

Forming an Alliance Against the Non-Culture of Looking Away

The campaign “Gewalt – Sehen – Helfen” (“Violence – Notice it – Help”) of the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City

by Dr Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller



I am doing something ...

... against violence

- I make eye contact with the victim.
- I call “can I help?” or “we are here and will help you” to the victim.
- I loudly call the attention of people around me to the emergency situation.
- I address bystanders directly and ask for their assistance: “You with the red jacket - please call the police!”
- I dial the police emergency number. This is a free number and manned at all times.
- In a train I pull the emergency brake in case of danger.
- I place myself at the police’s disposal as a witness. Thus, offenders can be detected more easily and further crime can be prevented.
- I act before the situation comes to a head.
- I do not allow others to pick a fight with me, and I do not pick a fight with others. Violent situations are often generated by one thing leading to the next.
- I never ever meddle with a weapon, because weapons generally make for an escalation.

Help ...

is to be obtained at ...

- **Police emergency number 110...**

Further information at ...

- Police headquarters Frankfurt am Main, Press and Information Office, 7 55-19 98 8
- Police Shop 28 52 35
- Municipal Public Order Office Frankfurt am Main, Task Force 2 12-44 04 4
- Counselling for Citizens, Frankfurt am Main, Römerberg 32, 2 12-4 00 00
- Emergency number for women 70 94 94
- College of further education, Frankfurt am Main 2 12-3 99 89
- Council for Prevention Office 2 12-3 54 43

www.gewalt-sehen-helfen.de

Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City, assisted by:  
Association Citizens and Police for More Security (registered society)  
German Cities’ Media  
Traffic Association, Frankfurt am Main

Flyer of the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City

The examples of brutal violence in broad daylight in large cities, but increasingly also in rural areas must wake us up. The example of a 9-year-old schoolboy who bullied a fellow schoolboy and said irreverently to his teacher, who scolded him in school, “so I wait until we are out of school, then you have nothing more to tell me” must alert us. Experts agree: The public space is not a legal vacuum: It has to be remade a protected area and an area of law. It should not be accept-

ed that a citizen who, regardless of his age, must be afraid to walk on the street or take the underground trains. However, how can we deoxygenate the widespread climate of violence and how can we make our environment safe again? A visitor to the Frankfurt Book Fair said, she had traveled by train to Frankfurt and was surprised when she arrived. She knew the city from the past – Frankfurt had been regarded as one of the cities in Germany with

the highest crime rate and especially the station area should better be avoided. Today, however, being a guest in the city she felt safe and well. How can this be explained?

Thirteen years ago, on 22 July 1996, the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City was founded at the initiative of the Frankfurt Mayor Petra Roth and the former police chief, together with the head of the public prosecution office and the City Councillors for Security, Education and Social Affairs. The aim was to be able to address the underlying causes for the rise of crime early and effectively. Since then, the problem areas in the field of crime have been analyzed, in order to implement strategies for the prevention of crime in cooperation with all social institutions of the city. In the city of Frankfurt, prosecutors and police cooperate and coordinate their respective tasks in the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence.

The council members recognized very early that one of the key factors in perpetuating violence is the phenomenon of the non-culture of looking away in emergency and conflict situations. Action had to be taken against this attitude. It quickly became clear that helper skills, the ability of individuals to actually help in emergencies, were to be promoted. Only in this way, the citizens can be supported to develop the necessary moral courage. Only in this way, we can create a joint attitude of attention and support: “No looking away when we witness violent acts against others, we ought to show cour-

At a bus stop Mrs A. observes three young men bumping into an elderly woman. Suddenly, one of the teenagers tries to snatch the woman’s handbag. Mrs A. speaks to the bystanders in a loud voice. “Help! Take action! This woman needs help! You, in the yellow jacket, call the police!” Immediately, the situation is changing: The passers-by respond to the appeals, come to an understanding among them, and chase away the culprits.

Source: engagieren – vernetzen – vorbeugen. Crime prevention in Frankfurt City, edited by Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City (Translation Current Concerns)

age and help, but without endangering ourselves” – as the 2004 annual report of the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence says.

Civil courage can be learned. There are now numerous programs available to citizens to learn, for example with the help of role-plays, how they can behave in various situations of conflict. For Frank Goldberg from the Council, an important basis for his work in order to pull the rug out from under crime is the “provision and further development of traditional values and norms that promote civil responsibility and the promotion of responsibility and the sense of duty.”

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Steady Prevention is Successful in the Long Run



Current Concerns: Why are the activities of the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City?

Frank Goldberg\*: The most important representatives of the city’s administration, the police and justice are members of the Council for Prevention. The Council for Prevention is able to make long range decisions and to implement them. The Council for Prevention is associated with a network of working groups on special topics und a voluntarily working network of regional prevention councils. Problems with crimes have to be solved in the districts at first. Structural problems are dealt with in the working groups on special topics and the overall strategy is mapped out in the Council for Prevention. The whole thing works quickly and unobstructedly.

What has increasingly to be taken into account concerning the prevention of local crime according to your opinion?

It is the involvement of the citizens that is important. They know a lot about the reasons of local delinquency and collaborate in order to solve the problems. It is the collaboration of the whole society that is needed.

What could citizens do fundamentally to make crime unnecessary?

At first it is important to foster the attitude of solidarity within the city society. We have to create an urban awareness again so that it is taken for granted that people do help and look after each other.

The citizen can contribute to our local prevention councils so that the social conditions concerning the rise of delinquency are solved on the ground. The citizen can notice violent situations, help the victim without jeopardizing himself. Civil courage makes the offenders feel insecure, helps the victims and reduces the crime rate.

What are your most important experiences from your activities in the Council for Prevention?

It is very important not to get lost in single projects, but to implement programs within the wider range of the population. Behavior modification as with the prevention of violence in schools can only be achieved by sustainability and persistence. In Frankfurt, the people’s fear of delinquency has been reduced from 57 percent in 1995 to 14 percent in 2008. These figures show that our steady prevention is successful in the long run.

Which other European countries take up your concept and what are your experiences?

With our colleagues in the other European cities, we carry out a steady exchange of information and experience. Also we are visited frequently by non-Europeans, recently from South Africa, whose representatives ask for our advice for the occasion of the World Cup. Our campaign “violence-notice it-help” to foster civil courage and the issue of how to implement these ideas within the citizens attract wide interest.

\* Frank Goldberg is managing director of the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City

One Example: The Project *Emergency Entrance*



ef. In Frankfurt, among a multitude of other projects, the new project *emergency entrance* has existed for one year. Normally, *emergency entrances* are retail shops and other accessible facilities, in which children are especially welcomed and whose owners voluntarily agreed to help children in case of need. The project is an important corner stone that fosters a “feeling of togetherness” in the district and therefore, creates a sphere which makes it much more difficult or even impossible to commit criminal activities.

A bright yellow sticker “Come in – children get help here” on entrance doors of shops, pharmacies and retail stores should give children a stronger sense of security along their way to kindergarden and school.

Wherever this sticker is put up on entrance doors, it is signalled that there are so-called emergency entrances, where children get help and an opportunity to retreat. Normally, emergencies are “little everyday difficulties, such as nausea, falls, lost keys, the need to go to the loo, but also having a bad feeling or the feeling of being harassed by others.” The shop owners are informed by a letter of the regional prevention council and get specific tips what to do, if a child needs help as well as important phone numbers for emergency. In Frankfurt, 95 percent of all shopkeepers have voluntarily agreed to take part in the project. With another letter the parents are informed about the project and invited to talk about it with their children. Schools, kindergardens and day-nurseries are informed as well and asked to cooperate. The regional prevention council offers its advice and support. (All letters are available in German at [www.gewalt-sehen-helfen.de](http://www.gewalt-sehen-helfen.de). On this website an overview of the projects is also translated into English.)

(Translation Current Concerns)



# Taking Our Youth With Us on a Constructive and Humane Path

## Value education in family and school to counterbalance destructive effects of media violence

by Dr Rudi and Renate Hänsel

(Paper delivered at the conference entitled “Value education, success in life and audio-visual media: The problem of the mediatisation of childhood” in Berlin on 19. October 2009. Topic of the paper: “The Impact of audio-visual media on the character formation of adolescents”)

We are going to show that character formation always happens in the context of values. There is no development and no education without values. Next we will direct your attention towards the disastrous psycho-social consequences of our children’s exposition to violence in some of the audio-visual media. These media teach our children a number of amoral and anti-social “anti-values”, which are incompatible with the ethical values of a civilised world. These “anti-values” like hostility, contempt and violence towards humans, conveyed through images, language and interaction, present a harmful orientation for an ever increasing number of children and youths, i.e. for their ways of feeling, thinking and acting, i.e. for their character formation.

The extent of today’s juvenile delinquency in many European countries is a disaster for the affected societies: civil-war-like turmoils in Great Britain, the Netherlands, in Denmark and Sweden, in Greece, France and in Germany. Even in Switzerland – as a study of the *Criminological Institute of the University of Zurich* from August 2009 revealed – about every third 15 to 16-year-old youngster has become victim to violence and about 25% of them had committed violent acts themselves. The study had been ordered by the Canton of

### Theses

1. Thesis: There is no education without communication of values. Value education goes with character development.
2. Thesis: Many of the electronic media transport contents which are directly opposed to the ethical values of a civilised society.
3. Thesis: Family and school must lay ethical value orientation and reinforce those values and virtues that are directed towards the common weal.
4. Thesis: We will only gain our children’s compliance and co-operation if we succeed in forming an alliance for humaneness with them, on equal level.

St Gallen in order to be able to evaluate the options of intervention and prevention strategies. The extent of the young people’s experiences as offenders or victims surprised everybody. In order to prevent the enhancement of the youth’s readiness to use violence by exposing them to violence-transmitting media, the young people should learn to sort out such media products that are sensible and to reject the rest and learn to use electronic media in a reasonable way. How can we, parents and teachers, lend a hand to such learning? The adolescents of today will hardly allow adults to forbid them anything; moreover, everybody must be able to handle the computer nowadays if only for the benefit of his later professional life.

Our approach is the following: Only if such learning processes are embedded in an ethical value structure, will our youths have a moral compass at their disposal in order to handle the media in a constructive way. And

these ethical values have to be laid in the families and must be strengthened and consistently enforced in societal institutions like kindergarden and school.

Since we know from a life-long experience as teachers and parents that all efforts will be in vain if we fail to put the youngsters off from their destructive ways, we will dedicate the greater part of this paper to this problem and will do so with as much practical relevance as possible.

#### 1. Values are acquired in the context of human interaction

The human being is able to distinguish between positive and negative, healthy and sick, becoming and harming tendencies in his life. This way, humans are able to set values, create culture and develop an ethics. The basic principle inherent in all ethical values is that “all activity must serve the *humaneness* of man, (i.e. the development of the self and human-

ity to a higher level, the protection and dignity of the individual and mankind as a whole)” (Werner Wiater).

#### Values are learnt

The psychological, mental and social development of the child begins with the first day of its life and takes place in the context of social interaction with its closest attachment figures in the family and later on with the persons of his nearer and farer environment. This is where the forming of a conscience, ethical behaviour and moral feeling commence.

The basis for such learning processes are only a few predispositions. (*In the following we lean on the educationalist Werner Wiater, who very clearly described this early process of value formation*):

“Man is born with the ability to perceive (sense) his own actions as being satisfying and comfortable or frustrating and painful.” Furthermore nature endowed him with the ability “to evaluate his actions as being successful or unsuccessful. This is essential for his surviving, since otherwise we would not be able to achieve our aims.” Even in the very small child elementary forms of logical thinking can be observed. Thus the necessary presuppositions are given that humans may delineate criteria, which of their actions are sensible, and which are senseless, which are harming and which are becoming, what is good and what is bad. In the course of his life, each individual acquires – grappling and interacting with his specific environment – “a very personal organisation of behaviour-

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### “Forming an Alliance against ...”

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Similarly recognizing that something must be done about the predominating attitude of looking away, the campaign “Violence – Notice it – Help” was developed, which soon attracted attention all over Germany. The campaign succeeded in bringing about a trend reversal, while the fear of becoming victims of crime has decreased significantly among the population (see interview in the box, p. 3)).

The campaign is accompanied by a variety of information brochures, training courses, activities in public and projects, and has since found many imitators in other cities in Europe.

Since the beginning of its work, the Council has established a network for a purposeful coordination of administrative and social institutions of security and prevention. Crime prevention is understood as a general social concern. The recipe for success of prevention work is to include the expertise of local citizens. The citizens can immediately contribute to “their neighborhoods” and their efforts are supported. Thus, preventive mergers occur permanently and on all levels.

Over the years, the participation of citizens and the neighborhood work in crime prevention on a voluntary and unpaid basis has been worthwhile and is embodied in society. Frank-

furt is thus exemplary for the prevention of crime all over Germany.

#### An active civil society is needed


In Frankfurt, it became obvious from a very early stage that crime prevention has to start locally in the immediate neighborhood before it can tackle the causes of crime preemptively and comprehensively. Therefore, in Frankfurt, the first regional Council on neighborhood level was founded in 1997 in Sossenheim. In the regional councils the city, the police and also clubs, schools, churches, neighborhood initiatives, trade associations and social services cooperate jointly and on an equal basis. Improvements in security and thus the maintenance of social life can only be achieved through purposeful cooperation of all social groups. The commitment of all parties involved is the key to success.

#### European City Network as “early warning system”

In 2001, the city of Düsseldorf and other cities together with the *Stiftung Deutsches Forum für Kriminalprävention* (Foundation German Forum for Crime Prevention) in coordination with the Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City founded “a City Network for more tolerance and non-violence” reaching beyond the borders of Germany. By sharing of identifiable trends in crime and key aspects an “early warning system” was established. The “overriding goal is to curb crime by means of preventive measures, reduce crime-induced damage and increase the feeling of security on the part of the general public.” (European City Network for more Tolerance and Nonviolence: [www.kriminalpraevention.de/downloads/english/05Citynetwork-2001.pdf](http://www.kriminalpraevention.de/downloads/english/05Citynetwork-2001.pdf), [www.gewalt-sehen-helfen.de](http://www.gewalt-sehen-helfen.de) – English version)

This campaign differs fundamentally from previous security concepts: Primarily, not victims or offenders are addressed, but all citizens, since at any time they might witness or watch a violent situation. For every citizen it has to become crystal clear that protection against crime and violence is only possible due to his or her own activity.

Source: *engagieren – vernetzen – vorbeugen. Crime prevention in Frankfurt City, edited by Council for Prevention of Crime and Violence of Frankfurt City (Translation Current Concerns)*




**Sagen Sie nicht:**  
„Gewalt geht mich nichts an“

Gewalt findet täglich statt, manchmal ganz in Ihrer Nähe: Körperverletzungen, Sachbeschädigungen oder Raub. Auch Anmache, Rempelen, Belästigungen.

Gewalt entwickelt sich immer dort, wo keiner hinschaut. Wer wegschaut, gibt der Gewalt eine Chance! Wer hinschaut, reduziert die Gewaltbereitschaft.

Deshalb hat der Präventionsrat der Stadt Frankfurt die Initiative gegen das Wegschauen ins Leben gerufen. Gewalt sehen und helfen. Wenn wir den Gewalttätern auf die Finger schauen und Menschen in Not Hilfe leisten, tragen wir dazu bei, unsere Stadt lebenswert zu erhalten.

**GEWALT**




**Sagen Sie nicht:**  
„Ich habe nichts gesehen“

Viel zu viele Menschen in unserer Stadt schauen bei Gewalt weg. Eilig rennen Sie am Geschehen vorbei oder schauen teilnahmslos zu. Sagen sich: „Mir kann das nicht passieren!“ oder „Was geht mich das an.“

Auch Sie können jederzeit mit einer Gewalt- oder Notsituation konfrontiert werden.

Wer in dieser Situation hinschaut, hat schon den ersten Schritt zur Hilfe getan. Lassen Sie den Täter nicht aus den Augen. Beobachten Sie die Situation und merken Sie sich so viele Einzelheiten wie möglich. Machen Sie andere auf die Situation aufmerksam. Helfen Sie mit, „Öffentlichkeit“ zu erzeugen. So haben Gewalthandlungen keine Chance.

**SEHEN**



**Sagen Sie :**  
„Ich kann helfen“

Sie sollen nicht die Heldin oder den Helden spielen – die gibt's im Kino oder Fernsehen.

Um Hilfe zu leisten, brauchen Sie nur andere auf die Situation aufmerksam zu machen. Wenn Sie schreien, werden andere es auch tun. Wenn Sie 110 anrufen, wird schnell professionelle Hilfe vor Ort sein.

Überwinden Sie eigene Ängste. Und zeigen Sie Verantwortung und Solidarität mit dem Opfer. Bieten Sie Ihre Unterstützung an. Damit werden Übergriffe verhindert.

Versuchen Sie beim nächsten Mal aktiv zu sein und holen Sie Hilfe. Sie werden das gute Gefühl erleben, Zivilcourage gezeigt zu haben.

**HELFEN**

**Do not say**  
“Violence has nothing to do with me”

Violence happens daily, sometimes in your immediate surroundings: Criminal assault, wilful damage to property, or robbery. Advances, jostling, harassment, too.

Violence always develops where nobody looks closely. Looking away means giving violence a chance! Engaged on-looking diminishes the inclination towards violence.

Therefore, the Council for Prevention of Frankfurt City has originated the initiative against looking away. Do not ignore violence and help. If we keep a sharp eye on the perpetrators of violence and help people in distress, we contribute to keeping our city liveable.

**Violence**

**Do not say**  
“I did not see anything”

In case of violent acts, far too many people in our city look away. Hastily they run past what is happening, or they watch impassively. They say to themselves “This cannot happen to me”, or “What is that to me?”

You, too, may be confronted with a situation of violence or emergency at any time.

The person that does not ignore a situation of this kind has already made the first step towards help. Keep your eyes glued to the perpetrator. Watch the situation and memorise as many details as possible. Call the attention of others to the situation. Help to create “publicity”. In this way, acts of violence have no chance.

**Notice it**

**Say**  
“I can help”

Do not try to be the hero or the heroine – they only exist in the movies or on TV.

To provide assistance, you only have to call the attention of others to the situation. If you shout or scream, others will do so, too. If you call the police, professional help will be on the spot soon.

Overcome your own fears. And show responsibility and solidarity with the victim. Offer your assistance. In this way, assaults are thwarted. Next time, try to be active and fetch help. You will experience the good feeling of having shown civil courage.

**Help**