



# OUTinOUT PROJECT

## WORKSTREAM 4

### GOOD PRACTICES AND EXPERIMENTATION OF GOOD QUALITY TRAINING INTERVENTIONS

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## Acronymes

**ALP** – Associação de Ludotecas do Porto (Porto’s Association of recreational extra-curricular activities and programs)

**CDT** – Comissão para a Dissuasão da Toxicodependência (Commissions for the dissuasion of drug addiction)

**CEF**- Cursos de Educação e Formação (Courses of Education and Training)

**CESA** – Centro Educativo de Santo António (Educational Centre)

**CNPCJR** – Comissão Nacional de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens em Risco (National Commission for the Protection of Children and Youth at Risk)

**CPCJ** - Comissões de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens (Commissions for the Protection of Children and Youth)

**CV** – Casa do Vale (Temporary child care residence)

**DGRSP** –Direção-Geral de Reinserção Social e Serviços Prisionais (Probation and Penitentiary Services – Ministry of Justice; This service, concerning the juvenile justice system (LTE) is responsible for the supervision of the educational tutelary measures and for the educational centers)

**EMAT** – Equipas Multidisciplinares de Assessoria aos Tribunais (Multidisciplinary Teams of Support to the Courts)

**LP**- Lei de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens em Perigo (Law on the Protection of Children and Young People in Danger)

**LTE** - Lei Tutelar Educativa (Educational Guardianship Law)

**GNR** – Guarda Nacional Republicana (National Republican Guard)

**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation

**IPDJ** – Instituto Português do Desporto e da Juventude (Portuguese Institute for Sports and Youth)

**IPSS** – Instituições Privadas de Solidariedade Social (Private entities of social solidarity)

**PIAC** – Projeto Integrado de Apoio à Comunidade (Integrated Project for Community Support)

**PIEF** – Programa Integrado de Educação e Formação (Integrated Program for Education and Training)

**PSP** – Polícia de Segurança Pública (Public Security Police)

**TEIP** – Territórios Educativos de Intervenção Prioritária (Educational Territories of Priority Intervention)

### *Introduction*

The main general objective of the Workstream 4 was the planning and implementation of interventions that enhance the quality of work in terms of promoting the social integration of youth with antisocial and delinquent behavior. It represents the point of integration of the different phases and activities of the action-research project and its most concrete expression. The planning of the pilot-experiences are supported by the knowledge that was produced about practices, needs and resources of the local agencies network and by the dynamic and reciprocal trust that was generated by the previous activities of the OUTinOUT project.

Based on the objectives of this Workstream and the experience afforded by the development of the project, the conceptualization of the prevention program was based on the following key principles:

-The design and implementation of an evidence-based prevention program, which means a program supported by the scientific knowledge about antisocial and delinquent behavior. Moreover, a prevention program based on the interventions that have demonstrated efficacy or have proved to be promising when evaluated according to the standards of the scientific evaluation. The success of prevention efforts depends, in large part on the interventions used. That is why it is imperative to identify approaches that have been proven effective. Despite the existence of educational, cultural and social responses aimed at children and young people, especially from vulnerable groups, the analysis of practices during the OUTinOUT Project made evident the lack of prevention programs specifically addressed to the needs and risk factors for antisocial and delinquent behavior. This need is especially felt at the community level and for young people subject to protective measures, some of which are also in contact with the justice system. Thus scientific knowledge about good prevention practices guided the planning and implementation of the program in the three selected contexts. Moreover the previous experiences developed by the School of Criminology in juvenile contexts (namely in schools) with the aim to prevent youth antisocial behavior (universal prevention)

constituted a useful background in the design and implementation of the current experience.

-The implementation of the project in three different contexts, covering the child welfare system and the justice system. This principle follows from what has been emphasized throughout all the reports of the OUTinOUT Project: (i) the continuity that exists in many of the problematics, both in terms of risk factors and in terms of behavioral outcomes, and (ii) the need, well expressed by the professionals of the two systems and by the local network, of a closer cooperation and a more systematic continuity at the intervention level.

- The implementation of the program in institutional and non-institutional settings.

- The involvement of professionals that follow the young people in a daily basis in the program preparation and implementation, taking into account the objectives of OUTinOUT Project and Workstream 4, and the awareness that the establishment of the necessary conditions for a successful implementation would depend on the close cooperation between practitioners and the project team.

- As we have said, the time of the project do not pitied with the time required by the demands of a scientific evaluation. It was, however, prepared an assessment device of the young participants that can provide a basis for the future evaluation of the effects of the program in their central dimensions.

According to these principles, the team set the following operational objectives that guided the planning and the implementation of Workstream 4:

- To plan an evidence-based prevention program addressed to specific needs of young people with antisocial and delinquent behavior (selective and indicated prevention) as an experience of creation and transmission of knowledge as efficient resource;

- To conceive evaluation tools that could be used in an effective evaluation model;

- To implement the program in close cooperation with agencies and practitioners;

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- To improve the understanding about the specific and differentiated needs of juveniles with antisocial behavior;
- To improve the understanding about institutional resources at local level that could be mobilized for the implementation of preventive practices;
- To design an implementation plan to deliver interventions that are efficient, effective and sustainable.

The first part of the report describes the design of the OUTinOUT Program which supports the three pilot-experiences, highlighting its rationale, structure and methodology. In the second part, the planning and conditions of its implementation are presented. The third part describes and analyses the program implementation in the three contexts (educational centre, youth residential care and community setting). In the fourth part are summarized and discussed the main results of the experiences evaluation. Finally, in the last section, final remarks and guidelines for good quality interventions are presented.

# *I – The Design of the OUTinOUT Program*

## **1. Program Team**

- Josefina Castro e Carla Cardoso (coordination) - School of Criminology, Faculty of Law (U.Porto)
- Ana Margarida Santos - School of Criminology, Faculty of Law (U.Porto)
- Rita Martinho - School of Criminology, Faculty of Law (U.Porto)
- Ana Paula Agra (DGRSP, Ministry of Justice)

In addition to the elements assigned to the OUTinOUT Project, two other persons participated in the design and implementation of the project: Ana Margarida Santos and Ana Paula Agra. Ana Margarida Santos had already collaborated in activities integrated in the Workstream 2 and 3, and followed, from the beginning, the development of the Project. She has a bachelor in criminology and a master in the same area with a master dissertation related to the scope of the program. Moreover, she has experience in intervention with children and young people (particularly in child welfare system). She integrated, as Rita Martinho, the team that implemented the universal prevention program in youth contexts developed by the School of Criminology. Ana Paula Agra is a psychologist, and a senior practitioner of the Probation and Penitentiary System (DGRSP). She has a vast working experience in children, youth and adults with antisocial and delinquent behavior.

The program team had the support of 1 practitioner (“internal facilitator”) in each implementation context.



## 2. Rationale

The OUTINOUT Program is an evidence-based psychoeducational and developmental program designed to promote pro-social behavior and prevent disruptive behavior in children and adolescents. It is based on fundamental and applied scientific knowledge that supports since the 90s, the developmental prevention: the identification of key factors and processes underlying the development of antisocial and delinquent behaviors through life-course; the design, implementation and evaluation of prevention programs aimed at reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors. (e.g. Moffitt et al, 2011; Welsh & Farrington, 2012).

The OUTinOUT Program is inspired in approaches that have been proven effective or promising, as the *Aggression Replacement Training* program (ART; Reddy & Goldstein, 2001) and *Thinking for a Change* (Bush *et al.*, 1997). The Aggression Replacement Training was first employed and evaluated in schools and juvenile justice contexts in 1978. Since that time, an extended number of studies have demonstrated positive outcomes, namely on anger control and on improving social skills.

### 2.1 Core dimensions

Adolescents with aggressive behavior usually lack the social skills required to solve problems adequately. They often lack the ability to express their feelings and to take responsibility for their own actions. They often are cognitive and emotionally immature, impulsive and lack self-control. Supported by this knowledge, the OUTinOUT Program is focused on three major dimensions: 1) Interpersonal problem solving and conflict resolution; 2) Self-control and regulation of aggressiveness; 3) Moral development and social norms internalization.

The first dimension, *interpersonal problem solving and conflict resolution*, is aimed at improving pro-social skills, such as: listening, understanding feelings, dealing with problems; learning how to manage anger. Thus, the purpose of this training is to replace anti-social and destructive behaviors by pro-social ones that help adolescents to have more positive and constructive relationships with others (Glick & Gibbs, 2011).

The *self-control and regulation of aggressiveness* component is based in the literature that suggests that self-control is crucial in regulating antisocial and delinquent behavior (Farrington & Welsh, 2007, Moffitt *et al.*, 2011, Piquero *et al.*, 2010). As highlighted by several researchers, low self-control is a predictor of health, wealth, and crime outcomes from childhood to adulthood. This dimension has been positively correlated with behavior problems such as starting smoking in adolescence, leaving high school, early parenthood, drugs and alcohol abuse, etc. (Moffitt *et al.*, 2011). Programs to enhance children's self-control have been developed and positively evaluated (Piquero *et al.*, 2010; Piquero *et al.*, 2010). Thus the main objectives of this component of the Program OUTinOUT is to improve some executive functioning skills, like inhibitory control and attention, on one hand and, on the other hand, teach adolescents how to manage disturbing situations, how to deal with frustration and control their aggressiveness.

The third dimension, *moral development and social perspective taking*, have its foundations in the literature on moral development and on its relationship with antisocial and delinquent behavior (Eisenberg, 2000; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977; Stams *et al.*, 2006). This module is aimed to improve values like solidarity, sense of justice, fairness and respect for the needs and rights of others, by exposing the adolescents to moral dilemmas. The discussion, in a group context, of different and relevant situations is expected to enhance cognitive conflict promoting a more advanced reasoning.

### 2.2 Motivation, consolidation and transfer of learning

The program included, in addition to the dimensions already mentioned, a motivational component. During the program, through different methodologies, it was worked the motivation of young people to participate in the proposed activities. We point out all of the motivational activities that were planned and implemented:

- Before the 1st session: a meeting with the group of participants and an individual interview with the following objectives: mutual presentation, a presentation of a summary of the program objectives and the clarification of the issues raised by young people in relation to the functioning of the program. The individual interview with each of the participants also intended to provide conditions for a first assessment of individual motivation and expectations for the program, in addition to collect useful information to enhance the adequacy of the sessions.

- In the sessions: it was planned to provide during the implementation of the program experiences at key moments that could constitute incentives for participation and involvement in the activities. The concrete contents of these experiences were not previously defined by the program team; instead they were decided together with the participants by listening their own interests and concerns. The introduction of these "rewards" was combined with the participants' self-assessment and with the performance assessment of each participant that was carried out in each session by the facilitators (held at the end of each session).

Regarding the consolidation and transfer of the learned skills for other experiences and contexts, the team decided to introduce in the program a kind of "homework"; it consists in the proposal of tasks that should be accomplished by the participants; each "homework" would be proposed at the end of each session and presented in the next session.

### 2.3 Social and personal skills

Specifically, the program seeks to promote the development of a wide range of personal and social skills:

- To develop basic skills of interpersonal relationships (e.g., listening, start a conversation, greet, thank, ask for help, apologizing);

- To learn to identify external and internal events that provoke anger and to learn alternative and pro-social behaviors to deal with those events and with the thoughts and feelings associated with them;

- To learn how to deal with feelings (e.g., understand their own feelings, understand the feelings of others, express emotions, deal with fear);

- To promote social perspective taking, as well as the recognition and understanding of the needs of others;

- To develop moral values that promote honesty, sharing, solidarity, justice and fairness, as well as the respect for the needs and rights of others;

- To acquire skills to deal with frustration (e.g., dealing with rejection, handling charges, prepare for stressful conversations), as well as conflict resolution skills (e.g., choose alternatives to aggression, negotiation, social perspective taking, recognition of the needs of others);

- To enhance planning skills (e.g., goal setting, decision making, setting priorities in problem solving, anticipating the consequences of the acts).

### 2.4 Participants

It was intended that the program would be applied to a group of 5 to 10 young people aged between 12 and 14 or between 15 and 18. Ideally, the group should be as homogeneous as possible in terms of maturity level.

## 3. Structure and Methodology

The program is constituted by 12 sessions (4 sessions for each of the core dimensions) held in group, twice a week. The sessions have a duration of about 1 hour.

For the development and promotion of the mentioned skills, each session is constituted by a set of activities to be carried out with the young people. These activities are planned according to their suitability for the developmental level of the participants and the previously outlined specific objectives of each core dimension and skills.

Each session is planned around a main theme and is based on a dynamic and experiential work methodology. The “role playing” is a main methodology and its use in the sessions was inspired by ART: the facilitators present a situation planned according to the theme of the session; they discuss it with participants and then the facilitators perform the situation and model the skills; in the next step the participants are invited to share situations from their life experience that are related to those skills; they are invited to perform those situations with the support of the group; finally, the facilitators conduct the discussion about the role-play giving feed-back about the capacity to perform the instructions and to follow the learning steps. The use of role-play allows the participants not just to think about the situations but to act, potentially enhancing self-awareness.

The role-play, modeling and feed-back were complemented by a playful component able to raise the interest and involvement of the participants. Different strategies were planned (games, role-playing, group discussion, audiovisual material, etc.).

In the program design the following aspects were also specially considered:  
i) The involvement of the professionals of the institutions in the preparation and implementation of the project. The involvement of the institutions and of their

professionals was fundamental in the preparation and implementation. Knowing the institutional constraints in terms of human resources, a major concern was to maintain the communication with the director and staff of each institution during the development of the program. For that purpose it was decided: the jointly planning of regular meetings; the designation of at least a practitioner in each context to collaborate directly in the organization and implementation of the program, according to the objectives of WS4. The latter aspect has been achieved in the three institutional contexts.

ii) The creation of favorable conditions for the preservation of program integrity throughout its implementation. This concern has resulted in:

- The accurate planning of each session-type: each session was designed by the technical team through a detailed description of objectives, methodologies and activities. It was understood that this would be the best way to provide a basis for consistent and oriented work, without losing sight of the objectives of the program. This methodology assures a consistency even when it is necessary to introduce adjustments that arise from the conditions of implementation. It provides also the conditions for the consistency between the experiences developed in the three different contexts.

-The team meetings that occurred between sessions during the implementation of the program. These meetings aimed to discuss the previous session and prepare the next based on the already outlined session plan and also on the information resulting from the implementation of the previous sessions.

- The adequacy of the locals for the application of the program, in order to facilitate its implementation, was of major importance. The delivering of the program was planned to occur in the agencies' facilities, avoiding additional routine breaks. Furthermore, in the case of young people in the non-institutional setting, the proximity to the residential environment seemed to be crucial in order to avoid the displacement of the participants. As mentioned before, in this context (co) it was not easy to conciliate this requirement with the available conditions.

### 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the Program were designed during the implementation planning according to the following strategies:

a) Being impossible to implement an evaluation process according to the standards of scientific evaluation (ex-ante and ex-post design with a control group), the OUTinOUT team sought to focus on the development of adequate tools for the individual assessment of the participants. These instruments constitute a basis for the evaluation of the impact of the program on youth, in the context of a future implementation. A set of instruments focused primarily on the core dimensions targeted in intervention have been adapted and tested before the first session of the program.

These individual assessment tools included the following dimensions and measures:

- Young's socio-demographic features: date of birth, grade, type of education (special education, vocational education, regular education), regime type in the fulfilment of the tutelary measure of internment;

- Hobbies and individual interests (e.g. reading, sports, cinema, etc.)

- Antisocial and prosocial behaviour, measured by the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) (Goodman, Meltzer & Bailey, 1998). This questionnaire measures antisocial behaviour (Difficulties) and prosocial behaviour (Strengths) in children and adolescents aged 11 to 17 years old. The version used contains 25 items which cover five dimensions: behavioural problems, emotional symptoms, attention-hyperactivity problems, peer problems and prosocial behaviour. Thus, it includes positive and negative aspects of the subjects. The first four scales reflect the difficulties experienced by the young, while the latter scale reflects their skills.

- Personality, measured by the *Big Five Questionnaire* for children (BFQ-C) (Barbaranelli *et al.*, 2003). This instrument comprises 65 items that allow individuals characterization in the following personality dimensions: extraversion/energy (e.g., activity, enthusiasm, assertiveness and self-confidence); agreeableness (sensitivity towards others and their needs); conscientiousness (dependability, orderliness, precision, fulfilment of commitments); emotional instability (feelings of anxiety, depression, discontent, and anger); and intellect/openness (intellect in school domain, broadness of cultural interests, fantasy, creativity, and interest in other people).

• Self-control, measured by *The Self Control Scale* (Tangney *et al.*, 2002). This scale evaluates the ability to change one's inner responses and to interrupt inappropriate behavioural tendencies (such as impulses). In particular, the instrument covers dimensions such as thoughts control, emotional control, impulsiveness, regulation and rules breaking habits. Low self-control has been related with a wide range of social and individual problems, especially poor school performance or/and negative social interactions. Thus, the individual's ability to exercise self-control can be highly adaptive and allows the individual to inhibit their antisocial impulses and act accordingly social rules.

• Moral Reasoning measured by the *Sociomoral Reflection Measure* - short form (SRM-SF) (Gibbs *et al.*, 1992). This instrument was designed to evaluate the development status of an individual's moral judgment and consists in presenting a set of proposals/statements, followed by questions about moral judgments and questions about the justifications for the given answer. The original instrument contains 11 claims and its scoring follows the moral stages of Kohlberg's theory.

These instruments are self-administered and were applied previously to the intervention, in a quiet place by investigators of the project. The confidentiality of data was guaranteed.

b) The main purpose of process monitoring is to improve how things get done by answering questions about program operations, implementation, and service delivery. The program monitoring was planned as a continuous activity and in fact it involved the feedback of participants, daily discussions with staff, supervision and board meetings. These activities enable the introduction of adjustments in order to improve practices.

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Table 1: Guide for monitoring and evaluation

Information/Indicators	Data Collection and analysis Methods	Source
<p><b>GENERAL INDICATORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-attendance to the sessions</li> <li>- excused and non-excused absences</li> <li>-dropouts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- facilitators’ records of each session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-facilitators</li> </ul>
<p><b>- Behavior and attitudes of youngsters during the sessions and the program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-additional information concerning the participants’ background and relevant life events</li> <li>- youth involvement in the core and motivational activities</li> <li>-the quality of activities performance</li> <li>- group dynamics (participant’s interactions, the progress of the sessions; the observance of rules</li> <li>- significant events</li> <li>- the feedback of the participants concerning the activities the facilitators performance, the rules and the group;</li> <li>-the accomplishment of the “homework activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The reports of the sessions made by the external facilitators</li> <li>- the analysis and results of the meetings , involving the external facilitators (at least twice a week)</li> <li>- the reports of the information provided by the staff and internal facilitator in regular and extra meetings</li> <li>- the materials produced by the participants during and after the sessions;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- external and internal facilitators</li> <li>- staff</li> <li>- group members</li> </ul>
<p><b>The integrity of the program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The decisions taken concerning the changes introduced in the initial plan</li> <li>-The plan of each session with the changes that were introduced to the initial plan and its justification</li> <li>- The analysis of the sessions that took place against what was planned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- - the analysis and results of regular meetings involving the external facilitators and the coordination team (once a week)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-facilitators and coordination team</li> </ul>
<p><b>- FACILITATORS’ PERFORMANCE &amp; TRAINING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The performance of the facilitators in the sessions conduction (difficulties, insights, training needs. general</li> <li>-suggestions for improving the sessions plan , namely the activities and methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self-evaluation</li> <li>- supervision meetings</li> <li>- - the feedback and suggestions of internal facilitators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Facilitators and coordination team</li> </ul>



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c) The evaluation of the program is based on the collected information and analysis that results from monitoring. In addition it was also planned to organize meetings with all the participants, facilitators and agencies' staff after the last session of the program in order to collect their feedback and evaluation. The purposes and methodology of the evaluation will be further detailed in section IV.

## ***II – The Implementation Planning***

### **1. The Contexts of Implementation**

The pilot-experiences occurred in three different contexts:

1. Centro Educativo de Santo António (CESA) – DGRSP\_Ministry of Justice
2. Casa do Vale (CV) – Associação Crescer Ser
3. Comissão de Protecção de Crianças e Jovens – Porto Ocidental in cooperation with the Associação de Ludotecas do Porto

The identification of the three contexts occurred in a "natural" way during the development of the OUTinOUT Project, taking in to account the collaborative and proximal relationship that was built with these agencies in the development of the Workstreams. Moreover these agencies constitute key-nodes of the local network: CESA is the only educational center in the Porto Metropolitan Area and presently the only one in the North of Portugal. The CPCJ- Western Porto is one of the three Commissions of the municipality of Porto and Casa do Vale (CV) is a residential care house for young boys in danger situated in Porto. The latter two institutions had previous collaborations with the School of Criminology. In addition, these three contexts correspond entirely to the key principles that had been defined for the implementation of the program, namely: to implement the program in institutional and community settings and involving the child welfare and the justice systems. Finally, the openness, the availability and the commitment demonstrated by these institutions in the acceptance of the proposal presented by the OUTinOUT team.

In May the Project Team had already finished the structure of the program, having started the preparation meetings with the institutions. The objectives of these meetings were: to discuss the proposal and obtain the input of professionals; the definition of the conditions of implementation; the selection of the youngsters. In the initial meetings it was also designated a professional in each context to participate in the preparation and implementation of the program. The initial meetings involved the direction and members of the institutional staff.

### 2. The Selection of the Participants

The general criteria for the selection of the participants were the adequacy of the program, in terms of objectives and core dimensions, to their needs and individual characteristics. Thus the main criteria of inclusion were substantial deficits in prosocial skills, anger control and moral reasoning, considering the age, and developmental maturity. The selection of juveniles presenting cognitive deficits that were likely to seriously compromise the participation in the proposed activities was avoided.

The selection was based on the proposal presented by the Director of each of the institutions. This proposal was then discussed on the basis of the available information about each youngster taking into account the predefined criteria referred above.

Eight participants were selected in CESA and seven in each of the other contexts. The young offenders selected at the educational center were placed in closed and in semi-open regimes, being deprived of regular contact with the outside. The participants at CV attend the school and other activities in the community. The selected participants in CPCJ/ALP live with their families and are supervised by CPCJ-Western Porto. Initially, it was discussed the possibility to integrate young people with protective measures under the supervision of the other two CPCJs of Porto, in order to make a larger initial group, anticipating potential dropouts or the non-adhesion of families. However, in terms of logistics this possibility put to many difficulties, inasmuch as this would require the displacement of the young to another city area. In addition, the fact that these young people were attending different schools with different schedules would introduce serious obstacles to the implementation.

In the non-institutional group the family consent to participate in the program was obtained through the CPCJ and ALP.

### 3. The Conditions of Implementation

i) Relatively to the facilities for the program implementation, the only difficulties concerned the non-institutional context, since CPCJ facilities do not have any suitable space for this purpose. Furthermore, the CPCJ-Western Porto is installed in the eastern part of the city, in facilities shared with the other two commissions. This fact would create

an additional difficulty taking into account that all the selected participants lived in a neighborhood in the western area. This problem forced to postpone the date of the program implementation in this context. Finally, the cooperation established with the ALP permitted to solve the problem, and the program was applied in the facilities of that agency, located in the neighborhood where the young participants live. In the other contexts, the available rooms were appropriate in terms of physical conditions and in terms of safety.

ii) Facilitators selection and preparation. The effectiveness of this kind of programs depends deeply on the qualities of the facilitators, namely on their experience to deal effectively with adolescents, the capacity to listen them seriously and respectfully and the sensitivity to their needs. It requires simultaneously the capacity to respect the integrity of the program and to moderate and adequately handle common problem behaviors and conflicts. These were the criteria that supported the composition of the external facilitators team.

As usually recommended, it was previously established that each experience would be led with two external facilitators (see team above) and at least a professional from the implementation context (internal facilitator)

For internal facilitators, as mentioned above, the selection was decided by the agencies after the preparatory meetings with the project team. In CESA has been designated one of the probation officers who participated in the organization and in the sessions. In CPCJ / ALP was designated one of the practitioners of the ALP. The adequacy of this decision was clearly during the implementation given her knowledge and experience with families and young people from the neighborhood. This professional participated in all the sessions. In CV the designated professional followed and participated actively in the development of the whole program, from its preliminary stage, although it has not participated in the delivering of the sessions.

In addition to these three key-elements most directly involved in the implementation of the program, it was achieved in the three contexts, particularly in CESA and CV, the extended involvement of the direction and staff both in the preparation and monitoring of the program.

## *III – The Pilot-Experiences: Implementation and Analysis*

This section presents a summary of each pilot-experience, describing and analyzing the main aspects of the program implementation.

### 1. OUTinOUT Program – Centro Educativo Santo António

**Internal Facilitators** – Eduardo Garrido

**External Facilitators** – Josefina Castro and Ana Margarida Santos

The educational centre (CESA) hosts young males aged between 12 and 16 years old with educational measures of internment in semi-open and closed regime. This institution has three residential units: two of them are prepared for the semi-open regime and one for the closed regime.

Eight young boys, with ages between 14 and 17 years old with educational measures of internment participated in the program: Four of them were from the north of the country and the other came from the metropolitan area of Lisbon.

Table 2: Youth’s Characterization - CESA

ID	Age	Schooling	Measure of internment - Regime
A	15	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Semi-open
B	17	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Closed
C	16	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Closed
D	15	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Semi-open
E	15	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Semi-open
F	14	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Semi-open
G	16	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Semi-open
H	15	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Semi-open

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In general, these young offenders have a life trajectory marked by antisocial and delinquent behaviour and serious vulnerabilities: academic failure and truancy/dropout, family instability and, in some cases, victimization the successive loss of affective bonds. One of the youths had serious difficulties in terms of reading and writing basic skills, presenting learning difficulties.

### a) Implementation

The program implementation took place at the institution twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday), from 10.30 a.m. to 11.20/12h a.m. The youth participated in all the planned sessions; with the exception of two bows: one of them missed one session due to sickness and the other missed two sessions due to court's appearance.

Table 3: The program at St. António Educational Centre – Schedule of Activities

Date	Activities
September 9 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administration of the individual assessment tools</li> <li>- Program's presentation/ young's motivation and expectations</li> </ul>
September 11 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual interviews with young: program's presentation and young's motivation</li> </ul>
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 1: <i>The OUTinOUT Program</i></b></li> <li>- Program's presentation: goals and procedures;</li> <li>- Activities for promotion of mutual understanding;</li> <li>- Group's rules definition;</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
September 23 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 2: "<i>Listening</i>" (Mod. 1)</b></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
September 25 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 3: "<i>Anthony's Dilemma</i>" (Mod. 3)</b></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 4: "<i>Understanding my feelings and the feelings of others</i>" (Mod. 1)</b></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
October 2 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 5: "<i>Alphonso's Dilemma</i>" (Mod. 3)</b></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>

## OUTinOUT Project – Workstream 4

Date	Activities
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 6: “Solving Problems I”</b> (Mod. 1), based on the exhibition of an extract from “<i>The Breakfast Club</i>” movie</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 7: “Solving Problems II”</b> (Mod. 1) – <i>Mr. Manuel’s Problem</i></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Motivational/Expressive activity: Music &amp; T-shirt</li> </ul>
October 14 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 8 (cont.): “Solving Problems II”</b> (Mod. 1)</li> </ul>
October 16 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 9: “Controlling my actions”</b> (Mod. 2)</li> <li>- “My T-shirt” activity</li> </ul>
October 23 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 10: “Don’t judge anyone by the bottle”</b> (Mod. 3) – Visualization and discussion of the short movie “<i>French Roast</i>”</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Expressive activity “My-T-shirt” &amp; Music</li> </ul>
October 28 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 11: “Conflict Mediation”</b> (Mod. 2)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Expressive activity “My-T-shirt” &amp; Music</li> </ul>
October 30 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expressive activity: Recording a rap music made by young</li> </ul>
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 12: “My Rights”</b> (Mod. 3), based on the exhibition of a short movie about children rights</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> </ul>
November 6 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 13: “Panning my actions”</b> (Mod. 2)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
November 10 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 14: Continuation of the previous session</b></li> <li>- Program’s evaluation by the young</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Extra activity:</b> Convivial snack with the young at the institution</p>

Session’s implementation has fully complied with the phases and activities described in the initial design of the program. The implementation was preceded by a preparatory phase that met the objectives and activities of the initial plan described above. These activities included a meeting with the group, a pre-assessment and individual interviews with youths in order to present the program (its objectives and procedures) and to

motivate their participation. These interviews were focused on their main interests, expectations and motivation to attend the program

Regarding the individual pre-assessment test, the following instruments were applied: *Capability and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ-Por)*, *Big Five Questionnaire for Children (BFQ-C)* and *Sociomoral Reflection Measure – Short Form (SRM-SF)*. It is important to note that the application of these instruments arose some difficulties in some young's, such as: the high number of items in BFQ-C, reading, comprehension and interpretation difficulties in some questions of SRM-SF. It is also important to mention that one of the participants requested the facilitator to read all the questionnaires, once it had high reading difficulties as mentioned above.

### b) Analysis: general aspects

In general terms, the program proved to be appropriate to young's developmental level. They showed, in the proposed activities, the ability to understand and to learn, to use abstract reasoning, and the capacity to perform the proposed activities. The progressive building of a close relationship of trust and mutual respect between the group members and the facilitators was very fruitful, having a positive effect on the sessions' dynamic. This relationship was built not only through the sessions, but also in moments that took place before and after the sessions. The participation of the internal facilitator in the sessions, in addition to met the training goals of the Workstream 4, was a relevant element for the promotion of these conditions.

In addition to participants and facilitators' characteristics, the environment of implementation is always a decisive factor for the quality of interventions. In this particular case, the specific context of an educational centre, endowed with so distinct elements, has inevitably shaped the experience, inducing changes and adjustments to the initial plan. When we compare with the other two experiences, we highlight the more visible and rigid control structure. The system's rules were much more present in young's behaviours and attitudes. On one hand the program's implementation was often facilitated by a system of clear rules and by a system of continuous supervision. On the other hand the system of rules constituted, in this group more than in the others, a central issue in the expression of contestation and challenge.



### i) Core dimensions

The program addressed three main dimensions: interpersonal problem solving and conflict management (Module I); Self-control and aggressiveness regulation (Module II); Moral development and internalization of norms (Module III). According to the specific characteristics and needs of this group (assessed through the report of the host institution professionals, by the initial interviews and assessment tools, and sessions), the intervention in these dimensions proved to be appropriated.

Regarding Module I, the participants revealed difficulties to apply some of the basic skills, namely, the ability to recognize and understand conflict situations and apply positive and assertive strategies of resolution/negotiation. Thus, at an initial phase, the work on these competencies was very important to help the development of the following sessions and the learning of other skills.

The Module II proved to be the most relevant, but also the most challenging, considering the group characteristics. Indeed, we were dealing with youngsters with a very reactive and impulsive behaviour, with difficulties in regulating their thoughts, emotions and behaviours and with a low level of frustration tolerance. Similarly, these youths revealed difficulties in defining goals, making plans and organizing their actions. Despite the work done to improve these skills, it is important to note that this work should be more profound and intensified.

The sessions directed to moral development (Module III) were the ones that had less motivated the participants. In part this occurred because these young apparently "know" how to formulate socially desirable answers. However, they have evident difficulties in taking other's perspective. During the sessions became clear the gap between their "conventional" responses to the dilemmas and their behaviour in real-life situations. This gap became more evident when, instead of discussing hypothetical situations, it were discussed real/daily situations. During the meetings of the team facilitators some adjustments were made in the structure of the presentation of the proposed dilemmas in order to allow a more in-depth discussion.

### ii) Motivational and expressive activities

In addition to the planned sessions, were also conducted motivational and expressive activities designed according the interests expressed by the group members not only in the individual interview, but also throughout the sessions:

- The activity "My T-shirt" in which a t-shirt was designed by each participant, with images and words chosen by them; at the end of this activity the t-shirt was printed and offered to youths.
- A musical activity which consisted on the composition, by the group, of a rap song. This activity was developed at the end of the sessions and culminated with the song recording in collaboration with two professional musicians;
- A convivial activity at the end of the program

### c) Group dynamics: specific aspects

Although the expected sessions had all been applied, the need to constantly rethink and adapt some contents and activities to the young's developmental level, their interests, as well as their different learning styles, emerged throughout the entire implementation. The most relevant aspects of this experience, particularly in terms of youth involvement, session's dynamics and methodologies, are:

-It was possible to observe that this group had high levels of resistance to intervention, translated into behaviours of passivity or defiance/reactivity to the activities presented. These behaviours arose associated with two aspects: on one hand, the understanding that if the program constituted a break in the intense school routine, this time should be mainly "fun" (e.g. singing, telling jokes, talk ....); on the other hand, at certain moments, those reactions seems to be an expression of their dissatisfaction and, sometimes, anger against what they considered "unfair" whether "in life out there," whether about the rules of institutional life. The hostility towards the "conventional world" was more evident in this group, which was obviously intensified by the exposure to peers and by a natural dynamics of influence and competition. Moreover, the sense of belonging and identification to a group or context outside the institution (residential zone, "a neighbourhood" a "gang"....), took sometimes a more exacerbated expression, that was more intense in the participants from the region of Lisbon. The facilitators decided to take advantage of these moments, as "real-life situations", in order to promote the discussion about relevant issues and promote skills learning. At several points, it was possible to discuss and negotiate rules, either internal rules of group functioning or institutional rules.

- In order to increase motivation and decrease resistance, special attention was given to motivational and expressive activities as a positive reinforcement for participation and involvement in the program. Thus, a system of rewards was adopted, assigning a

maximum of 10 stars per session to each participant. The criteria to allocate the stars were the participation in the activities and the compliance with the rules of the group. It was established that after 40 stars, the participants would receive a pre-agreed reward (the development of “My T-shirt” activity and the musical activity). All the participants have achieved this goal. By the end of the program, the number of stars continued to be high, so other reward was given at the end of the intervention (convivial meeting with the facilitators). In this experience, it was possible to observe that some of the participants had difficulties in distinguishing the assessment made in the context of the intervention itself and the evaluation made by the educational centre for progression of the internment measure. Thus, often, it was necessary to directly address this issue and clarify it.

- Regarding the methodologies applied, the role-play was the most motivating tool. In addition, it was the activity wherein the transmission of contents was more effective. For that reason, though not initially planned, the role-play was used also in moral development sessions, in which young represented the dilemmas. Moreover, role-playing also served as a useful tool in young’s needs assessment, allowing to better observe how they behave and think in more concrete situations. As an example, it could be seen in conflict resolution performances that the youngsters had difficulty to listen their colleagues, to “stop and think”, to analyse the consequences of their actions and to propose alternative solutions for conflict resolution. Another example concerns the attitude assumed by the participants when they performed adult/authority roles (e.g., police). In these cases it was possible to verify that they perceive these actors as distant, hostile and unfair in applying rules.

- In terms of the sessions content itself, it was found that young’s reaction and their level of motivation was higher when the sessions included more practical and experiential activities, instead of more theoretical and expositive contents. It was possible to verify that the use of audio-visual stimulus (e.g., movies, music, pictures) had a positive effect in capturing their attention and making them better understand the relevant contents.

## 2. OUTinOUT Program - Casa do Vale

**Internal Facilitator** – Rita Brito

**External Facilitators** – Rita Martinho and Ana Margarida Santos

Casa do Vale is a residential temporary centre for boys aged between 12 and 18 years. However, the placement can be extended until 21 years old if the young requires its extension. The institution is located in a social housing neighbourhood in Campanhã (Porto) and it has 13 vacancies.

Seven young boys, with ages between 12 and 19 years old (as the following chart shows) were assigned to the program. One selected young gave up at the beginning of the implementation.

Table 4: Youth’s Characterization - CV

ID	Age	Schooling
A	14	5 <sup>th</sup> grade
B	18	7 <sup>th</sup> grade
C	19	Course equivalent to the 12 <sup>nd</sup> grade
D	13	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
E	12	5 <sup>th</sup> grade – Special education
F	16	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
G	16	7 <sup>th</sup> grade – Special education

The path of these youths is especially characterized by family problems and lack of social protection (neglect, maltreatment, exposure to violence, etc). Some of them were institutionalized for several years and had already previous placements in others residential centres. Furthermore, most of them present behaviour problems, characterized by impulsivity, low self-control, difficulties in anger management and emotional instability. In developmental terms, it was also evident that they reveal emotional immaturity, and in some cases cognitive developmental deficits. These developmental vulnerabilities mitigated the effects of age heterogeneity, a point that was seriously

considered in the selection. One of the youngsters (C), whose maturity was adequate to his age, has been integrated in the group as a facilitator element, since he had a positive influence on the others. This option has proved to be appropriate, especially since in this context it was not possible to count with the regular presence of the internal facilitator in the sessions.

In addition, one of the aspects that was particularly discussed with the institutional staff was the sessions schedule. Since the selected participants had other activities outside the institution, the sessions had to be scheduled at the end of the day. As expected this was a less positive aspect in the group dynamic.

### a) Implementation

The program implementation took place at the institution itself twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday), from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. Generally, the assiduity of the participants was quite high and only two absences were registered.

Table 5: The program at Casa do Vale – Schedule of Activities

Date	Activities
September 10 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convivial lunch with young at the institution</li> <li>- Individual interviews with young (program's presentation and young's motivation)</li> <li>- Administration of the individual assessment tools</li> </ul>
September 11 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual interviews with young: program's presentation and young's motivation (cont.)</li> <li>- Administration of the evaluation device (cont.)</li> </ul>
September 16 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convivial dinner with young at the institution</li> <li>- <b>Session 1: <i>The OUTinOUT Program</i></b></li> <li>- Program's presentation: goals and procedures;</li> <li>- Activities for promotion of mutual understanding;</li> <li>- Group's rules definition;</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 2: "<i>Listening</i>" (Mod. 1)</b></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>

## OUTinOUT Project – Workstream 4

Date	Activities
September 23 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 3: “Anthony’s Dilemma”</b> (Mod. 3)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
September 25 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 4: “Understanding my feelings and the feelings of others”</b> (Mod. 1)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 5: “Alphonso’s Dilemma”</b> (Mod. 3)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Motivational activities: games</li> </ul>
October 2 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 6: “Solving Problems I”</b> (Mod. 1), based on the exhibition of an extract from “<i>The Breakfast Club</i>” movie</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 7: “Solving Problems II”</b> (Mod. 1) – <i>Mr. Manuel’s Problem</i></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 8 (cont.): “Solving Problems II”</b> (Mod. 1)</li> </ul>
October 14 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 9: “Vasco’s Dilemma”</b> (Mod. 3)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> </ul>
October 16 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 10: “Controlling my actions”</b> (Mod. 2)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
October 21 <sup>th</sup>	Convivial dinner with young at the restaurant
October 28 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 11: “Conflict Mediation”</b> (Mod. 2)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> </ul>
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 12: “My Rights”</b> (Mod. 3), based on the exhibition of a short movie about children rights</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> </ul>

Date	Activities
November 6 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 13: “Planning my actions”</b> (Mod. 2)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Program’s evaluation by the young Convivial with the young at the institution (cinema session).</p>

The session’s implementation was preceded by a pre-assessment moment, in which there were performed individual interviews with the youngsters in order to present the program (its objectives and procedures) and to motivate their participation. In this interview it was sought to listen their main interests, expectations and preferences. This phase also included the application of a group of assessment instruments: *Capability and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ-Por), *Big Five Questionnaire for Children* (BFQ-C) and *Self-Control Scale* (SCS). It is important to note that the application of these instruments arose some difficulties, such as: the high numbers of items present in BFQ-C; the reading, comprehension and interpretation difficulties were observed in the comprehension of the questions, and also in the answers scoring (e.g., confusion between the meaning assigned to the various levels of the *likert* scale). It is also important to mention that four youngsters requested the facilitator to read all the questionnaires.

### b) Evaluation: general aspects

Concerning the sessions, we applied the predicted sessions and extra motivational activities. The progressive building of a relationship of trust and mutual respect between the youths and the external facilitators was very fruitful, facilitating sessions functioning. This relationship was developed not only through the sessions, but also in moments that took place before and after them. After the establishment of a relationship of greater communication and trust, another central aspect of the experience, especially in CV and also in CESA, was the spontaneous approach of their personal experiences and life events.

In general, the performance and learning processes were more heterogeneous than in the other contexts. As expected some of the participants presented more difficulties in abstract reasoning and concentration skills. By contrast to the other groups, open resistance was far less frequent and spontaneous adhesion to the intervention was more continuous. Behavioural problems during the program, as well as conflicts arose during

the sessions, were more due to individual aspects and to external conflicts between the juveniles.

### i) Core dimensions

The program addressed three main dimensions: interpersonal problem solving and conflict management (Module I); Self-control and aggressiveness regulation (Module II); Moral development and internalization of norms (Module III). According to the specific characteristics and needs of this group (assessed through the report of the host institution professionals, by the initial interviews and assessment tools, and sessions), the intervention in these dimensions proved to be appropriated.

Regarding module I, the youngsters revealed difficulties to apply some of the worked basic skills, namely, the recognition of emotions, as well as the ability to recognize and understand conflict situations and apply positive and assertive strategies of resolution/negotiation (the answer usually given by the youngsters to solve a conflict was aggression). Thus, working this abilities or skills was very important at an initial phase helping the run of the following sessions and the learning of other contents.

As in CESA, the module II to be the most necessary, but also the most difficult to apply. The group members presented high levels of impulsive behaviour, with difficulties in regulating their thoughts, emotions, behaviours and low tolerance to frustration. By comparison to the CESA's group, the participants expressed their feelings more overtly which sometimes constituted a source of conflict. Similarly, these youngsters revealed difficulties in defining goals, making plans and organizing their actions. Despite the work done to improve these skills, it is important to note that this work should be more profound and intensified.

Within module III, it was possible to understand that these youngsters have difficulties in taking other's perspective. Nevertheless, in general they provided congruent answers with what is socially desirable. As in the previous group the gap between the approach of hypothetical situations and the action in real-life situations was evident. Concerning moral reasoning it was more evident the heterogeneity of the group.

### ii) Motivational and expressive activities

In addition to the planned sessions, we also conducted motivational and expressive activities, including: a lunch at the institution, at the beginning of the program; the



realization of a playful activity at the end of one of the sessions; a dinner at a restaurant at the middle of the program; a dinner followed by a movie session at the institution on the last day of the program.

These activities were chosen by the participants and planned with them throughout the program's implementation. It was adopted the same reward system already described in the previous experiment. By the end of the program, the number of stars remained high (most of the young got all the stars in the sessions), so other reward was given at the end of the program (cinema session in the institution).

### c) Group dynamics: specific aspects

Although the expected sessions had all been applied, the need to constantly rethink and adapt some contents and activities to the young's developmental level, their interests, as well as their different learning styles, emerged throughout the entire implementation. Thus, although the objectives and dimensions defined in the plan sessions have been held, some activities were adapted according to the group, as occurred in the other two contexts. It is important to highlight the following points:

- There were some difficulties in adjusting the contents and strategies to the heterogeneity of ages and developmental levels of group members. More specifically, some activities proved to be too "childish" and few challenging for older boys, and others were too complex for the younger or for those with some learning difficulties;

- Regarding the methodologies, it was observed that youngsters' reaction as well as their degree of motivation was higher when the sessions included more practical and experiential activities. In terms of the strategies applied, role-play appeared, similarly to the other contexts, as the activity with more adhesion and involvement by the youths;

- Another relevant aspect was the difficulty in articulate program's participation with the multiple activities performed daily by the young, which at certain moments has resulted in a state of tiredness that did not facilitate intervention;

- Finally, it should be noted that this group presented more experience in group activities than the other youths.

### 3. OUTinOUT Program – CPCJ Porto Ocidental/ALP

**Internal Facilitators** – Neusa Rocha

**External Facilitators** – Rita Martinho and Ana Paula Agra

As mentioned, the third experiment was implemented from cooperation with two local network entities: the CPCJ-Porto Ocidental and the “Associação das Ludotecas do Porto” (ALP). These institutions were involved from the beginning in the OUTinOUT Project. The intervention took place within the ALP facilities located in one of social the neighborhood of Aldoar parish. Seven adolescents were selected, having actually attended the program six of them. The selection of five participants was proposed by CPCJ and the others were proposed by the ALP. All the participants were characterized and presented behavioral problems, indiscipline and disruptive behaviors in school. Some of them were followed by child psychiatry services.

Table 6: Youth’s Characterization – CPCJ Porto Ocidental/ALP

ID	Age	Schooling
A	15	7 <sup>th</sup> grade
B	13	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
C	13	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
D	12	5 <sup>th</sup> grade
E	14	6 <sup>th</sup> grade
F	12	4 <sup>th</sup> grade

#### a) Implementation

As already mentioned, the implementation of this experiment faced several difficulties that delayed the starting date relatively to the other two experiments.

Actually we could not accomplish all the steps of the preparatory phase envisaged in the plan, namely the individual assessment of the youngsters and the informational and motivational meetings.

## OUTinOUT Project – Workstream 4

Despite the previous approach of each family by the institutions involved, we believe that the lack of preparation and motivation of the youths by the facilitators team was an element that have influenced negatively the implementation. Moreover the information shared about the participants, their needs and behavior patterns, was more comprehensive than the information collected in the previous experiments.

At the beginning of implementation a special attention was paid in order to motivate the participants. Twelve sessions were conducted by the three facilitators.

Table 7: The Program at CPCJ Porto Ocidental and ALP – Schedule of Activities

Date	Activities
October 20 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 1: <i>The OUTinOUT Program</i></b></li> <li>- Program’s presentation: goals and procedures;</li> <li>- Activities for promotion of mutual understanding;</li> <li>- Group’s rules definition;</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback.</li> </ul>
October 22 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 2: “<i>Listening</i>”</b> (Mod. 1)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> </ul>
October 27 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 3: “<i>Understanding my feelings and the feelings of others</i>”</b> (Mod. 1)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> <li>- Meeting with young’s parents/caregivers</li> </ul>
October 29 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 4: “<i>Anthony’s Dilemma</i>”</b> (Mod. 3)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- "Homework"</li> <li>- Motivational activity: table football game</li> </ul>
November 3 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 5: “<i>Solving Problems I</i>”</b> (Mod. 1), based on the exhibition of an extract from “<i>The Breakfast Club</i>” movie</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Motivational activity: table football game</li> <li>-----</li> <li>- Meeting with young’s parents/caregivers</li> </ul>
November 5 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 6: “<i>Solving Problems II</i>”</b> (Mod. 1) – interrupted session</li> </ul>

## OUTinOUT Project – Workstream 4

Date	Activities
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 7: “<i>We have a problem, how do we solve it?</i>”</b> (Mod. 1)</li> <li>- Group’s discussion about the previous session</li> <li>- Group’s discussion about the rules: re-establishment of group’s rules</li> </ul>
November 19 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 8: “<i>Solving Problems II</i>”</b> (Mod. 1) – <i>Mr. Manuel’s Problem</i></li> <li>- Individual talk with the young (perceptions about the program, ideas for activities to be undertaken in the following sessions)</li> <li>- Motivational activity: “Hide And Seek”</li> </ul>
November 24 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 9: “<i>Controlling my actions</i>”</b> (Mod. 2):</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- Memory, attention and inhibitory control (games)</li> <li>- Discussion with young about their ideas for activities to be undertaken</li> <li>- Motivational activity: “Hide And Seek”</li> </ul>
November 26 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 10: “<i>Don’t judge anyone by the bottle</i>”</b> (Mod. 3) – Visualization and discussion of the short movie “<i>French Roast</i>”</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Motivational activity: “Hide And Seek”</li> </ul>
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 11: “<i>Controlling my actions</i>”</b> (Mod. 2):</li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- <i>Difficult questions</i></li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- <i>Following instructions</i></li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Motivational activity: “Hide And Seek”</li> </ul>
December 17 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Session 12: “<i>Controlling my actions</i>”</b> (Mod. 2; Cont.)</li> <li>- Self-evaluation &amp; feedback</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting with parents</li> <li>- Motivational activity: convivial snack with participants and their parents; feedback of youth participation to parents; conclusion and farewell</li> </ul>

### b) Evaluation

In order to evaluate and describe in greater detail the way that the experience occurred it can be considered three stages of development of the functioning of the intervention and of the group:

- The first stage included the first four sessions. It was clear from the beginning, the difficulties presented by two young boys in the adaptation to the operating rules of the group. These two participants, for different reasons, which included serious attention deficits, hyperactivity and impulsivity, and, in one case, aggressive behavior, constituted a factor of serious disturbance of the group. During the first sessions, nevertheless, it was possible to carry out the tasks and even maintain the integration of these two young people through concerted strategies of the three facilitators.

The attitude and behavior of these boys showed a great ambivalence regarding their participation in the program that was translated into moments of participation in the activities, of seeking proximity to the facilitators and, times of great unrest, provocation and reactivity compared to other participants. From the fourth session, the conflicts among the participants were largely generated outside the intervention context, and began to make very difficult the regular functioning of the group.

With objective to better understand these behaviors, the team met with parents and decided, given the information that confirmed the difficulties already evidenced, to proceed with the sessions in order to assess the need to suspend the participation of these young people.

This decision was the last resort, since despite the initial difficulties felt in the other contexts, the persistence in finding effective strategies had been successful. The next two sessions showed that effectively would not be possible to continue since the minimum conditions of operation of the group could not be ensured. Furthermore, another problem was highlighted: the space, being quite wide, and easily accessed by outsiders, began to raise some security issues, in addition to the behavior of some young people. Thus, after a due consideration by the team, it was decided request a new space, more secure and container, and to suspend the participation of the two young people, explaining the motives to the parents and reinforcing the need to continue with individual consultations in mental health services.

Furthermore, an individual meeting with each young was taken. At that meeting, it was approached the functioning of the group, the previous events and, the expectations of the

young people facing the maintenance of their participation in the intervention. All young people expressed the desire to continue, presenting suggestions for changes. More than in other contexts, it was evident the rejection of activities that made them remember the school.

This aversion was not directed to the contents of the sessions, even when they required effort and concentration as in certain problem-solving exercises, but on certain details in the presentation that made them resist.

We believe that this meeting, in addition to has enabled a better understanding of the intervention from the perspective of each youth, brought together information that was very helpful for the adaptation of strategies to each of them with a positive impact on the group's conduction. Moreover, it also permitted to strengthen the established connection and to establish a compromise around the negotiated rules. As a result, changes were made to the original plan of the sessions, focusing more on the modules 1 and 2 which correspond better to the needs diagnosed. In addition, the working methodologies had to be reset to the number of participants.

Meanwhile, the ALP had made available another room and the group continued with the four remaining participants. Since this new space owned computer equipment that allowed individual use by each participant, it were reprogrammed some sessions that included the use of computer games centered on some functions that seemed essential considering the characteristics of youngsters: attention, memory and effortful control.

The remaining sessions were held regularly, without major disturbances, with greater involvement of young people and with the establishment of a more balanced and fruitful relationship between group members, particularly in terms of mutual respect and mutual help. The internal facilitator participated in the whole process demonstrating to be an essential element both in relation to young people either in conjunction with their families and with the group.

### *IV – Evaluation Summary*

In addition to the analysis of the information that was gathered by the continuous program monitoring, it was carried out an evaluation of the three experiences at the end of the program implementation. The focus of this summary is the evaluation that was conducted at the end of the program, by the coordination and facilitators teams, by agencies' staff and the participants.

#### **Purposes**

As already mentioned, the type of evaluation that was carried out evaluation doesn't aim at the measure of outcomes. Being instead a process evaluation, its main purpose is to assess what was done taking into account the objectives that were set and to improve the planning and the implementation of future actions: Thus the main issues under evaluation were:

- The adequacy of the OUTinOUT program to meet the objectives of the Workstream 4;
- The fidelity of the program implementation to its objectives and design;
- The perceived adequacy of the OUTinOUT program to meet the participants' needs and expectations.

#### **1. Methodology and Evaluation Guide**

The evaluation at the end of the project involved all the participants in the pilot experiences conducted in the three contexts and was achieved through the organization of successive meetings with the young participants, the agency's staff and facilitators. In Casa do Vale, one of the two meetings was attended by the Director and the technical team, including the internal facilitator, the two external facilitators and the OUTinOUT coordinator. The other meeting was attended by the facilitators and the youngsters. In the educational Centre were also organized two meetings: one attended by the Director, staff team and facilitators and the other with the facilitators and the youths. In the last CPCJ/ALP were conducted 3 meetings: one with CPCJ, one with the group participants and the other with the parents of the participants.

This evaluation was supported by a common guide for allowing its consistency and comparability.

### **The evaluation guide**

O guião de avaliação centrou-se nas seguintes dimensões:

i) The adequacy of the program rationale and design to the youth's needs. This dimension was explored concerning to the following programs aspects: duration, intensity, dimensions, activities, methodologies, monitoring and evaluation. The main issues addressed were: the motivation, skills learning and performance level, interaction and relationship quality, progress, etc. and the group dynamic;

ii) The adequacy of the rationale and design to the expectancies and needs of the agencies and practitioners. This dimension was explored concerning to the following aspects: duration, intensity, dimensions, activities, methodologies, monitoring and evaluation;

iii) The adequacy of its implementation to the program's design and rationale. The phases and the more relevant aspects of the implementation were evaluated in comparison with the original plan: the modifications that were introduced, the difficulties that were faced, and the positive aspects;

iv) The cooperation between the OUTinOUT team and the institutional staff;

v) The facilitators training, motivation and skills strengthening.

In each point were discussed suggestions to improve the program's design or implementation.



## 2. Results

### 2.1 Evaluation by the coordination team and facilitators

The design dimensions of the program met the youth's needs, concerning skills and main problem behaviors. The careful planning of each session allowed, without distorting the program's core principles, the introduction of adjustments in the activities and methodologies during the implementation phase. The professionals' involvement during the conception and planning phase (that was fully achieved in two of the contexts), allowed a better adjustment of the program to the youth's needs and to the contexts of implementation.

Another issue that must be highlighted was the planning of a motivational component that was developed throughout the sessions. The active involvement of the group members in the choice and design of these activities had a very positive effect on the group functioning. This component allowed an adequate balance with the over structured character of the sessions, enabling the enhancement of youths' ability to delay the gratification and taking conscience that there are moments for "work" and moments for "fun". Furthermore, the choice of motivational activities that met the youths' interests with their active involvement in "something meaningful" favored a sense of achievement. This fully happened in the CESA with the t-shirts design and, above all, with the CD recording.

The introduction of the self-evaluation process and the facilitator's feedback regarding to youth's performance in each session have complemented this logic in a well-successful manner.

It must also be highlighted the absolute importance of the phase of pre-implementation that allowed the prevention of implementation difficulties. Comparing the experience in the community setting, whose preparation phase was constrained by several reasons, with the other two experiences, this importance is evident.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Being a selective prevention program and given the correspondent characteristics of the participants, the increase in the session number would strength the skills training in each core dimension and the learning consolidation. This is particularly important

regarding to self-control and anger management core dimensions. In addition, the intensification of the program would allow a deepen knowledge of each youth and the quality of group dynamics;

- It would be important, given the complexity of the situations, to include other components and other settings deemed relevant. For instance, concerning the community-based intervention, the articulation with other ALP's facilities, health services or schools;

- The inclusion of individual sessions in the program. Several times throughout the program implementation, it was noted that an individual approach would be relevant to better understand some aspects of the group functioning. This need was particularly felt in the community-based context and in the educational center. These sessions, would also permit work some aspects that are difficult to deal with in group contexts, protecting the youths from an excessive exposition to others;

- In the non-institutional context, it was confirmed the importance of the articulation with the youth's families. It is crucial to properly clarify them about the program objectives and to establish conditions for involving them in the youths' motivation;

- Although the methodologies had been diversified and, in general, appropriated, there still are aspects that could be improved in order to strength the association between "thinking" and "acting"; it is also worth to explore "creative" strategies in order to promote the learning consolidation and transfer;

- Predict an effective program impact evaluation system.

### Implementation

- Each experience was unique not only because of the participants' characteristics (including the facilitators) but also due to the group dynamics and the contexts where the experiences occurred. The central concern in the implementation was the establishment, in each experience, of a structured, safe and communicational environment able to provide favorable conditions for learning. In CV and CESA, this principle was met. In the CPCJ/ALP experience, given the reasons already pointed out, we couldn't say that this was accomplished. In this case, although the experience has ended at a time when there were conditions for the group progress, it would be necessary to redefine some of the strategies and working methods.

- One of the central problems in the non-institutional experience was the youth selection that, for different reasons, was not adequate. Clearly, for two participants this type of intervention was not indicated or, at least, at that time, without a previous specialized individual intervention.

- The rules are fundamental for the group functioning and, as what was done in the implementation, it is worth developing a negotiation system based on key-principles. Furthermore, as happened particularly in the educational center, it is essential a good knowledge on the part of the implementation team of the context rules in which young people are framed.

- In the CV experience the schedule was, as predicted, prejudicial. In certain moments the youth's fatigue was clear.

- The continuous intervention monitoring, through systematic reunions between sessions, was fundamental for the program implementation process. In fact, this constituted a space of: experience sharing, mutual training, evaluation and planning.

- The professionals' cooperation was fundamental. It not only allowed a mutual learning but also provided external facilitators with a valuable support in the implementation context. Despite the non-participation in the direct implementation, in the CV experience we must highlight the relevance of the joint work concerning to: the youths selection, the implementation conditions and the efficient anticipation of difficulties. It still is worth mentioning, relating to the CESA experience, the continuous involvement of the Director and staff in the monitoring, through informal meetings in the beginning or at the end of each session.

- The delivery of the program in the three contexts represented to the OUTinOUT team the opportunity to: improve the knowledge about the risk factors and needs of youth with antisocial and delinquent behaviors; develop and improve the design of a selective prevention program and the processes of its implementation; learn how to best describe and measure the program; gain insight about the mobilization of agencies in collaborative actions; foster the implementation of good practices and develop new intervention tools.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Concerning the preparation phase, it is important to create conditions to strengthen the approach to the context and the participants. Thus, it is important to reinforce the previous assessment of the youths and the involvement with the institutional staff. The

knowledge regarding the youth's characteristics, their developmental level and their specific needs is crucial for the selection process and implementation.

- The program insertion in these youths daily routine must receive a more careful attention. The intervention schedule and its relation to other daily routine activities are relevant elements for program functioning.

- The facilities where the application occurs must provide security conditions and reduce eventual distracting events.

### Intervention impact on youths

As mentioned several times before, the impact of the intervention in young people cannot be evaluated. However, and consistently to what was observed throughout the sessions and the feedback given by the staff, we had the opportunity to monitoring the behavioral changes and to apprehend its relation with the program. There was only one situation in which the facilitators questioned if the intervention might have a prejudicial effect over the participants. In that moment the team implemented different strategies in order to protect the youths. That happened, as already mentioned, in the non-institutional experience. The interventions' iatrogenic effects are object of growing concern. Several studies have shown that the positive effects of the content of an intervention might be offset by processes of peer influence that naturally occur by the aggregation of youth (Dishion et al., 1999). The negative effects of the processes of peer contagion may be a result of the interaction of different aspects, including "the developmental status of the individual, the informal and formal interactions of the participants, and the context of the program or service."

## 2.2 Evaluation by the institutional staff

### Design

- The program design was previously presented and object of debate with the institutional team. In fact, several adjustments were made based on their contributions. The evaluated dimensions were perceived as indicated to the participants' characteristics and needs. The structured character of the sessions and the used methodologies were also valued.

### Implementation

- Relating to the sessions' schedule and duration, that were longer than the anticipated in CESA and CV, the staff managed in a collaborative way in order to conciliate it with the daily routines. The hardest situation occurred in CV, since it was impossible, given the youths routines, to find a more compatible and proper schedule for everyone.

-Concerning to the duration of the program, the staff and the internal facilitators considered that the number of the sessions should be extended in order to consolidate its perceived positive effects. These effects in each participant were appreciated by the staff and no negative effects were identified.

- One of the aspects referred to as positive by the CESA's staff was the involvement of the group in motivational activities, namely the change in the attitude and behavior of the young who led the musical activity. His enthusiasm and commitment was more remarkable given the contrast to his general attitude of resistance and passive rejection, namely in scholar and training activities (indifference, apathy and ostensive silence). Another case that deserved special attention in the evaluation was the positive progress made by the mentioned young with learning problems. Being the most disturbing group member at the first part of the program (provocative and aggressive toward the other group members and facilitators), his participation became progressively calmer and more respectful, and also more engaged in the proposed activities in spite of the notorious disadvantages;

-The fact that young people had generally maintained a regular participation in the activities, despite some threats of abandonment during the sessions, was appreciated as very positive by the institutions. Even in the community experience, although the changes in the group composition, the youth's regular attendance was maintained.

- The motivational component was also valued by the staff. In CESA this appreciation was communicated directly to the youths by the institutional team.

- The cooperation between the external and the institutional teams throughout this process was evaluated as very positive for the program development.

- In the three contexts the staff transmitted and reinforced the will to continue the partnership and to give continuity to the intervention. This have constituted for the OUTinOUT team the clear expression of a truly commitment.

### Recommendations

- The program continuity in order to develop and consolidate its effects. This was a common recommendation for the 3 contexts.
- Regarding the non-institutional experience, not only the internal facilitator but also the rest of the implementation team agree with need to do a more systematic evaluation of the youth to include in the program.

### 2.3 Evaluation by the participants

- In the three contexts, the criticisms made to the program by the participants relied on the fact there were moments in which the activities were “boring” and they forced them to “think too much”, or sometimes “looks like school”;

Several suggestions were made concerning to this aspect, depending on the interests of each group (watch fun movies, play football, sing, writing songs, etc.). In general, the role-play and some games were the most appreciated activities because they were considered more “active”;

- Some of the participants in the CV’s group referred the fact that some of the activities were similar to other previous activities in which they have participated; this fact was pointed out as a reason for a lower motivation;

- The rules adopted by the group was perceived as adequate and their enforcement was considered fair;

- The expressed ambivalence throughout the intervention remained in the final evaluation: although some of the participants referred that the program did not correspond to their expectations (it was expected to be “more fun”), the majority said that they would like the program to continue. This was more intense in the CESA and in the CV where the attachment with the facilitators was stronger;

- An aspect that appears to be relevant for a trustful relationship, as it was expressed by the participants from CESA and CV, was the fact that the facilitators have always keep the promises made. This evaluation was mainly focused on the implementation of motivational and expressive activities.

### Recommendations

- To further develop activities that meet the interests and preferences of the participants; this suggestion was similar in the three contexts;
- In CV, some of the participants have considered that the schedule was not the most appropriate since they reported to be very tired in some of the sessions.

## ***V – Final Remarks and Key Guidelines for Intervention***

The three experiences that were carried out in Workstream 4 provided the opportunity to design and implement a selective prevention program addressed to the specific needs of adolescents with disruptive and delinquent behaviors. It also provided the opportunity to organize and implement them in three different contexts, working in effective cooperation and mutual training with the institutions and practitioners.

At the end of this process and being supported by the reflection that was carried out by the project team, it is time to highlight key issues about the planning and implementation of similar programs of intervention. Far from pretending to be exhaustive, we highlight the following guidelines:

### **1. Evidence-based Interventions**

High-quality interventions are based on an evidence-based approach, meaning that its design and implementation should be supported by the best available research evidence on what works in delinquent and antisocial behavior prevention. An increasing body of research on the effectiveness of intervention programs for preventing youth delinquency and antisocial behavior is available to practitioners. This literature on risk-focused, evidence-based prevention has identified many effective programs, programs that are promising and programs that were ineffective or have iatrogenic effects. The most effective programs are supported by the scientific evidence about risk and protective factors, have clear objectives and effective methods designed to counteract risks and promote protective factors. Accordingly multimodal programs proved to be more effective on preventing persistent juvenile delinquency. Another aspect to take into account in the design of an effective intervention is that it should be social culturally relevant for the participants. This aspect can be decisive in promoting the adhesion, motivation and maintenance of the participants.



### 2. The Participants Selection

The adoption and implementation of an assessment system of risk factors and needs composed by validated tools and applied by qualified practitioners. This is an essential requirement for providing a safe basis for adequately assigning youth to specific programs, and for measuring the individual progress. An adequate assessment will allow to determine the type of intervention, its duration and intensity. These instruments typically include items concerning juveniles' needs in areas that correspond to risk factors for delinquency, including family functioning or relationships, school attendance and behavior, peer relationships, and individual problems such as substance abuse and emotional and cognitive difficulties.

### 3. The Integrity of Program Implementation

The selection of an evidence-based program is a necessary condition but not a guarantee of a good intervention. Several aspects should be carefully considered for favoring the quality of the implementation. Besides the absolute importance of the quality of the program design, we highlight the following aspects:

- . The staff training in terms of knowledge, skills and motivation, complemented by a continuous supervision and monitoring;

- The commitment and the cooperation of all the agencies involved in the implementation. The evidence shows that successful programs include different components and, in general, multimodal programs require the involvement of several settings. Thus inter-agency cooperation is crucial in order to assure a supportive environment and the sustainability of a comprehensive intervention.

### 4. Evaluation of Intervention Impact

In order to carry out the evaluation of interventions impact it becomes necessary to meet a set of strict criteria that international scientific community points out as fundamental to know the effects of intervention (e.g. Farrington & Welsh, 2005). These criteria are:

i) Clearly define the goals of intervention and its "outcomes" (e. g. aggression reduction, increasing self-control, recidivism reduction), as well as the target groups for which it was designed.

ii) Constitute a control group or comparison group equivalent to the group subject of intervention (experimental group). That is, a group that before the intervention has similar features to the experimental group, particularly individual and contextual features. Ideally, the experimental and control groups are formed by randomization (designated experimental designs) from a homogeneous population. Alternatively, the formation of these groups may take place through the matching of some key features (called quasi-experimental designs). The assessment of these groups before the intervention (evaluation *ex ante*) allows demonstrating their equivalence. During the evaluation, the control group will not to be subject of intervention. Due to ethical reasons, in the case of intervention have the desired effects, for which it was conceptualized and implemented, it's important to ensure that the control group can still be subject to this intervention later.

iii) Evaluate the experimental and control group in established moments (according to program goals) after intervention (evaluation *ex post*) in order to compare these two groups and to determine the effect (and its magnitude) of the intervention.

Despite being a methodology that requires its own technical and scientific knowledge, it has been international practice to have collaborations between academics and institutions in order to be able to accomplish this goal.

### 5. Intervention Support and Sustainability

The success and maintenance of these types of intervention requires from the planning stage the active involvement of all the stakeholders, including organizations' staff at different levels of management and decision-making. The commitment of higher levels of decision-making is essential in providing the formal support and the necessary resources, the conditions for staff training and participation as well as the introduction of organizational changes and adjustments. Moreover, this support is essential for the implementation of high quality evaluation and for the maintenance of effective programs.

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