



## **The Work of Our Charity: samara - Prevention of (Sexual) Abuse, Vienna, Austria**

Violence against girls and boys is still very widespread. We interpret the term “violence against children” to mean psychological, physical, and sexual violence. The prevention of violence requires a sustained and coordinated effort at global and local levels.

Our work in Vienna represents a national and a local effort. In accordance with our wide interpretation of the term “violence against children”, we take a broad approach to attacking the problem. Our team consists of expert psychologists, social workers, and educators that focus on kindergarten and social pedagogy. We have over 25 years of practical experience in the prevention of violence against children and adolescents.

We also have international experience; in particular, we led a one-year project in schools and homes for children in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the „Austrian Development Agency.”

Our vision is that prevention of violence becomes an integral part of child protection regardless of religious, cultural, ethnic, or social backgrounds. This work views itself as a health-policy measure in the sense of the World Health Organization and the Ottawa-Charta.

### **Objectives**

The execution of work with a trans-cultural approach boosts the understanding of and respect for other cultures in children and thereby has a lasting impact against discrimination and racism. European ways of life have become increasingly trans-cultural. Our cultures no longer correspond to the idealizations of unified national cultures, but instead are characterized by a plurality of possible identities and exist across national borders.

Based on the concept of multiculturalism, our goal is to improve the mutual understanding and the cultural and social interaction of the participating children, parents, and teachers in our workshops. We use the term “trans-cultural competence” to denote the respect, appreciation, collective action, openness, and engagement with other cultures.

Living in such an environment is important in order to impart certain fundamental ethical values to the children. According to scientific investigations by Beelmann, 5-7 year old children develop increasing ethnic prejudices.

To date, hardly any concepts exist in Austria that are suitable for schools and that combine work against racism and sexism. Developing such concepts is thus very much a forward-looking venture.

The main objective of our project is to participate to decrease the risk factors of violence against girls and boys, especially those with migratory backgrounds. Protective factors for children will be improved at the selected model schools.

By considering the multiple religious, ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds in our workshops, girls and boys are empowered to speak freely about transgressions and violence perpetrated against them.

We also aim to help anchor prevention of violence at a structural level and to contribute to the development of quality standards for the protection of children.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of our work, we are working with the teachers training colleges in Vienna and also developed a handbook and teaching materials.