

## YOUTH AT RISK IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: REASONS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

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**ABSTRACT** The article analyses the main reasons as to why children and teenagers are at risk and are committing crimes. The most serious reasons are related to crises in family relations due to the growth in poverty rates, the decrease in living standards, the deterioration in moral values and the educative potential of families. So-called ‘exterior’ reasons; namely, ineffective youth offence prevention, the general growth in crime, the influence of TV and advertising, the influence of a child’s mates or ‘bad street children’ are important as well, although their influence is less intensive as compared to problems which exist within individual families. The analysis shows that in contrast to general trends, regions and municipalities have certain specific characteristics. In some regions the most common problems are drug addiction, youth unemployment, child neglect and homelessness and juvenile delinquency. The negative general trends and regional characteristics require the creation of a multi-level system of social support and protection for young people at risk and their families.

**KEYWORDS** youth, children, risk group, Russian Federation, social protection

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## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile crime and delinquency are serious problems all over the world. Their intensity and gravity depend mostly on the social, economic and cultural conditions in each country. Young people who live in difficult circumstances are often at risk of becoming delinquent. Poverty, a dysfunctional family life, substance abuse and the death of family members have been demonstrated to be risk factors for delinquency. Insecurity due to an unstable social environment increases vulnerability, and young people with poorly-developed social skills are less able to protect themselves against the negative influences of peer groups. For this reason there is a preference for social rather than judicial approaches to dealing with young offenders in a number of United Nations instruments, e.g., the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Numerous studies have established a causal relationship between so-called youth at risk and the phenomenon of youth crime (Sheregi 2003, Zubok et al. 2006, Kliucharev et al. 2007, Gorshkov et al. 2010). The most general definition which can be applied to young people at risk is: a person aged 14 to 30 years, whose life, health and development are under threat. The number of young people who find themselves in a critical situation in life and need of different kinds of legal and social support in Russia has increased annually. Meanwhile, the social protection of youth at risk remains extremely inadequate and ineffective.

This study was a part of a pilot project with assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) for improving services to Youth at Risk (YAR services) in the Russian Federation. The project was performed from October 2006 to March 2007 in six regions of Russia – Bryansk Oblast, South–Western Administrative Okrug (Moscow), Rostov Oblast, Republic of Chuvashia, Stavropol Territory, and Mozhaisk District (Moscow Oblast). Different models for supporting youth who experience difficult life situations were validated. Data ascertained from the study were used as a basis for the analysis of objective conditions in which projects are implemented in order to make them more effective and dynamic.

## DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE AND STUDY METHODS

In order to implement the tasks defined and conduct a field (empirical) study, sample models were identified: small samples of experts (88 persons – regional–level experts, 58 persons – managers of federal educational colonies, and 8 persons – pilot project directors) and a purposive sampling of YAR in the pilot and control (Republic Mari El) regions (n = 588).

A small standard sample of experts (n = 10-15) in each of the pilot regions was determined by a group of professionals which, by nature of their activities, meet at-risk youth and are faced with their problems on a daily basis, but use various methods, and often, as they belong to various structures of executive authorities, use various decision–making and implementation ideology. The sample of experts was formed as follows:

judges working with YAR, courts of primary jurisdiction in various districts and cities of a pilot region; chairmen of Commissions on Juvenile Affairs (in various regions or cities of pilot regions); social workers specializing in YAR services (in various districts or cities of a pilot region); district Militia (Police) Officer or Inspector of a Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Department; a deputy of an oblast (city) legislature specializing in youth policy; an official of a regional (city) executive body in charge of the development and implementation of youth policy.

As a result, the expert sample professional structure was as follows: officers of the Ministry of the Interior – 29.8%, tutors and teachers – 26.3%, judges – 15.8%, social workers – 14.0%, employees of judicial authorities – 8.8%, leaders of non–commercial organizations and public associations – 3.5%, officers of public prosecutor’s offices – 1.8%. A standard YAR sample (total n = 588) was formed as follows in each of studied regions:

youth aged 12 to 18 years having served a custodial sentence for offences (including a conditional sentence, conditional early relief, etc.) (n = 40-50 persons); youth aged 12–18 years, with no custodial sentences for criminal offences (n = 40-50 persons).

As a main study method, standard questionnaires were used. Also, for measurements of average indicators at the national level a sample by the All–Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) was used (n = 1,700), representing the total population of the country.

## **YAR – GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

In Russia, the number of children and minors who have found themselves in critical life situations has been growing on a yearly basis. Data show that at the end of 2006 there were over 731,000 orphaned children and over 676,000 children in difficult living conditions. The number of homeless children is growing now as well, and ranges from 800,000 to 3–4 million according to various sources.

The situation is also alarming as regards the protection of children from violence and abuse. In 2005, over 175,000 children and minors became the victims of crimes. Over 73,500 violent crimes, including over 7,000 crimes connected with sexual violence and abuse, were committed against minors. As a result, 3,000 children died and just as many were seriously injured. Within the last five years, 1,080 children were killed by their parents. In 2005, about 8,000 criminal cases of improper parenting were brought to court. According to study data (Lelekov et al. 2006), home violence in a various forms (bodily blows, violent abuse, verbal abuse, psychological terrorism, sexual violence, isolation, child neglect) occurs in every fourth family.

Child abuse and neglect result in violent responses. Every year over one million juvenile offenders are brought to departments of internal affairs, and over 500,000 administrative cases were initiated in courts towards juveniles; out of these case 350,000 were registered in Commissions on Juvenile Affairs and Departments of Juvenile Affairs of the Ministry of Interior. In 2005 minors committed or took part in over 154,000 crimes, including about 1,000 homicides, 3,000 assaults, and 18,000 robberies.

Of growing concern is cohesion among juvenile delinquents: every two out of three crimes are committed by youth groups. Mixed minor–adult criminal groups commit half of the total registered serious crimes and felonies, including every second robbery and assault, every third homicide, act of vandalism and theft, and every fourth attempt at bodily harm (The State of the Russian Federation's Children Report 2006).

There's a steady trend in youth committing crimes under the influence of alcohol and drug intoxication.

## **WHY CHILDREN JOIN THE AT-RISK GROUP**

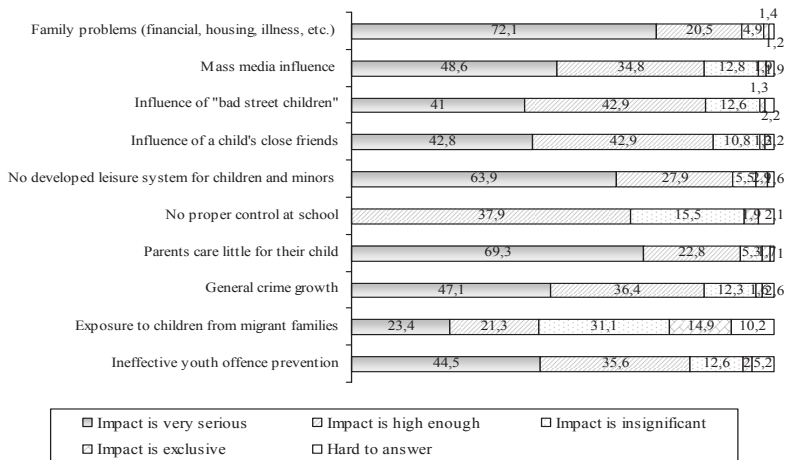
Russian citizens see that the current reason for a lot of children becoming at-risk is, intrinsically, the crisis in the institution of the family due to growth in poverty, decrease in living conditions, the deterioration of moral values and

the educative potential of families. The most serious reason for children joining the at-risk group was family problems (financial, housing problems, illness of one of their family members, etc) according to 72.1% of experts asked; while 69.3% of them are convinced that the youth at-risk group level is maintained due to the fact that parents “care little for their children”. Furthermore, 63.9% of these experts think that another serious reason is the lack of a developed leisure environment for children and juveniles (see Figure 1).

The importance of so-called “exterior” reasons, namely ineffective youth offence prevention, general crime growth, mass-media, the influence of a child’s mates or “bad street children”, is valued by respondents as being serious enough, although their influence is less intensive as compared to the problems which exist in individual families.

As for unfavourable family situations, results of the YAR inquiry survey show the significant influence of many factors, namely: incomplete families, family problems like relatives suffering from alcohol abuse, relatives with a police record, low income, disruption, and the low educational and cultural level of parents.

**Figure 1** Estimates of percentage levels of various factors resulting in children joining the at-risk group (%)



## **THE UN'S OPINION TOWARDS PROTECTION OF YAR RIGHTS IN THE RF**

The current practice of providing support to YAR in the RF is mostly ineffective. In the opinion of the UN Committee for Children's Rights the following circumstances are of serious concern.

There are problems related to neglect, including discrimination, torture and bodily punishment, child abuse, lack of parental care, sexploitation and an "adult" approach to juvenile justice and the inhumane policy of sending children to closed correctional facilities. There is a tendency to reduction in provision of social services and children's allowances caused by changes in legislation. The essence of the changes is that the child-service focus shifts from the federal level to the regional and municipal level. On one hand, this helps to account for the social, demographic, and ethnic factors of the territories; on the other hand, as the conditions of economies vary between regions, and as a number of federal guarantees have been cancelled, the territorial discrimination of residents becomes obvious. There is insufficient coordination of activities as regards the rights of children, and a lack of consistency in federal/regional measures taken in the interests of children and youth. There is no adequate coordination between central and local authorities, and a lack of cooperation with children, youth, parents and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Also, there are no legitimate structures to provide independent control over the observance of the rights of children (Federal Office of the Commissioner on the Rights of Children, Regional Offices of the Commissioner on the Rights of Children, independent right advocates).

Another part of the criticism related to the absence of a national children policy program. There are no indicators and reference points which could help to control and evaluate progress in the implementation of a relevant nation-wide strategy, results achieved and the effectiveness of monitoring. There is no adequate data collection mechanism to allow for the regular and all-inclusive collection of disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data concerning all children groups with breakdown by gender, age, rural/urban districts.

There is a serious shortage of proper and systematic professional training for all groups of specialists providing services to children and working in the interests of children, in particular, officers of law enforcement bodies, school teachers, medical officers, psychologists, social workers and employees of specialized institutions. The main drawback is the lack of specific federal procedures and courts for processing juvenile offenders specifically.

There are underdeveloped mechanisms for children to bring formal complaints without getting the consent of their parents or legal representatives. The number of children sent to specialized institutions and deprived of their family milieu is growing. With the widespread use of tobacco and alcohol among minors, there are insufficient measures to promote healthy lifestyles. Also, insufficient attention is paid to problems of diet, physical culture and personal hygiene as well as prevention of drug and tobacco dependence.

In general, all this leads to the growth in the number of homeless children and their vulnerability to all forms of abuse and exploitation, but also restricts an access of this category to services of public health care and education systems.

## PROTECTION OF YAR RIGHTS

The problem of shaping a YAR rights protection policy is very urgent today. Lacking a comprehensive long-term program aimed at solving such problems as child neglect, juvenile delinquency and other social problems of youth, there is low awareness of the current vital need for well-coordinated and targeted activities of various departments and public organizations in the field. A cooperation mechanism adequate to contemporary understanding of the problem is only now being shaped in Russia. The nature of such cooperation and its stability depend on many factors which vary between regions and municipalities. Of negative impact in Russia is lack of principles for legislative regulation of the whole spectrum of relationships between the parties during the child education process: state, society, public institutes, including educational institutions and mass media.

By identifying the basic rights of children and youth in contemporary Russian society, the community of experts which took part in this research project was virtually unanimous – the most basic right is the necessity of proper living standards for physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral and social development (see Table 1). The next one, considered fundamental due to its importance and topicality, is the right to prompt access to legal and other relevant support. This opinion was shared by over half of the expert community (59.1%). Also considered important in the opinion of a part of the experts (44.3%) is the right of minors to hold their own views and attitudes regarding all issues which affect their interests.

Besides the offered topic list of rights of children and youth, out of which experts could select several possible answers, a number of them suggested

other rights not covered by the above list, but which are also fundamental to modern society. Among these extra rights the experts named “the right to decent, free education and subsequent employment”, the “right to a healthy family”, and “being free from a derogatory attitude and punishment”.

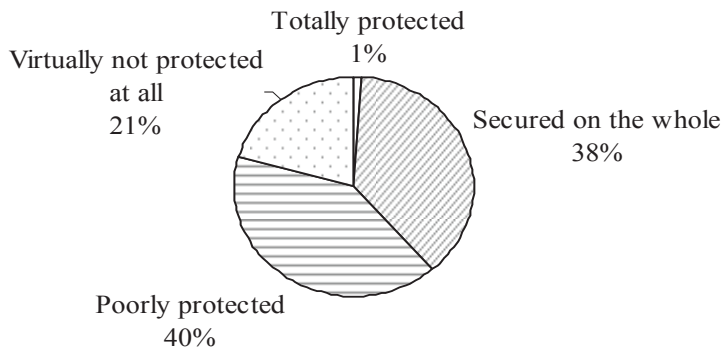
At the same time, rights such as that of protection from economic exploitation and the right to protection from discrimination were evaluated by the experts as being the least significant in modern society.

**Table 1** Which rights of children and youth you consider basic? (%)

1. The right to the living standards necessary for physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral and social development	95.5
2. The right to prompt access to legal and other relevant help	59.1
3. The right to hold their own views on all issues crucial regarding their interests.	44.3
4. The right to protection from discrimination	25.0
5. The right to protection from economic exploitation	19.3

However, in evaluating the extent of the legal security of children and youth in modern Russia, the majority of experts gave a negative appraisal (See Figure 2). Thus, most experts (61%) are convinced that today the rights of children and youth are either poorly protected or not secured at all. Just a little over one third of those interviewed (38%) think that the rights mentioned above are generally protected, but not sufficiently.

**Figure 2** Do you think that rights of children and youth in today's Russian society are protected?





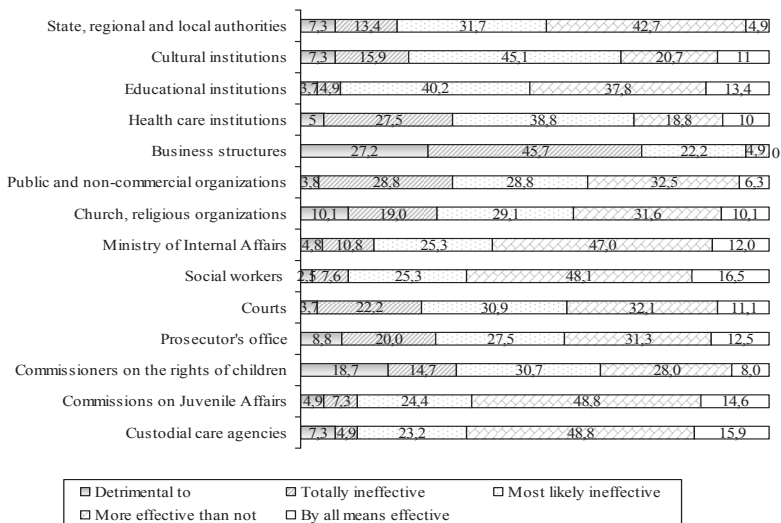
In this regard, the experts mostly correlated the insufficient legal security of children and youth in Russia with the lack of a targeted state youth policy in general and, primarily to the lack of an effective youth-oriented legal framework. This point of view is held by a majority of the experts (64.6%). One reason experts identified as being serious for the low level of legal security of children and youth (at 37.8%), was the underdeveloped structure of public institutes, the support of which could protect their rights. Against this background, such reasons as the ineffective work of legal institutes (courts, prosecutor's offices) and law enforcement authorities are, in the experts' opinions, less significant, though the said agencies have an adverse effect on the development of the legal framework.

During the interview, the experts also identified other reasons which have an obvious adverse effect in the field of legal security of children and youth. Such reasons named included „the low functional literacy and competence of employees of law enforcement bodies”, „the lack of a unified system to regulate the issues of juvenile rights”, „the current punitive and not right-protective approach to youth services and youth protection”, and „the poor support of the institution of the family”. As the main reason for the low level of legal security of children and youth in Russia, the lack of effective youth laws was identified. The lack of public organizations to which one can apply for rights protection is considered significant by one third of the experts. Every fourth expert indicated the ineffective and sometimes uncontrolled operation of law enforcement bodies.

As seen from the data (see Figure 3), certain activities of authorities and institutions are considered most effective as regards YAR services. Primarily, these are custodial care agencies, commissions on juvenile affairs, social workers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and federal, regional and local authorities.

One should note that experts took a critical attitude toward the participation of business organisations. Over a quarter of interviewed experts valued the youth-targeted activities of business organisations as detrimental, while almost half of those interviewed (45.7%) valued these activities as most likely ineffective. This is obviously explained by the very low social responsibility level of the Russian business community.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the activities of the Commissioner for the rights of children are appraised rather critically (as compared to other evaluations). One third of the experts (33.4%) identified the activities of the Commissioner as being detrimental and most likely as ineffective. In all appearances, such opinions are explained by the low development of this institute in the regions under study.

**Figure 3** Evaluate the role of institutions and organisations in YAR services (%)

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

A special standardised questionnaire survey conducted with an all-Russian sample of 1,700 respondents in January 2007 by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) showed that the most serious factor resulting in children joining the at-risk group is family problems (financial, housing, relative illness, etc.). Among other factors that residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg particularly identify are a low level of parental care and a lack of a developed leisure infrastructure. The latter factor was also named by residents of all large cities of the country who took part in the survey.

The majority of respondents primarily consider that the YAR situation can be improved by measures directed at the improvement of the family institution and the rendering of social services to all children without discrimination or labelling them as “bad” and “good”. In this regard, the respondents admit the necessity of introducing innovative YAR services which exclude punitive measures. No doubt this can be considered a positive issue, one which confirms a preference for the development of juvenile justice.

A public opinion shift from zero tolerance to understanding and reconciliation is more appreciated by residents of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other large cities than by residents of small towns and rural communities. As to the

question of who must care for the fate of a “problem” child if parents of that child do not want or cannot care for them, the respondents evaluated the roles of close relatives and custodial care at approximately 50/50. Respondents are least inclined to see courts as entities which can determine the fates of “problem” children. Obviously, this is largely explained by the specific legal culture of the residents and their personal experiences with law enforcement bodies which do not always meet the high requirements demanded of this institution, including transparency and confidence.

Respondents’ opinions as to whether or not relatives should concern themselves with the fate of children in critical situations are reinforced by the responses of children. When questioned whom they would resort to, the vast majority named their relatives in the following order of priority – parents, grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters.

Thus, according to public opinion, the most topical issues are family institution improvement and family support from the state. A developed system of family services provides real chances to families so that they can solve their problems in the best possible way. In the regions where the system is underdeveloped, YAR growth and juvenile offences are positively correlated with a number of dysfunctional families.

Another vital issue is the setting up of day-to-day work with children in their community and the development of youth-targeted services. Primarily, responsibility for this activity is vested in municipal authorities. In these fields, public organizations, including youth organizations, must play an active part as well. It is necessary to involve business structures which must compensate for a shortage in budget funds. One option is the development of a youth service system based on schools and cultural-entertainment institutions (clubs) which already have trained personnel in pedagogical and psychological fields; in addition the population’s confidence in schools and clubs is higher than that in public organizations or law enforcement authorities.

Unfortunately, public opinion today is that YAR services are associated with child delinquency and therefore neglect the prevention activities of various departments and institutions. To an even lesser degree does public opinion support the idea that YAR services provide a long-term comprehensive program directed at supporting minors caught in critical life situations. The case in hand is not only a problem of intentionally shaping public opinion, but of raising awareness, professional training and the level of personal responsibility of officials, public actors and politicians whose concern is YAR and their problems.

Thus, by comparing statistical data, public opinion survey results and expert panel surveys we can conclude that in the RF society, professionals and the

state still have no common opinion and distinct approach to understanding YAR problems and the protection of youth rights. By all appearances, no positive opinion on the positive experience of YAR services and on the results of the operation of juvenile courts has reached the general population or state officials yet. In this respect, 72.4% of experts interviewed voiced their criticisms of the mass media. And, in turn, this explains the low public awareness of the problem.

## **YAR REPRESENTATIVE PROFILE**

The minors surveyed were split as follows: the first sub-group was composed of those who had committed a crime and served a custodial sentence; and the other group was those who are just ‘problem’ youngsters who have not stood trial or served a custodial sentence. It turns out that among those who committed crimes, girls amount to 7.1% and boys amount to 92.1%; while from YAR who do not commit crimes, girls and boys comprise 34.4% and 65.6%, respectively.

The analysis of respondents in the two YAR subgroups shows that notwithstanding general trends, each of the pilot regions has certain characteristics which must be accounted for during the implementation of the projects.

The majority of YAR permanently reside in the pilot regions. However, it should be noted that the share of YAR permanently residing in Stavropol Territory, as compared to average figures and values for the other pilot regions, is lowest at 51.4%. This is explained by a high level of migration within the Southern Federal Okrug. The largest percentage of permanently residing teenagers at risk is in the South–Western Administrative Okrug of Moscow at 84.2%. One could suggest that relocation results in a certain (however, less obvious as compared to other factors) adverse effect on social adaptation and the socialization of teenagers.

When characterizing the family conditions of those interviewed, one should note that the majority of respondents in this group live in broken homes. Thus, the vast majority of those interviewed (80.9%) indicated that they live together with mother, while the share of those interviewed who said that they lived together with their fathers in their apartments (among their other relatives) was almost half (49.9%). In general, in the pilot regions a certain correlation can be tracked between the education level of fathers and criminal offences of their children. The more educated a father is, the less probable it is that his child will commit a crime. If we take into account the fact that the majority of

offenders are boys, it becomes clear that a “steady and literate man’s hand” in a family is very important.

Teenagers kept in correctional facilities care more about family relations because they obviously idealise the family milieu they left at home. Unfortunately, these hopes often “collapse” and youngsters face bitter disappointment when they return home from an educational colony. This is confirmed by professionals who supervise former teenage offenders released from custody at their living community.

The majority of teenagers note that there are no problems in their families. However, among the main problems named by the respondents, the dominant ones include alcoholism of family members and serious illness. According to appraisals by YAR, problems common amongst to all families include physical violence, bodily blows, and threats to health and life. As witnessed by the responses of pupils from Stavropol territory’s educational colonies, half of those pupils faced the problem of physical violence. In addition, in this region 50% of respondents of this YAR subgroup noted such problems as permanent features of their families. In this context, one may say that the situation in Stavropol territory is critical.

YAR’s views on their life goals may be defined as positive. Contrary to expert evaluations, a significant part of YAR does not consider “money” to be their major goal in life. They are more focused on obtaining a prestigious occupation which, in their opinion, must ensure a comfortable living. However, in Stavropol, YAR’s aspirations for “getting money by any means” are strong when compared to other regions.

Among YAR’s fears, the top ones ranked according to their importance are being afraid for their lives and the lives of their relatives owing to growing crime rates. To a considerable degree, the effect of this factor is aggravated by a lack of self-confidence, with a feeling that they are themselves unable to implement their most important and significant life values.

Within this study it was very important to identify the main reasons for the tendency of children and teenagers to commit crimes. In this context we thought it necessary to find out opinions for all peer groups. It turned out that respondents from the “offenders” group named the “adverse influence of their peers” and lack of life goals as dominant reasons. Factors related to a crisis in family relations, which are predominant according to the expert community, were identified by only 14.2% of respondents in this youth group.

The research was done within a relatively short period when the pilot projects were being launched. That is why it is probably too early to speak about the dynamics and effectiveness of the projects. However, some preliminary appraisals were made, first of all, concerning the evaluation of the changes in

attitudes of adults towards children. Only 14.5% indicated positive changes. Thus, 40.1% of those interviewed noted that in the last year nothing important happened in this field. Meanwhile, a relative majority of those interviewed (45.1%) thinks that the attitude of adults toward them only became worse in the last year. Taking into account the responses of teenagers, one can conclude that the activities of various departments and institutions engaged in YAR services do not meet the objectives set, while the effectiveness criteria for these activities (in the form of reports on measures taken and money spent) completely interfere with the solving of problems. Here it turned out that the amount of positive changes is greater for the activities of correctional facilities as compared to that of community-based YAR service agencies. As one of the directors of the correctional facilities commented regarding the situation: “It’s only we who need this category of youth. No one is interested in them – they have criminal records and it is all the same for them”.

There are other regional distinctions between the two YAR subgroups. Thus, out of respondents registered in Rostov Oblast, 65.4% noted that they learnt how to apply for professional help; however, the same was noted for only 4.2% of such respondents among the pupils of educational colonies. A similar situation can be observed in the majority of the pilot regions. The fact that teenagers at correctional facilities do not acquire the “applying for professional and adult help” skills can be regarded as an alarming sign, since the chance is that on release from an educational institute they will face this problem again.

Thus, a vast majority of respondents tend to appraise the effectiveness of their participation in a pilot project as positive primarily concerning changes in their personal attitudes and level of mastering various skills which enable them to more successfully adapt themselves in contemporary social environment.

## **GENDER SPECIFICS**

Gender issues are insufficiently understood and poorly accounted for in YAR services. At the same time, paying attention to gender helps to more correctly and effectively build YAR services, determine which methods should be used with girls and boys, and discover what arguments are required to help children understand their interests, self-actualization, behaviour, etc. The results of YAR surveys in the pilot regions helped to determine that girls at risk are more emotional, and more sensitive to the specifics of social contacts. They have a stronger need to be understood (for example, by

teachers); however, they react more strongly to unjustified attitudes towards them. Of note is a stronger dependence on the opinions of their peers and friends, and they are more sensitive to the income level of their families. At the same time, for girls at risk a more serious attitude towards their future life is characteristic; they think more about their future, and their perceptions of their future professional occupations are highly variable. However, the views of girls and boys at risk concerning the creation of their own families are not so different.

As for the two YAR subgroups, one can note that both boys and girls kept in correctional facilities tend to perceive more good in family relationships, while children who live at home, on the opposite, evaluate them more critically.

The feelings of girls after the delivery of a court sentence (fear and exasperation) also somewhat differ from the feelings of boys in such situations. Some typical boys' responses include: "A smile on my face and depression in my heart", "I wanted badly to go home and see my parents", "a poor girl-friend and mother", "all life goals lost", "just wanted to make all cry".

The share of girls appealing court judgments was significantly less than that of boys. Girls are more interested in consultations on housing issues and family relations. There is clear evidence that girls tend to participate in the development of personal rehabilitation programs less than boys while boys are keener on their rights and obligations.

## CONCLUSION

As is known in terms of "human capital assets" and "social capital" theories, YAR crime prevention is more effective than YAR rehabilitation and probation. However, many professionals in the service, field and community actors are still little aware of crime prevention measures taken under the pilot projects.

According to study data, YAR families are not or are insufficiently paid attention to by professionals. One could hardly name any service institute which could help families to solve their problems, particularly in the field of family relations, before a teenager commits a crime.

There should be an effective YAR-targeted policy, identified as a constituent part of a social policy of the State at federal, regional and local levels. To improve YAR services, the public must be well-informed and have a developed opinion. This complex and delicate work is impossible without the participation of regional and federal policy makers. One should note

that in Russia, different and often opposing approaches exist in relation to the goals and methodology of YAR services. According to the study data, this is due to a misalignment in departmental work programs. Meanwhile, there is an obvious lack of experience in how to moderate the activities of various Ministries and Agencies performing in the same domain. It appears that the first step is to initiate a nation-wide dialogue of professionals on the development of inter-regional/national YAR service strategies.

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