

Street Mediation Norwegian Red Cross



**empowering young
people as
conflict mediators**

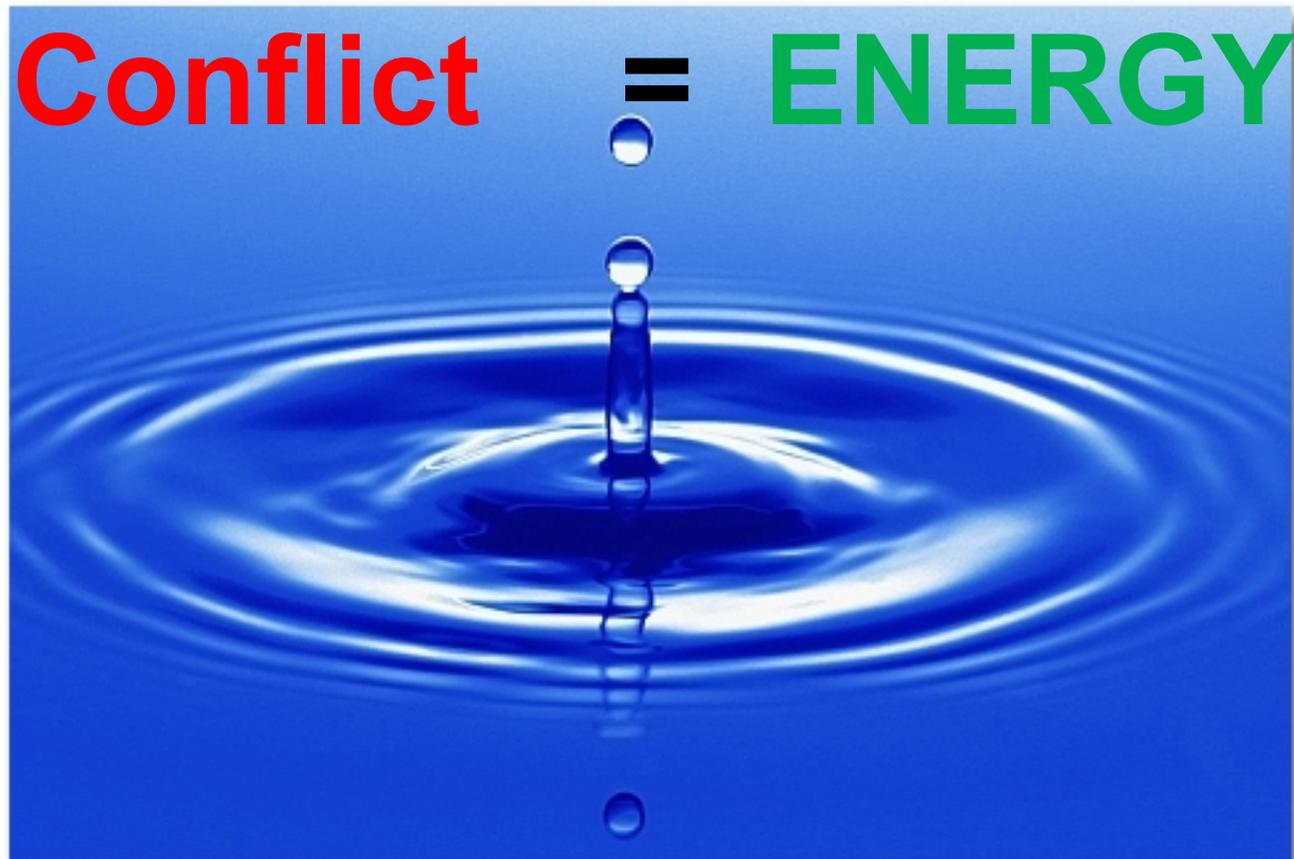
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Facts about the Norwegian Red Cross

- ◇ Established in 1865
- ◇ 135.400 members (31.12.2010)
- ◇ 35.000 volunteers
- ◇ 450 employees
- ◇ 400 local red cross branches
- ◇ 19 districts
- ◇ The best recognized brand; the most respected organisation in Norway. (MMI survey)

«Conflict» - associations?



Target group

- ◇ Young between 13 & 25 years
- ◇ Focus on youth at the margins



History



Two project phases

- ◇ 1998: National Mediation Service, Oslo
- ◇ 2004: Co-operation with Red Cross Oslo
- ◇ 2008: **Permanent activity** in Oslo, close cooperation with the municipality (SLT, preventive work)
- ◇ 2009: Tromsø starts up
- ◇ 2010: Part of national strategy for violence and conflict prevention

Street mediation is the only preventive effort in Norway where the youth themselves become active agents for change and empowerment. Ida Hydle, professor.

Numbers

Oslo 2008-2010

- ◇ 90 workshops
- ◇ 3419 youth participants
- ◇ 175 instructors

Tromsø (2010)

- ◇ 33 in conflict workshops
- ◇ 120 young participants

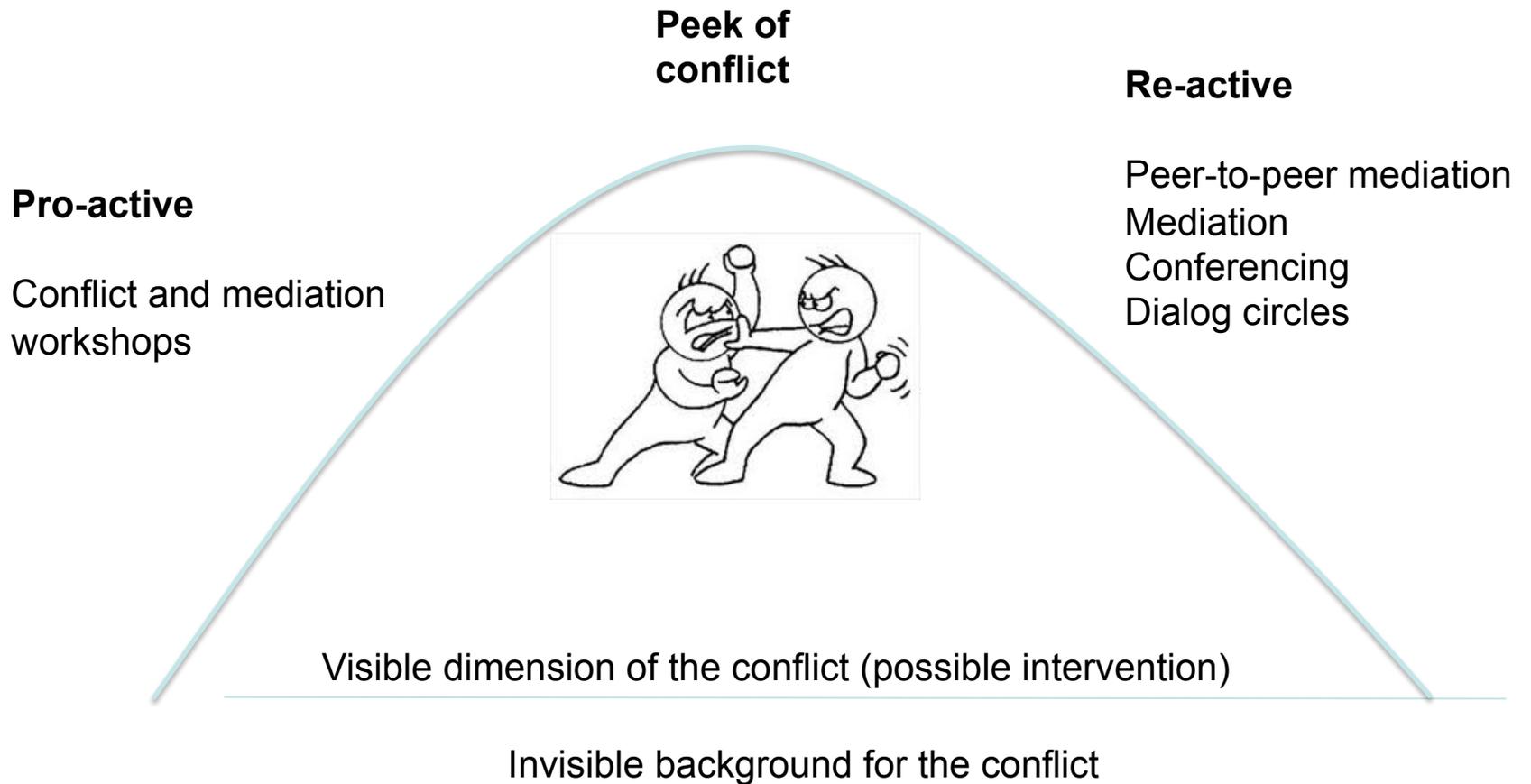
2011:

- 51 so far
- 14 street mediators

Total for Norway:

- **Yearly 400 youths are educated**
- **200 persons have taken part in reconciliation processes**

Methodology



Proactive/Reactive Methods

| METHOD | PURPOSE | PROACTIVE | REACTIVE | COMMENTS |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|----------|---|
| Outreachwork in the streets, | Relationshipbuilding/prevent actions of revenge/mediation/other | Yes | Yes | Uniformed volunteers or employees from Red Cross are actively seeking youth at risk in the streets. |
| Conflict workshops | Youngsters are empowered to solve their conflicts in more constructive ways, | Yes | Yes | |
| Conflictmapping | Map to decide: 1. Threatlevels and proper methods to use 2. Networks and parties involved, 3. Coordinate actions with the Police, municipality, schools, etc. | | Yes | The conflictmapping involves a wide arrange of different methods not outlined in this table. |
| Dialoguecircles | Acknowledging our common humanity, reflect upon consequences of violence, support each other in grief, etc. | Yes | Yes | Used on a regular basis with youngsters seeking each other on the streets, |
| Peacecircles | Restart communication and stop cycles of violence about to spiral, | | Yes | Used when the SM has a stable and longlasting relationship to all parties involved – trustlevels are high with all parties, |
| Conferencing | Restart communication/repair relationships/ | | Yes | |
| Mediation | Create new dynamics, etc, | | Yes | Used when: threat levels are low to create new dynamics when the conflict is taken over by others, |

Examples from Tromsø

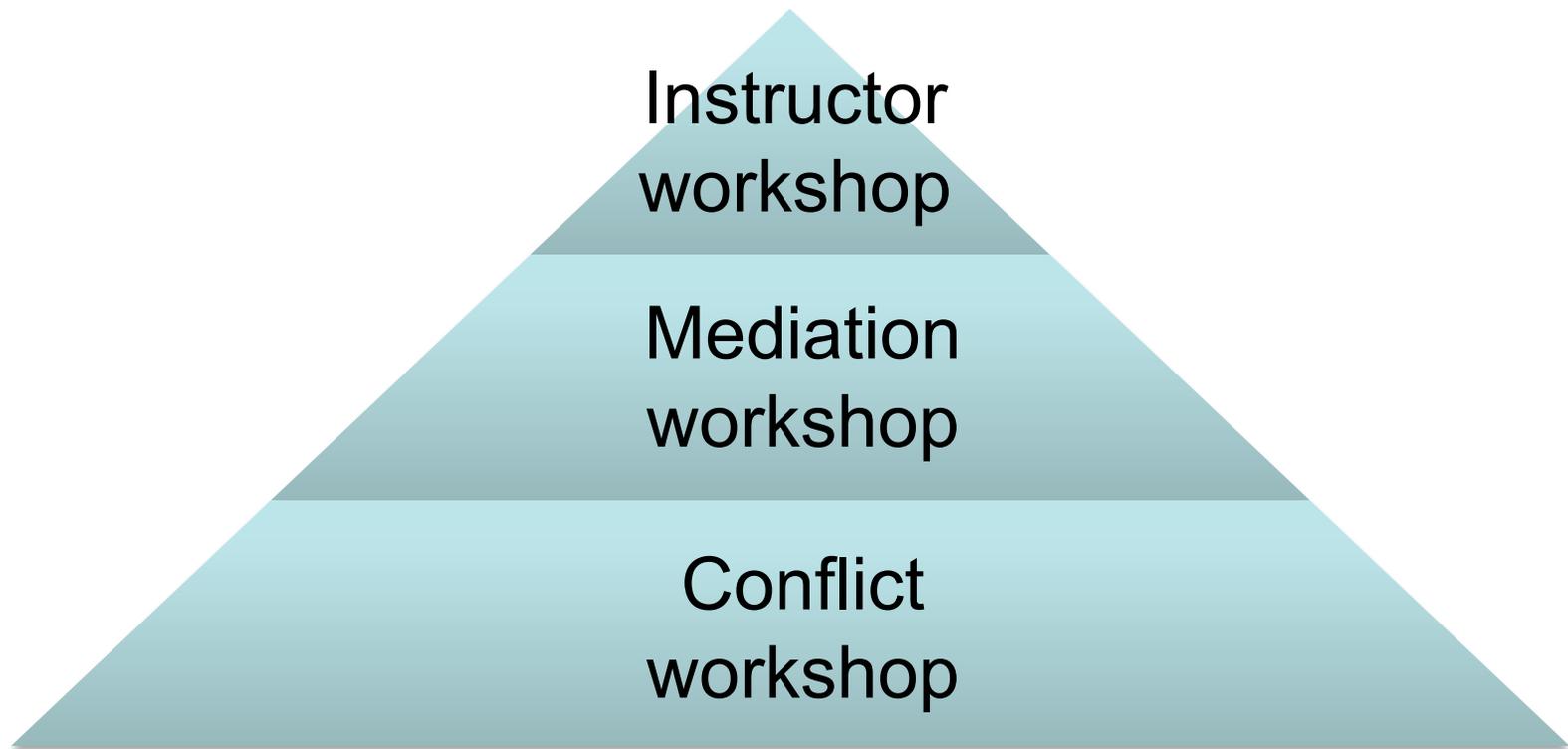


1. Troubles at a downtown shoppingmall. The mall is in proximity of the bus station in Tromsø.

2. Two girls bring their out of school quarrel into the classroom.

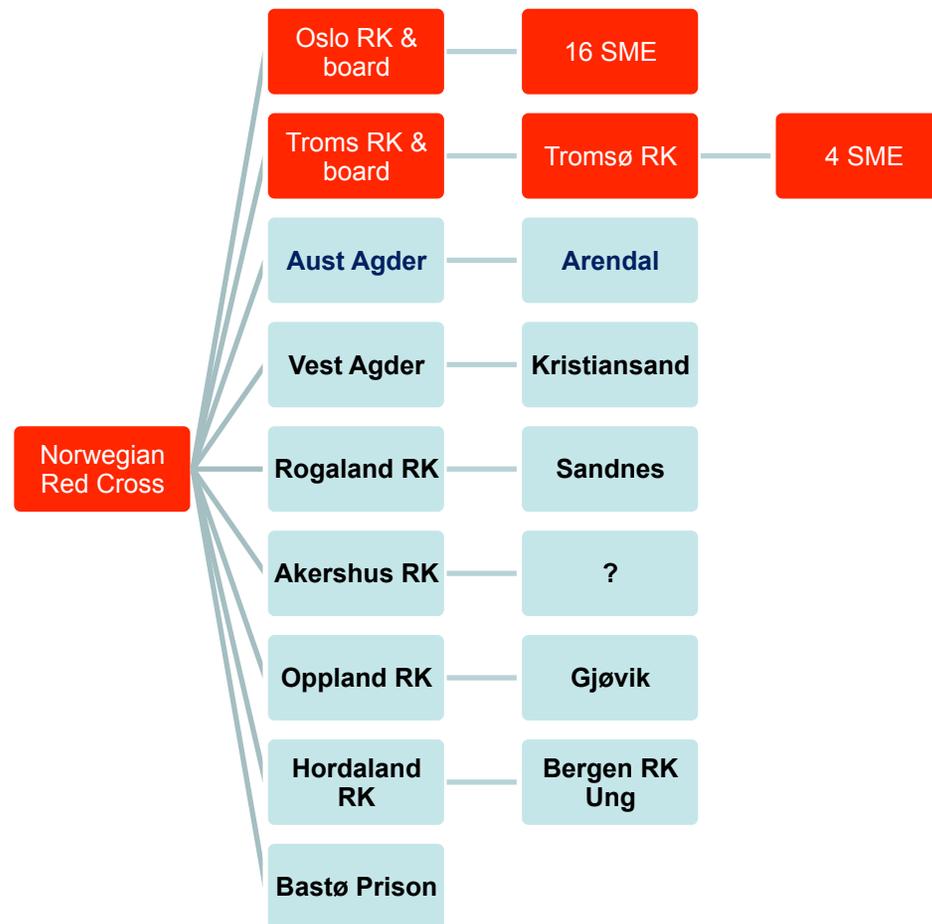
3. A quarrel over a girl by two boys are taken over by two groups not directly involved in the conflict. The two groups create fear in the school they are attending with regular fights and threatening behaviour.

Education model



Each workshop 3-4 h pr week / 6-8 weeks

Organisation: Cooperation between voluntary and professional actors



Why Red Cross?

- ◇ Principles of humanitarianism, neutrality and impartiality
- ◇ Peace-work promotes health
- ◇ Interface between the self-organized «life on street» and the professional helpers (state, municipality and private organisations/NGOs)
- ◇ Other Red Cross activities; participants/families

Challenges & success factors

- ◇ Working with marginalized youth on the «other side of the law»
- ◇ Local ownership
- ◇ Employed facilitator at Red Cross district
- ◇ Concelling / followup



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empowering young people as conflict mediators



Proactive and reactive conflict management with young people

Street Mediation is a program organized by Norwegian Red Cross. The program aims to prevent violence and conflict among young people (13-25 y), and has both a proactive and a reactive dimension.

In the **proactive part** the young participants develop skills in conflict management during a three-step education model:

- (1) During the *Conflict Workshop* the participants explore the concept of conflict and various tools for dealing with it, such as non-violent communication (the “giraffe-language”), triggers and creative conflict resolution (lateral thinking). The focus here is on the participants’ own experiences, and how they themselves better can deal with personal conflicts.
- (2) Having completed step 1, the participants are offered the *Mediation Workshop*, developing skills in conflict mediation. Still drawing upon the participants’ own experiences the focus here is on helping others in conflict, as they dig deeper into the phenomenon of conflict and conflict resolution. Upon completion, the participants are certified as *Street mediators*.
- (3) The *Instructor Workshop* offers the certified Street mediators instructor skills in order to facilitate workshops (step1) for other youths, usually together with adult instructors. In this process they become positive role models for other young people.

The educational model of Street Mediation empowers the young participants by framing their personal experiences ‘from the street’ in a restorative approach, hence improving their self confidence and social capital. This model has proved useful in a wide range of youth and community work.

Street Mediation is also **reactive conflict management** dealing with explicit conflicts that have arisen in the local community. Over time, the three-step workshop model educates large numbers of youth in becoming part of restorative community-networks that can perform such mediation processes. In addition Street Mediation consists of networks of adults, both volunteers and professionals (crime prevention, child welfare service etc) that together with the youth mobilize in restorative processes when needed. Usually adult facilitators lead the conflict resolution processes in the forms of conflict mediation (two main conflicting parties), conferencing circles (bigger conflicts affecting a larger

network of the community) or peace circles (less concrete, but nevertheless serious conflict issues).

Street Mediation is closely related to the core values of Red Cross, in particular the principles of neutrality and impartiality. In our experience, the wide cross-cultural acceptance of Red Cross as a neutral humanitarian organization gives Street Mediation a favorable position in conflict management and violence prevention.

Methodology

Street Mediation has a strong link to restorative practices and is inspired by restorative justice, conflict mediation and conferencing, peace studies, forum theatre, non-violent communication, the concept of ubuntu and more. It is a practical approach to violence and conflict prevention, implementing restorative practices in accordance with the motto: As simple as possible, but not simpler!

The workshops are fundamentally built on various participative methods such as exercises, role plays, games, reflective dialogues and discussions. The methodological approach is “learning through discovery” in a fun, safe and engaging way where the participants apply concrete tools and perspectives on their own experiences as well as ‘external’ examples.

Both the proactive and the reactive components of Street Mediation are fundamentally voluntary; the participants can at any time choose to withdraw from the process or say no to participate in any of the concrete elements of the Street Mediation workshops. However, it is the facilitators’ responsibility to guide and motivate the participants through the workshops (proactive) or the conflict resolution processes (reactive) in a safe and informed manner.

Organization

Street Mediation has since 1998 been developed during two project-phases in Oslo. Since 2008 it has been a permanent activity at Oslo Red Cross, financed by the municipality of Oslo (crime prevention authorities). In 2009 Tromsø Red Cross (Northern Norway) formally started with Street Mediation as a result of local voluntary initiative. In 2010 Norwegian Red Cross decided that Street Mediation should be one of the strategic activity areas for prevention of violence and conflict among young people. In 2011 five new cities/municipalities in Norway are planning to start up with Street Mediation.

The backbone of Street Mediation is the Street Mediation Units (SMU). By the end of 2010 there were 16 SMU’s in Oslo and 4 in Tromsø. A SMU can be located at the local Red Cross Resource Centers, at the various city districts (part of the municipality) or at non-governmental organizations (such as the Islamic Cultural Centre). Each SMU have a local responsible, i.e. an adult instructor in Street Mediation, either voluntary Red Cross members or professional youth workers.

Red Cross Street Mediation works in close cooperation with a number of NGO’s as well as governmental and municipal organizations such as the child welfare service, the police and crime

preventive task force, social workers and the like.

Impact & results

90 Street Mediation workshops were held in Oslo during 2008-2010. Totally 3419 youth participated. The total number of educated Street Mediation instructors is 175, both adult and youth. The population of Oslo is close to 600.000.

In 2010 there were four Street Mediation Units at Tromsø Red Cross. 33 youth participated in conflict workshops in 2010 and 120 youth participated in various activities related to Street Mediation. Tromsø has educated 26 adult instructors (9 operative). Tromsø has about 70.000 inhabitants.

For the reactive conflict management about 200 persons (parties in conflict) has participated in resolution processes from 2008-2010 (Oslo + Tromsø).

At the end of the second project phase in 2007, Professor Ida Hydle evaluated the Street Mediation project. Her conclusion is that Street mediation is unique compared to all other national attempts on violence prevention because it is the young people themselves that become mediators and instructors for other young people. Professor Hydle recommended that the project would be continued and as a result it is a “permanent activity”. Street Mediation is also highlighted as a positive activity in the government’s action plan for crime prevention.

Challenges and lessons learnt

- Implementation in new Red Cross districts can be a challenge (busy offices). Need is higher than capacity. For new offices wanting to start up with Street Mediation we recommend finding resources for at least one full time position administering the activity.
- Maintaining high quality level of the adult voluntary instructors. The instructor workshop is the beginning of a longer learning curve. The instructors need follow-up and guidance.
- Follow-up of the young Street mediators after having completed the various workshop steps. There should be an arena and network for the youth in their local communities, partly taken care of by the SMU’s and partly by Red Cross at district level. This work is time demanding but also rewarding for Street Mediation to reach its full potential.
- Patience, finding economical resources from year to year.



Quotes of participants

Boy 17

Street Mediation is; we learn how to resolve conflicts, think in a better way – at least I have learned to think in a better way. It has changed me as a person. If I'm in a conflict I'll do the opposite of what I'd done before: Before I would have made it bigger but now I take it easier, use my mouth more and think with my brain.

Girl 17:

When I was younger I was involved in a lot of conflicts. Then our teacher asked us if we were interested in Street Mediation. I hadn't heard about it, but said; ok! Now I'm really happy I joined because we've grown during this last year with the courses. Before I was very direct, but now I have learned to lean back a little and listen to what people has to say. I think it's a great opportunity because - in many milieus there is a tension between the youth and the police or child welfare authorities. Then the youths takes the position; us vs. them. But now as the youth is on line with the police they understand that it's not about us vs. them. What we want is for everybody to be accepted.

Girl 17

I'm part of Street Mediation because I have been part of some conflicts that we didn't solve in a good manner. I feel that I'm one of the silenced voices on the street, the person who gets the blame and are being judged for things she didn't do. Street Mediation is an opportunity to be heard and show who you are, as well as helping others who are "silenced" in order to develop and improve themselves.

