

THE CHILD ON THE ASPHALT (CITY CHILD) – THE CHILD AT “RISK”

Abstract. Everybody exists in one’s own world, where a person may feel safe, worth-while, and significant. But what is the child’s position of today, when he very often stays alone in his living environment? In order to reveal the problems of a city/town child, the article tries to answer the question: Why, the term “child in the street” in a city/town is related to risk? In order to answer the problematical question and reveal the problems of a city/town child, the article analyses the following: 1) pictures in the streets made by a child at risk in order to look deeper at the conception of the world that surrounds the child; 2) variety of social programs and projects applied for a child in the aspect of compatibility between the needs of the society and a child; 3) environment of institutions implementing preventive programs. Referring to the experience and models offered by European countries, the article reveals the case of the Lithuanian child at risk.

Keywords: children at risk, street, risk factors, society.

Introduction

Growing migration of people from countryside to town, from town to city, etc., higher career perspectives, salary, striving to forget some things or other reasons stimulate to talk more and more often about the appropriateness of social environment for a person. The prime cause of these deliberations implies increasing numbers of murders, growing scales in consumption of drugs and other psychotropic substances, different ways of self-injury, etc., especially spreading among the urban children (it is rather interesting that more and more often the aforementioned problem is analysed not in the countryside context). Results of the performed investigations demonstrate that the main analysis aspects more and more frequently imply the following: child’s feeling and place in a city/town (McKendrick, 2000), communication networks (Matthews, 1992; Lynch, 1997), influence of urbanisation on child’s mobility (Berns, et al., 2010), recreational place of a child (Hart, 1997; Motore, 2000; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Philo, 2000), etc. Analysis of different papers of the aforementioned scientists allows envisaging the main constant formulated by them indirectly – social environment functions efficiently and influences a person positively provided that it is balanced. However, why today social environment defined as the social world surrounding a man, i.e. social (material and spiritual) living conditions of people, their

development and activity conditions lose positions of the positive conception and take the shape of environment that is unsafe and menacing for child's development? Why analysis of the aforementioned problem makes no decrease on it, but even turns it into more relevant and complicated? Alicia Oria-Iriarte (2002) notes that a man too often ignores and fails to assess impartially the direct influence of environment (e.g. buildings, woods, playgrounds, etc.) on the formation of communicative relations.

Over the past decade, events in Lithuania and the social and economic changes have brought both positive and negative changes. More and more people on the strained living conditions in rural areas moved to the city or left the country, leaving grandparents to look after their children or relatives. There is a greater momentum among adults undergoing pursuit of material goods, and everyday household improvements that directly affected the children, they raised the need for adaptation in the new social environment, intensified competition between material resources and the acquisition of new information technology fields. Also, the concept of moral values have changed: more and more power enters in force, excessive consumerism, and other mass-culture-specific manifestations of the cult. Adults in this competition and rivalry between the world's constantly growing needs of family members of affected adults in employment growth, while the descending control of children's leisure and self-help strengthen that process. While aggregate data on how many children after school, rushing to a variety of extracurricular activities not found in Lithuania makes it that every third student. In assessing the employment of children after school, this number is too low. This situation raises several questions: Maybe these factors are focused too little not only in the theoretical development but in the development of practical skills of a man, especially a child, either? However, do the absence of these components and inability to cherish them really form a base that determines child's feeling and his self-expression possibilities in a city/town? Is an urban child really "sentenced" to higher risk compared to his countryside contemporary?

The aim of the research – is to reveal the conception on the surrounding social environment characteristic of an urban child at risk. The object of the article is a "child at risk" in a city/town.

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Research techniques: this paper presents **the data are based** on a study carried out one of the Kaunas Z territorial community. Upon analyzing possibilities of positive social educational expression of children at risk, first of all selection of operating institutions within the chosen territorial community was carried out. For investigation, analysis of verbal documents was applied (Kardelis, 2002) and 12 social educational institutions

were selected in total. From the aforementioned 12 institutions, just 7 ones where the non-formal education programs / projects in progress met the following predefined analysis criteria have been chosen for investigation: a) the institutions shall be attended by children at risk living in selected territorial community Z; b) in the selected institution, work shall be carried out with 14–16 years old children at risk; c) for analysis, just programs being in progress at the moment shall be selected taking into account their succession and types of the services offered. For analysis at 7 institutions selected for investigation, 13 programs, designed for 14–16 years old children were chosen.

At the aforementioned institutions, analysis data of the selected programs were supplemented by 9 experts directly working with children at risk with data of a verbal interview. After completion of analysis of programs some data was missing, therefore, data was supplemented by the results of a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire for students was used to verify the data obtained after the program analysis and implementation of semi-structured interview of specialists.

The obtained data of document analysis are provided in the form of matrices. This form of data introduction has assisted in defining regularities prevailing between different social educational institutions and tendencies in respect of the criteria being analysed. The collection and processing of data about the non-formal education programs / projects, was carried out based on the institutional level, according isolated positive social-educational-resolution creating the assumptions and the form of expression issues. For the purposes of a qualitative study, it was first performed an analysis of documents, according to this sequence: 1) collection of the primary information (for example, the newspaper reports, information leaflets, Internet sites and etc.); 2) selection of documents in accordance with the selected empirical criterions, constructed in the theoretical model; 3) repeated reading of text; 4) information grouped into categories and to more sizeable groups – subcategories; 5) interpretation of the data according to selection categories and subcategories. Data obtained during an interview of experts was processed applying qualitative analysis of results: by sense relations, the obtained variants of answers by respondents were grouped into subcategories first of all and then to more sizeable groups that unite subcategories, i.e. categories.

In order to preserve confidentiality with respect to the organisations being analysed, the organisations operating in Z territorial community are coded in the capital letters of Lithuanian alphabet, whereas the organisations attended by children outside the community are coded in the capital letters of English alphabet. Furthermore, symbol i at the capital letters means that the organisation being analysed is a public institution (e.g. Bi, Qi, Φi).

In order to reveal the absence of essential differences between a social child and child at risk, the article compares the following graffiti at city/town places, where youngsters usually bunch together, i.e. at new building sites, underpasses, etc. Besides, the article introduces photographs from the recreation urban areas revealing the real situation in the solution of issues related to occupation of children.

Papers of the Lithuanian scientists (Pikunas, 1994; Miskinis, 2003; Cerniauskiene, 2005 et al.) demonstrate that influence of social environment on the development of a child is analysed in terms of intercommunication and intercooperation of community institutes (especially, family). An essential element characteristic of different scientific works implies the social relations grounded on traditions and used to analyse the following: possibilities to develop safe social environment, to improve individual competences, etc. in family, at school or community. However, as J.Adams (2001) states, when different problems of child socialisation appear various decisions often are made by adults motivating their position by the following: on the one hand, by insufficient experience of a child at risk situations, which impedes the right perception of the reward (action outcome); and on the other hand, by exposure of a child to permanent risk (e.g. risk family, unsafe school environment, etc.) and by the resulting inability of a child to choose appropriate behaviour models to tackle the situation formed (2001, p. 40). According to A. Wildawsky (1988), all this follows from the fact that cultural filters in the nearest environment of a child not always pass an accurate information on the reward for risk and the incurred costs whereof (Adams, 2001, p. 216). However, any risk factor in the society affects a child rather than an adult, because the latter has explainable reasons of his behaviour that not always imply a negative striving. Thus, what is the child's position in this situation? Maybe attribution of a child to a "risk group" results from the training functions improperly carried out by adults and various institutions, and from the inappropriate behaviour models demonstrated? For the aforementioned term, i.e. "child at risk", another few explanations of its conception may be found:

- 1) As foreign scientists (Astroth, 1993; Quarterly, 2004; Gildson, 2006 et al.) point out, attribution of a child to a "risk group" implies looking at him through a reading-glass, thus undesignedly developing negative self-attitude of such a child (www.joe.org). This statement is supported by the ideas of M. Males (1992) and A.C. Lewis (1998), which express that continuously arising discussions on children at risk reflect a strained social status, when different behaviour models and contraposition whereof gains the features of a "massive epidemic".
- 2) In the papers of different scientists (Bajoriunas, 1995; Miskinis, 2003; Gould-bourne, 2003 et al.), we may notice that the term "child in the street or child

at risk” is used to define an active life of a child in a community, i.e. “outside the family”. This expressed concern is explained by the fact that expanding activity space of a child, especially in a city / town, also leads to his stronger interface with the values prevailing in that society and with the “decisions related to values” made by a child under the influence of this environment.

Why, however, the term “child in the street” in a city / town is related to risk?
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Referring to K. Miskinis (2003), the reasons of the existing situation with regard to a child shall be searched for in the tradition of training whereof, which reveals a few peculiarities of the process:

- 1) children were taught of respectful and delicate behaviour with nature and people by the old generation, i.e. grandparents, therefore, the behaviour model conveyed by them was treated as an unarguable attitude based on experience, traditions and personal example;
- 2) from little up children were taught to work different works, help parents (2003, p. 63–65), i.e. time of children was planned.

These „traditional family“ position adopted by many researchers in Lithuania, because the family is considered as the main basis for the formation of personality, the personality core maturation and self-help area. However, essential problems arise when individual institutes share different attitude towards the functions to be carried out and expectations. Hence, a child is protected against the negative influence made by the family if it is considered at risk, and against the negative influence made by the society itself. Outcome of such an undefined position manifests itself through stopping natural curiosity and self-expression of a child, whereas a child tries at any price to satisfy these needs as one of the fundamental demands, i.e. by involving into such activities or joining the affinity groups that are treated by adults as unacceptable. Consequently, how in the society itself positive socio-educational expression of children at risk is defined? According to V. Zemaitis (2005), three categories of person’s evaluation in this environment may be distinguished (see Fig. 1).

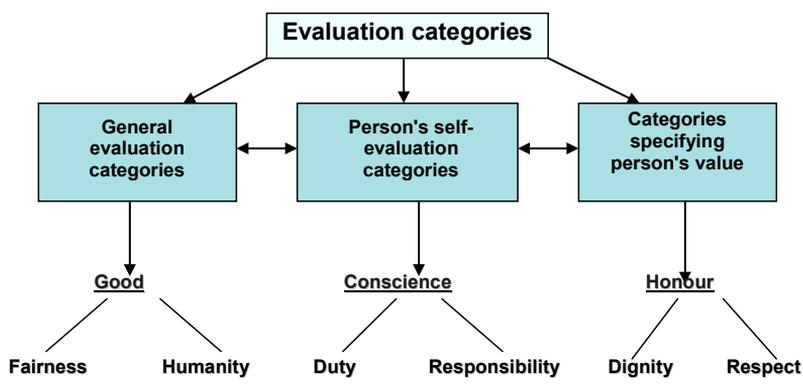


Fig. 1. *Person's Evaluation Categories* (modify by V. Zemaitis, 2005)

In socio-educational environment, evaluation of a child, similar to evaluation of each adult, is related to general evaluation categories (with good being the most important), person's self-evaluation categories (with conscience being the most important) and categories specifying person's value (with honour being the most important). In this system, the prevailing sequence may be envisaged: a person, carrying out self-evaluation against the morals provided by the society, selects behaviour models respectively, the value whereof is defined by the society through the same criteria, i.e. general evaluation categories. According to St. Salkauskis (1992), J. Lauzikas (1993), J. Pikunas (1994), R. Bakutyte (2001) and other scientists, all these features are the most important to be trained in a child as they determine person's value and self-consciousness. Thus, evaluation of positive socio-educational expression of a child depends on the ability of the institutes that are the closest to a child to convey morals and to assist in consolidating them.

And in which way, however, a child perceives and communicates the surrounding environment?

1. Pictures in streets made by children. Drawing is one of the main activities of a child used to express feelings and moods, to reflect tender spots, different experiences, etc., and assisting to envisage "hidden" features of things or various phenomena. V. Lepeskiene (1996) notes, that many of us have heard the following remarks said to a child: "Stop fantasising, – such things do not happen" or "Stop dreaming, try something more serious", that hold down child's imagination both at home and at school. This phenomenon could be explained by fallacy of adults that a child shall live in the reality, i.e. in the real world. However, is such obtrusion of the

world conception beneficial for a child? Analysis of the content of graffiti on various walls allows envisaging a wide range of the events taking place in the society: from taboo words of everyday use to explanation of interpersonal relations, representation of characters of individual persons, watchable TV serials, the most famous public figures, etc. Even more obviously this gloomy reality is reflected by children graffiti depicting a man (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. The example of graffiti on various walls

Here, reflections of the menacing environment are expressed by the following: (a) scared or angry faces, geometric body postures symbolising coolness, power or an attempt to escape to uncertainty; (b) unemotional, covered or primitive figures of a child; (c) isolated elements of nature that are also endangering (e.g. fly-agarics) (see Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Isolated elements of nature (c) graffiti

A similar tendency in the aforementioned aspect is also especially bright in the papers of foreign scientists analyzing the problems of a child and family (Barrow, 1998; Gouldborne, 2003; Chamberlain, 2003 et al.), development of an environment that is safe for a child (Rivkin, 1990; Brilliant, 1997; Valentine & McKendrick 1997 et al.), etc. In this context, however, another question arises: maybe behaviour of a child considered at risk is a consequence of the conflict of the senior generations failing to distribute training functions with each other? Expression of this idea is supported by the remark of H. Shibata (1998), stating that intercontradiction between self-evaluation of child's behaviour and evaluation provided by the society is related to different conception of social phenomena (see Fig. 4).

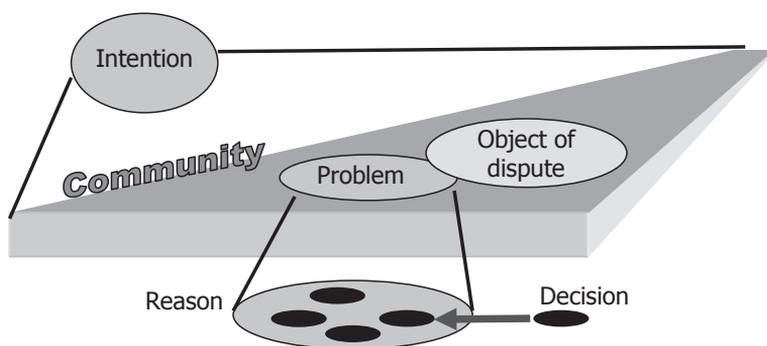


Fig. 4. Conception of Social Phenomena (modify by H. Shibata, 1998)

To a child, the society itself creates different problems sometimes failing to reveal accurate information on the reasons of the origin whereof. Irrespectively of age, J. Rubino (2006) defines such a situation as waste of one's own life avoiding an image of the things that are bad "in us" (2006, p. 26). "This waste is identified with avoidance of an inferior image, actually failing to realize what shall be avoided precisely". Thus, a child disposing insufficient information on the events taking place in his environment and failing to realize what he shall do is unable to develop an image opposite to the one that shall be avoided. Thereby, a child even being a member of the society may only play the roles assigned or simulated undesignedly to him by the society (this situation is presented in the papers of D. Jacques, 1996; M. D. Griffiths, 1997; K. Subrahmanyam, R. E. Kraut, P. M. Greefield, E. F. Gross, 2000 et al.). Hence, a child at risk is a social consequence of the society based on the negative experience available to it and on the designed negative expectations. Considering

these differences, the context also shows up a few general problematic issues: What are the perspectives developed to a child in the society? What expectations of the society are related to a child?

2. Social programs and projects applied for a child

In the society, the perspectives of children are oriented towards the following directions:

by teaching to observe traditional behaviour models;

by stimulating individual initiatives of a child, efforts to create new environments to a child.

Both models may be found in the practice of social work with children “at risk” of both Europe countries and Lithuania (see Fig. 5).

Analysis of all the papers worked out by the scientists referred to in this article has demonstrated that training, which forms both traditional and new environments, may dominate both in a family and any other institution. However, Fig. 5 shows that training of a child always is balance between child individual initiative and traditional social behaviour models. According J. Adams (2001), a society opens to a child the greatest activity prospects, but this freedom also implies a higher risk (e.g. accidents, drugs, plunders, antivalues, etc.), the reduction whereof is possible only after finding the mutual consensus by all the institutes (i.e. family, school, community) that are the most important for a child. The following question arises: how these consensus and risk reduction are being achieved for?

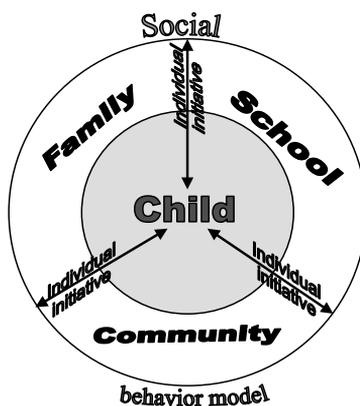


Fig. 5. *The child perspective in the society* (composed by A. Juodeikaitė)

The most important interconnection linking all these components implies communication, which is related to intercooperation of different institutions upon tackling the appearing behaviour problems of a child considered “at risk” in the society. M. Spierts (2003), T. Cerniauskiene (2005) et al. notices that solution of the aforementioned problems mostly takes place upon developing different preventive programs able to do the following: 1) compensate for a child the functions of parents carried out by adults in families insufficiently; 2) diminish the prevailing contradiction between the society and a child due to mismatch of the latter’s behaviour to well-established social rules; 3) assist a child to integrate into the society and guarantee a child positive possibilities for self-expression in the society. A more detailed view on the implementation peculiarities of the programs in Lithuania and European countries is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Characterization of Preventive Programs

Criterion	Dimension	Subsample of Lithuania	Subsample of European countries
Orientation towards a child “at risk”	Audience	Child and his family	Child, his family, community members
	Activity content	Static – focused on learning results	Mixed – focused on learning results and interrelationship
	Activity direction	Individualization of problems is typical	Problems are solved in the social context (child in the environment)
Orientation towards the process	Succession of programs	Carried out at individual (e.g. at schools, day centres, charity organizations, police, etc.) institutions and national level	Carried out at different institution both at community and national level
	Types of programs	Target programs prevail	Early prevention programs prevail
	Environment	Educative – training	Supporting – training
	Interinstitutional relations	Team of experts, self-government	Team of experts, community, self-government

Table 1 demonstrates that compared to European countries, implementation of various preventive programs in Lithuania differ by scale, the activity direction selected and tradition. The aforementioned tradition manifests itself by the fact that: 1) higher responsibility for unachieved desirable results is assumed only by the institution implementing the preventive program; 2) the educative – training environment applied is based on interrelationship of family members that is grounded on a different communication status in the interpersonal relations; 3) problems encountered by a child usually are solved in a very narrow circle (e.g. most often between an expert and child; an expert, child and one of the member, i.e. a target program), going more deep into individual features of a child: behaviour motives, opinion, feeling, etc.; 4) different preventive programs are developed and implemented only by the experts working at separate state institutions; self-government usually provides only financial or legal support. Considering the newly applied requirements for preventive programs, certain syncretism may also be envisaged between the following: 1) different components of the program; 2) adaptation of interventional actions to individuality of a child and social environment of a child; 3) quality (character of activity) and quantity (supply of services) of the services provided, etc.

Activity types carried out by individual institutions are revealed in Fig. 6.

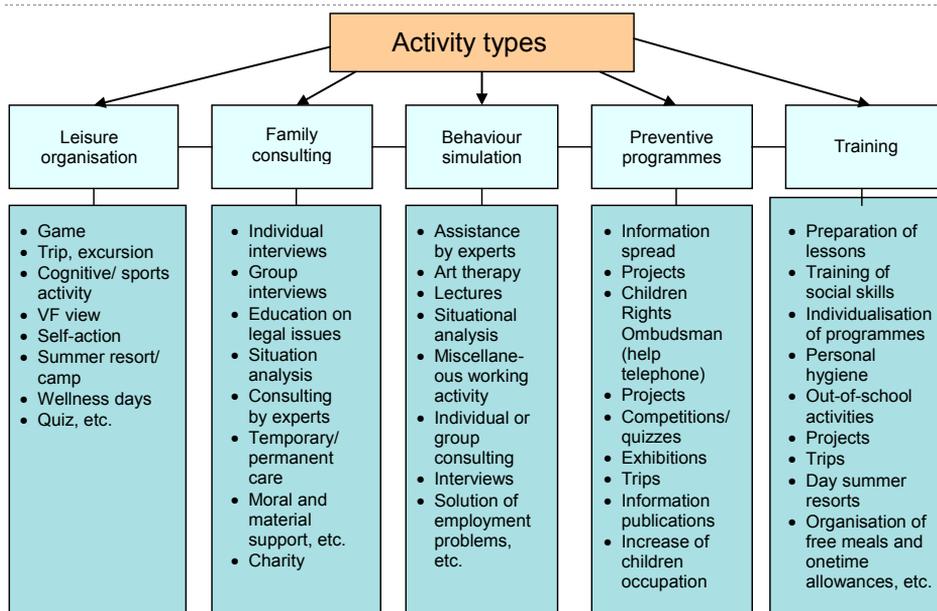


Fig. 6 Activity types (composed by A. Juodeikaitė)

This grouping of activities, however, is conditional as analysis of operation of various organisations (“Dienos namai”, “Pastogė”, “Caritas”, “Langas”, etc.) demonstrates that programmes contain no such activity, whereas activity types often duplicate each other. Furthermore, another few peculiarities show up:

- the main focus in the programmes, however, is made on training of a child (e.g. arranging different lectures, trainings, orientating towards homework accomplishment, etc.) and organisation of free meals (it is the main activator in order to stimulate a child to take part in activities of different centres);
- experts working at a particular institution confine strictly to their competences and direct purpose of the institution they work wherein;
- different assistance mostly is rendered for a child individually but not together with the members of the child’s family; family members often refuse to take part;
- in the course of development of programmes, absolutely no references to moral assistance rendered for a child by a territorial community of separate groups whereof are made.

Upon summarising the ideas expressed in this subsection, it may be seen that in Lithuania the reasons of the origin of child’s problems and solution possibilities whereof are focused on analysis of a person as an individual society oneness going deep into the quality of an inner world rather than the quality of an interactive relation with others.

To make identify positive socio-educational opportunities for expressions of children at risk in a territorial community, in this article we will deliver only a few of the results of the research.

Inter-institutional cooperation. The analysis of non-formal education documents, it was found that the respondents employed in the socio-educational institutions cooperate with experts in various fields (see Table 2). The partners are generally identified institutions, which direct them to problem children, provide support and perform other similar functions. Priority according to the sequence is usually given to financial sponsors, the related non-formal education programs and engaged in the socio-educational services institutions. However, the opposite situation, which was determined by analysis of documents obtained during the interviews: the majority of the respondents (66.7 %) said that cooperation between various institutions from all over is not. According to respondents, the main reasons that hinder the development of interagency cooperation are not appropriate for some institutions of direct execution of functions and shortcomings of mutual exchange of information.

Table 2

Cooperation between the socio-educational institutions

Criteria	Organization							
	A	Bi	C	Di	Qi	W	Φi	
1. Cooperation between the various institutions	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
2. Cooperation between several institutions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
3. Cooperation does not fully	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

The study participants from the A and W socio-educational institutions, talking about their collaboration with other institutions, mainly indicated in the specific individuals (“<...> This woman is an interesting excursion organized ... just calling her work with children“, “...we have here are different people ... and with all we have a friendly get ...“, etc.). However, they also have very significant requirements: “People – the volunteers, trainees – is strictly selected...”, “<...> no, we do not want to trainees, as they come <...> they know nothing ...”, etc. Only 33.3 % of respondents interviewed at the time indicated that the cooperation between the institutions engaged in similar activities only. Based on the survey responses of participants, they often choose partners from other territorial communities or even abroad. Respondents failed to clarify the reasons for such cooperation in connection with other institutions.

In this situation is the one paradox: only 33.6 % children at risk evaluated positively the activity of the socio-educational institutions (see Fig. 7). The current situation shows that the subjects in this group of predominantly negative aspects of (33.7 % of operations evaluated “poor” or “very poor”). Avoidance of talking about the socio-educational institutions and their operations in revealing the majority of the children at risk to respect the neutral position (on average) or total avoidance to speak on this topic (32.7 % of the subjects indicated that they are not interested in this area of the total) (see Fig. 7).

Concept of the reasons which influenced the risk of child attachment to the socio-educational institutions revealed that the adults are affected by the misinterpretation of actions, i.e. these institutions are often intended to cause fear in children, and highlight the negative consequences of behavior (stick “label”). The study showed that the children rated positively only one main social institute, which mostly develops and implements various preventive programmes, is school (see Fig. 8).

The school is that place where all information on young persons and their families is accumulated, therefore it becomes a universal moderator, or the community of communication between the children and the adults. The results of analysis show, that the children classified as high-risk group, of their questionnaires (19.04 %) mostly indicated

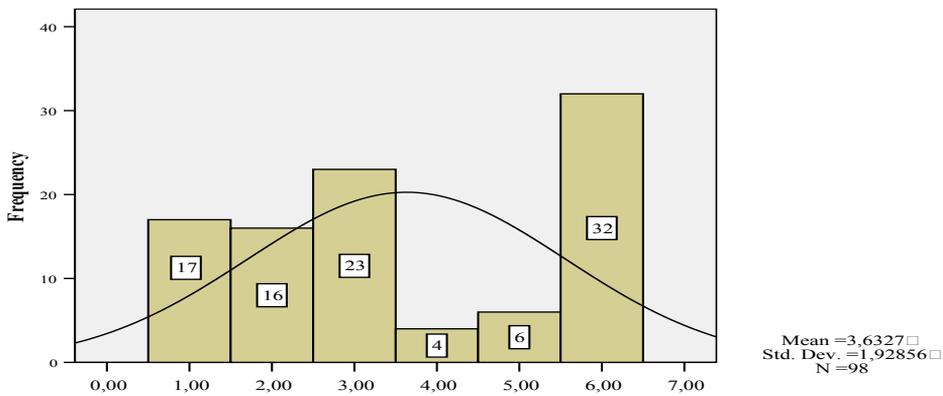


Fig. 7. Socio-educational activities of the evaluation (N = 98)

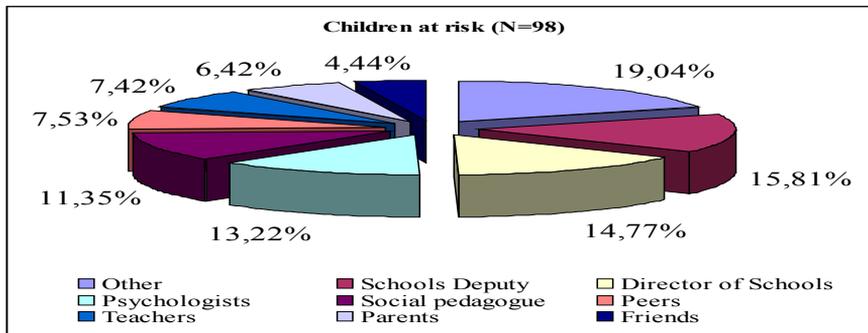


Fig. 8. Persons contributing to the risk group of children to address the socio-educational problems

“other” option, directing that the tackles the problems they have recourse to several people – peers, teachers and parents (see Fig. 8). The socio-educational problems of children helps to address the school administration too (school deputy stated 15.81 %, and school directors – 14.77 % of respondents). Friends (4.44 %), parents (7.42 % – as mentioned in the provision of individual assistance), teachers (7.42 %) and peers (7.53 %) at least contribute to various problematic situations. So the school becoming one of the main institutions, where all children are educated together, irrespectively of their ethic, cultural, psychological, social and other differences, therefore it can be regarded as one of the youth communities, where young people develop their social skills an learn to communicate with the world beyond the family limits.

Discussion

However, what a child failing to adapt to the school environment shall do? Essential problems that prevail in most Lithuanian institutions carrying out social functions and are related to the following aspects:

- Differently from foreign countries (e.g. Sweden, Belgium, England, etc.), the prepared programmes usually are oriented towards the removal of already existing problems and rendering of material support but not towards the early prevention. Besides, according to the opinion of A. Liaudanskienė (2005), orientation towards training of children by work is not sufficient in Lithuania: usually, children at risk are taught just to take and receive, being afraid to feel even more socially isolated (<http://svietimas.takas.lt>). For instance, activity of an urban child is confined just to short-term and easy to do household works. Unfortunately, nobody risks a broader working activity, e.g. landscaping, organisation of assistances for employees at supermarkets, as
 - a child is treated as a not self-dependant and unreliable person requiring permanent supervision. Adults motivate their do-nothing position in this regard by absence of time.
 - a child copies the example demonstrated by his parents. The expressed statement shows that for a child no harmonious socio-educational environment based on strong moral values is developed.

Why the programmes developed for a child at risk are not effective and give no expected results? Analysis of scientific literature allows finding a few explanations of the situation:

- According to A. Guogis (2005), social policy and social security continue to be considered more as the system of social allowances and social benefits. This situation results from the fact that costs in respect of “active” social policy are even higher compared to implementation of “passive” social policy. According to the scientist, such a situation “marks” its clients, but is ineffective in order to bring back a person to social environment and to stimulate him to take care of his own living needs (2005, p. 14–15).
- Many organisations try to develop for a child an image of harmonious family, however, as R. G. McMurray and others (1998) state referring to their researches, initially behaviour of a child improves, but after a half of the day a reverse reaction is observed (e.g. a child becomes uncontrolled, aggressive) due to burn-out in foreign environment.

Conclusions

- Attribution of an urban child to a risk group is related to a few reasons:
 - too low confidence in a child shown by adults, inappropriately selected information on life regalia communicated to a child;
 - increasing social contacts outside the family and resulting rapid growth of different risk factors, insufficient occupation and activity planning of a child;
 - weaker relations of a child with grandparents; duties and functions inappropriately carried out by parents.
- In Lithuania, social problems of a child are caused by insufficient communication of a child with adults and by lack of new self-realisation potentials, however, training of a child and solution of social problems continue to be more focused on development of individual powers of a person rather than on sociality.
- Child's insecurity and distrust in surrounding environment are characteristic of all, not only of children at risk. For the time being, the main communication forms of a child in the society are the following: escape from problems, tolerance towards addictions and showing of one's strength to others.
- The main part of various preventive and social assistance programmes are carried out at school and non-governmental institutions. At different social communities, these institutions become the main social establishments maintaining and developing social contacts due to the fact that the closest relations of the persons working herein with various society members are supported and developed. Due to their direct purpose and consideration of the needs of the society members, the aforementioned institutions, however, usually carry out the following educative functions (e.g. training, education, information conveyance, etc.);
- Insufficient efficiency of the preventive programmes in progress may be related to artificial isolation of individual society members, especially children at risk, from the surrounding environment.

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Santrauka

Audronė Juodeikaitė

VAIKAS ANT ASFALTO (MIESTO VAIKAS) – „RIZIKOS“ VAIKAS

Dėl didesnių karjeros perspektyvų, atlyginimo, siekio užsimiršti ar kitų priežasčių intensyvėjanti žmonių migracija iš kaimo į miestą, iš mažo miestelio į didelį ir pan. skatina vis dažniau kalbėti apie socialinės aplinkos tinkamumą asmeniui. Pagrindinė šių svarstymų priežastis – augantys žmogžudysčių skaičiai, narkotikų ir kitų psichotropinių medžiagų vartojimo mastai, įvairūs savęs žalojimosi būdai ir pan., ypač plintantys tarp miestuose augančių vaikų. Atsižvelgiant į paminėtos problemos didėjantį aktualumą, pažymėtina tai, kad ji dažniausiai analizuojama lyginant ne konkretų miestą ar šalį, bet pasauliniu mastu. Ši teiginį patvirtina M. H. Matthews (1992), R. Harto (1997), K. A. Motore (1996), C. A. Lyncho (1997), J. H. McKendricko (2000), S. L. Holloway, G. Valentine (2000), G. Philo, D. Millerio (2000) ir kt. moksliniai darbai. Analizuojant įvairius paminėtų mokslininkų darbus, galima įžvelgti netiesiogiai jų suformuluotą pagrindinę konstantą – socialinė aplinka efektyviai funkcionuoja ir turi teigiamos įtakos asmeniui tik tuomet, kai ji yra subalan-

suota. Vis dėlto A. Oriá-Iriarte (2002) teigia, kad žmonės per daug dažnai ignoruoja ne tik juos supančią aplinką (pvz.: žaidimų aikštes, parkus, skverus ir kt.), bet ir pastatų bei gyvenamojoje aplinkoje juos supančių elementų tarpusavio išsidėstymą. Galbūt šiems veiksniams per mažai dėmesio skiriama ne tik teoriniu, bet ir žmogaus, ypač vaiko, praktinių įgūdžių ugdyme? Tačiau ar šių komponentų nebuvimas bei nesugebėjimas juos puoselėti iš tikrųjų yra pagrindas, lemiantis vaiko savijautą ir jo saviraiškos galimybes mieste?

Tyrimo problema apima tokius klausimus: kodėl socialinė aplinka, kuri yra apibrėžiama kaip žmogų supantis socialinis pasaulis – visuomeninės (materialinės ir dvasinės) žmonių gyvenimo, jų vystymosi ir veiklos sąlygos – šiandien praranda pozityvios sampratos pozicijas ir įgauna nesaugios ir grėsmingos vaiko vystymuisi aplinkos pavidalą? Kodėl analizuojant minėtą problemą ji nemažėja, bet tampa dar aktualesnė ir sudėtingesnė? Ar vaikas, gyvenantis mieste, iš tikrųjų yra „pasmerktas“ didesnei rizikai nei kaime gyvenantis jo bendraamžis?

Šio straipsnio **tikslas** – atskleisti rizikos grupei priskiriamo vaiko, gyvenančio mieste, sampratą apie jį supančią socialinę aplinką. Straipsnio objektas – „rizikos“ vaikas mieste. Tyrimo **metodai**: literatūros analizė, turinio (*content*) analizė, lauko tyrimo metodas, lyginimas.

Straipsnio metodologinis pagrindas yra aplinkos koncepcinė nuostata, kad visi asmenybę ugdantys veiksniai sudaro vientisą socialinę edukacinę sistemą su daugeliu struktūrinių elementų ir bendrai veikdami siekia laipsniškai sumažinti asmenybės ir ją supančios aplinkos atitrūkimą (Buchler, 1955).

Straipsnyje, siekiant atskleisti esminių socialaus ir rizikos grupei priskiriamo vaiko skirtumų nebuvimą, tarpusavyje yra lyginami: 1) grafičių piešiniai iš paauglių dažniausių susibūrimo vietų mieste – naujų statybiečių, požeminių perėjų ir pan.; 2) netikimybinio principu atsitiktinių grupių parinkimo būdu atrinkti 12–14 m. mokinių kūrybiniai darbai iš įvairių Kauno miesto mokyklų. Tiriamųjų amžiaus pasirinkimą lėmė tai, kad šiame amžiaus tarpsnyje bendrojo ugdymo mokyklų ugdymo programose daugiausia dėmesio skiriama pasakų kūrimui.

Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje aptariamas vaikų grafičių piešimas gatvėje, trumpai paminimi trys šio meno rūšies tipai: užrašai; organizuotų gaujų piešiniai naudojant sutartinius ženklus (simbolius) ir mėgėjiški piešiniai. Straipsnyje išsamiau aptariama trečioji (mėgėjiškų piešinių) rūšis, kuri geriausiai atskleidžia ir labiausiai yra orientuota į vaiko saviraiškos, saugumo, požiūrio į supančią aplinką sampratos poreikius ir kt. socialinius aspektus. Siekiant patikrinti analizės metu pateiktų teiginių objektivumą apie grafičių piešinius ir išsiaiškinti, ar skiriasi rizikos grupei priskiriamo

ir socialines normas atitinkančio vaiko straipsnyje analizuojamų atsitiktiniu būdu pasirinkti mokinių rašto darbai. Autorė pateikia tik keletą jų, tačiau daugumos vaikų kūriniuose dėsningai pasikartojančių trijų tematikų epizodus: vaiduoklių, svetimų namų ir „gatvės“ vaiko.

Antroje straipsnio dalyje ieškoma atsakymo į du probleminius klausimus: kokios vaiko socializacijos perspektyvos visuomenėje? Ko iš vaiko tikisi pati visuomenė? Analizuojant vaiko socializacijos perspektyvas visuomenėje, pateikiami ir aptariami du šios aktualijos sprendimo būdai: orientacija į rizikos grupės vaiką ir orientacija į socializacijos procesą, tarpusavyje lyginant Lietuvos ir Vakarų šalių patirtį. Siekiant atsakyti į antrą probleminį klausimą, pateikiami vaiko aktyvumui didinti taikomi metodai bei išskylandčios pagrindinės problemos, bandant juos įgyvendinti.

Trečioje dalyje, aptariant socialinių institutų, vykdančių prevencinę veiklą, aplinką, atsižvelgta į du analizės aspektus: a) socialinių institutų, atliekančių tiesiogines socialines funkcijas, pasiskirstymą ir veiklos kryptis; b) socialinę aplinką, kurioje gyvena vaikas. Čia ieškoma atsakymų į keletą iškilusių klausimų: Kodėl pagrindinis visuomenės institutas, daugiausia kuriantis ir įgyvendinantis įvairias prevencines programas, yra tik mokykla? Koks yra pačios bendruomenės, kuriai priklauso vaikas, indėlis, sprendžiant vaiko socializacijos problemas jo gyvenamojoje aplinkoje? Kodėl rizikos grupei priskiriamam vaikui ugdyti sukurtos programos nėra efektyvios ir neduoda laukiamų rezultatų?

Ieškant atsakymų į straipsnyje pateiktus klausimus, atlikta literatūros, prevencinių programų analizė. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad:

- Vaiko, gyvenančio mieste priskyrimas prie rizikos grupės, yra susijęs su keliomis priežastimis:
 - per mažu suaugusiųjų pasitikėjimu juo bei netinkamai atrinkta ir vaikui perteikta informacija apie gyvenimo realijas;
 - didėjančiais socialiniais kontaktais už šeimos ribų ir su tuo susijusiu sparčiu įvairių rizikos veiksnių gausėjimu, dėl per menko vaiko laisvalaikio užimtumo ir veiklos planavimo;
 - susilpnėjusiais vaiko ryšiais su seneliais; tėvų netinkamai atliekamomis pareigomis bei funkcijomis.
- Lietuvoje vaiko socialinės problemos kyla dėl per mažo bendravimo su suaugusiais žmonėmis ir naujų saviraiškos galimybių stokos, tačiau vaiko ugdymas bei socialinių problemų sprendimas ir toliau orientuojamas ne į bendruomeniškumo, o į individualių asmens galių plėtojimą.

- Vaiko nesaugumas ir nepasitikėjimas jį supančia aplinka yra būdingas visiems, ne tik rizikos grupėms priskiriamiems vaikams. Šiandien vaiko pagrindinės bendravimo formos visuomenėje yra: bėgimas nuo problemų, žalingų įpročių toleravimas ir savo jėgos demonstravimas prieš kitus.
- Daugiausia įvairių prevencinių ir socialinės pagalbos programų yra vykdoma mokykloje bei NVO. Šios institucijos dėl jose dirbančių asmenų glaudžiausių ryšių su įvairiais visuomenės nariais įvairiose visuomeninėse bendruomenėse tampa pagrindinėmis socialinius kontaktus palaikančiomis ir plėtojančiomis socialinėmis įstaigomis. Vis dėlto minėtos institucijos dėl savo tiesioginės paskirties ar gebėjimų atsižvelgti į visuomenės narių poreikius dažniausiai vykdo edukacines (pvz.: mokymo, švietimo, informavimo ir kt.) funkcijas.
- Per mažą vykdomų prevencinių programų efektyvumą galima sieti su atskirų visuomenės narių, ypač rizikos grupei priskiriamų vaikų, dirbtino išskyrimo iš jį supančios aplinkos.

Esminiai žodžiai: rizikos vaikas, gatvė, rizikos veiksnys, visuomenė.

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