of abuse, and one that stated the movie to be harmless. The assessment of the opinions regarding credibility was "strongly influenced by its own opinion in the group-think-condition; more than in the non-group-think and the individual condition" (*Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000, 83). From this the authors state that "an open, discussion-oriented group discussion can be very effective in working against a unrealistic abuse suspicion" (*ibid.*, 83).

Since the decisions made in helper or consultation conferences have hard consequences for those affected, they should be carefully considered. According to *Johnson and Johnson* (2003) and *Janis and Mann* (1977) *Bierhoff* (2006, 501) names the conditions in the following table II.3.1 that support well-considered group decisions. These include by implication, the strategies of *Schulz-Hardt and Köhnken* (2000, 84) that are required to counter the self-called confirmation bias: discourse-oriented discussions and diagnostic techniques and hypothesis testing[9].

Table II.3.1: Requirements and favourable conditions for well-considered group decisions (according to *Bierhoff* 2006, 501)

Requirements for well-considered group decisions	Conducive conditions for well-considered group decisions
Positive group atmosphere	Unbiased guide
Individual responsibility rather than diffusion of responsibility	Group members have to be willing to work with critique
Social skills of group members (confirming others, understand perspectives, see conflict as an incentive to solve the problem)	Willingness to question a majority opinion
Sufficient time for discussion	Consulting experts from outside

Interdisciplinary case conferences in the sector of child protection require specific conditions that allow well-considered group decisions in addition to the requirements listed in Table II.2.1 for a successful cooperation.

9 During the diagnostic testing of the hypothesis, evidence will be judged not only for the purposes of the test hypothesis (a misuse or abuse has taken place), but it also checks their compliance with the alternative hypothesis.

4. Conclusions for the Current Project

Overall it can be said that interdisciplinary cooperation in cases of suspected sex offences against children is essential for effective child protection. Their relevance is now also recognised and stressed by the legislature – at least in Germany and Switzerland. By working in a workgroup helpful work relations can be created and gaps in the supply system are identified and closed. If there has to be a discussion of actual cases in the workgroup, for example in the form of a helper conference[10] or anonymous case discussions, the various (disciplinary) perspectives help, under certain circumstances, to reach a more informed assessment.

In the meantime several empirical studies on such workgroups were found, where not only the benefits out of the cooperation itself are demonstrated but also conditions for the success of the interdisciplinary research program have been identified. These studies in general refer to single or a few work alliances in Germany; experiences from Switzerland and Austria have not been taken into account so far. Moreover, in these studies the cooperation between children and youth services and medicine were investigated, and the results can not easily be – partly due to the legal requirements and targets named above – transferred to a cooperation between the public children and youth services and the criminal justice or police. Ultimately, there is no evidence available on how many and what different forms of such workgroups are existent in Germany. This research request was the starting point for the present study, which followed the following objectives:

1. Study of the forms and frequencies of interdisciplinary cooperation in cases of sex offences against children in Germany, Austria and German speaking Switzerland;
2. Analysis of the problems, the solutions and the basis for the development of those workgroups as well as the work itself in such a working alliance;
3. Development of an ideal model of cooperation between public children and youth services and criminal justice and/or police in sex offences against children, taking into account the experiences and conditions in the three project countries.

10 "Helper conferences" are there to assist the professionals in the case-oriented networking, they serve to help with the "case-oriented coordination, planning and decision" (*Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge* 2002, 572).

III. Design of the Study and Methods[1]

1 Translated by *Katharina Kossatz.*

For the identification and description of existing working alliances in the three project countries a two stage approach was chosen based on the study of *Frenzke-Kulbach* (2004): First, in the fall of 2008, a quantitative questionnaire study was made, and in the 2009 summer, building onto those results, a qualitative interview study was made. This procedure was necessary because the relevant working groups were not known in all countries and the actions should be comparable. The surveys were carried out simultaneously in the project countries.

1. Questionnaire Study

In the quantitative questionnaire study public institutions for youth support were interviewed to find the form and frequency of existing partnerships with criminal justice and/or the police when sex offences against children were processed in their area. In addition, the persons who participated in such workgroups were asked to turn in the written material that resulted from the cooperation, together with their questionnaire (guidelines, manuals, brochures or the like). They were also informed of the intended interview study and asked for their consent, if necessary, for a subsequent interview and to give their contact details.

The questionnaire took into consideration the state of research on interdisciplinary cooperations in suspected cases of sex offences against children and was created specifically for the study (incl. *Elz* 2007; *Fegert & Schrapper* 2004; *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004). It comprised the following six sections, and only differed in its German, Austrian and Swiss versions in terms of national differences:[2]

1. Function and structure of the institutions
2. Forms of cooperation
3. Frame conditions of the workgroup
4. Personnel and organisational structure of the workgroup
5. Content focus of the workgroup
6. Personal details of respondent

2 The three versions of the questionnaire can be downloaded from www.krimz.de (under “research”) or from the project homepage www.netzwerk-kooperation.eu (under “CCC-Project”).

Respondents, who were not participating themselves in a workgroup thus only answered questions related to their own institutions and forms of cooperation – in addition to the personal questions. The remaining three subjects blocks were exclusively directed at members of those workgroups where criminal justice and/or the police were involved, in addition to representatives of public children and youth services.

The collected data was analysed using the statistical program SPSS 16.0 of SPSS Inc. and measured primarily descriptively (frequencies, central tendencies and measures of association). To find out the importance of individual inputs and about the differences of the inputs of two subgroups sample test were also carried out – if this was methodically possible (*Bortz* 2005).

2. Document Analysis

The documents attached to the questionnaire (e. g. guidelines, brochures) were analysed using a grid, in which information – if there was any – was put in on the following topics:

1. Targets of the workgroup
2. Target groups
3. Tasks of the workgroup
4. Composition
5. Function (organisation, objectives, procedure)
6. Competences (“rights and obligations”) of the workgroup
7. Working tools and guidelines
8. Measures for quality assurance
9. Funding, support

The information collected for each workgroup was summarized in a second step. This approach corresponds with the principles of the summary content analysis *Mayring* (2008).

In *Germany* the researchers were given materials of five workgroups, among them information leaflets, guidance documents for the workgroup members and other institutions in the help system that were supposed to help with inter-disciplinary cooperation ($n = 4$), as well as a guide for the target groups of the workgroup (e. g. schools or daycare centres).

In *German-speaking Switzerland* eleven respondents enclosed materials from the work of nine workgroups (children protection groups) in their questionnaires. These were texts published (online), as well as internal working papers. The former include flyers, leaflets, fact sheets and guides ($n = 10$)[3], concepts or standards for the work of the child protection groups ($n = 4$), as well as general information about each child protection group ($n = 2$). Internal working papers from one questionnaire enclosed the requirement profiles for the members and management of the child protection group, another one enclosed the conduct requirements for giving advice and risk assessment.

In Austria a guide for compulsory school teachers as well as internal protocols of two workgroups were made available for the analysis, which dealt with issues of task distribution and current developments in the facilities.

3. Interview Study

In the second survey phase, workgroup members selected as part of the questionnaire survey were interviewed in a qualitative interview study to subjects such as planning, establishment and the course of cooperation. For this, the form of expert interviews according to *Meuser and Nagel* (2003) was chosen, where representatives of the public children and youth services and criminal justice were interviewed as experts for interdisciplinary cooperation in cases of sex offences against children. The focal points of these semi-structured interviews were the problems and solutions paths in planning, establishment and continuation of interdisciplinary working alliances. For this purpose, an interview guide was developed that was modified or extended to fit each country, by the cooperation partners.

This divided the interviews into three thematic blocks, each of which was preceded by a narrative question:

1. Structure and function of the workgroup (task, composition, legal framework, policies, cases and so on)
2. Positive and negative experiences while working together
3. Personal connection to the workgroup (motivation to participate, expectations, disappointments, and the like)

3 In one child protection group, the same number of sheets were attached flyer. Others attached both a flyer as well as a fact sheet for professionals, so that the material does not refer to the work of ten, but of seven child protection groups.

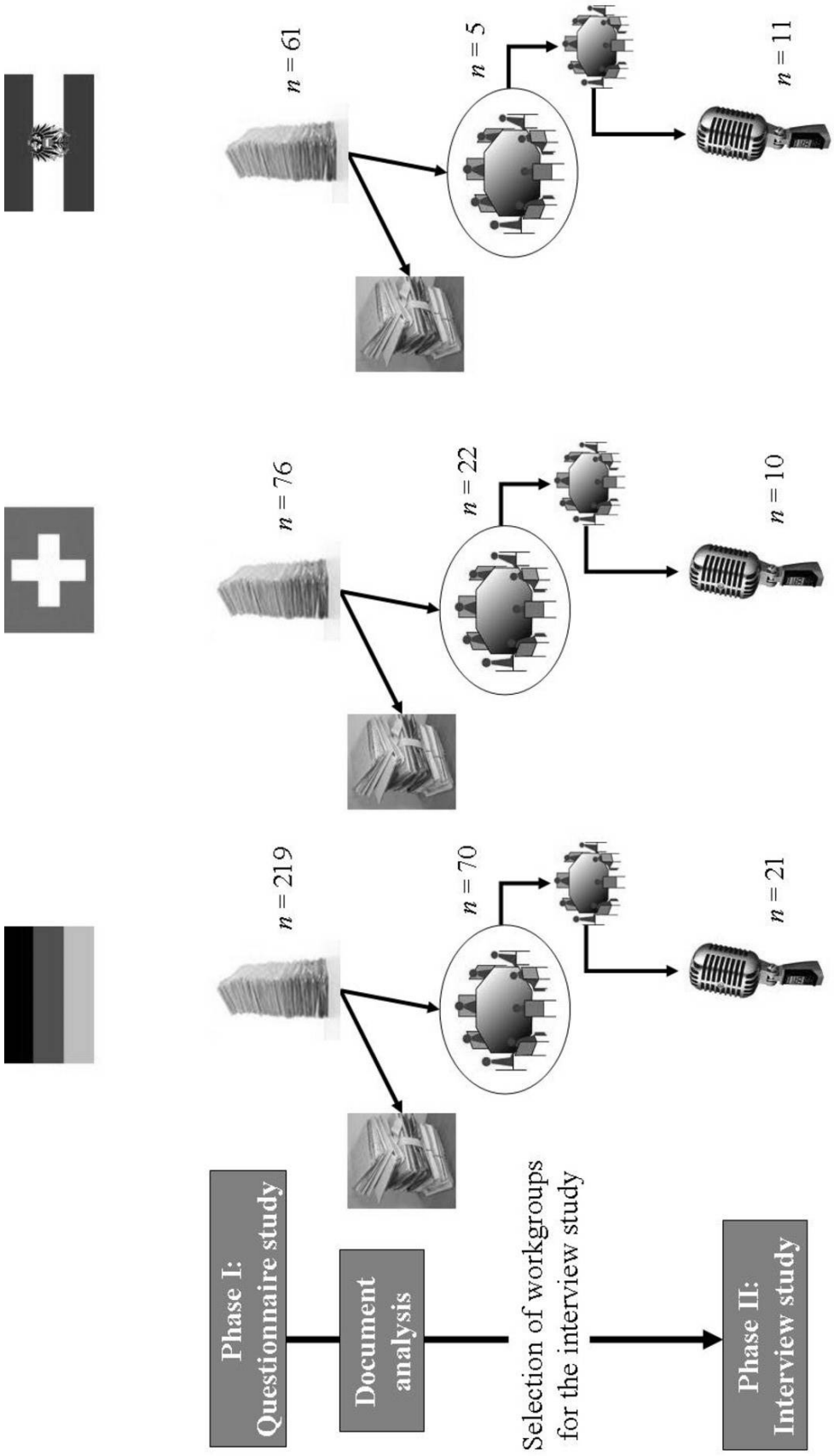
Since in Austria only a few research groups were detected through the questionnaire study, interviews were not only led with working group members, but also with representatives of youth welfare, criminal justice and criminal investigation department that were not participating in cooperative alliances, such as those examined here. These talks were about both positive and negative experiences of cooperation, and about arguments for and against the establishment of interdisciplinary workgroups.

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Here, a literary inscription was chosen, based on the standard orthography, but still considered special and accents, pauses, etc. (*Dittmar* 2009). They were then given a computer-based evaluation (Atlas.ti ®, NVivo 7) using the structuring qualitative content analysis *Mayring* (2008). In this case, certain content structures or themes were filtered out of the material (*Mayring* 2008, 89). Therefore the relevant passages were first coded and then extracted. Subsequently, the extracted material gets summarized per each main and sub-category.

The following figure III.3.1 summarizes the design of the study and has to be read from top to bottom for each project country. The “session tables” symbolise the workgroups – those who were identified as part of the questionnaire study, as well as those which had their representatives interviewed as experts in the second phase.

Since the objective of the project is the development of one practical model, the forms of cooperation from overall study were given to experts for discussion at a workshop from the three project countries (see chap. V.2). The results of these discussions were considered in the development of the ideal model (see chap. V.3).

Fig. III.3.1: Design of the study



IV. Country-specific Research Results[1]

1 Translated by *Katharina Kossatz.*

1. Country-specific Report Germany

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 (Public) Children and Youth Services

The children and youth services are regulated by the nationwide effective Eighth Book of the Social Security Code (Sozialgesetzbuch, SGB VIII), also known as Child and Youth Welfare Act (Kinder-und Jugendhilfegesetz, KJHG). The basic duties are described in § 1 III SGB VIII. According to it, the children and youth services should, among other things, "protect children and young people from danger for their well-being". According to § 69 III SGB VIII, the responsible body for *public* children and youth services sets up youth welfare office for the performance of their mission so that "public children and youth services" in Germany can be equated with "youth welfare office".

The instruments available to the child and youth services to fulfil the protection order mentioned above stood unconnected side by side for a long time. In 2005 a law became effective whose target was to further improve the protection of children. Here, § 8a SGB VIII stands in the centre, organising systematically the "protection order with child endangerment" as a task of youth welfare offices and concretising it, describing the responsibilities of the professionals involved and arranging the participation of free funders. In the recommendations and procedural standards developed on the spot for this, the issue of internal cooperation – from collegial advice to helper conferences – is of great importance, due to the formulation in § 8a SGB VIII, whereby the youth welfare office if it "knows of significant evidence of the threat to the welfare of a child or young person" has to "assess the risk of danger in the interaction of several experts". The interdisciplinary cooperation, as was examined in this study, also improved through the discussions.

1.1.2 Criminal Justice

"Criminal Justice" includes prosecution and criminal courts, but not the criminal investigation department (CID). The latter is, however – in addition to the prosecution, which is in authority over police in the investigation – the most important law enforcement institution to which after § 163 Criminal Procedure Code (Strafprozessordnung, StPO) rests the duty "to investigate criminal cases". For this reason in the current study, while criminal justice was not taken into account, their involvement in interdisciplinary cooperations must however be considered.

All law enforcement authorities apply the law of criminal procedure, in the first instance the StPO. They are bound to the principle of legality, that is, obligation to investigate any suspicion of a crime and at least to open up a criminal case. If the results of these investigations make a conviction predominantly likely, the prosecution is obliged by the principle of legality to bring an indictment. While there are often-used exceptions from this ("principle of opportunity"), that allow the prosecution to stop an ongoing process if applicable, for example because of low guilt or other, more serious crimes of the accused. This does not alter the fact that first of all such a (investigation) process must be instituted – even if it will almost certainly be discontinued later.

1.1.3 Legal Obstacles in the Cooperation

When it comes to suspected sexual abuse of children in the cooperation of youth welfare offices and criminal justice or CID, the responsibilities of both partners – fulfilment of the protection order and law enforcement – are affected. While the law enforcement agencies have to be interested in obtaining information, but are also subject to the principle of legality, experts for the youth welfare offices ask the question of what they *are allowed* to tell in such a workgroup due to "data protection".

For the public children and youth services, the data protection laws arise exclusively from the SGB. If a professional was "entrusted" with personal data "for the purpose of personal and educational assistance" – personally told with trust in his or her confidentiality – he or she is allowed to pass it on only under the requirements of § 65 SGB VIII. Toward law enforcement authorities, this practically only comes into consideration if the person consents to the disclosure, or the exceptional situation of a vindicatory state of emergency exists. The disclosure of other personal – not entrusted – data is regulated in § 64 SGB VIII. Thereafter, such information must be provided only for the purpose for which it was collected, which in the context of SGB VIII, definitely does not allow for them to be sent to law enforcement authorities.

However, because of a reference to § 69 I SGB X experts are "authorized to report alleged offences to law enforcement authorities, if this is against the background of the possible positive and also negative effects [...] an appropriate and necessary means to deal with a situation of (imminent) child endangerment and if through the disclosure of information the success of the aid is not at risk"

(*Meysen* 2007, 54). Assuming that the meeting of an ongoing case in a (multidisciplinary) workgroup has at least partly the purpose, on part of the youth welfare office, to conclude on how to proceed, it is hard to imagine that these

powers for data transmission apply for a suspicion of sexual abuse of children not yet known to law enforcement. Then, a meeting is only conceivable on the basis of anonymous social data.

1.2 Quantitative Part: Results of the Questionnaire Study

The questionnaire was sent out in November 2008 nationwide to 588 youth welfare offices. In an accompanying letter, the office management was asked to pass the questionnaire on to an expert of their house to answer it. From all states completed questionnaires were returned, the total response rate was 37.2 percent (218 forms).

Almost three-quarters of the participating youth welfare offices work in some way with other agencies and institutions on the subject of *sex offences against children*. These are almost as frequently of organised forms (such as roundtables, workgroups; 103 mentions) – in the following called "workgroups" – as they are individual, person-dependent contacts (93). Temporary projects were named significantly less often (31). A total of 70 workgroups were reported, involving in addition to representatives of youth welfare offices, representatives of criminal justice and/or CID. In 30 workgroups only the CID were concerned.

The 70 working groups come from eleven states, but are spread out very differently. It is striking that from East Germany[2], almost no working groups were reported. There was only one in Thuringia and one in Brandenburg, in each only the CID was represented.

40 youth welfare offices also indicated that they disposed of an interdisciplinary working group on sex offences against children, where criminal justice or CID is *not* represented. About a quarter of the youth welfare offices *without* a workgroup have tried in the past to establish one or to involve the criminal justice and/or the CID. Regarding the question, in which tasks or cases a workgroup with the criminal justice or the CID was requested, only a third of all youth welfare offices gave specific information, and 8 percent explicitly stated that there was no necessity. Nearly one out of three youth welfare offices that responded, wanted to co-operate in specific individual cases.

Only a fifth of the surveyed youth welfare offices agreed that the introduction of § 8a SGB VIII had an effect on their cooperation with the criminal justice or with CID. While this was confirmed by 22 percent of youth welfare offices without a workgroup, youth welfare offices with such a group confirmed it to

2 Brandenburg; Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania; Saxony; Saxony-Anhalt; Thuringia.

18 percent. As far as prosecution and/or criminal courts were (also) involved in this workgroup, the rate was 21 percent, when only the CID was involved, it fell to 14 percent.

The questions on the benefits as well as the problems and conflict fields of cooperation with criminal justice and/or CID were posed to all respondents, regardless of whether the youth welfare office had a workgroup or not. From a list of possible benefits of a workgroup, the five most important should be selected according to personal account. In youth welfare offices without a workgroup (n = 148), *Handling confidence through binding agreements* takes the first place with 105 entries, followed by *Optimization of procedures* (100), *improved role differentiation* (74) and *well-grounded risk assessment through case discussions* (73). Six youth welfare offices said that they see no advantage in cooperating with law enforcement authorities. In contrast, youth welfare offices with a workgroup (n = 71) mostly named *Optimization of procedures* (56), *Expansion of informal contacts* (55), *Handling confidence* (51) and *improved role differentiation* (50) as a benefit. *Improved image for the youth welfare office* was named by the two groups most infrequent.

More distinct differences were evident in the assessment of problems and conflicts. Here, the respondent should rate all prescribed items using a five-point scale ranging from *agree completely/rather* over *partly/partly* to *agree rather/not at all.* The biggest problem and conflict areas were rated as *different legal mandates/targets (protection order vs. prosecution)* (average: 3.98), the *dependence on personal commitment of the actual participants* (3.63) and the *different technical approaches, definitions, "language", etc.* (3.57). The average in youth welfare offices without workgroup was consistently higher than in those with a group; therefore the former valued the problems and conflict areas basically as more significant. Only the items *dependence on personal commitment* and *prejudice/negative images/stereotypes* were equivalent or slightly lower than estimated by youth welfare offices with a work group. Significant differences[3] emerge in the following items:

- *Lack of institutionalization of cooperation* (difference: 0.59);
- *Lack of knowledge of legal and structural framework conditions of the other* (difference: 0.49);

3 The difference is the absolute deviation between the arithmetic mean of the youth welfare offices with no workgroup to those with a workgroup in the assessment of each item. It indicates how much the average estimate of youth welfare offices with workgroup is below the data of the youth welfare offices without a workgroup.

- *Significant additional time requirement* (difference: 0.46);
- *Compromises hardly possible due to legal requirements and instructions* (difference: 0.37);
- *Impression of control through criminal justice* (difference: 0.36);
- *Different legal mandates/targets (protection order vs. prosecution)* (difference: 0.35).

That the first two items were rated as more problematic by youth welfare offices without workgroup, is not unexpected as in those with a workgroup, structures appropriate for such cooperation were already created (at least partially), or relevant conditions were at least known through the existing cooperation. The higher-assessed feeling of a lack of possibilities for compromise by youth welfare offices without a workgroup, the sense of control through criminal justice or CID and the significance of the differences in legal orders all lead in this direction: If areas of activity, limits and targets of the "others" are not sufficiently known, existing opportunities of compromise or overlapping orders can only be estimated in a limited way or maybe rather underestimated. It was striking that the respondents of youth welfare offices with a workgroup estimate the additional time taken as significantly less problematic than those from a youth welfare office not involved in such a workgroup.

The respondents generally liked to have at least a consistent contact or communication with criminal justice and CID; however this request, regardless of the existence of a workgroup, was aimed much more frequently at criminal justice than at CID, which was particularly pronounced when there was in fact a working group with only CID taking part.

Information on the founding year of the workgroup's was provided by 63 of the 70 respondents. The workgroups have existed on average for 12 to 13 years (minimum three years, maximum 24 years), with a difference shown between workgroups involving only CID and those (also) involving criminal justice: While the majority of the former were founded in the last ten years (59 percent), the latter tend to be older, with only a third of them founded in the last decade.

The initiative for their creation predominantly came from youth welfare offices and/or information centres, CID was involved with eleven, the prosecution with only three cases. No workgroup was founded due to the involvement of criminal justice or CID alone.

When asked about the original targets and contents, 86 statements from 60 working groups were available. Most frequently, "networking" in general was named, followed by the wish for a better mutual understanding and the optimisation and standardisation of procedures. In 35 workgroups, targets and

contents have changed in the meantime, mostly enlargements regarding content – for example, enhanced "public relations" or the addition of other topics.

The majority of the 57 workgroups with regular meetings meet quarterly on average. With increasing duration of existence their frequency is increasing: Workgroups that have existed for more than five years meet approximately three times per year on average, those having existed from five to fifteen years meet close to four times, while older ones about five times.

Almost all workgroups are supported by the responsible body of the youth welfare office. Most frequently, the support consists of the fact that the cooperation is recognised as regular working time, in every fourth workgroup it is even part of the job description. The personal financial costs are refunded in 26 workgroups. Only nine workgroups are workgroups in terms of § 78 SGB VIII.

A written document (overall concept etc.) about the cooperation between the participants only exists in 37 workgroups.

Participation in the meetings consists on average of:

- 15 people (including two to three youth welfare office staff members)
- from nine different institutions and professional groups
- with five different vocational qualifications, including always social pedagogy/social work, followed by internal police trainings as well as psychology and medicine in the field of psychiatry.

The meetings are usually organised by one particular person, mostly someone from the youth welfare office (20) or an information centre (11). 17 workgroups take turns in organising the meetings – this is more often the case when only the CID, rather than (also) the criminal justice, takes part. With only one exception, the meetings are principally hosted between the participants, with 27 of the workgroups alternating the host, 17 hosted by the youth welfare office, nine by information centres and 14 by others, such as the CID. In 63 workgroups, the sessions were logged: 35 times alternating between the participants, 13 by only the youth welfare office.

In half of the workgroups (33), the meetings always took place on the premises of the same institution, mainly in the youth welfare office. In the other workgroups, the participating institutions alternated as hosts.

40 out of the 70 workgroups deal exclusively with sex offences against children, the remaining 30 with other forms of child endangerment. Workgroups from areas with a small population in their field of responsibility tend to have a broader substantive orientation.

In 86 percent of the workgroups, thematic units rather than discussions of individual cases were at the fore of the meetings. However, in at least 49 workgroups, anonymised individual case discussions took place as well. In only one workgroup were current cases exclusively considered. In many workgroups, the thematic units go back to questions that arose from joint case discussions: 29 out of 61 workgroups reported that this was mostly the case, and another even stated that this was always the case.

More than two-thirds of the workgroups issue their own publications and organise advanced training. Training was only for members of the workgroup in five groups, while in the vast majority (42), it was also open to other interested people. Advisory services for institutions and especially for individuals, by contrast, were organised by only a few.

1.3 Qualitative Part: Results of the Interview Study

1.3.1 Introduction

The results of the questionnaire had a further effect on the interview study: That the regional workgroups were so unequally distributed (see chap. IV.1.2.1), in fact showed in which states one could look for interviewees. For 57 of the 70 workgroups charged, the responding youth welfare offices gave a contact address and thus indicated that they would be prepared to have an interview. At first, those workgroups in which criminal justice (and not only CID) was represented were selected for interviews. This applied to 32 workgroups, distributed in six West German states. While the quantitative data reflect the situation in the whole of Germany, the results of the interview study therefore only give information about West Germany.

The 21 interviews, which are the basis of the following chapters were conducted between August and December 2009, eleven of them with the staff of youth welfare offices, seven with representatives of the prosecution and three with CID. From each of the eleven workgroups selected for the interview study, two interviewees – one from the youth welfare office and one from the criminal justice or CID – describe their experience with this form of institutionalised, interdisciplinary cooperation. From one workgroup, no one could be obtained for an interview on the part of criminal justice or CID. Therefore, instead of the planned 22 interviews only 21 came about. In two interviews with the

youth welfare offices, two interviewees were available in each case, so that 23 people have their say in the 21 interviews.

Among the interviewees from the youth welfare offices were eight women and three men, among those from the prosecution or the CID were six women and four men. All employees of the youth welfare offices had completed a degree in social work/social pedagogy; four of them had further qualifications (psychology, social sciences) or additional therapeutic training.

What follows is information concerning the German project team. Since *Melanie Spöhr* left the project after one and a half years, *Evelyn Dawid* from the Austrian team finished the German part. Melanie Spöhr together with *Jutta Elz* worked on the quantitative part and conducted the interviews. *Evelyn Dawid*[4] then took over the evaluation as well as the representation of the German project team in the cooperation with the two project partners and the responsibility for the qualitative part affecting Germany.

1.3.2 Participating Institutions and Persons

Youth welfare offices and CID were represented in all 11 workgroups surveyed, the prosecution in six, criminal judges in three workgroups. At first glance the regular attendance of the police and the relatively frequent attendance of criminal justice were, however, qualified when one considers how often their representatives were actually present at the meeting. So in only two groups were criminal judges among the permanent members, CID in six and prosecutors and lawyers in three workgroups. A look at the surveyed workgroups showed that no representatives of the criminal justice and the CID participated on a regular basis in four of them, in three groups, however, they belonged to the fixed group of participants. In another one, criminal court and CID were permanent members. Three workgroups remain, where in each case only one law enforcement agency took part regularly, in two of them namely CID and the criminal court in the third one.

4 At this point I would like to thank my colleagues in the Kriminologischen Zentralstelle in Wiesbaden for making the cooperation from Vienna possible: Melanie Spöhr for the unproblematic and complete handover, Linda Suhens for trying to skip the barriers of bureaucracy that a bilateral employment involves, Axel Dessecker for his sympathetic ear and bright ideas when bureaucracy threatened to win, and Jutta Elz, who always had time for professional advice, and brought in her expertise by correcting and commenting on all texts in detail, and eventually bore the brunt of the organisation of the project. A big thank you goes also to Robert Schlesinger, who read and commented on the texts in Vienna, and made sure that the language is not too scientific. – Evelyn Dawid

Personnel Structure

The surveyed workgroups were made up, at least in the core, of a stable group of members, in which the fluctuation of the participating individuals and entities was not a problem. Some workgroups provide that the group of people remained fixed. It differs how open or closed the workgroup was for new participants. For example, in two workgroups certain changes were even wanted: In addition to the core group, new members were always expressly welcomed, even only for a few months, for example because they need advice in a case and take part until this case is closed. Three workgroups follow a different policy: the admission of new members is discussed in detail.

On average, around 18 people attend the meetings. The size of the workgroups seems to be more likely to involve conflict and failure potential than the turnover. Four arguments against large workgroups – meaning those with more than 20 participants – were mentioned more than once: First of all, the mutual trust is weaker since in a large group people do not know each other well enough. Secondly, in large workgroups people tend to build grouplets, so that only those who know each other already or get along well with each other speak together. Thirdly, for several interviewees a group that was too large was equivalent to the fact that people distant to the topic took part. This would run the risk that the discussions veer away from the actual issue of the workgroup or that they would get more flat with regards to content – and this could in turn lead to the absence of "real" experts. Fourthly, working in large groups would be less productive. However, among the surveyed workgroups are also some that had no bad experiences with large membership numbers. For example, one prosecutor told that meetings with 26-27 participants worked well, if everyone had a time quota for their concerns that they stick to.

Some interviewees even perceived people as "false" participants who do not work directly with victims. So one policewoman said that one problem of her workgroup would be that the members do not do "victim work" and therefore could not give competent information. For another employee of youth welfare offices, "false" in her workgroup is one employee holding a high management role in his institution and accordingly shows a dominant behaviour. And finally, two youth welfare offices stated that disinterested members who do not participate are disturbing.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Personnel structure:

- work groups too large, too many participants (> 20)
- participation of persons who
  - are topic-distant (seldom dealing with sexual assault in their job)
  - do not work with victims (not enough relevance for practical experience)
  - concerning their position in their company hierarchy, do not match with the rest of the members
  - are very dominant
  - show no interest/do not participate

The Roles of Youth Welfare Office, CID and Prosecution

The clear majority of the interviewees addressed the fact that youth welfare offices and law enforcement agencies have different legal mandates, interests and perspectives and also represent those in the workgroups – so that their role as regards content is set to a certain degree. Respondents from CID and prosecution have, besides their determination order, another thing in common that distinguishes them from the youth welfare offices: The latter not only count themselves among the fixed participants as a matter of course, they also mostly take over tasks and want to play an active role in the workgroup. On the contrary, prosecutors and criminal police officers see themselves primarily as consultants, and almost all expressed a certain distance towards the work-group. One criminal police officer – the only one out of the three interviewed police representatives who regularly took part – precisely expressed it: "The police are in fact only appendages there. (…) (I) have simply pushed myself inside (…) take part regularly since (…) but I do not participate in planning, presenting and choosing the topics." Nevertheless, this understanding of roles says little about the quality of cooperation in everyday life. So this police officer understands himself explicitly as a "link": If someone from the workgroup wants to contact the police, this could always go through him.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Roles of the participants:

- Different legal mandates, interests and perspectives of youth welfare offices and public prosecution or CID

Participation of CID

Of the three interviewed police officers only one was regularly attending the meetings of his workgroup. The others respectively were there only once. One of the two received an invitation only this once – to a big round of introductions – afterwards only the record came, but no other invitations, although there were follow-up meetings, as the interviewee knows. The only meeting of the third interviewee was not at all favourable. She claims she got the impression that the participants had "very different interests" than hers: For about two hours, the name of the workgroup and the layout of a flyer had been discussed. Furthermore, there had been a "general atmosphere" against the police. Two of her colleagues had also participated in the workgroup once and had gained a similar impression. It makes sense, however, to "show up now and then", but she does not want to attend the meetings more frequently because one would hedge around the real problems.

For another workgroup the representative of the youth welfare office described that the CID had already belonged to the fixed participants, but currently only attends when invited – first of all, because the case discussions had brought the police officers in a conflict with the principle of legality and secondly because their work pressure was so high.

These examples of the problems that may arise in connection with the participation of the CID should not override the fact that in the surveyed workgroups, of all law enforcement authorities the CID clearly was most frequently represented and belongs more often to the fixed core group than the prosecution or a criminal court.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Participation of CID:

- Principle of legality in case discussions
- Work pressure and a tight time scale

Failure risks & potential for conflict – Participation in general:

- Stop of invitations to an organisation/person without giving reasons
- Accusations and attacks against participants that are present for the first time
- No substantive discussions, but extensive talks about organisational and administrational details when new members are present for the first time

Participation of Prosecution

The eleven surveyed workgroups provide ample evidence that the participation of the prosecution is more difficult to implement than that of CID. The sheer numbers alone can be read in this direction: In three workgroups, the prosecution was part of the fixed core group, in three others it takes part by invitation only, again in three others it has never been present, and in two workgroups it no longer takes part.

That the personal approaches and interests of the participants play a major role for a successful cooperation – also an institutionalised one – becomes particularly clear when looking at the participation of the prosecution. What the prosecutor explicitly says in the following quote, namely that it depends on the personal handling with the legal mandate and the commitment of the participants whether cooperation works, can be derived also from many other statements: "I just think that it depends on the particular individuals that have to deal with it. Some people just work more theoretical, formulaic and closer to the laws. (...) while other people are a bit more practical and even, let me say, less law-abiding, and then it is not complicated."

One prosecutor who for six years attended the meetings regularly, at the time of the interview took part only when invited. The increased number of various work-groups made that possible, because she could not participate in all of them and had difficulties explaining why she was a member here and not there. The workgroup extended its activities and grew at the same time, which meant that it worked less productively and repeated contents. For her, it had not paid to take the time pressure when in the end an institution was introduced that she had already know well for years. One disadvantage of the new arrangement would be, however, that it would get more difficult to keep up the mutual trust, since less contact exists.

The scarce time resources of the prosecution were cited by many interviewees as a barrier to participation, even on the part of youth welfare office and CID. In one workgroup the prosecution limited their presence at the meetings, because one person from the workgroup was involved in a lawsuit in which the participating prosecutor investigated.

Youth welfare offices staff from three workgroups in which the prosecution does not participate regularly, reported of a satisfactory solution for the daily case work: They could contact the prosecutor any time via telephone to ask questions and exchange information. A certain understanding exists for the prosecutor not attending the meetings, "Where there is a lot of general talking as well", as one representative of the youth welfare office puts it. However, what also came up in the interviews was that the legal competence of the prosecution was missed time and again in the workgroups.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Participation of prosecution:

- Principle of legality in case discussions
- Work pressure and a tight time scale (participation not mentioned in job description)
- Different styles of working and discussing
- When participants take different sides in a lawsuit (Increased likelihood when both criminal justice and CID are involved)
- Number of workgroups too large in total (participation in all groups not possible)

Failure risks & potential for conflict – Participation in general:

- Personnel changes in the leadership of the workgroup
- Changes in focus as regards content (e. g. expansion of the topic the group deals with)
- Weak mutual trust, when participants attend irregularly/only when invited

Participation of the Criminal Court

In about half of the surveyed workgroups there was never any attempt made to induce criminal judges to participate. Two workgroups sent invitations to criminal judges who did not accept them, however. From one workgroup the criminal court dropped out. Therefore, two workgroups remain that at the time of the interviews cooperated regularly with criminal judges.

The interviewees gave four reasons why criminal judges belong so rarely to workgroups. First of all, through their participation they would fear their judicial independence and impartiality was at risk. Some of them would not even like to participate when no cases are discussed, since mere participation could give the impression that they were “taken in by the victim side”. Secondly, the workload of the judges is very high, networking activities are not provided with them, and thus no working time for that. Thirdly, they are not subject to directives, and thus to participate in a workgroup always remains a matter of personal commitment. Fourthly, the staff of the youth welfare office is seldom in contact with criminal judges in its everyday work, and therefore seems to have less need to provide for their participation.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Participation of the criminal court:

- Conflict of interest with judicial impartiality (even the mere impression that a bias is possible is enough)
- Work pressure and a tight time scale
- Participation based on own initiative
- Participation outside paid working hours (participation not mentioned in job description)

Participation of Representatives of School System and Health Care

Among the regular participants, representatives of health care can be found in ten workgroups, and representatives of the school system (teachers, school psychologists, principals) in five. Doctors and teachers are among those professionals who were often described in interviews as difficult participants. What applies to both professional groups was that they were hardly induced to participate, because their working hours could be difficult to reconcile with the dates of the meetings. Also, with doctors in private practice – as could be heard in the interviews – the problem arises that participating in the workgroup produces a loss of earnings that will not be reimbursed. Their commitment is therefore to a particularly large extent a matter of personal interest. Furthermore, as self-employed persons they often have no substitution, either for their practice or for the workgroup, if they are absent here or there.

Not all interviewees think that teachers (and professionals from pre-school education) and health professionals should participate in the workgroup. One respondent from the youth welfare office believes that the topic of sexual abuse was “too intense for schools”. Another problem for the participation of school system and health care is that there are seldom contact persons that play the role of multipliers, and thus share the contents of the workgroups with their institutions (e. g. schools) or in their profession group.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Participation of school system and health care:

- Professional groups with difficulties to reconcile working hours and participation in the meetings
- Participation of topic-distant persons (seldom dealing with sexual assault in their job)
- Participation based on own initiative
- Participation outside paid working hours (with self-employed, e. g. doctors in private practice)

1.3.3 Organisational Structure

The way a workgroup is structured and organised, or how the tasks are shared are primarily administrative and organisational issues that are essential for the operation of the workgroups, because they give them the structural frame in which the real work takes place.

Structure of the Workgroups

Administrative Management and Allocation of Tasks

In ten of the eleven surveyed workgroups an institution or person is in charge of their smooth functioning – although they are responsible (with exceptions) for the administration, not the content. In five workgroups that responsibility lies with the youth welfare office, in three with the youth welfare office together with one or more other entities, and in two with auxiliary or advice. The police are represented in only one workgroup in the governing body, in a four-member team, in which also the youth welfare office and two victim facilities sit in. There is broad recognition that administrative leadership should be fixed in one or more hands. Only one youth welfare offices worker who is active in a workgroup with no formal leadership understands just that as an advantage.

In almost all surveyed workgroups complex projects and tasks – like organising events, but also the development of areas – are managed in team-work by forming subgroups, which are created temporarily and are much smaller than the actual workgroup. They often combine the respective experts on the subject, meet more frequently than the large group and have a higher workload. The results of the subgroups are discussed in plenary. This construction is the pre-requisite for something to “develop”, said some interviewees, which would not be possible in the large circle. The discussion of and advice on current cases is outsourced in some workgroups by building specialized subgroups, who come together on demand. This is interesting for the question of cooperation between youth welfare office, criminal justice and CID, as the two last named do not participate in this kind of subgroups in the surveyed workgroups. The regular tasks arising in connection with the organisation of the meeting – such as sending the invitations, the moderation and the creation of records – are done either fixed by one person or alternately, in a more or less fixed sequence of more and other participants. The trend seems to go to put the tasks in fixed hands. Meanwhile, at least the invitations and presentations take place by exchanging it between the members, according to the records of the groups. Three workgroups are organised very tightly: management, invitations, e-mail distribution, presentation and protocol, for all that just one person is responsible – and in a workgroup this person also determines its content.

Written Basics

The majority of the surveyed workgroups set themselves a written agreement, often in their foundation phase, as a "guide", a "concept" or a "charter", stated the interviewees: A definition of targets and contents in rather broad terms. In some workgroups a separate program was not written, as the protocols and the written results of the activity in the group was held as the basis. The responses of the interviewees, however, show that the writing of such fundamentals are not official and have only minor importance to the everyday work.

Legal Basis

Almost none of the surveyed workgroups have statutory regulations or a legal mandate – with only one exception, a registered association. Nobody would be organised as a consortium under § 78 SGB VIII[5], explained the interviewees. A certification under § 78 SGB VIII "would not improve (...), but bring only a bit more work", said a youth welfare office worker. Another youth welfare office worker is against the establishment of an association, since that would only costs time, for example, "for making statutory public orders". Two interviewees from the youth welfare office thought they could get something out of a statutory scheme as it would bring more "security" and the participation of individuals would not be so dependent on the consent of their superiors, as it is currently. The majority of the interviewees do not think it necessary or desirable to have a statutory basis for the workgroups, usually with the argument that they fear for the freedom they have now. A prosecutor brought another argument against a legal mandate: that it alone was no guarantee of the good quality of the work-group. You could also participate and then "go home shrugging your shoulders".

Organisation and Process of Meetings

Choice of Topics and Agenda

Subject areas, which occupy the workgroups as part of their information and training, are usually set one year in advance. In only a few workgroups the issues were fixed from one time to another. For the interview partners it was important that both, considering the long- term and the short-term plans, there was sufficient space for the spontaneous discharge of current topics. In ten of the eleven

5 § 78 SGB VIII: The representatives of the public youth welfare office should strive for the constitution of workgroups, in which next to them the approved representatives of the free youth welfare, as well as the representatives of supported measures are represented. In the workgroups it should be caused, that planned measures are matched with each other and complement one another.

workgroups surveyed, all members can hand in issues. Not all of them make use of this possibility: It mostly is the “audience” among the representatives of the criminal justice and the CID, who remain passive here. If there are more topics to choose from than there are meetings the final selection will be decided on together. In one single workgroup only the direction determines the subjects.

The detailed procedure of the meetings is normally set in an agenda, depending on the direction of the workgroup. An agenda was not provided in the early stages of some workgroups, but was later introduced. Here, too, the tendency towards a more streamlined organisation can be recognized.

Invitation, Presentation and Protocol

Sending invitations goes without saying, however, the fact tat all meetings will be moderated does not. One interviewee said that as an example, moderation would be renounced if very few participants were present. While the invitation and moderation were rarely mentioned, the interviewees brought the logs into conversation again and again: A protocol is not written in all workgroups for each meeting, sometimes that is not decided until the beginning of the meeting. There is some discrepancy on how detailed such a protocol should be: while some value the details (if possible with a lot of material in the notes), others will find this effort rather exaggerated.

Time, Frequency and Location

In three workgroups the meetings took place on Wednesday afternoons, as doctors and teachers had time then, some interviewees stated. In general the majority of the meetings take place after 14 o´clock, some around 17o´clock. Two respondents occupy an opposite position: their two workgroups had decided to come together in the morning, because this would fall in the working hours of those who actually took part. Teachers, for example, would not come anyway from experience, even if one was to take them into account when scheduling.

Most workgroups hold meetings four to six times a year, a few only twice, others eight to ten times. There is no overall unity among the interviewees regarding the ideal time for the determination date. In most workgroups the dates are set a year in advance, but there are others who only hold a schedule from one meeting to the next practicable. On average, the meetings last two hours.

A clear majority of the workgroups always meet at the same place, only two move from one participating institution to another.

Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution

The majority of the interviewees said they received no guidance from their superiors as to what they should review in the workgroup. Only two staff members of the youth welfare office mentioned that the leadership might say "This could be an issue for the workgroup." Primarily it is the participating individuals and not the facilities that determine the events in the workgroups.

In most surveyed workgroups decisions were taken together and consensual. Formal votes where the majority gave for a rash decision are very rare and were not the method of choice. None of the interviewees could remember any conflicts that could not be solved or required external help.

Financing

None of the respondent workgroups received public subsidies directly. Only one caller from the youth welfare office reported that there was any government payments specifically intended to finance activities such as workgroups. When costs were incurred, the workgroup must think "watch, do we get the funding", said another employee of the youth welfare office, thus describing the actions of his colleagues in most of the other workgroups.

Of the participating institutions the youth welfare offices seems to contribute most of the funds: they undertake regularly printing costs, sometimes they pay the fees of the speakers and provide the catering for larger events. In two workgroups the criminal justice also provided a financial contribution: a prosecutor for an event, a court for a publication. Two workgroups receive financial assistance through donations, one raises – low – membership fees.

In their role as employers most of the participating institutions support their workgroups indirectly: For all the questioned criminal police officers, and almost all of the youth welfare office staff, hours they devote to the study group are regular working hours. Only one respondent from the youth welfare office said that she and all other members would be working voluntarily. The case with the prosecutors is more complicated: two of them understand their participation as volunteers, others said that in the prosecution the working hours are less crucial than the completed documents.

In addition, the facilities for the meetings are always made available by a participating institution, which then perhaps provides for coffee and "some biscuits and cakes". Finally, the participants use their jobs, such as computer and Internet access, to prepare for the workgroups and for the follow up.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Organisational structure:

- Poorly accessible (for public transport) meeting places
- Professional groups with difficulties to reconcile working hours and participation in the meetings
- Time of fixing the dates for the meeting (too early/too late)
- Quality of the agendas (e. g. too superficial)
- Quality of the protocols (e. g. too little detail)

1.3.4 Targets, Tasks and Contents

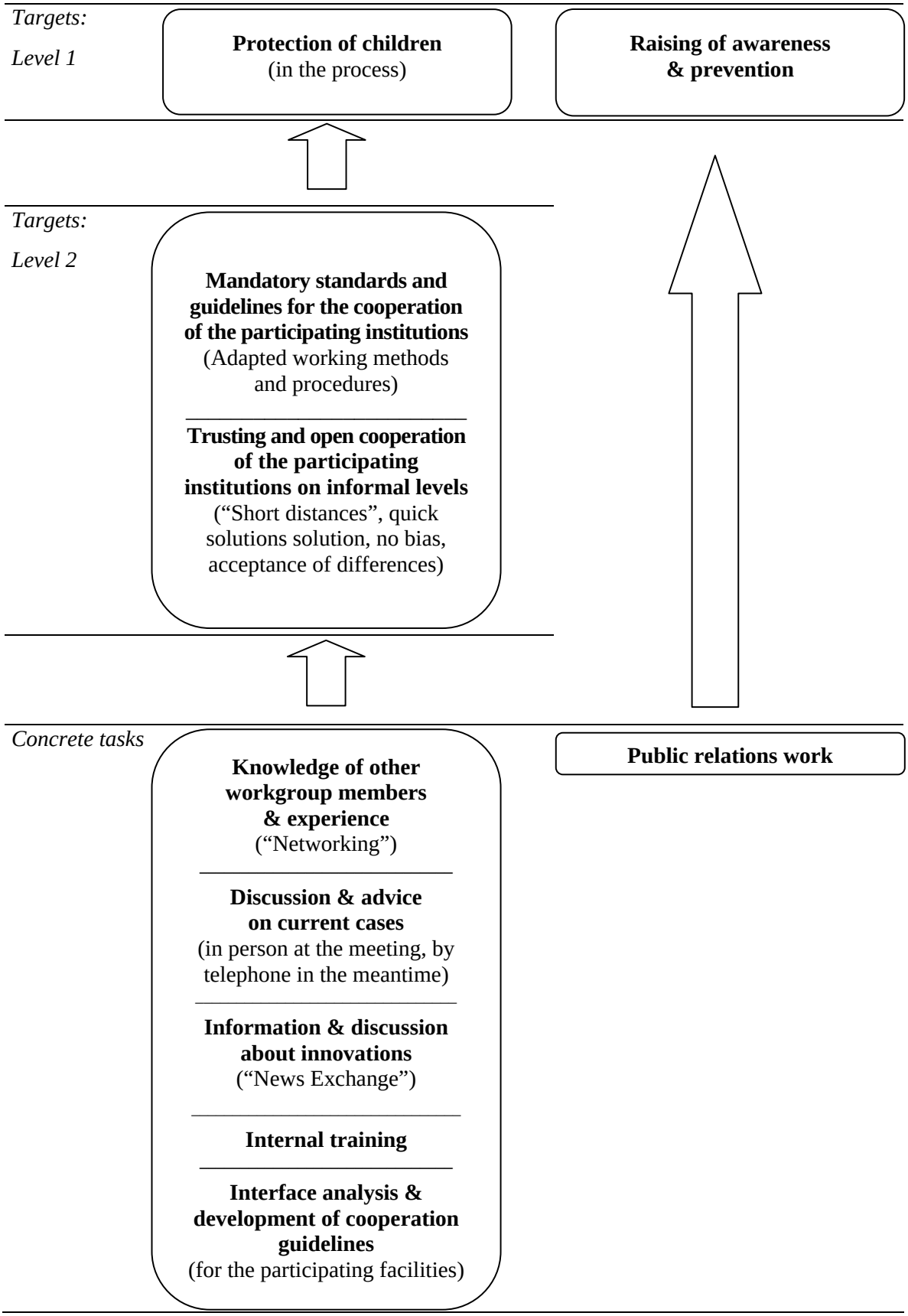
To develop binding standards in the workgroup that are used in the application of cooperation between the institutions when involved in actual cases of the sexual abuse of children, is the most common target of the interviewees. Regarding content the eleven surveyed workgroups focus first on the mutual knowledge and the maintenance of contacts, secondly on case studies, thirdly the improvement of information and new findings of the members and, fourthly on prevention measures.

Targets and Tasks

The interviews searched for the targets and tasks of the workgroups that were most important for the respondents. The result was a list of targets, which, however, were thematically disordered and where targets were put together at different hierarchical levels. We have provided the entries in a system with three levels (Fig. IV.1.1). The contents are solely of the interviews, the ordering is from us. This is not a targets hierarchy, which may have validity for all German workgroups because other interviewees and other workgroups would introduce other aspects. The broad agreement among the entries leaves us to conclude that the most important and common targets are covered.

At level 1 were the primary targets of the *protection of children (in the investigations and criminal proceedings)*, and the *raising of awareness and prevention*, with a significant focus of the entries on the former. This was certainly not reflected perfectly in the concrete contents of the workgroups – where activities used for prevention and awareness play important roles.

Fig. IV.1.1: Targets and tasks of the workgroups



At level 2 there were two aspects of cooperation: On the one hand it was about creating informal "small service routes" between the participants that lead to quick solutions for the victims. Such cooperation works when mutual personal trust is available and one knows the possibilities and limits of the cooperating partners. On the other hand it worked to create standards and guidelines and to change structures so that processes could run smoothly. So this was not about a personal level, but to create a system with which the gears reached well onto each other.

To achieve both targets at level 2, the concrete tasks of the workgroup at the first level would have to be at least partially fulfilled: This involves getting to know the members and sharing experiences, discussing current events together, disseminating news, organising internal training and to analyse for the case study the interfaces in the helper system and to develop cooperation guidelines for the participating institutions.

Contents

Of those surveyed, six workgroups were dealing exclusively with the sexual abuse of children, the rest were also devoted to other forms of violence against children and/or against women. Most of the interviewees were satisfied with their chosen variety of topics. Only one prosecutor and a police detective criticised the fact that too many subjects were dealt with, and were in favour of making the sexual abuse of children the main theme of the workgroups. Both rarely take part in the meetings, also because they were dissatisfied with the broad subject themes.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Contents:

- Variety of topics too large, no substantive focus (e. g. sexual abuse of children)
- Different styles of working and discussing

Presentation of the Participating Institutions

Rounds of introductions were among the fixed components of all workgroups. They were always used in the beginning stages – so in the initial phase of the research groups, as well as when new participants joined. The presentation of one's own institution and its activities, clarifying the respective roles and legal orders as well as the restraints which might limit cooperation were seen by several interviewees as a central task of the workgroups, as it represented the requirements of any network and cooperation with focus for the victim. While

some welcomed the repeated presentation of facilities, when for example the "job content" changed over the course of time, there was also one prosecutor, for whom the frequent round of introductions was a reason (among several) for no longer participating regularly in the workgroup, but only in specific subjects with an invitation.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Rounds of introduction:

↯ Rounds of introductions too frequent

Case Discussions

In more than half of the workgroups (anonymous) closed cases were discussed to illustrate procedures and to identify optimisation potential for cooperation or to create cooperation guidelines. Two workgroups were limited to the review of completed cases, while in the other nine there were live cases on the agenda (as well as or exclusively), for which there was also no obvious priority. Only two workgroups have a regular focus on anonymous case discussions where they give only advice; the decision for further action within the case always remains with those who brought the case in. However, law enforcement authorities only take part very sporadically on one of these two workgroups. In the other CID and prosecution belong to the fixed participants. Actually this second workgroup was the only one with which anonymous case studies regularly took place as a substantive focus with the involvement of criminal justice or the CID. The remaining groups that discussed current cases, did so extremely rarely with the presence of criminal justice and CID, and have in some situations created their own smaller sub-groups for case discussions, as well as for other tasks, with the difference that in the case-sub-groups, criminal justice and CID were not represented throughout. In the subgroups, sometimes the cases of members were discussed and also case deliberations were implemented to outsiders.

In what the problem of the case discussions could exactly be the interviews only give a diffuse image. Four interviewees said that the workgroup would not be the place for the handling of recent cases: under no circumstances should case studies define a large workgroup, especially in large workgroups the necessary confidence did not exist because one could not know enough about many of the others, and the cases would not be of interest for all participants. Also, a small town was too small to maintain the anonymity; if it was too far-reaching to allow for a meaningful discussion the falsifying for anonymity was no longer possible.

Regarding the critical interventions aspects of data protection, when explicitly asked about problems with the protection of data, more than half of the interviewees found no such problems within their workgroup: The tenor was either that there were no problems because of the anonymising, or that the topic was addressed only rarely, because it would not play a major role for the activities of the workgroup. A police detective and a prosecutor spoke with regards to the principle of legality: as long as the cases were anonymous, said the two, they could live with it, and the prosecutor came back repeatedly on the issue pointing out that he had "some difficulties in [his] role", as "I am obliged by the law to act, if I learn of a crime". The other representatives of the prosecution and the CID that their investigation order is not related to the work of the workgroup, but with anonymous (telephone) case discussions, which they often provide (but cannot exclusively) to workgroup members.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Case discussion:

- Privaty policy
- Principle of legality

Information and Training

In addition to networking issues it is especially necessary to obtain the latest information and to acquire knowledge in the workgroups. On one side, the agendas of almost all workgroups are scheduled to exchange the latest information in an informal way, on the other issues should be established which, at a meeting or sometimes over several meetings, are intensive worked at and discussed.

The ideas for the major subject areas would result from the daily practical work, from the desire to clarify something that sometimes may have caused years of uncertainty or discomfort, or out of any acute case, explained the interviewees, but were fed also from reports in the media and political discussions. Some workgroups invite external speakers, to approach a subject, others work on themes only internally, for example, by studying technical literature, still others reach back for the papers to the experts in the workgroup.

The latest news and findings from the workgroups are often passed on by the participants in their own facilities. It was important that "many colleagues could participate in the operational areas", one caller said from the youth welfare office. The general aim was to also communicate outside of the group of participants, that "cooperation is very important".

Public Relations, Education and Prevention

All workgroups are trying (with varying intensity) to work for the outside. The target of this effort are the peer community and the general public, notably parents and sometimes children. The workgroups perform public relations – often not for the workgroup itself, but for the issues and concerns that are addressed in it. Much has the character of education and should raise awareness of the issues and act preventively.

To reach the professional public, on one hand events such as training and lectures are held, on the other written materials, such as information flyers or action guidelines are worked on. This applies to institutions and people as they can be represented in the workgroups, for example, counselling services, police, prosecutors, judges, doctors and teachers but also students (for example of social education) or other workgroups.

Rarely is it about reaching the general public with the traditional press work. Five workgroups aim however to be represented in the media, though with varying degrees of emphasis.

For parents, for example, there are information evenings held at schools, for children there are theatre performances or special education programs in exhibitions where the prevention work in which the issue of violence is presented artistically. In only one interview was the internet mentioned: they had worked on a website with information on help offers for children said the youth welfare office. Especially for kids, a website was an appropriate offer, because children were used to searching the internet – and may perhaps contact the youth welfare office with an (anonymous) request.

The youth welfare office attach more importance to public relations than the criminal justice and CID do. While the staff of the youth welfare offices desired with at least one exception a certain familiarity of the workgroup and its activities, the representatives of the Prosecution and the CID tended to want to keep the workgroups away from the public.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – Public relations, education and prevention:

- Different value of public relations and prevention work

1.3.5 Results and Implications of the Workgroups

In the following the implications of the workgroups are at the centre, where the focus is not on the work of the workgroup, but on the ordinary, caserelated cooperation outside of the workgroups, and what the cooperation alliances bring ultimately for the victims. To illustrate what effect the workgroups cause in the eyes of the interviewees, the targets set out by them (see chap. IV.1.3.4) serve as orientation points. In the talks not all targets have been addressed in the same detail, this was partly because of the priorities of the interviewees, and in part because of the interview guideline, which provided the organisational structure and the contents of the workgroups and cooperation in the specific case treatment at the centre. Unfortunately the interviews provided little information, for example, about what kind of degree the targets in the second pillar of the pyramid were reached, having raised awareness and prevention in the content.

Concrete Tasks – Targets Level 3

Only a few interventions were found to which results arise from three of the five mentioned tasks – those located in the targets pyramid at the lowest level: from the *meeting and advice from recent cases* from *information and debate on innovation* and from the *internal training*. This does not mean that such activities have no effect, but only that they are of minor importance for the immediate cooperation in the everyday work – in contrast to *interface analysis and development of cooperation guidelines*, which do play a role in some workgroups, and to *know the other workgroup members and exchange of experience*, which was mentioned more often in the interviews than any other outcome of the workgroups.

The fulfilment of the last task conceives further consequences, as the interviewees noted: Your own horizon had expanded. You would get to know people in the workgroup that you would probably not or very rarely have met in professional practise, but with which you could cooperate usefully. You knew now, what the others thought and what they expected. You had more respect for their work and accepted their perspectives and ways of working easier, because you knew the background. Approaches that were contradictory at first glance would have often shown on closer examination as only a lack of knowledge. In the mutual presentation of everyone's work had been discovered much in common and little divisive.

Very often the greater knowledge of the activities of the other members and the fact that one is personally known is seen as a direct sign that cooperation (now) is working well. If you know each other personally, “very difficult issues” would be easier to work on, said for example a conversation partner from the

child welfare office. Another pointed out that “unnecessary disputes” could be avoided, because the roles were clear. Mostly it was mentioned that the informal contacts had become more frequent and easier: Where once a correspondence would have been necessary or no contact had been added, now a telephone conversation sufficed to obtain information or to make an arrangement to find a quick solution for those affected.

The majority of interviewees said that prejudices and stereotypes, which in the early years of their workgroup had certainly existed, could over time be reduced through greater knowledge. But there were at least three youth welfare office workers, a police officer and a prosecutor, who still discovered massive prejudices and a lack of knowledge about the work of other participants within the workgroup.

Interventions in seven of the interviewed eleven workgroups had pointed out that *interface analysis and development of cooperation guidelines* did have concrete results. The interviewees spoke of concerted work practises and procedures in the cooperation of the participating institutions in the workgroup. The level of formal standardisation is different: in some workgroups guidelines for cooperation have been developed, and the staff of the participating institutions hold on to those procedures. In other workgroups action guidelines for joint action have been developed without this in writing.

Targets – Level 2

Standardized and Informal Cooperation

Occasionally suggestions are found in the interviews that show that there have been structural changes within the participating institutions: Mostly, this is about an optimisation of the communication where the mutual presence was made possible, such as through the exchange of mobile phone numbers. At the Child Welfare Office a veritable structural adjustment is available, which has established a 24-hour standby phone service as a response to the workgroup.

The more informal the agreed procedures are, the more they seem to be based on the participant's knowing and trust in each other (personally) – and the longer is the line between mandatory standards and a “mere” good cooperation. There is an intersection where the cooperation has – with a different focus – both standardised and informal elements. It seems that in the surveyed workgroups the informal forms of cooperation have greater importance than the standard forms of cooperation.

Two beneficial effects of mandatory standards and guidelines have been mentioned several times: first, the crossing of professional boundaries is prevented or made unnecessary. A prosecutor said that a clear division of tasks relieved the investigating detective policemen and her "emotionally", as they could focus on their core tasks and would not have to feel obliged to advise or even look after the person concerned. Implicitly this means for those concerned that they come more frequently and more quickly to a professional service and advice. The second advantage, which results from a coordinated process sequence – and good cooperation – is good for both, the stakeholders and the helpers, namely that through the cooperation of many institutions, the circle of contact persons expands to those with very different skills and insights. Several times it was pointed out that it was not contemporary and not today's standards of professionalism to make decisions in a case "in private", but that the professional exchange and gathering of other opinions are or at least should be, of course, obvious.

In particular, the representatives of the prosecution provided evidence where and in what respect the vote of the procedures and the informal cooperation did not work. In particular they criticized two basic points of friction in specific criminal proceedings that occur regularly between youth welfare office and law enforcement: the slow data transfer of the youth welfare offices and their handling of evidence. A prosecutor summarized what most of her colleagues wanted: that "the privacy should simply step a bit to the background when it is about the welfare of the child". Speeches by representatives of the prosecution and the youth services suggest that a rethinking is at least partly in progress regarding the question of how the youth services data protection is dealt with: Two representatives of the prosecution said that earlier it had been much more difficult to obtain data from the youth welfare office, and two youth welfare office workers explained that they regularly worked with "release of secrecy". The interviews gave no information as to whether or to what extent the so called development is in conjunction with the activities of the workgroups.

For the majority of the interviewed representatives of the prosecution and CID the youth welfare office´s inadequate or complete lack of safeguarding of evidence was also a problem. The focus of the criticism is that the victims would be interviewed without documenting their statements or it would occur after they had worked with them therapeutically, so that they could not be used in criminal proceedings. Without this documentation "it may no longer be distinguished what comes from the victim or what is the result from the therapeutic process", a prosecutor said on behalf of his/her colleagues. The staff of the youth welfare office were not aware of the importance of safeguarding the evidence. As a result, "many procedures would be quashed (...)". Repeatedly the demand has been raised to have referees present for at least the initial interviews. In the

interviews with the staff of the youth welfare office, there are only two interventions that address questions of evidence. A caller pointed out that the standardized forms on which his youth welfare office "documents the risk situation", are designed so that they can be helpful too for the police and prosecutors. One of his colleagues from another youth welfare office reported that she considers the safeguarding of the evidence and the influence of a therapy on the testimony of the victims by always calling the CID in cases where a charge had already been laid, and questions if the investigations were completed far enough that therapy could begin. Both can be read as indications that the workgroups may have specific positive effects in connection with the way the youth welfare offices deals with evidence.

Case-specific Cooperation

Only one prosecutor talked about a close cooperation with the youth welfare office, four reported not communicating with the youth welfare offices or hardly case-related. Of the law enforcement authorities it was mostly the CID who cooperated with the youth welfare office through the course of the investigation. The majority of the interviewed prosecutors told that although their contact was rare, through their participation in the workgroup they had transformed their cooperation with the youth welfare office. Some representatives of the prosecution said that they conducted "confidential" anonymous law and case discussions for the workgroup members on the phone, some pointed out that these discussions and the principle of legality they would have to follow stood in a contrast.

The workgroups with the cooperation of the youth welfare office and the CID appear to cause far more than those with the prosecution, which is probably due to the fact that those two authorities generally maintained more contact during the casework. The cooperation was perceived as very positive by both sides. The representatives of the CID praised the good and lively communications with the youth welfare offices, youth welfare office workers said that anonymous case discussions were possible that you could "negotiate or discuss" more because you knew from each other, that there were clear structures and quick appointments and that the police officers worked professionally and were well trained. The good functioning of the cooperation is attributed specifically to the workgroup by the majority of the interviewees.

Selected Results of the Analysis of Documents

The written materials developed in the workgroups can also deduce the quality of cooperation and the degree of standardisation, both the cooperation guidelines for the employees of the participating organisations, and the action guidelines for target groups such as schools or day care institutions. The most striking similarity is a decidedly detached attitude to the penalty. While the roles and the actions of the institutions involved that protect the victims and the advisory institutions, health service and youth welfare office are described in detail, the police and/or criminal justice are usually only mentioned in passing, if at all. A single cooperation guideline devotes a lot of space to the possibility of a report – with a value-free assessment of the pro and con arguments. Overall, the written materials convey the impression that they are working towards leaving the decisions to report to experts (for example in the youth welfare office), who are better able to judge than enthusiastic amateurs, whether the procedure is to be expected of the victim – especially when they can rely on anonymous discussion of criminal justice and/or the CID.

Failure risks and potential for conflict – cooperation in the case work:

- Prejudices and stereotypes
- Handling of youth welfare offices with the privacy policy, which they are liable to
- Insufficient evidence by the youth welfare offices
- Incomplete exchange of information

Targets – Level 1

Some evidence that better networking is good for the victims, has been already mentioned in this chapter. The interviewees also believed that the quality of advice had increased, because you knew where and with whom the right support was to be organised quickly. One could reduce the victims' fear of the police, by establishing a contact, for example, in their presence and tell them something about the police officers. The exchange of information meant that while an investigation was proceeding, all the facilities were coordinated, which increased the chances that the procedures worked well. This will also avoid preventively "the one or other misfortune". One could better clarify whether there was the prospect for a criminal conviction of the perpetrators, and so decide whether to "suspend" the victims from the interrogations. In criminal proceedings, "the interrogation of the victims is minimized. The load is much smaller."

As for publicity, the interviewed representatives of the youth welfare offices and law enforcement authorities have differing assessments of whether such workgroups should operate (see chap. IV.1.3.4: public relations, education and prevention). They also do not agree whether the professional or general public know about the workgroup and his work at all: While the clear majority of the interviewees of the youth welfare offices thought that the workgroups were known good to very well at least in the professional community, only one prosecutor shared this view. The other interviewees from the law enforcement authorities did not know whether the workgroup was known, or thought that hardly anyone knew of it.

Cost versus Benefit

Whether they invest more or less time in their membership than they save by the results of the workgroup (such as "shorter pathways"), does not stand in the foreground for any of the interviewees. When asked specifically about their time spent on the workgroup, some concluded that it was difficult to assess. Namely, the time spent varied, depending on how many and which tasks they had taken over. Therefore, an average could not be calculated. The staff of the youth welfare offices indicated that they spent between three and a half and 16 hours per meeting, including meeting time, preparation time, and follow-up, where it is important to bear in mind that in some cases they hold the responsibility for the running of the workgroup or other administrative tasks. The majority of the representatives of the prosecution and the CID said that they were not spending more time than the duration of the meetings. As a maximum they would add up to an hour, rarely one or two afternoons, when something was to be prepared.

A majority of the interviewees were persuaded that the time was worth it, was a good use of resources, and also gave several aspects where this could be felt: Time and energy would be saved by: the smoother workflow, the shorter pathways, the faster access to the best professionals in the help system, avoidance of duplication, the avoidance of controversy, debate and lengthy explanations and better knowledge. Two conversation partners from the youth welfare office pointed to a resource gain which had nothing to do with time: they would get support in the workgroup and could then gain energy. Several times it was also talked about the benefit for the victims: "It also saves a lot of suffering among the clients themselves, if they are not quickly passed through the institution."

2. Country-specific Report German-Speaking Switzerland

2.1 Public Children and Youth Services and Criminal Justice in (German) Switzerland

The protection of children and young people is among other things enshrined in Article 11 in the Swiss Federal Constitution (FC). In addition, Switzerland ratified 1997 the UN Children's Convention[1], which requires them, among other things, "to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" according to Article 34, and to make use of "appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures"[2] for that purpose. In contrast to Germany and Austria, the **children and youth services** in Switzerland is federalistically organised with different structures, forms of organisation and a multitude of executive organs (*Häfeli & Voll* 2008; *Mahrer et al.* 2007). Also the cantonal legislative foundations are mixed. So only seven Cantons have a Child and Youth Welfare Act (German-speaking Switzerland: Basel-Stadt, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Zurich; different speaking Cantons: Vaud, Valais and Ticino), the remaining 19 Cantons often make the Social Security-, Health-, School- and/or Vocational Training Act or others the legal basis (*Piller* 2003). Planning and coordination functions of the multi-disciplinary child protection remain – following Article 317 Civil Code (CC) – in the whole of Switzerland at the cantonal level, which applies in the majority also for the financing of the offers (*Piller* 2003, 33)[3]. In some Cantons also private or publicly subsidized services are involved in these tasks.

The German-speaking Switzerland cantonal[4] authorities that are responsible for planning and coordination of the interdisciplinary child protection are the cantonal child protection committees (Aargau, Basel-Stadt, Bern, Zurich), the cantonal social services (Glarus, St. Gallen, Zug), the department child protection

1 http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/0_107/ (13.09.2010).

2 Ibid.

3 Institutions from 24 Cantons have been involved in the study by *Piller* (2003), but the Cantons of Solothurn and Nidwalden have not participated in the investigation.

4 The Cantons of German-speaking Switzerland are the following 18: Aargau, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Bern, Glarus, Luzern, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schaffhausen, Schwyz, Solothurn, St. Gallen, Thurgau, Uri, Zürich, Zug.

of the Canton Lucerne, the directorates and departments (Appenzell, Ausserrhoden, Glarus) and interdisciplinary child protection groups (Basel-Landschaft, Obwalden, Schaffhausen, Schwyz) (see *Piller* 2003). In addition, in child protection a variety of institutions work at cantonal, regional and local level; names and tasks of these agencies are similar to only a limited extent because of the federal organisation. For simplification *Piller* edits (2003, 18f.) cantonal bodies with similar functions to a total of nine categories: (1) cantonal youth office (e. g. office for youth, youth secretary), (2) cantonal social services, (3) services for the toddler area, (4) division/services/specialist for youth, (5) department addiction, prevention and health, (6) services department of health (such as district medical service), (7) cantonal information centres for youth, parents and families, (8) division of specialised institutions of children and youth services (foster care, residential children and youth services and/or day care families) and (9) others.

With regard to civil child protection what do these different cantonal organisational forms and types of agencies have in common, that protective measures in Articles 307-317 CC

> *are ordered from the guardianship authority and assigned to a guardian or an assistant for direction. She/he is accountable to the authority periodically, but belongs mostly to a social service (in the broad sense) [social services,children and youth services or the like] which is not directly in charge of the authority (Voll, Jud, Mey, Häfeli & Stettler 2008, 18).*

In Switzerland the police, examining magistrates (UntersuchungsrichterInnen), prosecutors, courts, special administrative authorities and others constitute the **criminal justice system** (*Expertenkommission "Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 72). As with the children and youth services, the criminal justice in Switzerland is also organised on a cantonal basis, so that there are 26 cantonal Codes of Criminal Procedure (CCP) and three of the federation (Federal Criminal Procedure, Military Criminal Procedure, Administrative Criminal Law). Since the 1940s, however, a (partial) unification of the criminal procedure law (*Expertenkommission "Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 15) was always discussed. The nationwide CCP takes effect on the 1st of January 2011, although after that day the official organisation remains left to the Cantons. The main difference between the previous CCP is in the conduct of the preliminary procedure. The *Expertenkommission "Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* (1997, 29) summarises the recent CCP to four types that differ mainly by whether the examining magistrate or the prosecution conducts the preliminary proceedings. In the "Examining magistrate model I"[5]

5 The "Examining magistrate model I" corresponds to the CCP of the Cantons Fribourg, Glarus, Solothurn, Vaud, Valais and Zug (*Expertenkommission „Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 30).

is the preliminary proceeding one-parted, "that is, it does not disintegrate in a separate investigation and analysis proceeding" (*ibid.*, 29). From beginning on of the process the judicial police is subordinated to the examining magistrate's office, which decides whether a preliminary investigation is commenced or the proceeding shall be terminated. Further the examining magistrate is responsible for the adoption of summary punishment. The prosecution has however no independent investigative powers. "It occurs in preliminary proceedings and in the referral as a party and only acts as a prosecutor" (*ibid.*, 30). While in Cantons with this model the investigation judges are under no authority, the examining magistrate's office is after the "Examining magistrate model II"[6] under the prosecution. According to the third model – the "prosecuting model I"[7] – the prosecution directs the judicial police in the investigation proceeding and decides on the continuation of the prosecution. "The independent investigator will only act if he is asked to by the prosecutor" (*Expertenkommission "Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 30). The "prosecuting model II"[8] corresponds to the German CCP, where only the prosecutor is responsible for the investigation (*ibid.*, 31; see also chap. IV.1.1).

As in Germany and Austria all law enforcement authorities in Switzerland are subject to the principle of legality (inter alia, § 21 CCP Canton Zurich; § 24 para 1 CCP Canton Aargau; Art. 28 para 2 CCP Canton Glarus; § 51 CCP Canton Lucerne; see also chap. IV.1.1); in the new Swiss Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP Swiss) this is regulated in Article 7 para 1: "The prosecuting authorities are obliged, within their competence to initiate and carry out proceedings, if they know about crimes or about offences indicating grounds for suspicion." If there is a reasonable suspicion against the accused, the investigation or a special prosecution is obliged to bring charges.[9]

Law enforcement authorities are however permitted to refrain from prosecution ("principle of opportunity") if the conditions of Art. 52 ("Lack of need for punishment"), Art. 53 ("compensation") or Art. 54 ("concern of the offender by

6 The "Examining magistrate model II" corresponds to the CCP of the Cantons Appenzell-Ausserrhoden, Appenzell-Innerrhoden, Basel-Landschaft, Bern, Graubünden, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schaffhausen, Schwyz, St. Gallen, Thurgau and Zurich (*Expertenkommission „Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 30).

7 The "prosecution model I" corresponds to the CCP of the Cantons Aargau, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel and Uri (*Expertenkommission „Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 31).

8 The "prosecution model II" corresponds to the CCP of the Cantons Basel-City and Ticino (*Expertenkommission „Vereinheitlichung des Strafprozessrechts"* 1997, 31).

9 Up to 31.12.2010 including: § 161 CCP Canton Zurich; § 24 para 2 CCP Canton Aargau; § 158 CCP Canton Lucerne.

his act") Criminal Code are required (Art. 8 para 1 CCP Swiss)[10]. In addition, in Article 8 para 2 and 3 CCP Swiss there are further reasons listed for refraining from prosecution, unless there are no overriding interests of the private prosecution party. However, in these cases an (investigative) proceeding must also be first launched.

In a **cooperation between public children and youth services and institutions of criminal justice** in cases of sex offences against children[11] problems can arise because of the different orders – threat aversion for the child, respectively law enforcement – and outlined legal requirements of both players. This concerns primarily the data protection, since it is part of the job of investigating authorities, "to care for information by which they can track, solve, and sanction crime" (*Meysen* 2007, 52), representatives of the public children and youth services, however, have the interest to protect the trust relationship between them and the person concerned. Although the legislature provides for a release of professional secrecy in cases of child mistreatment and abuse in some Cantons (inter alia § 55b para 2 Introductory Act to CC Canton Aargau; § 60 Introductory Act to CC Canton Zurich). The Federal Council rejected the introduction of a general duty of disclosure in this area, as this

> *[could] lead to an erosion of professional secrecy, that has the sense to create a relationship of trust in particular. The certainty that such a professional secrecy exists, often only makes it possible to address the abuse. A general duty of disclosure would have counter-productive effects especially in cases in which a child could not turn to any person of confidence, because there is no guarantee that the statements made are not carried forward (Statement of the Federal Council dated 25.02.2009).*[12]

The relevance of interdisciplinary cooperation in child protection is now undeniable and established by law in Switzerland in Article 317 CC: "The Cantons secure by appropriate legislation, the purposeful cooperation between authorities and agencies in the field of civil child protection, juvenile justice and other children and youth services." Because of the described federalistic organisation there is still no national approach to child protection or to cooperation between public children and youth services and criminal justice rsp. police in case of sex offences against children. For many Cantons, however, 1995 the statement of the Federal Council in the report "Child Abuse in Switzerland" was the

10 Up to 31.12.2010 including: § 39a CCP Canton Zurich, § 24 para 2 CCP Canton Aargau, Art. 86 para 2 CCP Canton Glarus, §§ 1bis, 125 CCP Canton Lucerne.

11 When in the following it talks about a cooperation on sexual crimes against children or in cases of sexual abuse of children, this does not mean that that cooperation is limited to proven cases of sexual violence against children. In general, the Swiss-German child protection groups deal with suspected cases of sexual abuse of children or maltreatment.

12 http://www.parlament.ch/d/suche/seiten/geschaefte.aspx?gesch_id=20083790 (13.09.2010).

starting point to deal with the improvement of child protection. As a result, in some Cantons, interdisciplinary child protection committees and/or child protection groups have been established. The existence of these facilities is well known, to date, however, no studies on the organisation and work of these groups are present in German-speaking Switzerland. This was one of the starting points of the present study (see chap. II). In the following the key findings of the qualitative analysis of interviews and the documents to the work of child protection groups provided to the authors are presented and discussed. The results of the questionnaire study can be found in *Krüger and Niehaus* (2009).

2.2 Qualitative Part: Results of the Document Analysis and the Interview Study

The staff of eleven child protection groups (CPG) from seven Cantons indicated that they wished participate in the interview study by giving a contact's willingness as part of the questionnaire study. In addition to representatives of the public children and youth services, at the time of the survey in all these groups worked representatives of the examination or investigation authorities too. Because of federal diversity it was assumed that the different cantonal structures have an effect on the work of child protection groups (chap. IV.2.1). Therefore child protection groups should be considered from as many Cantons as possible in the interview study. Hence, any differences between urban and more rural regions could be determined. Thus, there were two groups selected from two community and population weak Cantons (under 350 000 inhabitants, under 100 municipalities)[13] and three from two "big" Cantons (over 350 000 inhabitants, over 100 municipalities). The high concentration of child protection groups in the Canton Zurich, was taken into account by including two resident groups.[14] To take into consideration both the perspective of representatives of public children and youth services and the investigation and prosecution authorities, one social worker/psychologist was interviewed and one representative of the

13 According to the *Bundesamt für Statistik, Sektion Demografie und Migration* [http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/news/publikationen.Document.123463.pdf, 18.03.10] or *Bundesamt für Statistik* (2005) „Die Raumgliederung der Schweiz" [http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/news/publikationen.Document.64476.pdf, 18.03.10].

14 The first interdisciplinary child protection group in Switzerland was founded in 1969 at the Children's Hospital Zurich. Other groups have been established since then in the whole of Switzerland (*Siegrist* 2005, 7). Crucial for the further development of the child protection groups in the whole of Switzerland, about 25 years later was the entry into force of the Victims Assistance Act (1993), and the statement of the Federal Council to "Report of Child Abuse in Switzerland" (from 27.06.1995). This in 1998 alone created 19 regional child protection groups in the Canton Zurich, in addition to groups of hospitals (Children's Hospital Zurich, Clinic for children and young people Triemli Hospital and Children's Hospital Winterthur) (*Siegrist* 2005, 5) (see also *Krüger & Niehaus* 2010).

criminal justice (prosecution, investigation-/examination judgeship) per child protection group.[15] The majority of the surveyed experts spoke in Swiss German in the interview, since it is an international project it has been translated into German in the written transcription. To avoid loss of meaning, however, certain terms and dialect specific grammatical structures have been retained.

The sex ratio of respondents is almost balanced, with six women and four men. On average, they had been working for eight to thirteen years in their respective institutions (M = 13.30; Md = 7.75), four to nine years at the time of the interviews in their current positions (M = 9.40; Md = 4.25). The youngest respondent (33 years) was working the shortest time in her institution and in her active position (Institution: 2.50 years; position: 0.50 years), the oldest interviewee (63 years) worked the longest in his institution and in his position (both 36 years). On average, the experts interviewed were 49 years old (M = 48.50; Md = 47.50).

When possible the results of the interview study may be added to the document analysis. This is based on the materials for the work of nine child protection groups, that the eleven respondents enclosed in their questionnaires.[16] Four of these groups are urban rsp. regional child protection groups in the Canton Zurich, who developed and published standards for these groups (see *Amt für Jugend und Berufsberatung Kanton Zürich*[17]). The remaining five groups are resident in the West rsp. Central Switzerland. The materials provided to the project, were from both published writings (on the internet), as well as internal working papers. The former includes flyers, leaflets, fact sheets and guides (n = 10)[18], concepts or standards for the work of the child protection groups (n = 4) and general information about the child protection group (n = 2). As internal working papers requirement profiles for the members and the management of the child protection group have been added to the one questionnaire. The other had requirements on the conduct of advice and risk assessment added.

To prevent an assignment of the groups and individual interviews with certain persons, districts, municipalities or provinces, several strategies were pursued: First, all the (local) names were made anonymous and the groups and interviews

15 The duration of the interviews ranged from 27-134 minutes. The average duration was 73 minutes.

16 Some respondents explicitly permitted us to publish the materials provided. These can be viewed on the project homepage (www.netzwerk-kooperation.eu).

17 http://www.lotse.zh.ch/documents/ajb/fj/allg/merk_empf/reg_und_staedt_kinderschutzgruppen.pdf (02.09.2010).

18 From one child protection group a lot of flyers were attached, others have settled both a flyer and a fact sheet for specialists, so that the materials do not relate to the work of ten, but seven child protection groups.

were numbered (CPG IV, interviews 1-10)[19]; the assignment of numbers was carried out at random. In the presentation of the results it was ensured that individual interviews could not be assigned to any groups. Furthermore all representatives of the investigation and prosecution authorities are called prosecutors, even if this is not correct, as, for example, the functions, duties and powers of an investigating judge and a prosecutor differ (see chap. IV.2.1). However, as this has no effect on the analysis of the interviews, this path was chosen because with the use of the correct title it might be inferred to the home Canton of the interviewee.

The statements of the surveyed experts in relation to the work of their child protection group can be assigned according to *Frenzke-Kulbach* (2004) in three levels: (1) contents and tasks, (2) structure and organisation and (3) helpers.[20] In addition, it is interested in the project characteristics of a successful interdisciplinary cooperation as well as specific problems of cooperation of criminal justice, police and public children and youth services.[21]

2.2.1 Contents and Tasks of Child Protection Groups

Seven of the nine child protection groups that presented written materials gave details about the objective of their child protection group in the analysed documentations. This consists mainly in terms of protecting vulnerable children and young people and was not only in relation to sexual violence, but also in suspected cases of physical and psychological violence and neglect ($n = 6$). An explicit target in the materials of one group was also the known prevention of violence against children. This finding was not only the result of the written survey (see *Krüger & Niehaus* 2009), but also the statements of the respondents in the interviews. So hereafter, none of the groups deals exclusively with sexual violence, all deal with various forms of child abuse in principle (physical,

19 To avoid an assignment of interviews with groups, the interviews were in some places not numbered with Arabic numerals, but the affiliation of the group and profession was indicated, where "l" stands for lawyers and "s" for social workers.

20 In addition to these three levels, a fourth may be distinguished, the level of the detectors. As the interviewees were not explicitly asked of the advantages or even disadvantages of group work for the case detectors, it is not dealt with any further at this point and referred to *Krüger and Niehaus* (2010).

21 The results of the analysis of the statements of the respondents to group formation and progression stages of cooperation are shown in *Krüger and Niehaus* (2010).

psychological and sexual violence and neglect)[22]. This is connected not only with the order of child protection groups but also with the negligible amount of suspected cases of sexual violence (see, inter alia, in interview 8). In addition, legislative changes have affected the type of cases that are discussed in the groups. So increasingly suspected cases of domestic violence or violence in schools was discussed in the surveyed Zurich child protection groups, according to statements of the respondents at the time of the investigation, since these cases were to now reach to the information centres for youth and families due to a change in the Violence Prevention Act[23]. Other cases were related to problems of children of mentally ill parents (incl. addiction) or migration-specific issues such as forced marriage (see, inter alia, in CPG I, III).

Most respondents said that there had been rather few inquiries from experts. In two groups the situation is different: both meet approximately once a month for case consultation. Two leaders of groups in which only few inquiries were made, speculated on the reasons for that. So the leader of the CPG V presumes a connection between the functioning of the child protection group and the case-load, the leader of the CPG I rather sees lack of knowledge of the target group about the work of the groups as a problem. Moreover, it contributes to the hypothesis that those seeking advice would often turn to stationary child protection groups as they are not merely giving advise but could also respond faster as well. Another competitor is the own advisory board, which also advises specialists and propagates this strongly (in interview CPG Is).

The main task of all eight groups that have made details available in the documents, is the discussion of specific suspects (assessment of the suspected situation, delivering a non-binding recommendation). In one workgroup this is limited to cases of the specialised body to which the child protection group is connected, the remaining seven groups advise on suspected cases provided by external experts. For all of these child protection groups it is valid that they assume no case management, the recommendation is not binding, the group has no authority. The cases are discussed in an anonymous form. One child protection group reserves the option to disclose personal information if it is in

22 Different definitions of child abuse are found in the literature (see *Banaschak & Madea* 2007). We rely here among others on the definition of the *Arbeitsgruppe Kindesmisshandlung* (1992, 16f.), of *Deegener* (2009), *Douatz & Spalinger* (2003) or *Jud et al.* (2009). After this child abuse "is defined by its devastating effects on health and inhibition of physical, mental and social development opportunities of minors. It is carried by inappropriate care, deprivation, violence against children, affecting their health and prevent their physical, mental and social development" (*Arbeitsgruppe Kindesmisshandlung* 1992, 16). The said four forms of child abuse are distinguished: physical, mental and sexual violence and neglect.

23 At 01. April 2007, the new Violence Prevention Act came into force in the Canton Zurich (see http://www.ist.zh.ch/internet/ji/ist/de/home/Gesetzestext.html, 20.08.2010).

the best interest of the child. Other tasks are: (1) education of professionals ($n = 5$), (2) information and support cooperation with experts and authorities, (3) exchange of knowledge and experience between the members of the group, (4) coordination of private, civil and penal services, (5) developing and evaluating proposals for the attention of children and youth commission for public work, (6) intra-and inter-cantonal networking and (7) work with child protection issues of a fundamental nature (each $n = 1$).

Also the child protection groups examined in the interview study, are all connected to an expert or advising body. Some groups even directly or indirectly support the appropriate specialist: For example, while group III explicitly aims to support the cantonal office, the leader of CPG V uses the office outside the regular meetings as an extended team by summoning up to three members for case discussions.

Also in relation to the main task of the groups the results of the interview study correspond with the analysis of the documents. This also exists among the surveyed groups in the implementation of anonymous case discussions. That they always only pronounce a non-binding recommendation, and the responsibility of the case management remains to the case presenters, is perceived by some respondents as beneficial and relieving (Interviews 4, 10). This contribution of responsibility and the feeling "not to have to stand straight" for the decision (as in interview 4), hold, however, risks relating to the quality of the recommendations, as this may be at a higher risk of making a "wrong decision" (see *Schulz-Hardt et al.* 2002; see chap. IV.2.2.6).

For others the mere utterance of a recommendation, however, is not enough. For example, one respondent wishes that her child protection group could intercede, intervene in the cases or accompany the implementation of the recommendation, as this would be the case in other groups of her Canton. An approach that another group leader rejects explicitly because the recommendation would become a statement (as in interview 4). Background for this desire is a fact mentioned by one of the respondents that – especially at the local level – relevant authorities, such as the guardianship authority are identical to the community executive or a subcommittee thereof. In this sense it are "lay authorities", whose members are elected, often with an agricultural, commercial or industrial professional background (*Häfeli & Voll* 2008, 197; *Wider,* 2008, 215f.). If in a Canton several child protection groups exist with different orders, it could lead to a sense of competition and a comparison of the powers of their own with those of the other groups. If intervention would be perceived as higher than a consultative activity, a feeling of inferiority can be caused that brings out the desire also to be interceding actively. So she sees it as disadvantageous for the stationary groups in comparison with the ambulant child protection

groups, they were probably also less known than the former. Situations in which it can come to a social comparison (*Festinger* 1954; *Mussweiler* 2003) and therefore to a feeling of inferiority are discussed in that context with measures of quality security (see chap. IV.2.2.2, quality assurance).

Depending on whether there is, in addition to the child protection group, a child protection commission, which operates at a strategic level, some groups in addition to case work are active at a strategic level or in the preventive field by launching projects (CPG V) or organising and carrying out information campaigns (CPG III). A social worker wished that this preventive work would be given a greater emphasis: "And so other/ more preventive press, public relations and then the, uh, to stimulate" (Interview 2, lines 312f.).[24] To the instructions of group III also belongs explicitly the knowledge and experience between members.

Besides the meetings, that serve the fulfilment of the named tasks, four of the five groups meet a few times a year to talk about the work they are doing. In these meetings structural issues are usually discussed, but also group dynamic aspects of cooperation, in one group this is done in the form of a supervisor accompanied by a psychologist (CPG IV).

Unlike in Germany, the tasks of the child protection groups and the contents of their work result from the respective order. The groups themselves only determine the issues of common training (including CPG I, II).

2.2.2 Structure and Organisation of Child Protection Groups

Organisation of Child Protection Groups

Three of the surveyed groups are cantonal, two regionally organised. In the Canton Zurich, the urban and regional child protection groups are a service of the youth office rsp. of the social centre that is competent in the district. They provide the basic care and welfare for children and youth services of the Canton (see *Standards für regionale und städtische Kinderschutzgruppen im Kanton Zürich* 2006[25]). Also the other child protection groups have an official order

24 The transcription followed the following convention: Striking accent = Underline the stressed word (e. g. never); change in voice volume = ((softly)) or ((loudly)) after the respective word; striking vocal strain = multiple use of the respective vocal (the more vocals, the greater the strain); short breaks to five seconds = (.); longer breaks = (long pause); simultaneous talking = #statement Person 1#, #statement Person 2#; unintelligible conversation parts = (inaudible) of suspected text = (text?); termination = / ; non-verbal events = such as ((laughs)), X = Y = direct connection of the following word. Omission of words/phrases in the transcripts = [...].

25 http://www.lotse.zh.ch/documents/ajb/fj/allg/merk_empf/reg_und_staedt_kinderschutzgruppen.pdf (02.09.2010).

and must report partly to the parent cantonal directorates on their work. One of the respondents explicitly referred to this as advantageous because it meant a recognition of the work from the outside and could legitimise the membership (as in interview 8).

Since all groups are connected to a consulting or professional body, the executive committee is in the majority controlled by specialist social workers of the professional respectively counselling bodies. In the standards of the Zurich child protection groups it is set explicitly that the executive committee is provided by the youth office or social centre. In the records of another group, however, it is only stated that a member of the child protection group takes its lead. From information provided by interviewed members the management is mainly responsible for organising the group, that is, it provides the facilities for disposal, receives the requests and decides whether a case gets into the child protection group or is taken over by their own or another institution or a skilled person ("gate keeper function") (see also *Krüger & Niehaus* 2009). In the Zurich groups, the management also decides on the composition of the group (*Standards für regionale und städtische Kinderschutzgruppen im Kanton Zürich* 2006[26]). The temporal organisation is regulated differently by the groups. This is shown by both, the results of the analysis of documents and the interview study. In Zurich, a special central telephone number is available for the professionals who work with children and young people to report suspected cases of child abuse to.[27] It was found in the documents of two other child protection groups that the detectors are asked explicitly to call and report (during office hours) at the respective professional body to which the child protection group is connected. Three child protection groups also gave information in the materials about the regularity of meetings: According to that, two groups meet at least 4 to 6 times per year or once a quarter, in addition to that meetings can be convened if needed. The members of the third group keep free a period of two hours each week and if no reports come in until a certain date no meeting is called.

In three groups of the interview study, the members also hold open a certain time window weekly for possible meetings, which will be released if they receive no inquiries. If there is a case for the group, members receive an invitation from the leadership. Meetings take place, besides these weekly case consultations, in these groups up to four times a year, that serve the exchange of the group members themselves. In one group there is a meeting about once a month, where the leadership also convenes extraordinary sessions with selected team members. The group leader would however like to convene frequent and more

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

flexible meetings. She therefore desires that members hold a time slot available on a weekly basis, but this was not realisable due to the size of the group (eleven people). In group III, about five regular meetings are held, further meetings can be convened at any time if required, which, according to statements of the interviewed social worker, happen about 2 to 3 times in the year is their case. The meetings themselves take 75-135 minutes in the groups. Number – and presumably also the length of the meetings – depend on the particular requirements as well as on the case-load.

Remuneration of Employees

Involvement in the child protection group will be compensated in all groups surveyed – either it is part of the working hours or the participants receive so called session-money or compensation, which is based on the tariffs of the respective profession. This is also confirmed by the standards of the Zurich child protection groups and the concept of another group. Nevertheless, participation for some members in the meetings means that their real work "remains lying" in spite of compensation the work takes place in their free time – as a group leader expressed in the threads of his "requirements" for group members. Thus, the prosecutors work on the same number of cases, like their colleagues who are not members of a child protection group, and the general practitioners can not work in their offices in these times (so, inter alia, in interview 2). Thus, membership in a child protection group, despite the financial allowance for some members, is at least in part a private engagement. An example for this problem gives the following statement of an interviewed prosecutor:

> *Half [of service], half [private engagement]. It is also something that we try to share out internally because actually it is not recognised. So, it is recognised that it is necessary and it is also assumed that you do it, but in the case execution it will not be taken into account, that is, I have the same number of cases, as someone who is not in the child protection group. And therefore this is a little difficult condition, especially when more cases are in the child protection group (Interview 3, lines 127-132).*

This quote makes it clear that the reward or (financial, temporal) compensation of work in the child protection group is perceived from the members as recognition of the work by the employer or the Canton. It is thus more than a compensation of financial or additional expenditure.

Composition of the Child Protection Groups

The results of the questionnaire study show that overall, the child protection groups in German-speaking Switzerland consist of 4-15 members (*Krüger & Niehaus* 2009). The respondents disagreed when asked what form of composition

is most useful. A prosecutor criticised the **size of the group,** saying that theirs was too large with eleven permanent members, which meant the operation processes were "slow": "Once there was a discussion about whether we would want to reduce us, because the larger the group is, the slower its decision-making" (Interview 7, lines 48-50). None of the members have so far been willing to give up their seats, which the interviewed group leader attributed to the prestige that the membership of a child protection group granted. Also, members of authorities were sent to the groups, so they could not decide to leave it again on their own. Another representative of the criminal justice pointed out the potential of inertia of large groups without, however, wanting to give up a member of her child protection group (as in interview 8). The benefits of interdisciplinarity would also speak against a reduction of the groups size:

> *On the other hand, we found that everyone has their expertise that he brings in and can contribute to the group. In this way, it is again very interesting because each comes with his own focus and his background to the meeting and everyone can come play a part in the discussion board (Interview 7, lines 50-54).*

Basically the more members of large groups, the greater the chance that a range of skills is represented, which also is recognised in social psychology as an advantage of large groups (inter alia *Baron & Kerr* 2003, 7). Communication and coordination processes proceed "at best in groups of 5 to 6 members" (*Nerdinger, Blickle & Schaper* 2008, 404), but this depends on the task and the cooperation period.

An interdisciplinary composition in all groups is explicitly desired. The leader of a group even sees this as a "speciality of the child protection group". Through the assessment of a case in an interdisciplinary committee it could be assumed that the situation is assessed holistically and that carefully considered recommendations are made, for the betterment of the child. Some groups have specific requirements which authorities, institutions and professional groups should be represented. In the Canton Zurich it is distinguished between urgent and optional represented experts (see *Standards für regionale und städtische Kinderschutzgruppen im Kanton Zürich* 2006[28]). On the side of the (public) children and youth services and health services, staff of child and adolescent psychiatric services, information centres for youth and families, early childhood

28 In the standards that apply to the regional and municipal child protection groups of the Canton Zurich, it is determined that a child protection group must be composed of at least five members, to which representatives of youth and families as well as small child counselling must be present in every case; other possible members can be representatives of the following institutions or occupations: child and adolescent psychiatric service, school psychological service, child and school doctors, guardianship authority, teachers or school authorities, police or district prosecution, creche, nursery or home. http://www.lotse.zh.ch/documents/ajb/fj/allg/merk_empf/reg_und_staedt_kinderschutzgruppen.pdf (02.09.2010).

advisory services, guardianship authorities, the school psychological services, the social services and victim services counselling are represented regularly, this has also been shown by the document analysis and the questionnaire study. In addition, teachers and paediatricians are often members of the child protection groups. On the part of the investigating authorities and the criminal justice, prosecutors sit in the majority, then investigating judges (or examining judges) or youth prosecutors, and less often police officers. A cantonal court authority was not represented in any of the surveyed child protection groups (regional, district or supreme court or the like). In one group, in some cases additional experts are also invited as guests (such as people from the school administration). The participation of strangers can also lead to problems, since the basis of trust is missing for the exchange of information that is liable to official secrecy (see chap. IV.2.2.2, fluctuation).

A special feature in the selection of members is reflected in population and community weaker Cantons: Should a child psychologist be present within the group, and if in the Canton there are only two, both will be invited so that no one is ruled out. An interviewed social worker maintains that this approach was inadequate, because you did not need more representatives of a single discipline (as in interview 2), this was also mentioned by a group leader (CPG V). The head of a Zurich child protection group criticises the requirements for the selection of members, as stipulated by the Canton Zurich. The members were chosen because of formal criteria, rather than because of their qualifications. He has created a “requirement profile” for members of his child protection group which emphasises necessary social skills, not only vocational, but also for cooperation.

In addition to the group size, the **status of the individual group members** is an important aspect in the composition of the child protection groups. Here is a key difference between the representatives of the public children and youth services and those of the criminal justice rsp. the police. In two of the groups questioned, a limited number of members are summoned to refer on current cases, so not all members are always present at all meetings. This in particularly seems to be the case for the representatives of criminal justice and police. In another group the prosecutor takes part in every session, but only has a consultative voice and cannot vote for or against the recommendation at the end of the session. This is also recorded in the records of the group. In these records, representatives of the criminal justice are explicitly listed as consultants for risk assessments. No differences are made between the members of the other two surveyed workgroups with regards to participation. However, it has been discussed whether this is really useful.

This special status of criminal justice rsp. police in the groups has advantages and disadvantages in the eyes of the interviewees. One representative of criminal justice for example, that participates in all meetings, sees her participation as unnecessary (in parts) as she is does not feel competent if the case is not relevant to criminal law. A reinterpretation of the continuing participation, as a part of further training, does not work every time.

> *Yes, I realize that I am a less valuable member referring to my discipline, when it is not about criminal law issues. [...] And then sometimes there are real cases that I can learn something out of, so that for me it has almost been a private training and it was interesting to hear what opportunities there are [...] (Interview 7, lines 285-292).*

For another prosecutor the sole task of the participation of criminal justice in the child protection group is answering the question whether it can be taken to court or not: “Yes, I have more of a support role/ that's my way of seeing things [...] having the aspect of criminal law in mind/ I of course get asked specifically when it comes to those questions” (Interview 10, lines 105f.). A third prosecutor supports this view on the one hand: “In the group we get asked, is seeking a criminal charge useful, does it make sense now or is it useful at a later date, or what does speak against it” (Interview 1, lines 48-50). On the other hand however, he does not just want to be limited to the “purely legal” side and only be seen in his capacity as a lawyer in the group, but as a “whole person”. One group leader points out these status differences with an example of a paediatrician, but at the same time says that this is indeed a reality. Nonetheless, it is inconsistent with the self-understanding of such a group:

> *All members of the child protection group are equivalent. I mean a guide/ this is not like that. That's what the paediatrician said herself; [...] I come here to learn. Honestly. I think it is great. And she has learned a lot. For this reason she asked quite simple questions. I was very happy. The paediatrician asked things that had little to do with her profession. And I also encouraged her, Do it, go there as well!' And like this equality is more understood as an attitude and not as a maxim, we are all doing the same. Otherwise I could just stay social worker (Interview 4, lines 616-623).*

At another point he said: “All are equal. But that is just not the case ((laughs))” (Interview 4, lines 840f.). Thus he splits the members in teachers and pupils and asks for a “demand-driven composition” where he explicitly refers to the representatives of criminal justice: “Um, build the composition of the child protection group with demand, yeah, that was my idea. For example, a legal expert would be demand-driven. Again and again, looking after whom it needs” (Interview 4, lines 971-973).

If the representatives of criminal justice are invited only when the case asks for it, it can lead to the fact that they are not perceived as full members of the group or they do not feel as such. Thus, the representatives of criminal justice wished for a fixed core group in the child protection group, which also includes

them. Support for this proposal they received from the group leader, she understands a core group to be helpful for building confidence and ensuring the networking amongst the members. This reflects social psychological insights of the question of the status of individual group members. Thus, the status in a group "generally is a function of the extent to which an individual's contribution is crucial to the success and prestige of the group, and how much power (control over group outcomes) that individual has" (*Baron & Kerr* 2003, 9). In other words, if certain occupational groups are not as permanently co-represented as others members at the meetings, this can be interpreted as a sign that their contribution is less important and less important in the overall decision-making. This impression does not have to be mediated by others group members, or shared by all:

> *... I think that is my own perception. None of the other members would give me the feeling that my opinion is less in demand. Not at all. It's more that only my common sense can make a contribution to a discussion. So, just what comes straight to my mind. Things you could do perhaps, but being not really knowledgeable, whether it is feasible or practical. For the others it can be quite interesting, but to me it is sometimes a little strange, that I can contribute nothing on that sector (Interview 7, lines 297-303).*

This statement of the surveyed lawyer makes it clear that the members of the child protection groups – with the exception of the above cited attorney (Interview 8) – are not participating as individuals ("common sense"), but as representatives of their profession and institution in the meetings. If the expertise is forced into the background, the reason for the presence, the value of the contribution, is questioned. This is probably particularly true for professionals, who are used to orient themselves at the work of "facts" or laws, such as lawyers or physicians. This on the other hand leads to the fact that for the representatives of criminal justice a "omniscience" is assumed, what they say, is seen as a "law", just understood as true and accepted (Interview 4). In the eyes of one social worker this mainly meets members of authorities. He speaks of one example where he actually used his knowledge of this "obedience" to get a case handled with faster.

> *So, there was the [...] president of the guardianship authority, who wanted to put the whole thing away in his desk, yes, six months there was nothing happening. And then the responsible social worker asked me, the Head of Department. [...] Then I said, 'Well, let's make an authority-helper conference. We invite the president of the guardianship authority as well.' Two social workers were represented, I was invited as the head of child protection group, plus the prosecutor. I suggested that, because I knew what it can do. And the secretary of the guardianship authority was there, yes that was about it. For a long time the prosecutor said nothing, nothing, nothing, and then I thought, 'so, now come on and get it out'. And I said 'Well, what does the prosecutor have to say to this matter?' [...] And then he spoke, and did it well, after he had been silent for so long. And then he said 'Yes, that is relevant, this is not relevant, uh, this is relevant for the criminal law.' Two minutes later it was the same opinion for guardianship, City Council, and president – of course. Just because he said it. That's just life, status, image, everything plays a role (Interview 4, lines 539-557).*

Leadership of the Child Protection Group

The leadership plays a particularly important role in the child protection groups. This is often taken over by one of the employees (and therefore by a social worker), due to the connection of the groups with expert or advisory centres. Hereby they have a dual role, as they discuss the cases not only in the child protection group, but normally further accompany these cases after completion of the meeting. Generally, the leaders take the requests from the persons reporting the case and decide which cases go into the child protection group, invite to the meetings, write the record, manage the statistics and obtain feedback from the people seeking advice (see chap. IV.2.2.2, the organisation of child protection groups). Thus they have a key role in the groups. This becomes clear in different contexts during the interviews. An important leadership function is the conversation during case discussions.

The following statements show how difficult this is, a group leader who took support from an external supervisor in order to cope with the duties and functions of group leadership.

> *Well, that was also difficult/ yes, also to lead the group, well, to look that everybody has his or her say and everybody has the heart to stand behind their view in the end. Well, these are group dynamic proceedings that are not just easy.*
>
> *[…]No, I have/ Well, I had to start explaining this, because this is so, well/ because with us certain exponents were so, so strong, so dominant. Where I had attend a coaching and see how I handle this situation, and do I address this. [...] Well, and, yes, that was really difficult, yes, there I needed help, well, to/ to prepare the meetings and to look how do I go there and how can I clarify this in a constructive manner, so that a cooperation, so that I can keep the people here, that a cooperation is possible (Interview 9, lines 230-353).*

What becomes clear from this quotation is that here, the leader is solely responsible for the functioning of cooperation. One team leader had even written it down as a "leadership duty": "Ensuring the functioning of the [child protection group]". A failure of cooperation or dissolution of the child protection group are therefore also a personal failure. This poses a huge burden. In the interview with the cited social worker the burden is particularly apparent at another point; she had no other option than to get professional help and try to share the responsibility for the success of the joint work again with the entire group. These differences between leadership and members in taking over responsibility also becomes clear in the following statement from a social worker who initially served as a case reporter and member and – at the time of the interview – as finally the leader of her child protection group:

> *Now as a leader I have of course the duty here to look that there`s a way, eh, that conflicts do not cumulate even more and at the most get more serious. This/ in that sense, the point of view changed a bit (Interview 5, lines 294-296).*

Thereby, the leaders are not only held responsible for frictionless meetings; their personalities essentially determine the climate and the atmosphere in the group. This is also related to the question about mutual trust which is fundamental for working together. Against this background it is surprising that the appointment of the leadership function is not in the first instance determined by an adequate qualification, but by the institution itself and the position of the participants in the institution.

Fluctuation

According to the respondents, what affects the quality of cooperation in a negative way were frequent changes of member, because the group must then always come together again, must always "reinvent" (Interview 2) and get to know each other again; the unusual ways some other professional groups think may lead to irritation (as said in interview 8). Also, the "interdisciplinary" could scare them as long as one does not know the others:

> *And maybe also in an initial phase somehow this interdisciplinary, the cooperation also a fear/ a fear maybe of the cooperation or that there somehow trampled in the own garden or that you have to reveal something that you don`t want to. This really had to be worked out, yes, the cooperation between the different authorities (Interview 9, lines 250-254).*

One prosecutor even described a major change in their group as "a shock of the group", it had again taken time until everyone knew from which areas the others came and how they were involved. Furthermore, people joining later would also meet a "developed team" where "skills are increased" (Interview 4, lines 957f.). For this reason, they would have more difficulties. This would already apply for the deputies of the regular members:

> *But I see this as well in the child protection group, let alone when a deputy from one field arrives, then he or she never, by far never has the knowledge the other person has, who already, I don`t know, works in the child protection group for three, four, five, seven years and over the years internalized how such a thing should proceed (Interview CPG I l, Iines 123-127).*

Also, special cases welded a group together, so that it was a pity that many of the members who took part during a particularly successful "test case", were no longer part of the group. A consistency in the group composition therefore seems to be relevant (as in CPG V).

For prosecutors to know each other also means to trust each other. This would be particularly important when it comes to the exchange of information that is subject to official secrecy. The building of trustful relationships, however, takes time, as not only the respondent says, but also the trust research shows

(see, amongst others, *Schweer* 1996). On the other hand, a change among the members can also be an enriching experience.

Concerning member changes to the respondents, it seemed also to be of particular importance to emphasise that no one has left the group out of dissatisfaction or dispute. The departure always had different reasons (job changes, personal reasons or the like).

Schedule of the Meetings

One child protection group has kept hold of their case counselling with a graphic flowchart showing the procedure from the report to obtaining feedback from the person reporting the case. The flowchart was made available to the authors for document analysis. This flow chart corresponds with the results of the interview study, whereby the procedure of the case counselling altogether can be divided into three stages: before, during and after the meeting. Before the meeting, the expert involved or advisory centres for families and young people are usually responsible for the acceptance of the reports and the selection of cases. With one exception, this is done by the group leader. By what criteria the cases for the child protection group are selected, is apparently not known to the other group members (as among others in CPG I, IV). When a case is reported that may be discussed in the child protection group, the group leader calls for a meeting. Usually the members get – simultaneously with the preparation – an anonymised case report in which the most important information on the case is collected. One group prepared a standardised questionnaire for these case reports that the persons reporting the case a given in advance to fill in and return to the Group leader (CPG I).

The meetings themselves can also be divided into three stages: First of all, the case is presented again; for this, the groups invite the case reporters as they may announce new information about the case, thus members can also ask further questions about the case. After the presentation, the person reporting the case is asked by the majority to leave the room. In one group, the case reporters stay in the room, but are placed so that they sit slightly apart from the group (“standing back”) (Interview 4). So the person is shown that he or she now has an observing role, while at the same time is available for further questions.

In the first step of the counselling, three groups carry out a risk or threat assessment based on a predetermined instrument (CPG I, II, IV), others initially begin with a brief assessment round (CPG V). Subsequently, the case is discussed. Finally at the end of the consultation stands the recommendation to the case reporter, which is communicated to the informants at first orally and then in

written form by the group leaders. Each group usually tries to find a consensus, if it does not work, there is a vote and the minority opinions are recorded. The case reporter, however, exclusively gets the majority decision. This approach is maintained in the records of two child protection groups. Some respondents highlighted the fact that the case reporter receives the recommendation in writing as particularly important:

> *… We [have] made the experience that this is really helpful, also for example for a guardianship authority, when it has to take action, then this is really a piece of paper that they also can rely on, yes, where they can […] go back to, what they also then can present towards the family. Well, we had this clarified through an expert panel, and it was really recommended to us to act like that (Interview 9, lines 89-94) (also in Interview 6).*

After the meetings, the group leader has the duty to forward the recommendation and – in part – the minutes of the meeting to the person reporting the case and to obtain feedback within three months – did the person feel that the introduction of the case was helpful, has the recommendation been followed? Here again, some groups provide a standardised questionnaire. The other group members are informed of this feedback quickly (CPG IV, V) or once a year (CPG I, II). To learn in how far their work helps and how the case reporters proceeded further appears to be important to the group members, even if it is only once a year. Last but not least, the feedback of the person seeking advice is a means for quality assurance.

Quality Assurance

At the time of the survey, the child protection groups were partly in a phase of self-evaluation and restructuring (see *Krüger & Niehaus* 2010). Two groups had previously participated in a study surveying the structures and decision making processes of 14 Swiss-German child protection groups (see *Metzger* 2011). Both groups have used the results to revise the structure and approaches: So the leader of group V pointed out that she had clarified the procedure of handing out a written recommendation to the persons seeking advice through a panel of experts. Concerning the second group, the questioned social worker stated explicitly:

> *Well, we participated in the survey and there, eh, at the survey a report came back, and there a meta-model is described, so. […] We are currently revise it and then look how the group works after this model. So we have then now a conference […]. According to the meta-model: presenting, then informational questions, eh, proposing ideas and then sometime deciding. (Interview 2, lines 61-70).*

Next to this external evaluation, all surveyed child protection groups regularly take actions that are used for quality assurance and which are partly set forth

in the guidelines of the groups. So, according to the results of the document analysis, the Zurich child protection groups and one other group run a statistic on the case reports and counselling. Furthermore, all members of these groups must attend further education and/or supervision. The members of Zurich's child protection groups are required to attend specialized further education at least every two years and at least once a year an exchange of experiences, both can also be done together with other child protection groups. The groups from Zurich also have a standard questionnaire for feedback, and the recommendations are all recorded. The work of the other group mentioned is also documented and the papers are archived. It must give account to the cantonal Directorate of the Interior; a member of the centre to which the child protection group is connected checks also once a year whether the standards are observed. Another child protection group has developed a standardised "recording sheet" for the case discussions in which the most important information on the case is recorded – from reporting to the feedback of the person seeking advice. The following topics are covered: key information on the person seeking advice, the suspicion and the affected child; a genogram of the client system; assessment and recommendation through the child protection group (incl. explanation) and the feedback of the person seeking advice. Furthermore, this group uses an instrument for risk assessment developed by a physician based on specialist literature, that on the one hand estimates the risk of abuse, and on the other hand the psychosocial risk. For both the relevant risk factors are listed to support decision-making.

According to the results of the interview study, the participation of the leaders at the annual meeting of the inter-cantonal conference of child protection group leaders in Zurich is part of the quality assurance measures. Furthermore, the groups meet regularly or irregularly in meetings where the structure and functioning of their child protection group is topic. In addition, the use of standardised instruments (e. g. for risk assessment, collection of feedback, flowchart), the keeping of statistics and filing of (short) minutes serve the quality assurance. In one group, the documents of the meeting are deliberately not archived, but destroyed after the counselling is finished. The group's leader justifies this action in that these documents then could not be used in a lawsuit by the respective lawyers. Another social worker indeed complains about the expenditure of time it needs to write the protocols, but nevertheless values it as positive, since when writing the minutes she could reflect the course of the meeting again.

The standardised obtaining of feedback and the keeping of statistics also causes resentment among some respondents. So, according to statements of one respondent, the feedback sheet of CPG I helps the statistics, but says nothing

about the work of the child protection group in terms of content (Interview CPG Is, lines 284-286). The leader of CPG IV, however, does not see a use in keeping the statistics, he did not even know what would happen with the data; in contrast to the number of cases of another fixed group, the number of cases of his child protection group in fact would not be published.

> *It is so small [the case occurences], and you know, I don`t even know what happens with the statistics. Well I have/ ((gets up)) You know, when you do all this statistics stuff […], and then you look where there [in the task report] is an article about child protection groups. Well, I should read it again very close. But when you have to look very long and you don`t find anything, neither data nor text, then for what?*
>
> *[…] How important is it then? But when there is a conference and the anniversary [of K.], then there comes the data. Well, I am not jealous here, not at all. I think the child protection group should work calmly and should be left alone (Interview CPG IVs, lines 270-282).*

His frustration about attending his unpleasant duty to keep the case statistics which is then not acknowledged, leads to a social comparison of his child protection group with another group that gets more public attention (see *Festinger* 1954; *Mussweiler* 2003). However, he claimed to have no desire that his child protection group is perceived stronger. On the contrary, he wants to work calmly and to him, this is apparently tantamount to not having to attend – in his view – irrelevant administrative duties. His statement shows, however, that case statistics can be important for the public perception of child protection groups.[29]

2.2.3 Level of Helpers

The third level of the work of child protection groups considered here, refers to the members of the same. When asked the question of why they participate in the child protection group, the majority of them answered that it was part of their full-time job or that they are obliged to participate. They would also have interest in the activity. Three group leaders also said they would be convinced of the idea of child protection groups (Interviews 5, 6, 7), the group serves the dictum of child protection to never act alone and in haste (Interview 5); interdisciplinarity would be the most important thing in child protection (Interview 9).

The respondents see the **advantages in working in a child protection group** as primarily being the establishment of informal contacts, which would allow them also in everyday work life to contact another group member on professional issues ("short distances"). The contacts though remain purely professional; this was seen in the questionnaire survey as well (see *Krüger & Niehaus* 2009).

29 The results of the analysis of the respondents´ statements about the public perception of the child protection group are shown in *Krüger & Niehaus* (2010).

Furthermore, they would consider the other ways of looking at the cases as rewarding, so they got to know relevant institutions and experts and their field of work ("transparent structure of supply", see *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004), one interviewee described this as "personal development" (Interview 10). She also would wish for everybody to keep a "summary sheet", in which the key concepts, objectives and rules of the respective field of work would be recorded and explained.

Getting to know each other may eventually lead to an understanding of the perspectives, targets, decisions, and limitations of other professions. Thus, the representatives of the public children and youth services and the health services learn to understand that an early therapeutic or socio-paedagogical intervention can negatively affect the statement quality of the interviewed persons concerned, or that the law enforcement authorities, for example, can not simply take a perpetrator into custody, even if it would serve the welfare of children. One of the lawyers interviewed sees the decision of the child protection group as a good opportunity to issue a more secured, more objective recommendation: "... I also think it is good if the child protection group recognises this more objective and says: 'Well, but we have not got anything that endangers the child'" (Interview 8, lines 431-433). The work of child protection groups could also be a relief by learning the sight of the others (Interview 5), it was a "reinsurance" that one is on the right track (Interview 8, lines 209f.).

The relevance of the expert exchange in the case counselling was also identified by other respondents as a benefit of group work, even as a corrective for the own perspective on the case (Interview 7), the limited view of the own profession could be widened (Interview 8). This corresponds to the assumption that the collective problem solving is superior in quality to the individual one, since the case is considered from different (disciplinary) perspectives and, at least potentially, several alternative hypotheses are tested (see also *Keller* 2007; *Metzger* 2011; *Munro* 1999; *Wider* 2008). Some of the respondents seem to use this acquired non-specialist knowledge in their daily work as well, if only because they know the existing offer of support (Interviews 1, 6).

Another advantage mentioned by the respondents – which is directly related to the interdisciplinary approach – is that the other professions compensate the lack of knowledge or experience in certain areas (CPG II, V). The members would also act as multipliers, in that they would carry the information from the child protection group into their professional fields; this benefit, however, was mentioned in the interviews by only one group leader (Interview 9). For two group leaders the group work also means a relief from their daily case burden, since cases from their institution would also be brought into the groups (Interviews 5, 9).

It is interesting that in one child protection group, the membership was linked with prestige. The leader of this group suggested this because first of all, no one had wanted to leave the group voluntarily when it was discussed if the group should become smaller; secondly she said that it may be prestigious for certain authorities to send an employee to the child protection group (Interview 9). The statement of a lawyer interviewed seems to confirm the assumption, since she views her group membership as a unique feature in her administration, since it would qualify her for the handling of particularly complex cases. Furthermore, interdisciplinary work is prestigious in itself, as the following statement of a group leader shows:

> *I knew that this was a difficult and delicate task, but I was looking forward to it, because I think the most exciting thing is to work interdisciplinary and not always in the own professional field. And this was of course given here. Sounds good, of course, everybody wants to work interdisciplinary, […] in Germany or, yes, in Switzerland as well (Interview 4, lines 81-85).*

The additional workload is primarily perceived as **disadvantageous** – on the part of criminal justice because in the administration the case burden is not reduced as a working balance, and on the part of the group leadership primarily by the additional expenses due to the organisational work (invitations, case descriptions, minutes, obtaining feedback, keeping the statistics). The groups should have more time available for processing cases, this should, however, be taken into account in the workloads of members. The problem of a lack of time and human resources also played a role when considering concept changes (cf. *Krüger & Niehaus* 2010). One prosecutor questioned found another disadvantage for herself, her work in the child protection group was already interpreted negatively by accused persons (Interview 7). With regard to the level of helpers can therefore be said that all participants by their own account benefit in the first place from working in a child protection group, with membership having disadvantages for a few.

2.2.4 Characteristics of Successful Interdisciplinary Cooperation

Furthermore, for the analysis of problems and solutions for interdisciplinary cooperation in child protection groups, characteristics were identified that in the eyes of the respondents represent a successful interdisciplinary cooperation and whose absence may lead to a failure of cooperation. The basis for joint work is hereinafter mutual trust, respect and appreciation of the other and his work. This did not mean, however, that one must always be of the same opinion (Interview 6).

The relevance of mutual trust, appreciation and respect is reflected in the interviews in different contexts. A lack of respect and appreciation especially shows with so-called "alpha animals" – dominant individuals who seldom let others speak or not at all. This runs contrary to the idea of case discussions, since here the different disciplinary perspectives on the case should be brought together. In principle, it makes the group unable to work and may result in members leaving the group because they can not contribute to the meetings. This risk seems to be already seen by one group leader in her group (Interview 9, lines 230-353, see chap. IV.2.2.2, Leadership of child protection groups). At the time of the survey this problem was solved and she stated that now people listen to others and members would have the heart to "represent a view, something that maybe a little bit different from the opinions of others" (Interview 9, lines 565f.). She succeeded in dissolving the "tunnel vision" in finding solutions, she has brought the members of the group to question the proposed solutions and to "look, do I represent this as well or does my assessment go in a completely different direction" (Interview 9, lines 576f.). The prosecutor, who is a group member, also described the "decline of forces" as balanced; one would speak openly with each other. Of importance is the remark of a group leader that it is not about correcting each other ("You are misguided"), but to communicate the own opinion ("I see it that way...") (as in interview 4).

In another child protection group, communication also opened up over time, in that the members now ask more. One could feel – according to the representative of criminal justice – "the will to find a good solution on an objective level" (Interview 3, lines 157f.,). This is an improvement that she attributes to the mutual acquaintance – a process that needs time, since mutual trust must grow. The trust that the information disclosed "remains in the group", seems to be particularly important for the representatives of investigation and prosecution, since the participation in the anonymous case counselling makes them liable to criminal prosecution under certain circumstances (see chap. IV.2.1). Therefore, it is not surprising that the respondents value this trust as the most important thing when it comes to putting "the facts on the table" (Interview 3, line 262). It also creates the basis for all members on which to admit to that they are stuck and do not know a solution. One group leader stated that this was also especially in terms of those seeking advice. The following quote from a surveyed prosecutor supports this again and poses an important question, especially in connection with the investigation of interdisciplinary cooperation – does the extent of participation depend solely on the personalities of the participants, or does it also depend on discipline – the disciplinary socialisation?

> *Well, I think it is important that everybody can participate in the group. Well, that no dynamics occur, where one considers somebody`s opinion a priori as not important. And I don`t know if this has much to do with the professions or rather more with the personalities. But I think it is a pity when somebody sits there and does not contribute because he maybe thinks everything has already been said. But that you nevertheless know, what does this person think about this. I think this is also important (Interview 8, lines 318-323).*

Considering that, for example, doctors and lawyers not only belong to two highly accepted disciplines and professions, but that they already learn through the course of their studies to collect "facts" and on their basis make their own decisions, it seems likely that in the child protection groups, especially representatives of these professions act as opinion leaders. In contrast, social work is still in the process of defining and establishing itself as a profession (see *Staub-Bernasconi* 1995, 2007). An indication gives the analysis in connection with the status of members (see chap. IV.2.2.2). The question of who has the most say in a word group, therefore appears to be connected with how accepted the profession and thus the opinion of its representative is: "I think this year we were never in this situation [that we did not know how to continue in a suspected case], perhaps also because we called the prosecutor in" (Interview 4, lines 890f.). It is interesting that one social worker interviewed suspected that in small Cantons, the danger of "competitive spirit" or "arrogance" is less given.

Lack of respect for the specific field of other members may also show if people no longer only represent their own discipline, but also that of another group member. This can be seen then in the feeling that one would be "trampled in their own garden". One social worker described this as a fundamental fear that has to do with interdisciplinarity, a fear that could be cut back in the course of cooperation (Interview 9, lines 250-254, see chap. IV.2.2.2, fluctuation), so in the beginning "power struggles" were carried out between the participating authorities and professions, as everybody wanted to represent his or her position. While compliance with the disciplinary boundaries is requested by two other prosecutors as well (Interview 7, 10), a third prosecutor leaves these boundaries and, because of his experience as a father and school nurse, talks from a "school viewpoint" (as in interview 1). This behaviour is rejected by another lawyer: "That everybody contributes what they can afford, but take back where they realise that this concerns their area of expertise less" (Interview 7, lines 504f.). For one group leader, however, a certain degree of professional rivalry belongs to his work. It is necessary for creativity, so that the group does not become a "yes-sayer group". In the scope of one group supervision, he explicitly made "rivalry" a topic.

The recognition of the expertise of other group members also implies that one has certain expectations of competence from the others. This was perceived as

positive by the prosecutor cited in the following, but only because she does not regard those expectations as too high; it being okay if she did not immediately have the answer to a legal matter if it relates to a legal area she does not represent. Another prosecutor feels the same way, he as well can not always answer all questions "sur place" and also views this as a "presumptuous expectation" (Interview 10, lines 156f.). It is interesting that he assumes that there are expertise expectations especially to lawyers, he himself indicates at first, however, to have no "specific expectations" to other members, but then corrects himself and says that his expectations would be fulfilled. This statement is likely to go back, among others, to the special role of the representatives of criminal justice in the child protection groups. They are often exclusively invited to answer specific questions. That this gives the impression that people would have special expectations is not a surprise. Also not remarkable is the fact that he has no expectations of the other members because he sees himself as their adviser.

For the success of interdisciplinary cooperation it is also important that the participants understand each other; they must create a common basis concerning terminology. Again, this is part of getting to know the others and can also prevent members from feeling disintegrated if they have the impression that they were the only ones who do not understand the technical terms and abbreviations of the others. One prosecutor, however, does not want this creation of a common language to be understood as a "process of approach" or "alignment" – it is a matter of understanding and comprehending the messages of others.

As part of a self-organised evaluation, one leader has asked the members of his child protection group to write down their "wishes and expectations", i. e. to name the aspects of co-operation that should be maintained respectively changed. According to this, the members would be satisfied with the functioning hitherto; of importance is "careful, focused work", as well as the independence of the child protection group towards the institutions and the case reporter, especially if they worked in the same facility with a group member. Due to the difficult and demanding duties of child protection groups' important aspects when dealing with each other are "to bear mutual concern", "a good working atmosphere" and "mentally nourishing each other":

> *I like the term nutrition very much when it comes to psychology, to the soul. Then I sometimes look at my plants, there is now still a beautiful orchid, but they are about to fade away and without water really nothing happens. And to speak symbolically, without us caring for each other, nothing happens just as well. That´s how it is. We have to carry out a very difficult and demanding work, which can basically take place qualified in an interdisciplinary field (Interview 4, lines 976-981).*

One social worker sees the finding of a solution in the case discussions as a kind of "external criterion" for the success of the joint work.

Concerning cooperation with criminal justice and police outside the child protection group, one group leader wishes that one informs each other early in a suspected case. Another interviewed social worker has the same wish and makes this clear with an example case where especially the good cooperation with the representatives of criminal justice ensured that the hearing of the child victim was well prepared and carried out. Furthermore, according to this social worker, it would be perfect if one knew that outside the child protection group one would also be able to concentrate on the own specific field with the others adding their knowledge. The cooperation in the child protection group is a chance that the participating institutions and experts do not work at cross-purposes in their everyday case studies as well (as in interview 1).

Altogether, with the words of the respondents can be maintained: "interdisciplinarity requires a lot" (as in interview 4, line 102), and whether it succeeds depends on individuals: "... I think it stands and falls to a great extent with the participating members. So, right now it is really a very good working panel" (Interview 9, lines 291-293).

2.2.5 Problems in the Cooperation between (Public) Children and Youth Services and Criminal Justice rsp. Police

Specific problems in the cooperation of (public) children and youth services and criminal justice rsp. police in suspected cases of sexual child abuse arouse, according to the respondents, primarily due to different goals or priorities, approaches and ways of thinking as well as to different guidelines of pedagogical-psychological and legal professionals, even if everybody has the goal of child protection in common. This could not be resolved completely. Both the interviewed representatives of the public children and youth services and criminal justice particularly addressed the question of "civil law before criminal law or vice versa", and the associated mutual allegations:

> *Then, eh, there are slightly different opinions, I think, this is everywhere the same, child protection by civil law versus criminal law. And, eh, there is sometimes such hidden criticism, police, public prosecution – they have the feeling that we too infrequently make quick complaints, or we don't make a complaint at all, or we would treat the child protection cases somehow from behind without making a complaint, we would spare the perpetrators. Yes, and on our side, we sometimes have the feeling, well, they and their criminal law policy, they shoot forward and, eh, do some prosecutions before the wellbeing of the child is secured; what from our point of view, which is the civil law point of view, has first priority. And this sometimes leads to conflicts […] which would not be necessary if the cooperation would be clarified a bit better – and we currently work on that (Interview 5, lines 137-148).*

In this conflict, the participants indeed recognise that they have the same agenda, which is child protection. However, their different perspectives necessarily lead to a different approach to a case, whereby the proceeding of the investigation and prosecution authorities is particularly described by two interviewed social workers in a way that shows that they perceive it – different than their own proceeding – as aggressive ("brute interrupting", "pursue goal vehemently" as opposed to "give it a low-threshold [...]" [Interview 9, line 145]; "shooting in" [Interview 5, line 144]). Interestingly, one prosecutor speaks in a similar way of the actions of the criminal justice ("breaking-in with a club") and shows understanding for the position of the children and youth services. In her own work she tries to do justice to both positions, to "manoeuvre" between child welfare and law enforcement. This is mainly unsatisfactory for her as well as the police.

As the statement of one interviewed prosecutor shows, the different assignments and attitudes of the children and youth services and law enforcement and the related "guest status" of the lawyers contribute to the fact that the latter view themselves predominantly in a "marginal role" (as in interview 10, see also chap. IV.2.2.2). This effect can be increased through more knowledge on the job and a professional self-conception which is less applied to solving problems in groups: "Our job [as prosecutors] is always the same: collective further education certainly exists concerning criminal law or criminal process law, but less in a way that one aims at jointly working out something. [...] We are lone fighters" (Interview 10, lines 269-273). All in all, this could lead to the fact that representatives of the criminal justice identify exclusively with their own profession rather than with the group (Interview 10).

On the side of the (public) children and youth services, respondents also perceive status differences between them and the representatives of criminal justice. In the eyes of the leader of the CPG II the latter would make a difference between "real" public offices and institutions with private ownership, and this would be also intimidated to them. That they received the mandate for the establishment of the child protection group from the Canton does not change anything. The interviewed prosecutor of the same group accounts for more differences. So the competence to interview child victims would rather be attributed to the police and the prosecutor. Furthermore, more coercive force is available to them to obtain relevant information in a suspected case. Yet social authorities also possess power, which does not belong to the role understanding of especially the older representatives of social work, who always considered themselves as the "good guys" and the judiciary as a "repressive apparatus" (CPG interview II l, line 159). This resulted in people being suspicious and thus withholding information. Today, however, this would no longer be a problem due to the

changed apprenticeship in social work. Social workers today would work more factual, professional and structured (as in interview CPG II l, line 194).

2.2.6 Problems in Case Counselling

Concerning the case discussions the respondents named primarily three problems: lack of structure in the discussion, the anonymisation of the cases, and conflicts of roles and interests.

In one child protection group the case discussions get out of hand, according to the respondents due to a lack of structure by the group leader, although generally the group would succeed in giving a recommendation at the end. Both surveyed group members rate the work of their child protection group as altogether positive; however, they wish for a more professional way of working. From the perspective of the prosecutor involved, the meetings in group V under the former leader had been more structured and thus more efficient, but with the new leader it would be more harmonious.

The second problem in the case discussions mentioned repeatedly by respondents is the anonymisation of the cases. In all examined child protection groups, the case discussions are anonymised, which is mainly due to the participation of representatives of criminal justice, since they are committed to prosecute criminal offence cases ("principle of legality"). They can even be accused of favouritism or a complaint can be failed. This problem arises particularly in Cantons with fewer inhabitants or communities, since here one can quickly suggest the participants: "Now that this is discussed anonymously, in the Canton [...] mostly it is rather quickly known who that is" (Interview 3, lines 84f.). Another prosecutor moreover has the feeling that through the anonymisation the hands are tied, a feeling particularly felt by the police, since in spite of the anonymisation they would often know which persons are concerned (CPG V). Only one interviewed prosecutor extended the "problem of official secrecy" on to the majority of group members (Interview 1); one social worker extended it at least also to civil authorities (Interview 9).

The anonymisation of the cases also leads to other problems for the representatives of the (public) children and youth services and health services. So employees of the counselling centres or child and adolescent psychiatric services often know the cases and despite the anonymisation know which children or families are concerned. Especially in one group, this results in dissatisfaction on the part of the (public) children and youth services, since they would like to incorporate more information about the case into the preparation of meetings and the discussion; if representatives of criminal justice should take part in the meetings, a non-anonymised case discussion, however, is not possible because

of the reasons mentioned. In one group this problem is solved as follows: when representatives of the children and youth services or health services recognise a case, the leader announced bilateral names in advance, and further information will be investigated and replaced, which can then be used in the meeting of the whole group. It is worth noting that – although the anonymisation is based on clear legal guidelines for the representatives of criminal justice – not all representatives of the children and youth services are appreciative of this. This becomes particularly clear in the following statement of a group leader:

> *…the police an public prosecution, when they participate in a counselling and can/ despite the counselling being anonymised, they can guess which case is concerned, and then strictly speaking they must take action. Well, this is their opinion that they must do this (Interview 5, lines 129-132).*

In another group, it seems that this problem has not yet been addressed. The prosecutor in this group believes that the other members are not even aware of it. As their following statement shows, she has seemingly found her own way in dealing with this problem:

> *Well, I also didn't communicate something because I knew, this is now a crunch mode of the process, and nobody should know that we are planning something. So I didn't say anything and just took up what the others said and then prepared the action based on this background knowledge. But on the whole I say to myself, in the end it serves the cause and yes, sometimes I do say something where I think, in this panel this has to be said, but otherwise I wouldn't tell it of course. But the area of conflict remains, I think, also for the others (Interview 8, lines 75-82).*

This highlights a further problem arising from the anonymisation of the cases. If not all group members share the same information and if certain information is (or has to be) withheld, it can have a negative impact on decision making. Thus, perhaps (unconsciously) only information will be passed on, that is in line with their preferred solution (see *Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007); through this they can control the discussion, particularly if the informants are representatives of a profession with a high status. For the criminal justice representatives, it is also difficult if they do not know if a procedure is already opened against one of the participants, and they thus interfere with the jurisdiction of another criminal justice board.

But the respondents do not only see the disadvantages of the anonymisation. One prosecutor described giving the recommendation to file charges as easier when the discussion is anonymised, since it could not be controlled if the recommendation is upheld: "Especially if it is anonymous it is easier to give [...] advice and then once saying in a relatively hard way, there is no use anymore, now one has to file charges" (Interview 1, lines 165-167). However, this is problematic in that the decision should be taken against the background of the available information and the expert knowledge of the participants; to take

a higher risk of making a "wrong decision" because of the anonymity of those concerned seems, however, not effective, nor an increased risk due to the non-binding recommendation (see chap. IV.2.2.1).

In almost all groups, the problem is thus addressed and leads on both sides – the (public) children and youth services and the criminal justice – to a feeling of discontent. Some representatives of the investigation and prosecution authorities have found their own way of dealing with the anonymised case discussions that they see as a legal grey area. Only in one group the prosecutor believes that in these cases she is not required to take criminal action, another prosecutor had this clarified at time of the survey.

Another set of problems are roles and conflicts of roles and interests between members. First of all, role conflicts appear when a member of the child protection group is involved in the case to be discussed. If so, the member indeed presents the case, but does not take part in the subsequent discussion. Another possibility, which is among others practised in group I, is that this member sends his deputy – whereas deputies, according to the representative of criminal justice in the group I, entail the problem that they have less experience with the work of the child protection group than the regular member. In one group these role conflicts have been explicitly made a topic by the group leader. It can also be problematic when a colleague or a colleague from the own institution brings a case to the group. This could also lead to role confusion (Interview 4).

Other forms of role conflict are rivalries concerning expertise and "fantasies of omnipotence" (Interview 4) – the impression that the prosecutor always has a solution, as well as the crossing of disciplinary boundaries, when members feel that others would enter their area of expertise ("trample the garden of another" [as in Interview 9, line 252]) (see above). These problems also play a part in the question of characteristics of a successful interdisciplinary cooperation (chap. IV.2.2.4).

3. Country-specific Report Austria

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Country-specific Characteristics

The results of the questionnaire show at first glance how different Austria is from the two partners in the project presented here: Only 14 of the 61 youth welfare offices who returned a questionnaire reported a workgroup on sex offences against children – six of them with involvement of criminal investigation department (CID), one involving the CID *and* the criminal justice. The latter, however, was set for good in 1997. Another rested at the time of the survey. Since a high response rate of 53 percent could be achieved, this result has high explanatory power. Institutionalized forms of cooperation on sexual abuse of children in which both child welfare, criminal justice and CID are involved, are not only found with much less frequency in Austria than in Germany or Switzerland, but are in fact an exception. The results of the quantitative survey made an adaptation of the qualitative part of the study necessary: On the one hand there are simply not enough workgroups whose participants could have been interviewed, and on the other hand raises the question why the situation in Austria differs so much from the situation in the neighbouring countries Germany and Switzerland.

3.1.2 Legal Framework

In Austria, the states are responsible for youth welfare, with the result that their organisation and structure may differ significantly from state to state. The district administrative authorities act as people in charge of youth welfare offices: There are the district leaders, and – in cities with their own charter[1] – the magistrates. Vienna represents a special case in so far that all of the 18 youth welfare offices are centralized in one Municipal Department (MA 11). In the next two largest Austrian cities, Graz and Linz, a single youth welfare office is responsible for the entire city.[2]

1 In Austria exist 15 statutory cities. With the exception of Bregenz, all main cities (including the Federal Capital of Vienna) own statutes, furthermore, some smaller cities were chartered due to historical reasons (as seen in Art. 116 Abs. 3 B-VG).

2 At 31.10.2008, Vienna had 1,674,118, Graz 252,899 and Linz 188,966 inhabitants (http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen/index.html 17.4.2009).

The principle of legality has to be singled out as one of the principles of criminal procedure as it is a relevant legal provision for the present study. The so-called ex proprio motu is pointed out again and again as a difficult point in the cooperation between prosecution and CID respectively and other agencies, particularly the youth welfare (see chap. IV.3.3.5). § 2 StPO 2008 standardizes the commitment of CID and prosecution to investigate on their own initiative every suspicion of a crime coming to their knowledge.[3] In contrast, in fact a basic duty of disclosure for youth welfare also exists, but is abolished if the report "may influence any official activity whose effectiveness requires a personal mutual trust", or if it can be expected that "the criminal liability of a deed will be dispensed within a short period of time due to damage control measures" (§ 78 StPO 2008).

3.2 Quantitative Part: Results of the Questionnaire Study

In the autumn of 2008, the responsible civil servants of the provinces and magistrates in Austria were contacted by phone and asked to send the questionnaires to altogether 115 youth welfare offices. A direct reminder via phone to the youth welfare offices followed. 61 completed questionnaires were returned and used in this analysis. The response rate was therefore 53 percent. This applies to the first, general part of the questionnaire that was to a large extent almost completely filled in. Not so however with the second part, which focused on workgroups on sex offences: Here there are only five completed questionnaires, which is due to the small number of workshops on sex offences against children in Austria and not due to the lack of responsiveness of the youth welfare offices.

In relation to sex offences against children, three quarters of the youth welfare offices consulted have specific forms of cooperation with other authorities or institutions: 62.3 percent said that with individual problems it amounts to cooperation between individuals. Time-limited individual projects are relatively rare (8.2 percent). 34.4 percent or 21 youth welfare offices marked the option *organised cooperation*, 14 of them are involved in a workgroup; for the remaining seven organised cooperation is organised in other forms, for example in *round-tables*, or *helper conferences*. CID is involved with seven of the 14 workgroups, with criminal justice participating with one in addition. In one of the seven no more meetings were held at the time the survey was conducted, another one rested.

3 This applies only to offences prosecuted ex officio, and not to offences to be pursued only at the request of an authorized person.

A clear majority of the responding youth welfare offices wish for more contact and professional exchange with either criminal justice or CID: Nearly three-quarters of the respondents strive for more exchanges with prosecution, followed by the criminal courts (68.3 percent), and CID ranking in third place (60 percent). Respondents are most satisfied with their contact with CID, 40 percent marked *constant* as a request. Youth welfare offices were least satisfied with their contact with the prosecutors: Only a quarter thought contact frequency and intensity were just right.

The desire for more frequent and more intense contact was expressed significantly more frequently by those respondents who currently work with criminal justice and CID, than by those who do not. The difference is largest in relation to the criminal courts, with 73.3 percent of those youth welfare offices in cooperation wishing for more contact, while only 53.3 percent of the non-cooperating wishing for the same. Both non-cooperating and cooperating youth welfare offices wish for *more* contact with the prosecutors, but with different frequencies: 60 percent of the non-cooperating respondents and 77.8 percent of the cooperating ones. Contact wishes differ the least when it comes to the CID: 62.2 of the cooperating and 53.3 percent of the non-cooperating wish for a more frequent exchange with CID. Those respondents already in contact with criminal justice or CID therefore wish to have a greater exchange than those who have little or no contact. Then again, the (good) experiences made by the youth welfare offices in cooperating with criminal justice or the police could provide an explanation.

To identify the benefits of cooperation between youth welfare and criminal justice rsp. police in sex offences against children, respondents were asked to choose from a list those five that are most important to them. About two third of the questioned youth welfare offices see *optimization of procedures* or *reduction of friction at interfaces* as well as a *more substantiated risk assessment through case discussions* as an advantage. At positions three to five are *handling confidence through binding agreements, role differentiation through knowledge of authorities, instructions, etc. of the others* and *reduction of the number of victim hearings*. These three aspects of cooperation were counted by about half of the respondents among the five most important. When one compares the youth welfare offices cooperating with criminal justice or police with those who do not, a clear difference is shown in relation to one of the potential advantages of cooperation: the possibility of a more substantiated risk assessment through joint case discussions. Almost three-quarters of the cooperating respondents considered this aspect one of the most favourable of the five; however with in the non-cooperating respondents, it was only 40 percent. Another big difference between those cooperating with criminal justice or police and those

without was in how they view the *expansion of informal contacts and the flexibility of communication structures*: this was considered by 64.3 percent as one of the five most important benefits of cooperation by those whose evaluation was based on participation in a specific workgroup – and by only 40 percent of those youth welfare offices having no own experience with workgroups.

Respondents were asked to rate 19 possible aspects that lead or could lead to problems or conflicts when cooperating with criminal justice or CID on sex offences against children. The evaluation was conducted on a five-point scale ranging from *agree completely/rather* over *partly/partly* to *agree rather/not at all* (Table IV.3.1).

Of the youth welfare offices not cooperating with criminal justice or CID, 80 percent classified *the different legal mandates or targets* as problem or conflict areas; those who cooperate had a percentage of 69.6. At the other end of the scale those who do not cooperate tended towards more "extreme" ratings: 13.3 percent rated little or nothing in this aspect as problematic or conflict-filled; with the cooperating youth welfare offices the comparative figure says 2.2 percent. The proportion of respondents who consider this part a problem or conflict area was significantly higher from the cooperating authorities than with the non-cooperating ones (28.3 compared to 6.7 percent). Therefore, institutions with experience cooperating are more differentiated when evaluating this aspect, than those without this experience.

64 percent of respondents thought that cooperation between youth welfare and criminal justice or CID could lead to problems or conflicts, because it depends on the *personal commitment of those involved*, whereas the agreement is higher among cooperating youth welfare offices than with the non-cooperating ones (67.4 compared to 53.3 percent). The highest percentage with 71.4 is among those who take part in a workgroup. This suggests that on the one hand, experience showed the respondents that individual commitment plays a major role, and on the other hand that workgroups can not reduce this problem significantly or even eliminate it.

In 61.7 percent of the questionnaires, the *lack of institutionalization of the cooperation* is classified as a conflict or problem area. This is perceived as a shortcoming much more often by cooperating youth welfare offices than by the non-cooperating ones (66.7 compared to 46.7 percent). Another aspect was again assessed differently by the respondents participating in a workgroup than by those cooperating in other ways: Almost 75 percent of the latter group said that the lack of institutionalization is a conflict or problem area, while only 50 percent of those with experience in workgroups thought the same.

Table IV.3.1: Problems or areas of conflict in the cooperation between youth welfare and criminal justice rsp. police

Problems or areas of conflict	agree		partly agree		not agree	
	abs.	in %	abs.	in %	abs.	in %
Different legal mandates/targets	44	72.1	14	23.0	3	4.9
Dependency from personal commitment of the actual participants	39	63.9	11	18.0	11	18.0
Lacking institutionalization of cooperation	37	61.7	13	21.7	10	16.7
Different professional approaches, definitions, “language”, etc.	34	55.7	18	29.5	9	14.8
Lack of knowledge of the others´ legal and structural framework	27	45.0	20	33.3	13	21.7
Hardly any possibilities for compromise due to legal guidelines and instructions	25	41.7	18	30.0	17	28.3
Lack of social skills	19	31.1	25	41.0	17	27.9
Tension between autonomy and a shared right of creation	16	26.2	25	41.0	20	32.8
Principle of the mandatory prosecution of offences of criminal justice/police	15	25.4	23	39.0	21	35.6
Considerable additional expenses	17	28.3	20	33.3	23	38.3
Social data protection of youth welfare offices	18	29.5	16	26.2	27	44.3
Lack of role transparency	16	26.2	17	27.9	28	45.9
“Justiciary always has more pull.”	18	29.5	13	21.3	30	49.2
Prejudices/concepts of the enemy/clichés	12	20.0	17	28.3	31	51.7
Significant employee turnover	13	21.7	15	25.0	32	53.3
Pressure to legitimize own work	12	20.0	16	26.7	32	53.3
Arrogance of justice representatives	2	3.4	23	39.7	33	56.9
Impression of control through criminal justice/police	13	21.3	13	21.3	35	57.4
Class conceit	9	15.0	16	26.7	35	58.3

The fourth problem or conflict area concerns – like the first – the diversity of institutions. While legal tasks and targets deal with officially defined and differing tasks, here, actual existing, but not necessarily enshrined differences are in focus: for example the *professional approach* and the technical language. These "softer" differences are considered less likely to be problematic or conflict-prone than the different legal mandates and targets, with a total of 55.7 percent of all respondents. Moreover, their conflict or problem potential was perceived as less pronounced: The strongest classification *true* was not checked even half as often (19.7 percent) as in the statutory orders (42.6 percent).

Amongst the issues generally not classified as a problem or conflict area there was *considerable time additional expense*. Other parts of the questionnaire show that time pressure and lack of time can very well play a role. There seems to be a correlation between the number of completed working hours per 1,000 inhabitants and the nature and intensity of cooperation between youth welfare and criminal justice rsp. CID: While in the non-cooperative youth welfare offices 5.7 hours per 1,000 inhabitants were completed, the comparative figure for those who were involved in a study group was 7.8 hours, and for those who had chosen a different form of cooperation it was 7.1 hours. This could be interpreted that a more intensive form of cooperation can be addressed only when the staff has sufficient time resources. As a result of the workgroups, resource savings, for example through coordination of work flows, should be achieved in the institutions involved. To get there, working time has to be invested in advance, which in some institutions seems to be available insufficiently or not at all. Accordingly, two of the five attempts to establish a workgroup with the participation of criminal justice rsp. CID failed, as documented by the questionnaires, due to time requirements.

Of the 27 youth welfare offices either involved in no workgroup on sex offences against children or in a workgroup without involvement of criminal justice or police, information is on hand showing in which assignments cooperation through a workgroup with the criminal justice or police would be desirable: The answers to these open question are scattered in regards to content, but some priorities can be identified. For example, six youth welfare offices named an exchange (professional) on fundamental issues, taking place regularly at least twice a year. This network aims to promote cooperation in general and to ensure everyone gains a better understanding of the roles of the other participating institutions. A second focus can be made out at the request for a meeting with the other participants in the run-up to or at a very early stage in the proceedings: if it is proven that it will definitely come to a complaint, or immediately after the complaint. Of interest here would be, among other things, the

probability of a conviction, risk analysis and assessment of legal options. A third focus can be found in the proposals that aim to standardise the work processes and speed up the proceedings. Six youth services used the question that asked about the areas in which a workgroup with participation of criminal justice or the police would be useful to demonstrate – and partly also for what reasons – that such a workgroup would not be necessary or desirable: Three times it was pointed out that the personal contacts with criminal justice and police on special-purpose, through which everything is currently dealt with are enough. One time this was explained using the small sample size, another time with the disclosure duty, which criminal justice and police representatives would be subject to as soon as a crime comes to their knowledge. In one youth welfare office participation in "such workgroups/activities was prohibited by agency management".

A statistical analysis of the data from the five reported workgroups dealing with sex offences against children with involvement of criminal justice/CID did not make sense. They were described in the project interim report with the help of the information in the questionnaires.

3.3 Qualitative Part: Results of the Interview Study

3.3.1 Introduction

In Austria, eleven interviews with 13 people were conducted between November 2009 and May 2010 (on two interviews, two experts were available). Eight interviews were held with members of existing workgroups dealing with sexual abuse of children at district or state level, two were with CID[4] involved (see below). They were evaluated with regard to the activities of their workgroups and are thus comparable with the results from Germany and Switzerland. The remaining three interviews were conducted with experts who do not participate in cooperative alliances such as those studied here; they were evaluated with the hope to find explanations for the low number of workgroups in Austria. A "digression" is based on their interviews, which is inserted after the history of formation and development of the analysed workgroups (chap. IV.3.3.2).

For the analysis dealing with the activities of the workgroups existing in Austria, seven interviews from four workgroups on district level are available: four with representatives of youth welfare, three with criminal investigation officers. A fourth interview with CID was not made, as the best suited police officer who'd had a long-standing membership in the workgroup was absent due to an

4 Workgroups where the prosecutor or criminal judges are involved, could not be surveyed in Austria.

extended sick leave, and secondly because in this workgroup sexual abuse was dealt with only marginally. For the fifth workgroup, which had reported in the questionnaires, there were no interviews as the staff of the youth welfare office could find no time to talk.

Among the youth welfare staff members were three social workers and a psychologist. One police officer was also a trained social worker. Two respondents from the youth welfare office and one of the police officers held senior positions, the other two representatives of the youth welfare were administrators, while the other two officers were prevention officers, one also specialised in sex offences.

None of the analysed workgroups dealt exclusively with the sexual abuse of children, three dealt with violence in general, and one with violence against children.

At the time of the interviews, three out of the four workgroups were active; one had rested for about a year and a half, which was only found out during the talks on-site. What also emerged during the interviews: The CID had not participated in the workgroup since 2001. Their two interviews were included in the analysis because from this it becomes evident why workgroups might fail, which is, given the few active workgroups in Austria, an important question for the Austrian portion of the project.

The analysis of the activities of workgroups also includes an interview with a representative of a networking panel operating at state level. This respondent held a leading position in a victim protection facility. The state workgroup was only a minor part amongst the various forms of cooperation that were examined here, since it was not dealing with details of the actual case work, but with higher-level issues affecting the whole province. However since it also took on assignments that in Germany were fulfilled by the locally active workgroups, it was factored into the evaluation, without being considered an independent workgroup in terms of the project. Therefore in the following, four (and not five) workgroups are mentioned.

As already mentioned in the introduction, three additional interviews were carried out to investigate what, from the view of practitioners, stands against the establishment of workgroups or why such structured cooperation was apparently not seen as helpful everywhere. Two interviews were conducted in a state without any workgroups: one with two representatives from youth welfare, the other with a prosecutor. Besides, two law enforcement officers dealing with prevention issues at a federal level were gained for interviews.

3.3.2 Foundation and Development of the Workgroups

The interview partners allocated a lot of time and space to the development of their workgroup during the talks. We pick this focus up and use it to illustrate what has proven to be hazardous or promoting during the foundation and development of a workgroup.

Workgroup 1

"Three attempts" were needed to organise workgroup I as it stands now, said the respondent from the youth service. The impulse for the first foundation attempt in 1993 came from the regional government of the state in which their workgroup operates at district level. Lectures held by experts should sensitize for the issue of sexual abuse of children. Therefore, in this state around the mid-1990s more district workgroups as well as a state workgroup were established, which up till now have been represented in the same facilities as the district workgroups, but with people who were "authorized to take decisions in the ideal case" in their facilities, explained a respondent who has held the leading position in the state workgroup since its establishment. From the beginning CID was involved as well. The duties included public relations and prevention work. One acts as an information platform, deals with the developments in the state and remains in the background of the district workgroups dealings with the concrete cooperation of everyday work.

Since at the time of the interview the CID had only been a member of workgroup 1 for ca. three years, the description of its development is based on the interview of the youth welfare office: The original idea had been to form a group of specialists who took action in the case of a sexual abuse in the district. The concept however proved to be impractical, since one could not simply pass the children, once they had found a trustworthy person, on to someone else and "expect the same trust". They stuck to the subject of sexual abuse, and the workgroup continued with internally organised training courses and case discussions. But this second attempt was not successful too. The training and discussion topics were "talked to death". The meetings were held more and more just to have their own hold "on the boil". That the workgroup was not working well could be seen by the fact that new members soon stayed away. Finally, only a core group of institutions had stayed those which could already work well together. That the workgroup was threatened by closure was also showed by the fact that the youth welfare office often stayed away from the meetings and had even discussed a complete withdrawal.

The youth welfare office respondent told that when the workgroup was facing breakup at the turn of the century there was once again an initiative for the establishment of workgroups at a district level from the state workgroup. This time, the range of topics was extended, with sexual abuse now being one form of violence out of many that the "new" workgroups should deal with. Credit for the success of third attempt goes to one participant from a consulting organisation that informally took over the management of the workgroup and streamlined and restructured it. The new leader ensures that the dates for the meetings were set one year in advance. She prepared the meetings administratively and with regards to content and moderated the meetings in a way that lead discussions to a tangible result. There were no more case discussions however, due to youth welfare office not presenting more cases. The beginning of the third phase of the workgroup consisted of a round of introductions, with the participants reporting on their work. Of all the bodies and persons who had participated over the years at the workgroup for short or long term, a group of experts remained.

Workgroup 2

Workgroup 2 was founded in 1995. It operates in the same state as workgroup 1. The two founders, a police detective and a youth welfare office worker (which in 1995 was still employed in a care facility), were available as interview partners. The establishment was encouraged when they attended an event by the state workgroup that wanted to provide impulses for the establishment of workgroups at the district level. (This initiative also led to the third phase of workgroup 1.) The policewoman said that the good cooperation with the second founder started even before they attended the workshop. After the state workgroup`s event they sat down and considered who to invite, how often to meet and how an institutionalized cooperation might look like. To carry out case studies was never intended, said the employee of the youth welfare office – one dealt with current issues and legislative changes and placed the presentation of the participating institutions in the foreground. In the initial phase, described the police detective, the aim was to create a basis of trust to learn more about the legal basis, and the possibilities and limits of the work of others.

Workgroup 2 soon was not working well either. With regards to content, working was very unstructured, criticized the respondent from the youth welfare office. One was just "randomly discussing topics", a central theme was missing. It was "then very unsatisfactory for each". At the same time, the workgroup struggled with high turnover. Some did not even accept the invitation, while others came, but soon stayed away. Some institutions sent out new representatives each time, the new ones not being familiar with what had already been

discussed and therefore had to start over again and again. The meetings were held irregularly, the police officer said. Since one had not planned sufficiently in advance, it had been difficult to participate.

About five years after the foundation, a participant from an advise centre took the initiative and provided more structure, the two founders told. Since then, meetings take place four times a year and not – as before – every month, as this had been too much. The dates and topics were determined by the group a year in advance. The meetings were well prepared, having a fixed timetable and were journalised. The participants were assigned tasks and subject areas for which they were responsible. The targets and tasks of the workgroup were reviewed as well. When the targets and structures were clear, the group of participants grew again, the respondent from the youth welfare office told. Both said that since then, there has been a great continuity within the group, which is a great advantage. In recent years the workgroup has developed very well, summed up the interviewee from the youth welfare office.

Workgroup 3

Workgroup 3 emerged from a larger and thematically broader networking platform in the end of the 1990s, the respondent from the youth welfare office told. The members of the platform had become partly dissatisfied, as it was too big and therefore had become inflexible. Workgroup 3 had been established without many formalities. Here, the employees at the lower to middle levels of the hierarchy were represented, while the platform – still meeting twice a year – consisted of the management. The workgroup was dedicated to violence against and among adolescents, sexual abuse being only one from many topics. Youth welfare office, CID and NGOs work together without friction. Since foundation no serious problems had occurred.

Workgroup 4

At the initiative of some institutions and individuals, in 2000 a round-table on the topic of sexual abuse had been created, the interviewee from the youth welfare office told. The CID also had been among the participants. The targets of the round-table had consisted on one hand of networking, while on the other in building a fixed child protection workgroup. The concept for this had already been worked out, but failed due to financing. Therefore, the round-table and the operation workgroup lapsed in 2001. In 2002, the federal state government had then decided to install a workgroup on child protection in each district. The participants of the round-table had met at the end of 2002

again and continued where they had left off. The coordination of the workgroups was organised by the child welfare organisation.

Initially, workgroup 4 dealt with the tasks of the participating institutions, researched material on some issues in the context of violence against children and attempted – based on closed cases – to pinpoint potential for improvement in the cooperation. These case studies were abandoned because they led to disagreements, the interviewee of the youth welfare office said: Some participants had the feeling they had to defend their profession during fault tracing. About two years after its establishment, the workgroup began to develop a guide for compulsory school teachers that should help them in cases of suspected abuse and/or sexual abuse.

When it came to the participation of the CID, the two respondents were not in agreement: While the person from the youth welfare office said that her colleague from the police was present during the establishment of the workgroup and some time afterwards, the police officer only recalls the round-table. Her records also show that she never participated in the workgroup. The police had not been the only facility that ceased to remain over time, workgroup 4 also fights with high turnover. The youth welfare office employee gave several reasons: First of all, there were too many networking boards and one tires of always meeting the same people, even though in other topical contexts. Secondly, it took a long time to develop the guide. Thirdly, the guide problem was extended because no money could be found for the printing. Moreover, after finishing the guide, a certain amount of helplessness existed about what the next tasks could be.

At the time of the interview, the workgroup had rested for about one and a half years. While still waiting for a budget for printing the guide, a new network to deal with the abuse and mistreatment of children was founded. Again, the same people and institutions were invited. The original workgroup was de facto replaced in 2008 by that group, without explicitly talking about it.

Digression: Interviewees without Workgroup Experience

Since in Austria only the four workgroups (and a fifth, but with no interviews available) introduced just now were registered through the questionnaire survey, and such cooperations – different than in Germany and Switzerland – were apparently barely established, additional interviews were led with representatives of youth welfare, criminal justice and CID, who do not take part in a workgroup as defined in the survey. These interviews focused on the positive and negative experiences with cooperations in other contexts, and on reasons for and against the establishment of workgroups.

The interviews followed in a state with no workgroups (with youth welfare and prosecution), as well as with two executive officers dealing with prevention issues at the federal level. In the state where two representatives of youth welfare and one prosecutor were interviewed, a few years ago a temporarily established workgroup prepared a pamphlet to improve governmental child protection. The diversified panel of experts met in five sessions, a continuation of the workgroup was not planned from the outset, but after the presentation of the brochure all the participants of the group should implement the contents in their particular context. The collective meetings, in which anonymised case studies were also discussed, had at least given the participants from other professional fields an idea of the problems youth welfare has to face – a result that has been repeatedly confirmed as a "positive side effect".

However, a "history" of the inter-agency cooperation had already existed: Years ago, the youth welfare introduced a joint meeting of prosecution, police and child protection services prior to an annual press conference on sexual abuse, involving the member of the provincial government. The background for it was the wish to stem the populist reporting in the field of suspected sexual abuse by providing the media strategically with specific information.

Out of this tradition, quarterly meetings of the youth welfare with prosecution, police, child protection services and child and youth advocacy were held, called up by the youth welfare that also organised the necessary framework. At these meetings all relevant groups were represented, all of them knew about the meetings, although there was no advance planning for the dates. Prosecution and police were always invited, but did not appear regularly. This was no workgroup, there was no "project" with a start, an end and a goal, but rather the meetings were held to prepare the press information. At the same time, other current issues or general problems were also discussed within the group, sometimes even anonymous cases. In the beginning, when introducing each other, what was of particular importance was that the participants from the different professions had described their jobs – sometimes very concise and graphic, to give the other a concrete picture of their job requirements.

In addition to these gatherings, bilateral meetings of youth welfare and prosecution took place, in which, after the preparation of the child protection brochure, remaining questions of principle would be discussed, in particular diverging legal interpretations. A broader network including other groups had long been planned, but first of all these basic questions had to be clarified.

The prosecutor, who had also worked on the brochure, welcomed the former initiative when interviewed: Until then, almost no cooperation between youth welfare and prosecution had existed, and she valued the talks as very useful. The aim had been to collect on what legal basis the particular authority deals

with the best interest of the child. Despite her satisfaction with the brochure, she had realized afterwards that some of the points discussed in the meetings had apparently not been clarified for all participants, because they were not put into practice. As a central hub she named the divergent understanding of official secrecy on the part of youth welfare and justice. She regretted that the former talks had been discontinued, perhaps these problems could yet have been clarified.

She would appreciate the establishment of a workgroup in which these and similar problems could be discussed at quarterly intervals, and she would also participate in the meetings – as she was certain would the responsible police officers. Such institutionalized meetings should not only be held at state level, but also at a smaller scale, at district level. For her it is important to talk about problems early so they do not escalate and give each other a hard time. The organisation of a regular workgroup should best be organised "from the very top" – that is Court of Appeal or Supreme Public Prosecutor – to guarantee most liability. Even more effectiveness could probably be achieved when the responsible ministries or, alternatively, the federal state government issue a mandate to establish workgroups. She herself could not, for example together with representatives of police and youth welfare, establish such a cooperation board, at least not when it should be an official board to which one participates during the period of service. But perhaps the child and youth advocacy as an independent body, which stands in exchange with all relevant institutions, could organise a workgroup.

The two prevention officers of the police declared at the end of May 2010 that they were working on an initiative aiming at strengthening the protection of children across Austria. Details could not yet be presented, because their considerations are in a "preliminary phase" and had not yet progressed far enough. Behind their efforts stands the idea that children as the "weakest link in the chain" would get "the least support". The question of whether they could imagine workgroups for Austria such as those that exist in Germany, involving law enforcement agencies in addition to youth welfare and counselling services, was affirmed without reservation. From her point of view, for such an initiative youth welfare would have to act as a responsible body with statutory mandate, police and justice would then definitely take part. What the interviewees liked about the briefly presented Swiss model with the wide circle, from which reporters of a case could come, who – after consulting experts in the workgroup – shall then decide on how they want to handle the case, was the possibility that anybody could turn to this board on the basis of a suspicion. This should mean that the executive does not have to be informed as a first step, which could in fact be problematic, when the suspicion cannot be confirmed and then a counter-accusation of discredit will be brought in.

The interviewees in the state without workgroups therefore stressed at least a basic interest in such a cooperation – and not only on the part of youth welfare, but also on the part of the prosecution who is not yet represented in any workgroup nationwide. The police officers also welcomed the cooperation in workgroups as presented to them by means of German and Swiss models.

3.3.3 Participating Institutions and Persons

The CID regularly participate in three of the four workgroups, although not in the fourth since 2001. Therefore problems associated with the participation of the police (and criminal justice) can be illustrated particularly well by the fourth workgroup.

Professionals and Lay People

The interviewer partners do not agree on whether institutions that are not specialized on the topic of the workgroup, but only come into contact with cases of violence or sexual abuse on rare occasions, should be participating: A representative of youth welfare office is against the participation of non-specialized persons, such as health professionals or teachers, because they can hardly be involved in discussions and could not contribute a lot on the subject. Another employee of youth welfare office reported of very different experiences though. She discovered a profit not only for the working circle with participating kindergarten and school teachers – who showed lively interest and asked many questions – but also for herself: She experienced the other professional perspectives as an "enrichment" and the acknowledgement of these participants gave her more impetus. Another employee of the youth welfare office also thinks the poor representation of schools in the workgroup is "a little unfortunate". The fourth interviewed staff member saw the participation of teachers as problematic: In her opinion the turnover in this occupational group was very high, and the development of the workgroup inhibited by this factor. Secondly, teachers did not take privacy very seriously and spoke with colleagues about cases studied in the workgroup.

Disseminators and Decision-Makers

The attempts to win the participation of physicians was described as "too tedious" by a youth welfare office employee. She would not have known who to contact anyway, as general doctors do not have representatives with disseminator effect, she said. The question of what specific consequences their participation in the workgroup has – be it for a profession or for the institution

that sends the participants – had already appeared earlier. From the beginning of the workgroup's predecessor the supervisors sent their employees with orders to have a look at "what happened there". At that point the intention of using the knowledge of the workgroup for their own facility did not exist. Also, the participants did not have authorization to speak for their department or professional group. Thus the "obligation to implement" was missing and was also responsible for the breaking up of the workgroup. It also seems to have been a kind of interaction: The clearer it became that the workgroup developed little effect, the more often representatives without decision-making authority were sent.

Some institutions send several representatives. Of the questioned youth welfare office two to three employees belong to the fixed list of participants, per police station it is one to four officers. Sometimes only one person per institution attends the meetings, sometimes they all go. The nomination of several representatives suggests that participation is not driven by the initiative of an individual; it is supported by the institutions, and therefore not at risk if ever one person should drop out.

Fluctuation

A disturbing amount of turnover had happened in three of the four workgroups in the past. Two of those were able to resolve the problem over time through substantial and structural reforms; the third remained with the problem until the groups activities were put to a rest. The negative consequences of these fluctuations were mainly due to the fact that no trust could be established, and a continuous operation was not possible, as participants were constantly having to start from scratch. The fast turnover creates a vicious cycle, as it ensures that the workgroup functions poorly, and all procedures are unnecessarily protracted. This was clearly reflected in the case of the workgroup that could not handle the fluctuations: As with the two workgroups which had struggled in the past with changing members and participant numbers, this was a consequence of substantive weaknesses. In the particular case tensions between the participants added that were not resolved in the group, but only suppressed. Thus years were required to develop a teachers' guide, which included a little more than five pages.

Participation of the CID and the Criminal Justice

The three interview partners from the CID see themselves in quite different roles within the group. One police officer was a co-founder of the study group and has been a committed member for ten years now. She explained that the participation of the police was very important because without social workers

and other institutions and authorities they can not do their work. This interlocutor sees herself as a formative part of the workgroup and also takes over administrative tasks. Though her colleague, who has been part of his workgroup for three years now, sees himself in the role of a guest. The police keep up contacts with authorities, offices and other institutions and he felt “very committed” to the group. However, he repeatedly pointed out that he came because he had been invited: The police will attend and contribute to the group, but not organise it. To illuminate the role of the third police officer it is necessary to go back to the year 2000/2001, when the so-called Round Table, the predecessor of the actual workgroup, was still active. Both there and in the day-to-day work the third police officer understood herself as being a representative of the targets and tasks of the police – and thus stood in opposition to the working example, the targets and tasks of the youth welfare office. A waiver of the prosecution of the perpetrators was not in the interest of the protection of the victims, nor was the ideal of keeping the family together in any case, she said. The police officer also collided with the case discussions, where the anonymity was not maintained. This led to a conflict with her interest of statutory duty of investigation. As a consequence of her experiences she was absent (with excuse) from the workgroup meetings. After a while she did not received any more invitations. She now can hardly imagine going back to participating in a workgroup.

Her immediate opposite in the youth welfare office holds the same role as her, only from the other perspective. She represents the principles of the youth welfare office, especially the “best interests of the child”. Several times she pointed out that the CID only care about prosecution, and not a “child's protection” – although this should be the case. In interviews with these two interlocutors the comments about the inconsistent targets take up most of the interview. It seems as if the representatives of the police and youth welfare office – and their working authorities – have been frozen in their positions for years: each insisting on “her” position. An understanding of the view point of the other seems to be non-existent, although this is exactly what they vehemently demand from each other. At the round-table these tensions did not seem to be as virulent, the youth welfare office employee said. They simply had not been addressed.

For the youth welfare office, the police are still members of the workgroup. She argues that the police officer was sent invitations and protocols all the time. She holds a different explanation for the absence of the police officer: Before the youth welfare office files charges the employees research a case very carefully, as they want to be sure that the proceedings will result in a conviction. This can take a long time – too long for the police, she supposed.

Attempts to have the prosecution participate in the workgroup were not taken by the four questioned groups operating at district level, but certainly were by the workgroup active at country level – albeit without success: the interlocutor of the national workgroup pinpointed a "certain ignorance", misconceptions about the work of the networking bodies and an unwillingness to deal with the subject of networking and cooperation at all. The prosecution does not understand itself as part of the system and does not hope for any benefit gained through cooperation with other institutions, she speculated.

One of the district workgroups questioned invited the responsible judge to participate in the study group, but he never came, the employee of the youth welfare office said. However, it would be important to reach an agreement with the court, because she realizes on a regular basis the shyness and fears kindergarten and school teachers have if they are asked to testify before a court. Another representative of the youth welfare confirmed this observation.

3.3.4 Organisational Structure

Structure of the Workgroups

Administrative Management and Task Distribution

One of the surveyed work groups is organised "grass-roots democratic", the other three have an administrative direction. In those two who only found a proper organisational structure over time, one representative of a consulting organisation took over management out of her own initiative to save the workgroup. In both cases it was never officially recorded that there was management, or who held it. As for the division of labour, the two workgroups work differently: Both leaders have an eye on the overall organisation and moderate in the meetings as well. In one of the two workgroups, however, the other tasks are managed by a division of labour. Each member has a substantive area of specialization and prepares the meeting, if this area of expertise is concerned. Responsibilities for the invitations and the e-mail distribution are fixed, and the protocols are written alternately in alphabetical order. In the other workgroup the leader carries out all administrative tasks. The fact that all the work depends on the leader has only been addressed recently, says the representative of the youth welfare office. She asked for someone else to take over the protocol. In the future, she said, there must be another solution, such as a "wheel", so that it can not result in long discussions.

In the third study group the youth welfare office has the leadership and is also responsible for invitations, presentation and protocol. In the fourth, the democratically organised group, a facility has "taken over a certain responsibility". This includes the agendas, invitations and protocols. The latter are written on

the rotation principle. This streamlining was controversial, says the youth welfare office employee, the members were worried that the workgroup might lose its “character”. However, that did “not arrive”.

Written Basics

None of the surveyed work groups are operating on the basis of statutes or other written basics. Some interview partners referred to the protocols of the meeting, in which agreements are established. On demand, the interview partners said consistently, they did not think that a written documentation was necessary or appropriate.

Organisation and Process of Meetings

Choice of Topics and Agenda

In two of the workgroups the topics of the meetings are decided from one meeting to the next, whereas two plan ahead half a year, or potentially one whole year. All participants can suggest topics that can be decided on in the group. The meetings are structured by an agenda that is put together from one meeting to the next.

Invitation, Presentation and Protocol

In all workgroups invitations to the meetings are sent and protocols written. Two workgroups put particular attention on the writing of the protocol. There, the participants also receive a regular attachment with information material next to the protocol, which refers to the issues discussed. This can be used in everyday work and for future reference. Meetings were moderated in three of the workgroups, however the fourth group's youth welfare office representative believes that this was not “absolutely necessary”.

Time, Frequency and Location

When participation to the meeting started to become more irregular and less frequent, with some arguing that the times were unfavourable – so said an employee of the youth welfare office – they attempted to put the meetings into a time frame that was more practical for the different participating professional groups. The fluctuation was not reduced however, as scheduling problems were not the main problem, rather the rough running of the workgroup being responsible for the absence. Later on, the participants agreed on a specific

time for the meeting without taking into consideration single professions: "To whom it is important, those people will turn up and keep that time free."

Initially they meet monthly, interview partners from three workgroups reported, but over time the frequency decreased. You could see that in two workgroups the meetings were scheduled too often, as it was hardly possible to find common dates on such short notice. Agreement was finally reached in the three workgroups: who meet four times a year. The fourth workgroup comes together as it has always done – every two months. Two workgroups have converted to an annual plan, which helped to stop discussions to set the next date. Meetings across all the workgroups take between one and a half and three hours on average.

In the past the meetings always took place in the same location, but recently the hosts have alternated, reported the interview partners from an active workgroup. While the policeman thinks it is interesting but not "primarily important" to know the premises of the other facilities, the youth welfare office worker said that this system was very effective because the image that one has of the other bodies is completed by that. In another workgroup the meetings sometimes take place in one of the participating institutions, but mostly in the main welfare centre. The third workgroup went away from changing places, and now holds the meeting in the youth welfare office.

Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution

Decisions are made in the workgroups as a team; votes (by majority decision) are not necessary, said the interview partners. Interview partners from two different groups talked about conflicts within the workgroups. Both had their roots outside of the workgroup, emerging in everyday cooperation, and were therefore carried in to the groups. The "solutions" were that one of the participating institutions had to leave one workgroup, while the other was to have an activity area searched, where the discrepancies were not visible. A real solution to these conflicts was never found, in several other cases, however, some prejudices and tensions were overcome.

Financing

Financial resources are needed to pay external speakers and to print and send information, but only one of the four workgroups has its own budget. To solve the problem of financing the speeches, they sometimes organise events with those workgroups from neighbouring counties that also do not have a budget. In another workgroup circle the magistrate helps out if, for example, a transmission

is present. Problems arising from a lack of funding are reported from one workgroup. The conversation partner from the youth welfare office explains on the basis of three concrete examples: Even the predecessor of the workgroup, the round-table, wanted a permanent children protection group – comparable to the later set up workgroups – but the government never provided money for that. The guide, developed in the group, could never be printed because the state government did not take over the printing costs. One reason for not inviting external speakers was their (potential) fee. Particularly, since this workgroup now has many problems, it seems reasonable to question whether the lack of funding has been chosen as the "official" explanation, but in reality other causes were striking.

The largest de facto financial help the workgroups receive indirectly from the employers of the participants. For all of them, the time they spend in meetings and in which they follow up on them, before and after is counted as working time. Some institutions send about two to three employees to the workgroup and thus invest many working hours. They also provided some equipment, such as the computer.

3.3.5 Targets, Contents and Tasks

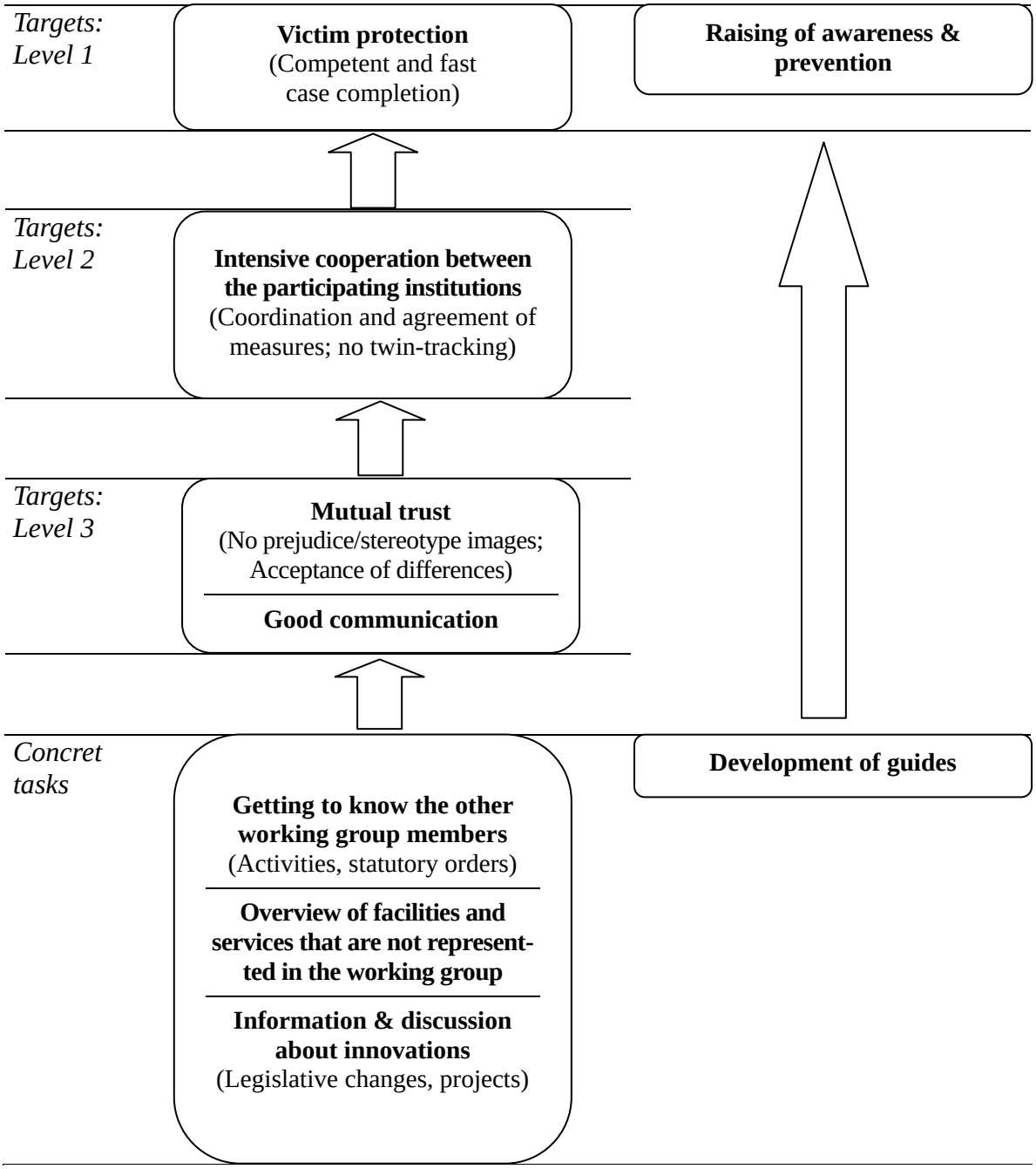
When considering contents and tasks, the improvement of information and knowledge is at the fore, followed by getting to know each other and keeping up contact. Educational initiatives, targeted at professional colleagues and a wider audience, play a rather minor role, whereas case discussions at the date of the interview played no part.

Targets

When asked about the targets and tasks of the workgroups, the interview partners mostly named aspects that were important to them or had proved to be significant for their group. The targets cover and complement the content largely, but to different levels. The project team has combined them in a hierarchical model. Included here are only those targets the respondents named, the model does therefore makes no claim to being complete (Fig. IV.3.1).

The focus of the research groups is quite deliberately targeted towards victim protection, in terms of improving the procedure for the completion of individual cases. Raising awareness and prevention were mentioned less frequently.

Fig. IV.3.1: Targets and tasks of a workgroup



To optimize the completion of cases, the interview partners request the intensive cooperation of the necessary facilities. One has to agree on the measures of each of the participating institutions and coordinate the time right. This would avoid twin-tracking.

To get to such a cooperation they must communicate and trust in each other. This is only possible – and thus the level of the concrete tasks the workgroups have, is achieved – by getting to know the other participating institutions: their

activities and legal orders, possibilities and limitations and the contacts who work there. It is also helpful to get an overview of all relevant offers, even if they are not organised by members, and to be informed about new developments.

Some detailed aspects led to the following question: What constitutes good cooperation? The interview partners mentioned the following criteria:

– *Agreement on and coordination of the activities* (Targets: Level 2): Developing a common strategy, joint and concerted action, no professional boundary violations, and passing over cases if one cannot provide the necessary power.
– *Style and attitude of the participants* (Targets: Level 3): Trust, respect for the competence and working method of the other; reliability.
– *Communication and exchange of information* (Targets: Level 3): quick and constant contact, finding the right contact persons; “short ways”; openness in the exchange of information and feedback on the completion of a case.

Contents and Tasks

Information Exchange, Further Education and Support

All workgroups are surveyed for information exchange and the training of the participants: via the people that participate, and, through them (at least partially) onto the bodies that sent them. For the two workgroups, which have the state workgroup in the background, this has a special function because it brings together news from across the state which were then carried into the district workgroups. Secondly, it offers special training to the members at the district level. The regional workgroups devote themselves almost exclusively to the so-called work topic. Lectures from outside experts, and less commonly by members, form the core of the meeting. For them, these lectures are crucial for continued participate in the study group, one interview partner of the youth welfare office explained. For her it is about being continually updated if changes have occurred. She could try to do this by another means, but feels more secure when informed by experts.

The former policewoman, who left the alliance in 2001, criticized: “It's had worked in theory perhaps, but I felt it was rather tedious and without (...) a concrete result.” Even after the CID had left the workgroup the topics continued to develop, the interlocutor of the youth welfare office told: Particular in the first two years until the development of the guide for teachers begun. From her point of view external speakers only made sense if the lecture topics were of interest to all the participants.

The interlocutors of another workgroup put emphasis on another function that works inwardly: There they would get recognition, retention and support – sometimes even more than in their own facility.

Presentation of the Participating Institutions

Two of the well-functioning workgroups began with an activity consisting of a large round of introductions in which participants described their work. The non-active workgroup also focused on the tasks of the participating institutions. A police officer stressed the importance of mutual understanding from the beginning: Those days there was a lot of prejudice and mutual recriminations, but that is long gone. To know the statutory tasks of the others, to know how they define their work and where their capabilities and limits lie, and also to learn communication methods is the prerequisite for a trusting cooperation. All this leads to them giving cases to each other with a good feeling, as they know they are in competent hands. A youth welfare office worker added that her trust had grown, especially with those organisations with which she did not deal with in everyday life. The "mutual understanding" was deepened through the meetings.

An interview partner from the youth welfare office reported that rounds of introductions in large networking bodies might hinder productivity. The platform from which the workgroup emerged had become lazy and less productive, as every time new members joined almost the entire session had been used by the round of introductions.

Public Relations, Education and Prevention

The work aimed directly at the wider audience – be it colleagues or interested lay people and parents – is taken very seriously by one workgroup. One covers a broader range of issues than the other workgroups surveyed. Its key tasks are printing brochures, doing public relations work including press conferences on specific issues and concerns, and in terms of "lobbying", talking to decision makers for people who have no official representation.

The second workgroup understood it as its task – as already mentioned – to create a guide for compulsory school teachers in the spring of 2005, addressing those who suspected that a student was physically and/or sexually abused. The fact that the CID were not represented in the group when the guide was developed, is noticeable: The police are only mentioned once in passing, the role and approach of the youth welfare office, however, is presented in detail.

For the two workgroups in the state with the higher level state workgroup, the entire promotion and prevention work is covered by the state workgroup.

Case Discussions

One of the four workgroups made an attempt to use completed cases to improve and analyse the cooperation of the participating institutions, and to write their guide on those real cases – but failed. The case discussions were "hot", the interview partner from the youth welfare office said: As soon as the analysis showed that one of the institutions should have behaved differently, the participants felt the need to defend their colleagues, rather than to focus on what could have been done in a better way and what should be changed in the future. At that time the police no longer participated.

At the time of the interviews none of workgroups discussed current cases. In two of those this was never planned anyway. The study group was too "diverse", one youth welfare office employee said. In specific cases the organisations involved would meet in small groups, declared several interview partners. The workgroup is not the right surrounding for the discussion of recent cases, because the intervals of three months were too long, the cases could become acute in the meantime. In addition, the secrecy of the participants was quite uncertain because of the high turnover and in a small district it was difficult to preserve the anonymity of people. There was also no supervision, and some of those involved had problems handling the subject. Since they were far away from the subject it was hard for them to contribute to the discussion.

The latter argument was mentioned by a different employee of the youth welfare office as well. She had experiences with current cases being discussed by the group, when the CID were not yet a part of it. In particular, she felt the discussions with distant members or those who just could not handle the topic very well threatened the existence of the workgroup. She believed that it was the situation even if not many case studies had taken place. The anonymity – the youth welfare office always brought in the cases – always succeeded, she said, but they left out those parts of the case, which would perhaps have been problematic.

How big the potential for conflict in case discussions could be, is shown by the predecessor of another workgroup. In the round-table, so a police officer told, there were no planned and complete case studies, but from time to time a case would have been used if questions did arise. Although she had made it clear that no names were allowed to be said aloud, this aim was not always successfully achieved. Sometimes other details that were mentioned would lead to the affected person. The situation was a difficult one for her, because she was required by law to take action when she learned of a criminal act. And indeed, cases were mentioned the police had not yet known of. On the other hand she had the feeling she was being a "nuisance" to the round-table, as "the others did not appreciate it" if the conversation was interrupted by her saying "stop". The explanations of the youth welfare office employee are

similar to those of the police officer, and it shines through that there was little sympathy for the, perceived as inflexible, attitude of the CID. The consequent sense of obligation of the police officer to the principle of legality led, among other reasons (see chap. IV.3.3.2: Workshop 4) to the CID no longer participating in this workshop. The police officer proposed to divide the meeting: one half with the participation of the police, in which no cases were discussed, and a second half for the case discussions – and without the presence of the executive.

3.3.6 Results and Implications of the Workgroups

“Subjectively, I would say yes immediately. Hence, I'm not really all that sure”, an employee of youth welfare office responded to the question of whether the workgroup had a positive effect on the day to day work with the CID. Here she speaks about a phenomenon that was shone through with all interview partners, but should be kept in mind when evaluating the results of the workgroups: the interview partners reported their subjective truth. Despite the careful evaluation of this it plays a big role for the Austrian part since the low number of active workgroups restricts the importance of the whole significance.

The majority of the interviewees agreed that the benefits of the workgroups outweighed any negatives, with only two employees of child welfare saying the time spent as was not advantageous. Two police officers said, however, that the time spent could bee seen as “a plus” because it was “not that much” and because “everything I do to stop an abuse, (...) is worth it. (...) No matter how time consuming it is, or how much strength and energy it takes. An interviewee from youth welfare office said the effectiveness was “much larger” because of the cooperation.

Following are the results of the research groups on the basis of the targets of the interviewee (see chap. IV.3.3.5). In this target pyramid we move from the bottom up: First there are the concrete tasks, the next step is level 3 (mutual trust, good communication), then level 2 (intensive cooperation) up to level 1, the competent and fast finishing of the case, while always in mind is the victims protection.

Getting to Know the Other Workgroup Members (Targets: Level 4)

All interviewees in the active workgroups said they knew a lot about the other participants – about their limits and possibilities, legal basis and responsibilities as well as about the staff and their skills – and therefore that the cooperation among the members of the workgroup had improved.

The police officer that participated at the round-table in 2000/2001 provided a counter-example, that was carried on in the workgroup that established afterwards: There was no detailed introductions at the Round Table, and she did not get to know the other organisations any better in her one and a half year membership. Her opposite from the youth welfare office said that they had introductions in the workgroup, but the tensions between some participants had not been resolved by that (see chap. IV.3.3.5: Case Discussions).

Another police officer pointed out though that with his knowledge of the other institutions he could help interested parties better, as he knew where the right offer was to be found for them quickly and without lengthy searching.

"Overview of Facilities and Services that are not Represented in the Workgroup", as well as "Information and Discussions about Innovation" (Targets: Level 4)

The victims also benefit from the fulfilment of the other two concrete tasks of the workgroup, two employees of youth welfare offices said. Now they can advise clients with more competence, because they know more about legal changes or therapy offers. For victims, who have to face a lot of uncertain situations, it is important to be informed promptly and to be offered help, not to be put off until the next appointment with the youth welfare office. This is working much better since the study group has been organised anew, said one of the two interlocutors. She now knows about offers by heart or at least knows where to look them up to quickly find the right answer.

Mutual Trust (Targets: Level 3)

Some cases, particularly those where sexual abuse is suspected, are sometimes far from clear, said an employee of youth welfare office. It did work "quite well" to talk about possibilities of action with other experts. Even if the data was always treated anonymously, you would only do these kinds of things if you can trust that confidentiality will be maintained.

Two employees of the youth welfare office pointed out that fears of contact between the CID and the youth welfare office was reduced – both the mutual fear of contact amongst the workgroup participants, and those of other employees. The reluctance to contact these two institutions had been lowered because of the workgroup's experience that the police do not only punish, but also support, and that the youth welfare office, for example, does not always take away children from their families. The greater confidence in police and child protection services did then jump from the employees onto the clients: If a consultant in a victims rights organisation sends her client to the youth welfare office with

full belief, the chances that the victim accept the idea is far greater – and gives them the opportunity to have their own (good) experiences.

Good Communication (Targets: Level 3)

Regularly mentioned in the interviews was the good communication between the participants. A police officer said something like: "There also is an exchange of information. (...) If I still have a question, then I just call them there." Another interviewee pointed out this deliberately was the "style" of the youth welfare office; they always wanted to give the cooperation partner feedback. Here it was important to not only report back the negative but also the positive experiences – and thank them. Thus a sustainably positive working environment was created. Two employees of child welfare stated that meeting the cooperation partners in a different context than only in case studies, particularly the police, leads to a more comprehensive knowledge of the other institution and thus to a better basis for discussion. This in turn had a positive influence on day to day work.

The interlocutors from the workgroup in which the police have not been participating in for years, both reported extensively about the fact that the communication between the youth welfare office and CID is not working well. Information does not seem to be shared, but is only given away to the extent required by law, not on a voluntary basis. Both interviewees want shorter ways, neither of the two bodies seem to want to make the first move though: As long as the police will not give away further information, the youth welfare office does not do so either – and vice versa. Therefore the youth welfare office does not know about arrests or registered complaints, while the CID do not know of suspicious cases until very late: often only after several months of research and investigation work by the youth welfare office.

An employee of the youth welfare office brings an example of how closely the two aspects of the third level of the targets pyramid – communication and trust – are related with the protection of victims: In one case of domestic violence she simply called the police officer from the workgroup and asked them to take the victim away for a hearing. One call was enough and the police officer went there straight away. Another police officer, the one who has not participated in a workgroup since 2001, reports of a completely different experience: Direct, fast communication and support for the victims was not possible because a call was not sufficient, as a formal protocol had to be sent to the youth welfare office. Confidence, good communication and the close cooperation between the youth welfare office and the police in the first example, results in the number of interviews, which are often very stressful for the victims, be minimized.

Secondly a quick solution can be found to keep away the perpetrators. In the second example those affected have to wait until the official channels are dealt with, and even then a common solution is not secured.

Intensive Cooperation (Targets: Level 2)

In the active workgroups it was mentioned a lot that the cooperation between CID and youth welfare office went well and was intense. A police officer gave one example of a case that had recently been completed successfully because of the good exchange of information, and the close cooperation between the police and the youth welfare office. Before the police began with investigations, they asked the youth welfare office whether the suspect was a known there. If this was indeed the case, both facilities arranged and proceeded together. Twin tracking was avoided and the cooperation had "actually turned out to be a great thing".

The information the police officer learned though his specific request from the youth welfare office, was on the opposite side – at the resting workgroup – only heard of by chance: That the police was investigating for a person who also was registered in their files. Thus the youth welfare office nearly allowed a man who was finally convicted for "moral endangerment" to be visited by his illegitimate child during the holidays. The police had not known about the illegitimate child, whereas the youth welfare office did not know that the man was on suspicion of sexual abuse. On the other hand the explanations of the same youth welfare office employee give the impression that the deliberate and regular practice of the youth welfare office is one of not including the police if possible. In a long investigation phase they identify, whether the suspicion on sexual abuse was justified, and a complaint only gets filed if the youth welfare office can be as sure as possible for it to come to a conviction. The CID, as an investigative authority, are left out, which is criticized by the police officer: In this lost investigation time, in which the participants usually get counselling and (psychological) service, valuable evidence could be irretrievably lost, and perpetrators and witnesses could be affected.

With criminal justice not being involved in the workgroups without exception, the interviewed representatives of the youth welfare office do not get into direct contact with them in the course of the case work. In two workgroups, however, the possibility of indirect contact was made through third parties: The crises centres for children and youth as well as the so called Child Welfare Judge. Through this detour it could then be found out, for example, if the evidence against a suspect was estimated to be enough for a conviction by the lawyers or not.

Competent and Rapid Execution (Targets: Level 1)

Whether the workgroup actually makes processes easier was hard to judge. A police officer said he did not know "how concrete numbers should be measured (...)", but emotionally his answer was a yes, thus finalising this initial section as to the results of the workgroups: Subjectively, the respondents of the active workgroups all were under the impression that all the target levels are reached. From level 4 to level 2, from the tasks of the workgroup up to the intensified cooperation they can judge from their own experiences, though the achievement of the ultimate target is more difficult to estimate.

Raising Awareness and prevention (Targets: Level 1)

Awareness of the sexual abuse of children has increased thanks to the workgroups, said a representative of the youth welfare office and another of the CID. In the institutions that might come into contact with abuse victims, people no longer have the opinion, "this cannot happen to us anyway". The same applies to people who rather seldom come into contact with the topic, like kindergarten and school teachers.

The workgroups contribute to the participants in their facilities as well, especially in the police: Two police officers said that their colleagues in the district now inquired through them when contact to another needed to be made. One of the two also sometimes delivers short presentations on the topics that have been discussed in the workgroup in the context of police training. Indeed, it took a while for the information to disseminated that the workgroup existed and for them to be accepted as experts. Also, for the institutions to understand that the best approach was to cooperate, but it now worked well said the officers in agreement. They also pointed out that the police had changed in the past five to ten years and thus the cooperation with other institutions had become easier.

Another development related to the establishment of workgroups, and that has probably improved the care of individuals and improved the cooperation of the facilities, is the expansion of support and advice infrastructure in rather sparsely populated areas. Facilities that had no offices in the small districts 15 years ago were now represented, said a young youth welfare office worker, and the intervals between the consultation hours of those who did work there earlier had nowadays already become smaller. The need for it had become visible through the work of the workgroups.

V. Combination of the country-specific Results[1]

1 Translated by *Katharina Kossatz.*

Following the evaluation of the interviews, the three country groups of the project team brought the results from Germany, Switzerland and Austria together and recorded in which specific forms the institutionalized cooperation between public children and youth service and criminal justice or criminal investigation department (CID) in sex offences against children take place. These existing forms of cooperation are hereinafter referred to as "actual model" to distinguish them from the "ideal type" model which is presented in chapter V.3. Based on the data from the questionnaire study, the document analysis and the qualitative interviews, five different actual models could be identified.

In a next step, a feedback to practical experience was carried out, while at the same time the final phase of the project was prepared: In a workshop with experts from public children and youth service, victim support organisations, science, criminal justice and CID, the actual models and some other topics that turned out to be contradictory in the interviews or problematic (e. g. principle of legality) were discussed; the results of the workshop (see chap. V.2) were then taken into consideration when developing the "ideal type" model.

1. Existing Forms of Cooperation: the Actual Models

The five workgroup models that have been identified can be distinguished by the following criteria:

- As regards content – depending on whether there are current (anonymised) cases;
- structurally – depending on whether the tasks are always done together, or whether some tasks are passed on to sub-groups;
- regularity of participation of representatives of criminal justice or CID – depending on whether they always take part or only sporadically, for example on invitation when special topics are discussed.

The majority of the surveyed workgroups not only deal with sexual violence against children, but also with other forms of violence against children, sometimes also against women.[2] Except for the anonymised case work, contents and tasks correspond to a large extent, though different priorities can be made out.

2 In Germany, six of the eleven surveyed workgroups deal exclusively with sexual violence against children, in Switzerland and Austria none do this.

That the case work moves to the fore compared to other (for many workgroups paramount) contents in building the actual models, is on the one hand due to the fact that its significance varies considerably in the surveyed work groups, on the other hand also because it is often closely related with the participation of criminal justice and CID and therefore particularly close to the central question of the research project. In Germany and Austria, the representatives of criminal justice and CID come into an insurmountable conflict of interest with the principle of legality[3] when they participate in the case work, even if it is anonymised (see chap. IV.1.1.2, chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.3.1.3, chap. IV.3.3.5). In Switzerland, however, the anonymised case work in the workgroups has been institutionalised, and the participating representatives of criminal justice and CID do not only have the official order to attend the meetings, they have – even if the criminal coercion is perceived as a problem and is discussed – generally found a way to deal with the problem of "criminal coercion" (see chap. IV.2).

When referring to case work here, both the discussions and the counselling of current cases are meant. The case discussion (the common term in Germany and Austria) and the case counselling (the usual term in Switzerland) have in common that exclusively or at least primarily experts participate in them who do not work on the case themselves. The two forms differ mainly in how much counselling stands in the focus. The workgroups examined here do not provide the right framework for case conferences or care planning of the institutions involved, according to concurrent statements of the interviewees (see chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.3.5, chap. IV.3.3.5). However, what can be found regularly in Germany and Austria are informal, small "helper conferences" around the meetings of the workgroups: Before and after the meeting and during the break, people who work together on a case use the opportunity to discuss and talk.

The workgroups for actual model 1 (Fig. V.1.1) do not have counselling or discussions on current cases, all contents of the members are shared, all the tasks completed together. Criminal justice and/or CID are part of the fixed group of participants. These workgroups are intended as prevention and structural development panels in which standards should be developed to make sure and improve the cooperation in the specific case work. Workgroups for actual model 1 are found in Germany and Austria.

3 On the principle of legality see chapter II.2 and IV.1.1.2, IV.2.3.5 and IV.3.1.2.

Workgroups for actual model 2a (Fig. V.1.2) work the same as those for actual model 1, with the one difference that anonymised case reports are not only added as content, but that these usually form the or at least one focus of activity.[4] In the clear majority of the workgroups that focus on case counselling, the cases usually come from outside, from so-called external case reporters: for example from teachers, Kindergarten pedagogues, neighbours or friends of the victims, but also from the participating institutions, but then not from the person representing the relevant institution in the workgroup. In Switzerland, the external case reporters are always experts (such as teachers). Although they present the case to the workgroup they do not actively participate in the discussions; so do workgroup members when their own cases are dealt with (see chap. IV.2). In Germany, the opposite is true: the external case reporters usually present the cases to a workgroup member who then presents them in the workgroup and participates in the subsequent case discussion. The case reporters are sometimes also present in the group. Workgroups for actual model 2 can be found mainly in Switzerland, and much less in Germany.

The workgroups for actual model 2b (Fig. V.1.3), work on the same tasks as those in actual model 2a. Therefore, also case discussions and counselling are carried out, but these – and from all activities just these – without the participation of family court, criminal justice and (criminal)police. This combination can be planned, then criminal justice and (criminal)police are not invited to certain meetings – Germany this applies to all meetings with case work, in Switzerland only to those in which the workgroup management assumes that the cases discussed are *not*[5] relevant for criminal law. Alternatively this combination is incidental, without this being addressed explicitly, because criminal justice and (criminal) police participate anyway only very sporadically in the workgroups. Workgroups for actual model 2b can be found in all three countries.

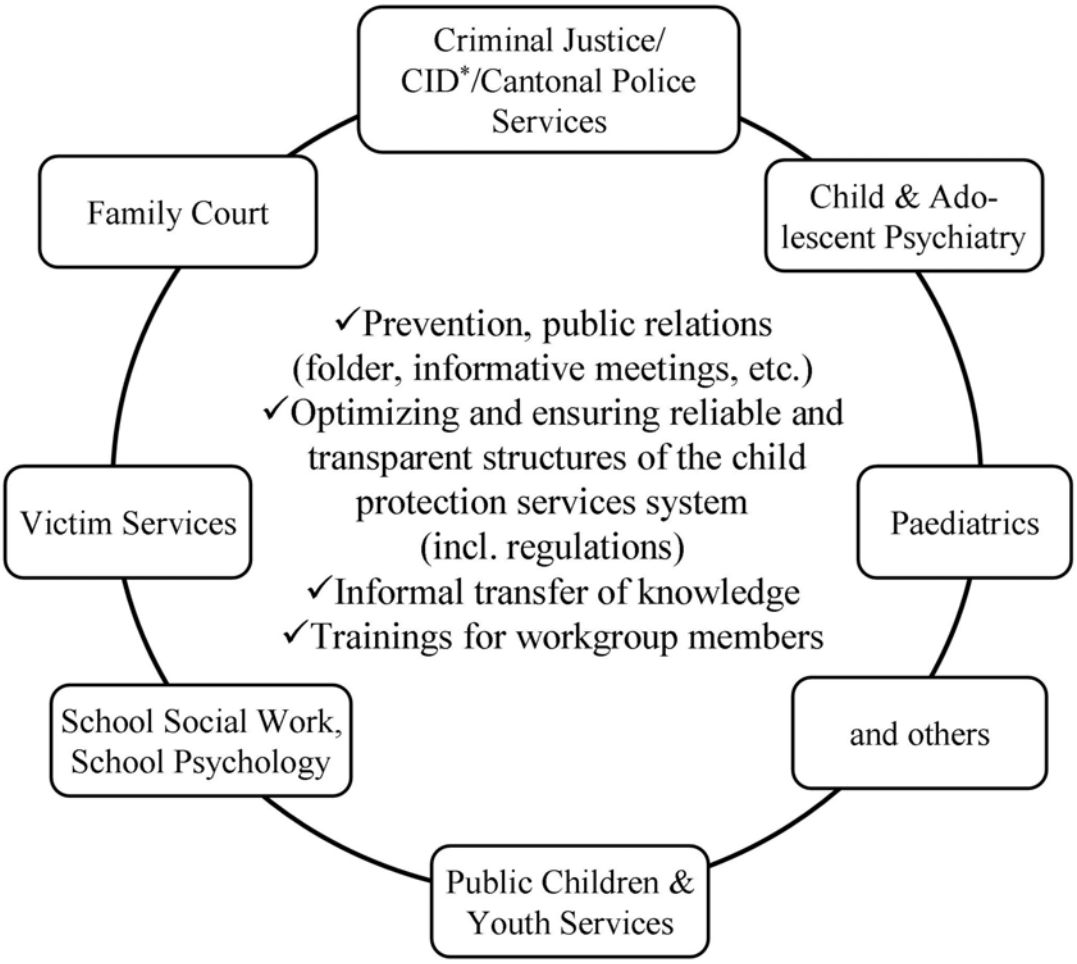
The workgroups for the models 3a and 3b (Fig. V.1.4) differ from the previously described in their organisational structure. They have a division of work that is not provided among the actual models 1, 2a and 2b. In workgroups for the actual models 3a and 3b smaller sub-groups are formed and get tasks assigned. In some workgroups, all tasks are assigned to subgroups, in others only a few. The sub-groups usually meet more often than the large group and work on results that are presented in the panel and adapted if necessary. If more than one subgroup works on something – such as a guide – the individual results are merged together in the panel. In actual model 3a anonymised case work is omitted, the

4 In a very few cases in Germany the exact opposite is true: Case discussions are the exception, these are usually cases that are worked on by the participants themselves and brought to the work group.

5 On the different approaches to the principle of legality in the three countries, see above.

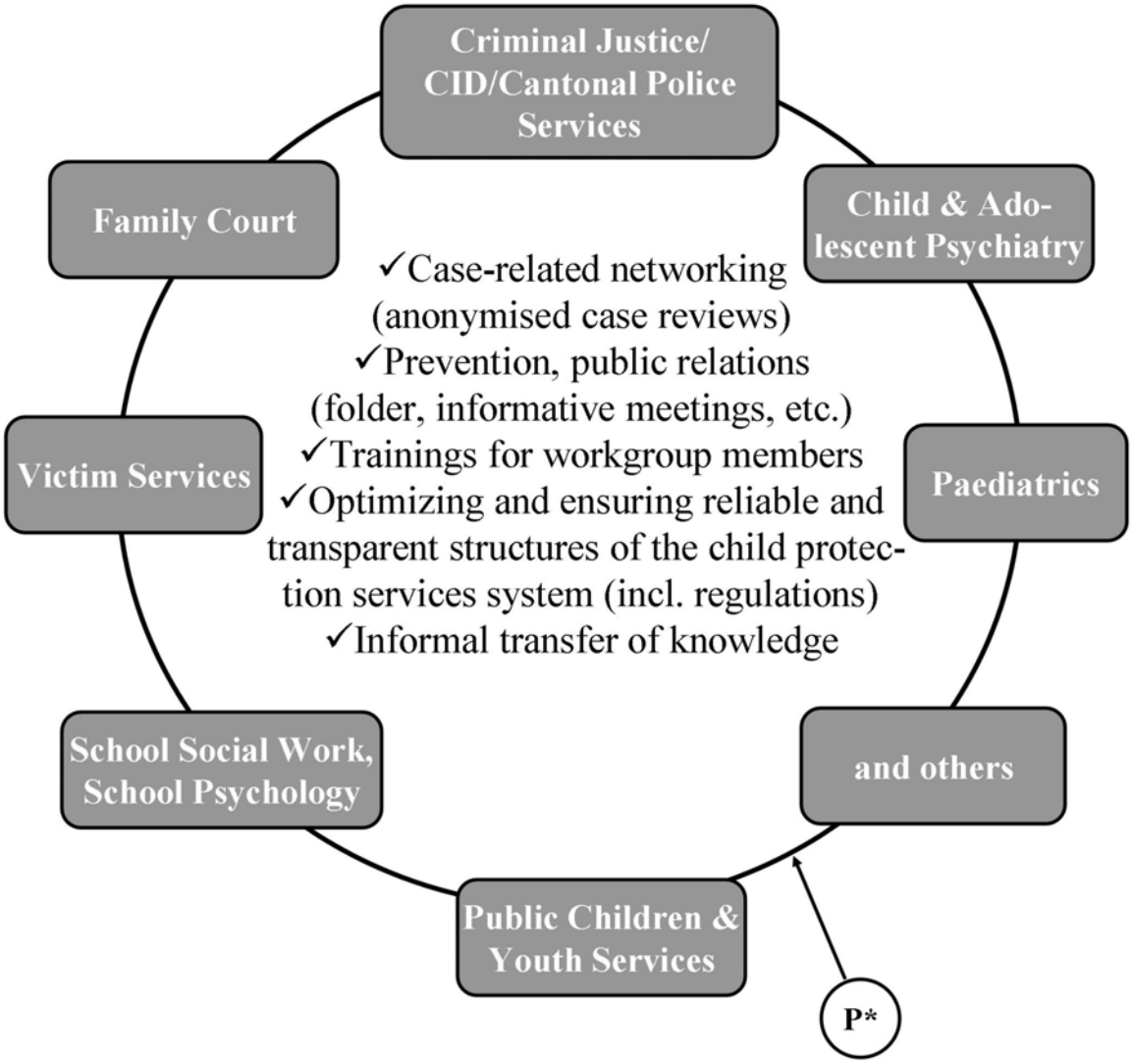
sub-groups only work thematically. In actual model 3b, case work is sourced out to a specialised sub group, in which neither criminal justice nor (criminal) police participate (since the two forms of actual model 3 do not differ in the graphical representation they are summarised in figure V.1.4). Workgroups for the actual models 3a and 3b can be found exclusively in Germany.

Fig. V.1.1: Actual model 1: "Prevention and development of structures"



* CID = Criminal Investigation Department

Fig. V.1.2: Actual model 2a: "Anonymised case work with constant participation of criminal justice and/or CID/cantonal police services"

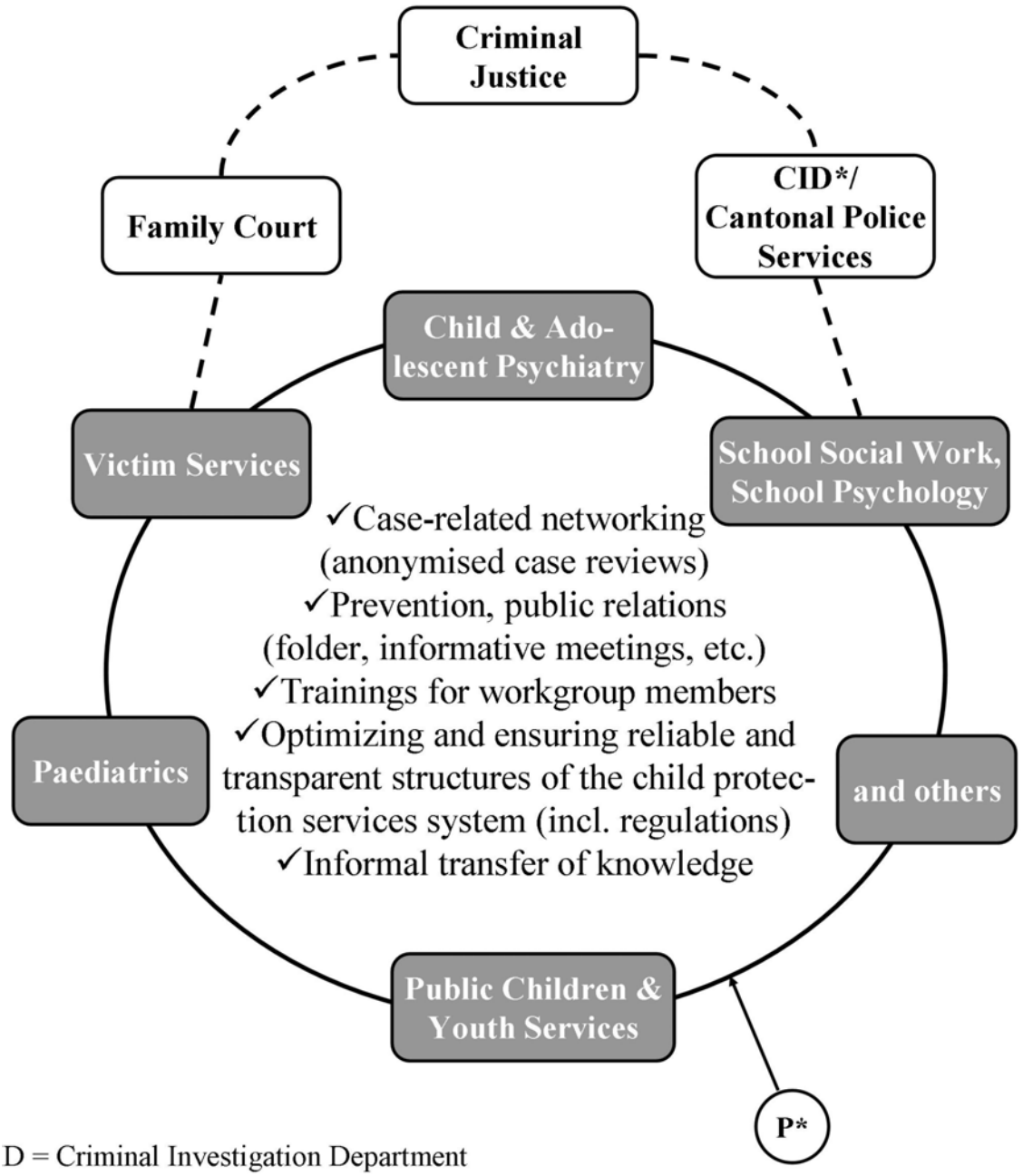


CID = Criminal Investigation Department

P* = Professional reporting the case (not a team member)

Participation in case reviews

Fig. V.1.3: Actual model 2b: "Anonymised case work without participation of criminal justice and/or CID/cantonal police services"

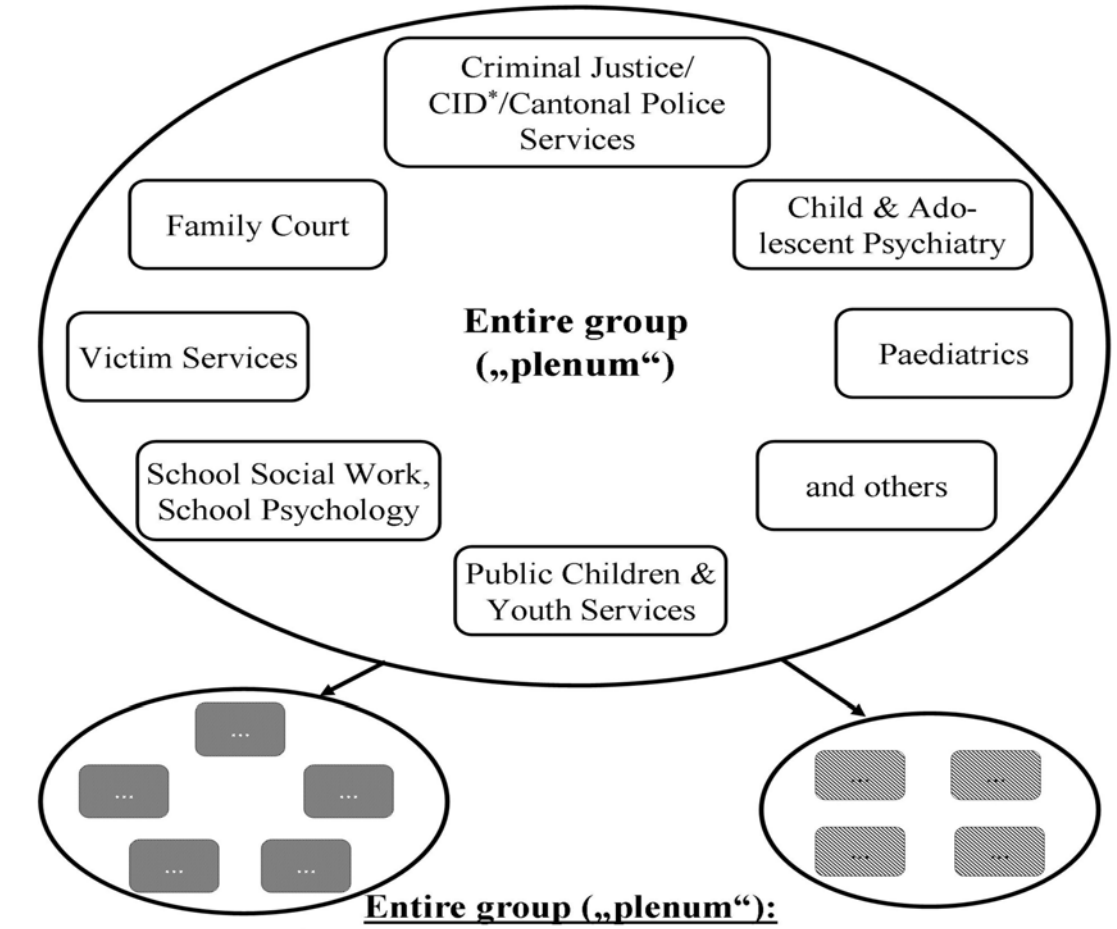


D = Criminal Investigation Department

= Professional reporting the case (not a team member)

Participation in case reviews

Fig. V.1.4: Actual model 3a & 3b: "Entire group and topic-related subgroups"



Entire group („plenum"):
✓ Optimizing and ensuring reliable and transparent structures of the child protection services system (incl. regulations)
✓ Informal transfer of knowledge

Topic-related subgroups:
(group composition depending on topic)
✓ possibly case-related personell networking
✓ Prevention, public relations (folder, informative meetings, etc.)
✓ …

* CID = Criminal Investigation Department

These actual models are based on workgroups that operate at regional – in Switzerland also on cantonal – level. The participants in Austria always, in Switzerland at times but not consistently, work with each other in the everyday case work as well. In some German-speaking Swiss cantons and some Austrian

federal states there are also umbrella organisations that determine the basic policy of the regional workgroups. In Switzerland these are the child protection committees, in Austria the state workgroups. For example, the child protection committee of the Canton of Bern is "responsible for the strategic direction of child protection, takes over a link function between the involved departments, agencies and experts and advocates for educational and advanced training" (*Keller* 2007, 28). The child protection committees are generally responsible for a workgroup. Not all cantons with active workgroups have also a child protection commission. The latter is also true for Austria: The co-existence of state and district working groups is not mandatory. If this is the case, however, the state workgroups are responsible for several district workgroups of the actual models 1, 2a and 2b, by taking over prevention work and public relations, offering advanced trainings or serving as national information platforms.

2. Expert Workshop

The workshop with experts from public children and youth service, CID, victim services, criminal justice and science was held on 21 and 22 June 2010 in the premises of the Kriminologische Zentralstelle in Wiesbaden; the KrimZ also assumed the role of the host. The presentation was made by *Beate Hinrichs*.

Seven experts from Germany, two from Switzerland and one from Austria were invited. One Swiss expert had to cancel her participation on short notice. In addition to the nine guests the five-member project team was present. The following participated:

Annette Frenzke-Kulbach
Märkischer Kreis, Fachbereich Jugend und Bildung, Fachdienst Soziale Dienste

Dagmar Freudenberg
Staatsanwaltschaft Göttingen und Landespräventionsrat Niedersachsen

Ilona Friedrich
Werra-Meißner-Kreis, Fachbereich Jugend und Familie, Senioren und Soziales

Céline Nanzer Bernhardt
Universitäts-Kinderklinik Bern, Kinderschutzgruppe

Ute Nöthen-Schürmann
Polizeipräsidium Krefeld, Kriminalkommissariat Vorbeugung

Gudrun Rebell
Landgericht Krefeld, Große Strafkammer

Birgit Schlathölter
Jugendamt der Stadt Gießen

Barbara Seidenstücker
Hochschule Regensburg

Sonja Wohlatz
Beratungsstelle TAMAR, Wien

At the workshop, the practitioners were given a lot of space to present their perspectives and to develop them further in discussions. In the first part of the workshop, the project team held a largely accommodating role. It just brought in some topics for the participants through the moderator and the discussion assignments that had emerged in the interviews as contradictory or problematic. During the second part of the workshop it then intervened to explain the situation in Switzerland since it missed out in the discussion due to the large number of German participants.

The workshop confirmed on the one hand the results of the analysis of the questionnaires, written materials and interviews. Thus few aspects of interdisciplinary cooperation in cases of child sexual abuse were raised that had not occurred in the interviews. However, particularly those aspects that carry a high risk of failure and/or potential for conflict dominated the discussions and, through the direct clash of different perspectives, once again gained more acrimony and complexity. On the other hand, the experts developed their "ideal type" models for a workgroup. This represented an input for the development of the "ideal type" model, which can be read in chapter V.3.

Among the many topics that came up, two were especially discussed intensively or were often raised: first of all, the importance of (time) resources for the participation in a workgroup. In that context, the experts pointed out the need to include networking activities in the respective job descriptions, to automatically provide working time for them. This increasingly plays a role given the trend towards more restrictive service account systems (for example, in Germany in the justice). Even a more prominent role played the question about whether and in what form (anonymised) case work should and could take place in the workgroups when the criminal justice and/or the CID are present. The (apparent) contradiction between the principle of legality of law enforcement and the fact that the surveyed Swiss child protection groups (in which case work involving criminal justice and/or [criminal]police is the general rule) represent a very good form of cooperation, gave the experts much to talk about. This led to some suggestions, but the contradiction could not really be solved.

3. Basic Model of Interdisciplinary Cooperation in Cases of (Sexual) Violence against Children

The central target of this study was to develop an "ideal type" model of co-operation between public children and youth service and criminal justice and/or police in suspected cases of sexual violence against children, that takes into account the experiences and conditions of the three project countries (see chap. II). Given that there are different legal and structural characteristics not only between but also within the three project countries, such an ideal type model is difficult to implement. Therefore, the recommended model should be seen as a "basis", which in detail can be adjusted to the respective conditions. It is based on the experiences made in the surveyed workgroups, the results of the workshop (see chap. V.2) and the empirical findings from other relevant research. The thematic focus on suspected cases of sexual child abuse does not always appear reasonable against the background of the results presented (see chap. IV.1.3.1, chap. IV.2.2.1, chap. IV.3.3.2). The recommended model can serve rather as a starting point for the foundation and evaluation of interdisciplinary workgroups on suspected cases of violence in all forms against children (physical, psychological and sexual violence). The basic model includes five aspects altogether that will be discussed in detail below: 1. Stages of cooperation, 2. Structure and organisation of the workgroup, 3. Composition of the workgroup, 4. Targets and tasks of the workgroup, 5. Target groups and radius of effect of the workgroups.

3.1 Stages of Cooperation

In relation to the temporal dimension of cooperation in the form of a workgroup three "course stages" can be distinguished: the preparatory stage, the constitution and planning stage and the actual realisation stage (see also *Böhm, Janßen & Legewie* 1999).

The focus of the **preparatory stage** are the concretisation of the target of the workgroup and the implementation of an analysis of needs and requirements for interdisciplinary cooperation. Particularly in countries like Germany and Switzerland, where there is already a large number of such workgroups, one should first verify that the establishment of another working group is necessary and politically welcomed. It should also be considered what institutions, authorities and experts should be represented in this workgroup, and whether such cooperation would be supported by them. The results presented have

shown that the different tasks and targets and the various professional self-conceptions of representatives of public children and youth service on the one hand and the criminal justice and police on the other hand can cause problems (see chap. IV.1.3.2, chap. IV.2.2.5, chap. IV.3.3.3). Should criminal justice and/or police be involved in the workgroup, it makes sense that representatives of the public children and youth service and criminal justice and/or police jointly take over the preparatory work.

Following the preparation phase, a first **constituent meeting** can be called. At this, all potential cooperation partners should be invited, especially those where resistance is also expected. The decision to cooperate should be made on a broad basis of information. For this reason, this first meeting should not be exclusively used to develop an organisational structure for the joint work, but also for a round of introductions. In the course of proceedings initiated by this first **constituent stage**, the face to face meeting should stand in the foreground: What are the tasks, targets and methods of the others? In which (legal) framework do they move? What expectations and concerns do the participants have concerning the cooperation? Finally, a shared view on problems and common purposes should be developed. The presented results underline the relevance of the constituent stages (see chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.2.4, chap. IV.3.3.5), whose importance is also confirmed by results of the social psychological small-group research (*Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007, 464ff.).

The conclusion of this stage should be a binding promise to cooperation, preferably in the form of a written cooperation agreement (*Böhm, Janßen & Legewie* 1999). In the **realisation stage**, the real work of the group finally begins.

For quality assurance, it is important that the cooperation will be evaluated at regular intervals (chap. IV.2.2.2). This can lead either to a confirmation of the targets and tasks as well as the organisational structure and composition of the workgroup, or to the conclusion that they need to be revised. In these cases, the stages mentioned are passed through at least in part on a regular basis. Furthermore, the evaluation of the cooperation can lead to the conclusion that the targets set at the time of the founding of the workgroup are achieved and that there is no longer a need for further cooperation in this form. This in turn can be the starting point for the preparation of a new workgroup.

3.2 Structure and Organisation of the Workgroup

The statements of the respondents to the questionnaire and the interview study in the three project countries underline the relevance of structural and organisational conditions. So the statements of the Swiss respondents show that an official

mandate not only forms an important basis for the substantive work of the workgroup, but is also perceived by the participants as an outward recognition of the work and a possibility of legitimated cooperation (chap. IV.2.2.2). However, the participants of the workgroup should be given the opportunity to participate in the precise configuration of the cooperation so that they do not feel restricted in their freedom of decision (chap. IV.1.3.3) and that valuable know-how can be considered, for example in connection with a possible restructuring or revision of the concept of the workgroup (see *Krüger & Niehaus* 2010). Also, a cooperation agreement and a legal foundation in this sense highlights the idea of interdisciplinary cooperation, without providing the organisation of the cooperation in detail.

Last but not least, an advantage of an official contract of cooperation can be the recognition of the work by the employer. Particularly the inclusion of the participation in the workgroup into the job description and a consideration of the same when planning the workloads would lead, according to the respondents, to some relief (chap. IV.2.2.2, chap. V.2).

Especially in terms of a cooperation of public children and youth service and criminal justice resp. police, presented results show, that a clear and satisfactory handling with the legal requirements of the participants has to be found (principle of legality, confidentiality etc.). This is especially true when anonymised current cases are to be discussed in the workgroup (chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.2.6, chap. IV.3.3.5). Case discussions in particular require a high degree of trust between the members of a workgroup (chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.2.4). This trust has to develop first. Essential for this is getting to know the ways of working and the workloads of the others as well as the boundaries of the respective field of work (see also *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004, *Ziegenhain et al.* 2010, chap. II). A low staff turnover and regular participation of the members in the workgroup meetings are also considered favourable. Frequent changes in the composition of the workgroup may interfere with the cooperation, not at least because each new member needs time to become familiar with the ways of the group (chap. IV.2.2.2, chap. IV.3.3, see also *Schulz-Hardt* 2007). Also *Frenzke-Kulbach* (2007) calls for a mandatory membership in the workgroup; she argues that only participants, who were regularly present, could successfully perform their function as multipliers in their special field.

In order to avoid role confusion and conflicts, the roles and functions of the participants should be established. This on the one hand concerns the leadership of the workgroup and the moderation of the meetings, as well as the separation between case reporter and consultants when carrying out anonymised case discussions (chap. IV.1.3.3, chap. IV.2.2.6, chap. IV.3.3.4). People who take over leadership and/or moderation, should not only be adequately qualified, but should also have experience in leading groups and meetings (see also

Frenzke-Kulbach 2004, 2007). Thus, the results of the interview studies in the three project countries point out that poor session management leads to dissatisfaction among the participants (chap. IV.1.3.3, chap. IV.2.2.2, chap. IV.3.3.2). In this regard, the leadership has to meet high demands, particularly in the stage of synchronising the group: An effective group leadership organises the exchange of information, in that the group remains focused on the particular problem or decision, communication is relieved, crucial input (especially unique information, that is, information that only one member has) is encouraged and remembered during the discussion. Through active information management, asymmetries in the discussion and evaluation of information can be counteracted (*Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007, 481). A fixed session schedule can also help to keep work target-oriented (see chap. IV.2.2.3, chap. IV.3.3.2, chap. IV.3.3.5). In addition, the use of standardised instruments, e. g. for risk assessment, can be used to structure the session. The keeping of session minutes is generally recommended and is also considered reasonable by the respondents (chap. IV.2.2.2, chap. IV.3.3.4).

In relation to the temporal organisation of the meetings it can be said that, against the background of the results presented, the workgroups should meet regularly to ensure the continuity of the joint work. The frequency of the meetings should thereby be matched to the respective necessity; the same goes for the duration of the meetings, which should be determined beforehand in any case (chap. IV.2.2.2). Both provisions increase the predictability of the members. Furthermore, should recent cases also be discussed in the workgroup, the possibility for exceptional meetings should be provided for (chap. IV.2.2.2). This could also avoid that case discussions are upgraded in relation to the other tasks of the workgroups and thus considered to be the actual core task.

Other important and well-known conditions for the success of interdisciplinary cooperation relate to **measures for group formation and quality assurance**. Regarding the former, in the present study especially the “creation of a common basis and language” and the “clarification of expectations and intentions” of the participants turned out to be essential for successful cooperation between the public children and youth service and criminal justice, resp. police. Only if the targets, methods and limits of the work of others are known and respected, one can understand and accept the different approaches and acknowledge and use the diversity as a key surplus of interdisciplinarity (chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.2.3, chap. IV.2.2.4, chap. IV.3.3.5). Also, quality assurance measures such as the elaboration of common standards (e. g. for dealing with circumstances of suspicion or the course of case discussions) and the joint visit of advanced trainings can concurrently promote the identification with the

group. Especially the results of the Swiss study demonstrate moreover the benefits of standardised instruments (guidelines, tools for risk assessment) – not only for quality assurance but also to create common ground and possibilities for orientation in the collaboration (chap. IV.2.2.2).

In terms of **person-related conditions** of active interdisciplinary cooperation, against the background of the present results, the necessity of mutual acceptance and respect and mutual confidence can be especially highlighted, in particular for the realisation of anonymous case discussions (chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.2.2, chap. 2.2.4, chap. IV.3.3.5). The statements of the respondents in Switzerland support, moreover, the findings of *Frenzke-Kulbach* (2004) – that the cooperation of representatives of "traditional" professions and so-called semi-professions could especially lead to tensions and feelings of inferiority on the part of the latter, for example, if the impression occurs that the representatives of the criminal justice would always know the right solution (see chap. IV.2.2.2). More potential for conflict entails the transgression of own disciplinary boundaries (chap. IV.2.2.4). Against this background it is not surprising that, according to the opinion of respondents from all three project countries, one characteristic of successful cooperation is respect for the specific fields of the others (chap. IV.2.2.4, chap. IV.3.3.5), and no opinion counts as more important or less important than that of any other member – but without this the group becoming a group of "yea-sayers" (chap. IV.2.2.4). Furthermore, it is essential that the work of the workgroup is of benefit to the participants (see also *Frenzke Kulbach* 2004, 2007).

To achieve the targets set, and against the background of the generally high workload of the participants, a solution-oriented approach is essential. Hereby especially, it can be avoided that meetings get out of hand (chap. IV.2.2.6, chap. IV.3.3.2). In the end, all members of the workgroup have to be willing to take responsibility for the success of the cooperation. They have to be prepared for the meetings, for example by collecting relevant information from their field for the other members and read further materials to be prepared for the discussions (protocols, case reports, information or the like) (chap. IV.2.2.2).

When in the examined workgroups current suspected cases of (sexual) violence against children are discussed, it is based on the assumption that the collective problem solving is superior in quality to the individual one, since the case is examined from different disciplinary perspectives (chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.2.2, chap. IV.3.3.3). However, as shown in Chapter II, in both the individual and the collective decision-making, "tendencies of self-affirmation" are possibly also in effect (including the so-called confirmatory hypothesis testing). For the decision-making in groups, further psychological mechanisms such as group polarisation and groupthink may also be added (see chap. II). The aspects

mentioned above for the success of interdisciplinary cooperation are thus necessary, but not sufficient conditions for increasing the quality of the joint work. For **well-considered decisions in groups**, further requirements must be applied. According to social and judicial-psychological studies, these requirements include (*Bierhoff* 2006; *Schulz-Hardt & Köhnken* 2000): a positive group atmosphere, individual responsibility rather than diffusion of responsibility, social skills of the members (to confirm others, takeover of perspectives, conflict as an incentive to solve problems) and sufficient time for discussion (*Bierhoff* 2006, 501). Conditions that promote well-considered group decisions are: a leadership that is unbiased concerning assessment of the case, critical abilities of the group members and the willingness to question the opinion of the majority (*Bierhoff* 2006, 501). Interestingly, the respondents view the better part of these terms and conditions as characteristics of a successful interdisciplinary collaboration. Thus, according to the Swiss respondents, the cooperation would function among others, when everybody can express his or her opinion, if the opinions of others are allowed to be questioned, all members are active participants, and everybody supports, respects, trusts and regards each other with favour (chap. IV.2.2.4).

Furthermore, if each member takes responsibility for the collectively made decisions, and if the groups have sufficient time for decision-making and an unbiased leader concerning the estimation of the case, the substantive requirements are fulfilled that in the case of consulting several alternative hypotheses are tested, with the knowledge of all members and all available information taken into account (e. g. *Munro* 1999).

3.3 Composition of the Workgroup

One Swiss respondent calls interdisciplinarity the “Alpha and Omega in child protection” (Interview 9, line 731-733), a view that among others *Fegert* (2008), the *Institut für Soziale Arbeit e. V.* and *Ziegenhain et al.* (2010) share with her. In the examined workgroups, in addition to representatives of public children and youth service and criminal justice resp. police, also are mainly those of health care (usually paediatrics, psychiatry, general medicine), school psychology, as well as victim services among the members. In Germany, representatives of the family or criminal courts rarely take part (chap. IV.1.3.2), which also applies to German-speaking Switzerland, where, unlike Germany there are no

family courts, but where the guardianship authorities[6] are responsible for ordering measures in child protection cases (*Voll, Jud, Mey, Häfeli & Stettler* 2008, 18). In Austria, CID are among the members of the workgroups, but no representatives of criminal justice (chap. IV.3.3.1). The chosen composition seems to prove itself from the view of the respondents, and covers the essential participating institutions, agencies and disciplines in all these cases. Participation by other institutions or experts, however, is possible and, depending on content and function, useful for the workgroup. It is essential that the participants are themselves interested in the subject and the tasks of the workgroup and are not obliged by their employer because no one else could be found.

Problems may arise with increasing group size, which is shown both by the results presented (chap. IV.1.3.2, chap. IV.2.2.2) and social psychological studies (e. g. *Kerr* 1983). Thus, in large groups it may come to "motivation losses" such as the so-called social loafing, in which some group members exert themselves less due to the low identifiability of individual parts with the group achievements. The "copycat effect", however, results from "a subjectively perceived higher dispensability of individual contributions in the group context" (*Schulz-Hardt et al.* 2002, 32). When group members anticipate at least one of these two profession effects with other group members, they in turn also decrease their efforts to avoid being exploited ("Gimpel" resp. "Sucker Effect") (*Schulz-Hardt et al.* 2002, 32). This withdrawal of individual participants leads, according to the findings of this study, not only to dissatisfaction on the part of the active members (chap. IV.1.3.2), but also on the part of the passive members themselves (chap. IV.2.2.2), whereas restraint and dissatisfaction may also be motivated differently. Thus, the interviews with Swiss prosecutors show that it can lead to dissatisfaction, if one has the feeling that he or she can make no useful contribution to the joint work (chap. IV.2.2.2).

Other disadvantages of large groups exist in the tendency to form informal sub-groups ("formation of grouplets") (chap. IV.1.3.2) and in "coordination losses" (*Fischer & Wiswede* 2002), for example in commonly checking suitable dates; in these cases the cooperation is perceived as "sluggish" (chap. IV.2.2.2). In addition, with increasing number of participants the familiarity of the individual members decreases, which in turn can lead to a decrease of trust between each other (chap. IV.1.3.2). However, mutual trust is a prerequisite for the success of interdisciplinary cooperation.

6 "Concerning child care, the guardianship authority has the mandate to develop perspectives and solutions in individual cases to change or to stabilize important parts about the given situation in favor of the vulnerable child, by means of perfectly matched measures, using available resources decisively" (*Wider* 2008, 217).

The identified problems can be counteracted in that divisible tasks are processed in small groups whose members are particularly qualified for this specific task. Whether a task requires a handling in a plenary session or in small groups, depends on the type of task. To ensure participation of the representatives of all professions as well as the necessary transfer of knowledge, the return of the results of the small group work to the plenary must be ensured. An allocation of tasks to subgroups is practised primarily in the German workgroups; here sub-groups take over, among other things, the organisation of events or the development of flyers and concepts (chap. IV.1.3.3). The anonymised case discussions should also be conducted in smaller (sub-)groups. Interdisciplinary case discussions are similar to so-called hidden-profile tasks, where decision-relevant information is distributed among the group members in a way that no individual member of the group is able to find the best possible solution due to his or her own information and knowledge. A suitable solution can be found simply by combining the special knowledge of the group members (*Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007, 459). Hence the necessity of interdisciplinarity for the processing of child protection cases. In the small group research, for problem solving and decision-making a group size of five people turned out to be optimal (*Brandstätter & Brodbeck* 2004). However, the arguments on hidden-profile task make clear that the success of a task depends crucially on the selection of appropriate group members.

Accordingly, when selecting participants it should be taken into account that people who in their professional practise are not confronted with such cases or only to a small extent, might be overstrained in case discussions (chap. IV.1.3.2, chap. IV.3.3.3). In order for members of the workgroup to act as multipliers, it must also be ensured that they have the necessary authority, competence and contacts (see also *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004). However, the target is not to combine leaders, but to build a network of people who in their daily work are confronted with such cases (chap. IV.1.3.2). Effective management of the described processes requires at first a determination of the task type on leadership level; then it can be decided on the group composition, which in this type of task can counteract process losses and gain process support (*Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007, 463).

3.4 Targets and Tasks of the Workgroup

The fundamental objective of the interdisciplinary workgroups is to protect children and young people from physical, psychological and sexual violence, as well as neglect, including – in Switzerland and Germany – the protection of child victims in criminal proceedings (to avoid secondary traumatisation and

improve the quality when giving evidence, see *Frenzke-Kulbach* 2004), in Austria, this is covered by the law suit guidance. To achieve this target, workgroups in Germany, Austria and Switzerland at this point in time pursue each or any of the tasks set forth as follows:

Optimising and ensuring reliable and transparent structures and rules of the system of helpers is a task that requires the continued commitment of all members of the workgroup, because not only people who work at important interfaces change, but also new institutions are added and others omitted. First of all, it is essential to identify the weaknesses in the system and to understand how the involved professionals and institutions work. For example, the analysis of completed cases can serve for this – following the model of German workgroups examined here (chap. IV.1.3.4). These cases not only have the advantage that the progress from the emergence of the suspicion to the end can be tracked, at these meetings representatives of criminal justice and police can also participate safely. The discussion of completed cases, however, holds potential for conflict if members of the workgroup are committed to defend their professional colleagues, as happened in one of the Austrian workgroups (chap. IV.3.3.5). This refers to the particular importance of an error culture that allows making errors available for a process improvement.

The **informal transfer of knowledge** is also an ongoing task of the workgroup, which, however, should take place in the whole group to ensure that all members of the group are always on the same level of knowledge; the written minutes can serve to inform the absent members. The "internal exchange of knowledge" fulfils two functions: the transfer of thematically relevant information on current findings or changes in the respective fields (e. g. legislative changes) and getting to know the responsibilities of other members. While it lends itself to schedule time at each meeting for the transfer of current information, the presentation of the different tasks should only be performed when needed, as this may otherwise be seen by "older" group members as a waste of time (chap. IV.1.3.4). Another way to get to know the functioning of the participants is the analysis of completed cases (see above). The mutual introduction and information serves not only to increase the knowledge of the individual, it also helps to improve cooperation, as misunderstandings and mutual recriminations can not only be prevented due to different ways of working and unrealistic expectations of other professions, but also mutual trust can be established (chap. II, chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.3.3, chap. 2.3.4, chap. IV.3.3.5, see also *Ziegenhain et al.* 2010).

The organisation and conceptualisation of **information offers for professionals (meetings, advanced trainings and the like),** who (potentially) are concerned with the subject of (sexual) violence against children (including teachers, doctors, social workers, police officers and lawyers), and of **internal trainings**

(lectures of external speakers, jointly attending advanced trainings, shared reading and discussion of specialist literature etc.) are tasks that are best worked within smaller (sub-)groups in order to avoid the "motivation losses" mentioned, and to ensure a professionally optimal realisation (see above).

For the conceptualisation and realisation of projects that serve to raise public awareness and information on the subject of (sexual) violence against children (**prevention and public relations**) – such as exhibitions, poster campaigns, parent-teacher conferences – the formation of thematic sub-groups also makes sense for the reasons already mentioned. If a subgroup is assigned with this task one has to pay attention that all professions that are relevant for the particular topic are represented, in order to ensure that important information is included. So information is lacking in a guide developed for compulsory school teachers by an Austrian workgroup on when and in which situation the police should be called when taking action in suspected cases of child sexual abuse (chap. IV.3.3.5). What should also be considered is whether one should get advice from an external person with experience in the design and effect of effective public campaigns.[7] When the workgroup is not known to the larger public – as is the case in Germany and Austria – the group, however, should first determine if all members agree, that the workgroup might get more popular by the scheduling of events and campaigns (chap. IV.1.3.4).

When **anonymised case discussions** in the workgroups are conducted on current cases, with the target to pronounce a non-binding recommendation to the leaders of the case, then this is a recurring task. Through these discussions, the case is viewed from the perspective of the represented professions each with their own perception of problems; in this way, case discussions help prevent rash action of inexperienced professionals (e. g. teachers, educators) (chap. IV.2). The benefit to the members of the workgroup is that they can check up on their own view and approach in such cases with the help of the assessments of the other members (chap. IV.2.2.3). It is important that participants receive feedback about the further course of the case. This feedback serves on the one hand to evaluate one's own action ("quality assurance"), on the other hand it can be motivating if the effectiveness of the cooperation is confirmed (chap. IV.2.2.2).

The frequency of such meetings should be made dependent on the caseload. If current cases are to be discussed, the experience of the German-speaking Swiss child protection groups speak for a certain time frame that the members should arrange in reasonable intervals (e. g. every 14 days). When no case is

7 *Vreny Schaller,* director of the Institute "Sozialarbeit und Recht" at the University of Luzern - Social Work, personal communication of 09 September 2010.

reported up to a certain date, the meeting is cancelled, otherwise the participants will receive an invitation, which includes not only the time and place of the meeting, but a brief sketch of the preparation (see chap. IV.2.2).

When the workgroup consists of more than about ten people, it should be considered against the background of the results of the present study whether the cases are discussed in a subgroup (see above). For the composition special attention should be paid to three aspects: participation of law enforcement, experience of participants with cases of (sexual) violence against children (chap. IV.1.3.2, chap. IV.3.3.3, chap. IV.3.3.5) and a solid composition. When the participants come to the conclusion that an investigation should be initiated, the anonymity of the case can hereby be repealed. According to the experience of German-speaking Switzerland, the persons reporting the case should not be members of the workgroup, as in these discussions just the impartial view of the different professions should be used. The case reporter presents the case, though, and is available for questions before the start of the meeting, but, however, should be excluded from the meeting to avoid confirmatory processes of consultation and decision-making. If, however, cases of group members are to be discussed, their function should also be strictly limited to the case presentation.

In order to achieve high quality group decisions, it may be useful to guide the group discussion by using special techniques. Even a simple structuring of the discussion process in stages of collecting information, information evaluation and decision, facilitates the successful management of hidden-profile tasks (*Brodbeck, Mojzisch, Kerschreiter & Schulz-Hardt* 2006, according to *Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007). In addition, the social psychological small group research provides dialectical techniques which can help to improve the quality of group decisions (see *Krüger & Niehaus* 2010).

Especially the anonymised case discussions of recent cases in Germany and the German-speaking Switzerland lead to problems in the cooperation between criminal justice, police and public children and youth service – due to the coercion of criminal prosecution of criminal justice and police (chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.2.6). In Austria, at the time of the survey, these case discussions no longer took place in the workgroups (chap. IV.3.3.5). As already described in the article by *Evelyn Dawid and Birgitt Haller* about the existing forms of cooperation, the coercion of criminal prosecution of investigative and law enforcement authorities in Germany means that, with the exception of two workgroups, such case discussions are basically carried out without the involvement of criminal justice and/or police (chap. V.1). In German-speaking Switzerland, the participating prosecutors, coroners and police officers do have an official order to attend these meetings, but this does not exempt them from coercion of criminal prosecution. Both the interviewed prosecutors and

coroners from Switzerland and the representatives of the German criminal justice have, however – in part together with the group – found a way to deal with this problem (chap. IV.1.3.4, chap. IV.2.2.6). Provided, however, that the participants trust each other and know and respect the particular (legal) requirements (chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.2.4, chap. IV.3.3.5).

The representatives of the public children and youth service also question the anonymisation of the cases, as this would lead to a loss of information (chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.2.6, chap. IV.3.3.5). When not all participants have the same information, a distortion of discussion and evaluation could take effect, that prevents optimal decision making (*Schulz-Hardt & Brodbeck* 2007, 462). In addition, in small towns, districts or provinces it is difficult to ensure the anonymity of persons, as they usually are known (chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.2.6, chap. IV.3.3.5). Overall, a solution should be found that allows the representatives of criminal justice and police to participate in such meetings without concerns; if necessary, this could be reached through a clear-defined exception from the duty of disclosure.

3.5 Target groups and Radius of Effect of the Workgroup

Depending on which tasks and contents the workgroups deal with, their activities are addressed not only directly to different audiences, but it also indirectly has a varied range of effectiveness (see fig. V.3.1). Therefore, the public relations and prevention work is aimed directly at the population, but indirectly it affects the situation of victims as well (for example, through a better understanding of the social environment), the work of professionals in the helper system and thus the daily work of the members (for example, through increased external acceptance of the work). Information services for professionals who work with children and adolescents have an indirect impact on the situation of the persons concerned, in that they benefit from the increased knowledge of the experts. The same is true for the anonymised case discussions: Here, the person leading the case benefits at first directly from the support and the wide range of knowledge of the workgroup members; if this counseling leads to improved case management, the affected children and parents are also among the beneficiaries.

Internal trainings and informal knowledge transfer between members of a workgroup serve first of all primarily the individual knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, if the members of the workgroups know the relevant professionals and the way they work, it leads to “short paths” in their work (chap. IV.1.3.5, chap. IV.2.2.3, chap. IV.3.3.6). Since they are also multipliers who carry the acquired knowledge into their institutions and to their colleagues,

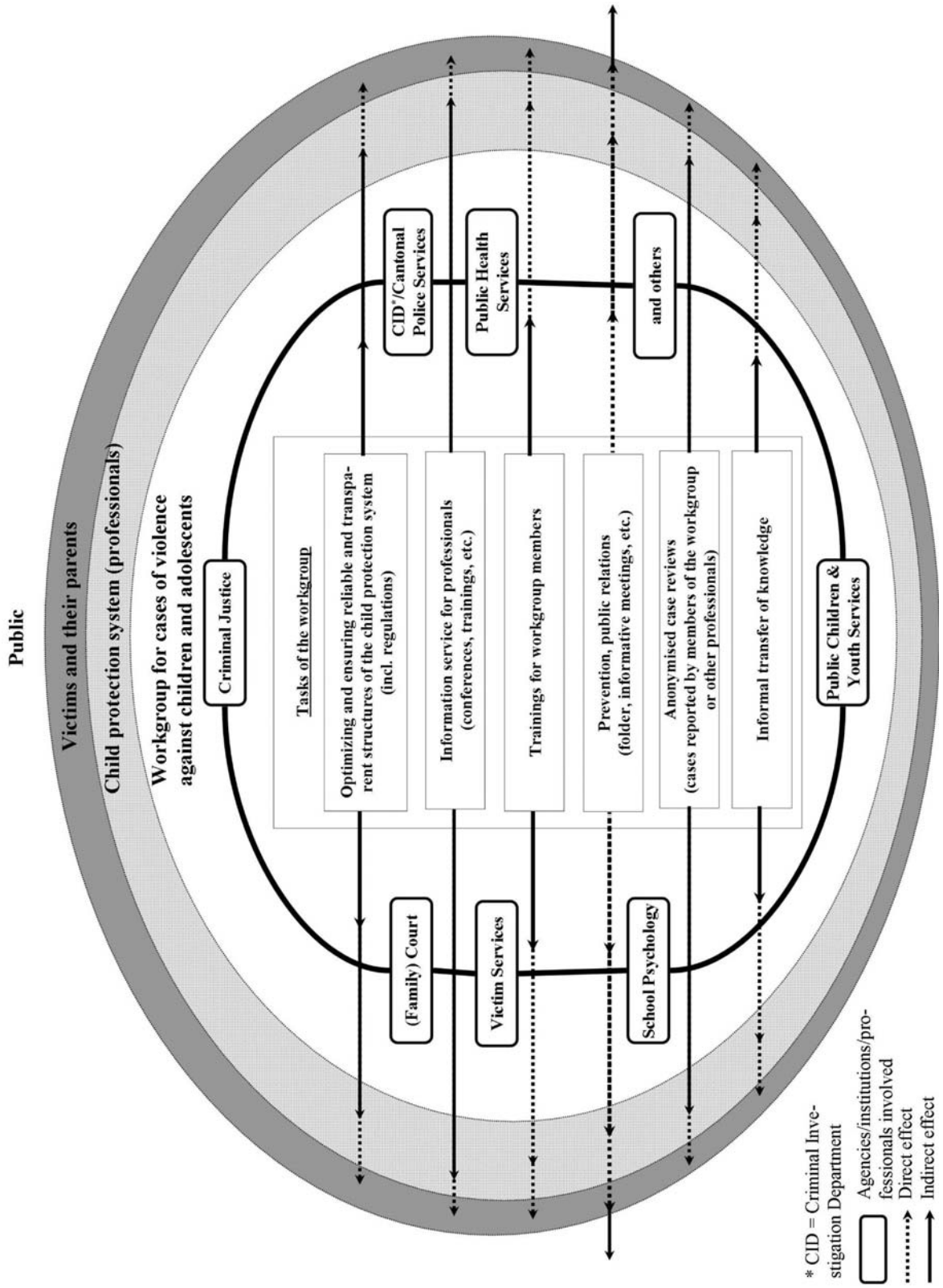
these activities in the workgroup also affect the other professionals in the helper system; the affected children and parents are further beneficiaries of the increased knowledge of the experts.

Long-term targets of the workgroups are, after all, the optimization and ensuring of reliable and transparent structures and rules in the helper system, which may also include increasing the offers in the victim assistance field. Based on an enhanced cooperation of the workgroup with the involved institutions and authorities, the knowledge and experience collected in the work of the workgroups can certainly also improve the cooperation with other similarly organised facilities. Interdisciplinary research groups also have a better chance to make their voices heard in the political area – through a planned expansion of offers in the victim assistance field. From both – improved and transparent structures in the helper system and a wider range – not only all professionals in the helper system, but once again the victims benefit as well.

The following figure V.3.1 summarizes what has been said and takes into account composition, tasks, target groups and radius of operation of the workgroups for interdisciplinary collaboration in suspected cases of (sexual) violence against children. The structural and organisational conditions for the success of interdisciplinary cooperation (chap. V.3.2) form the basis of the joint work – they are not included in the figure, but are quasi an invisible layer behind the workgroup, which, with its members and the tasks, forms the center of the graphic. In addition to the representatives of public children and youth service and criminal justice and/or police, other institutions, agencies and activities whose participation in the examined workgroups has been found to be useful, are also listed as members of the workgroup. Depending on group size and nature of the task, participants can handle tasks together or in subgroups.

Based on the workgroup, the target groups of its work are covered: the helper system with other professionals, concerned children and parents and the public. The radius of operation of the respective tasks of the workgroup is symbolized by pointers, with the solid pointers representing a direct, and the dashed ones an indirect effect of the activities of the workgroup.

Fig. V.3.1: Basic model of interdisciplinary cooperation in cases of (sexual) violence against children



VI. Conclusion and Outlook[1]

How often do interdisciplinary groups consisting of public children and youth services and criminal justice work together over a long duration of time in Germany, German-speaking Switzerland and Austria? How are they organised? How (well) do they work? How should interdisciplinary workgroups ideally look like? These key questions of the project *Cooperation between child care and criminal justice agencies in case of sex offences against children*, the final report wants to gives answers to.

For this survey the current situations in the project countries were both shown in detail (chap. IV.1-3) as well as united over national borders by presenting current "models" (chap. V.1). The basic model, developed at the end, can be seen as a summary of the results that came out of the project (chap. V.3). It is supposed to explicitly focus and help when building up a workgroup with interdisciplinary alliances when dealing with violence against children. The model was created based on the inputs the practitioners have supplied, has been developed with scientific instruments – and turns again, especially to practitioners. This basic model can and should be adapted to local conditions and existing structures, in which workgroups are planned or already active. So it is not to be understood as a "recipe", that one should implement in the same way, but leaves room for individual design – how much room there is, is shown by the country reports.

In this base model the already known, confirmed and extended features of a successful interdisciplinary cooperation were combined and the points that can make them fail were also taken into account. Here now will be summarized, in a nutshell, the most important country-specific differences as well as what type of research desiderata derived from the results of the proposed project as a whole.

In Germany more than half the interviewed workgroups only talk about the topic of sexual abuse of children, in Switzerland and Austria all surveyed cooperative alliances also deal with other forms of violence and/or other groups of victims. The results suggest that the *width of the issues* stand in a relationship with the population in the service area: The more residents that fall within the remit of a workgroup, the more that group can focus on sexual offences against children, because then the number of cases is so high that a regular and continuous operation is possible.

1 Translated by *Katharina Kossatz.*

In German-speaking *Switzerland* the "child protection groups" are firmly anchored, institutionalised and established *throughout* the country. In *Germany*, "occupational groups" or "workgroups" are *widely* used in the old federal states and are mainly seen as a good tool to improve the interdisciplinary cooperation. In *Austria*, however, "workgroups" are *exceptions*, in the phase of clarification of a suspicion they hardly resorted to institutionalised forms of cooperation.

While in Germany and Austria the establishment of workgroups usually is founded on the commitment of some members, in German-speaking Switzerland the formation of the "child protection groups" is based on an official order. Their *tasks and contents* arise as a result of the particular job. In Germany and Austria only one topic is given, a generally formulated theme, and the content-related orientation and focus is determined by the participants.

The most important difference between Germany, Austria and Switzerland is in the *role of anonymised case discussions* in the workgroup. In German-speaking Switzerland they are the main topic, while child protection groups in Germany tend to place those behind other tasks and in Austria they play no role at all. Moreover, in Switzerland representatives of *law enforcement authorities are* regularly *involved* in case discussions, in Germany only in exceptional cases.

Regarding the *composition of the participants* in some Swiss groups, sometimes specific requirements are to be fulfilled to participate. In Germany and Austria the decision about the authorities, institutions and professional groups that are represented is solely by up to the members.

In Switzerland the *head* of the child protection groups has a substantive and organisationally key position. In Germany and Austria the tasks performed are mostly shared by all participants. Decisions in all three countries are made by all members together.

In the German-Swiss child protection groups independently active members, such as physicians and doctors, receive an *allowance* for their time in the group. In Germany and Austria they take part in unpaid self-employed generally in their free time.

Overall it can be noted that in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland there are a multitude of interdisciplinary alliances for (sexual) violence against children, in Austria they (still) are an exception. Partly because of the different legal and structural characteristics, not only between but also within the three project countries, the workgroups studied differ both, in terms of the thematic focus as well as in its precise configuration (organisation, composition etc.). What they have in common is that certain conditions must be present so that the various disciplines can be co-managed well, and well-considered decisions

can be taken. The here presented results show which kind of conditions have to be exist for the particular cooperation between public child and youth services, criminal justice and/or CID into suspected cases of (sexual) violence against children. It remains open to what extent this can be transferred to the cooperation of other disciplines in this or in other areas. A comparison with the results of other studies on the cooperation of children and youth services and health institutions in cases of sexual offences against children, however, shows similarities (see chap. II). Since representatives of various disciplines work together in the workgroups, an extension of the question set seems worthwhile to all groups involved.

Furthermore, only some evidence is collected on how one of the main objectives of the workgroups can be met: The improvement of the structures in the helper system. To investigate these, a central desideratum is necessary. This would need an initial capturing of what these structures look like, what they should be like and a way of "measuring" possible improvement.

In terms of the decision-making processes in interdisciplinary groups it is indicated by the results presented that there are mechanisms that can become established, which can actually have negative impacts on the quality of the decision making. A more detailed study of these processes and mechanisms as well as the development and evaluation of structures, that support well-considered decisions of interdisciplinary workgroups, is also pending.

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