



*The Second Project Year
– An Overview –*

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This newsletter provides an overview of the main project activities during the second year of the *Zurich Project on the Social Development of Children, z-proso* (i.e. from August 2004 to August 2005). The second year has been a decisive year for the overall study. It was the year in which the project team was simultaneously confronted with three major tasks:

- 1) Setting up an organisational structure that can cope with a total of two times over 1,200 interviews within 6 months, each involving some 20 interviewers and 9 different interview languages.
- 2) Creating a set of questionnaires and other instruments which allow us to assess the extent and the determinants of problem behaviour among primary school children, and that over time will tell us something about the effectiveness of the interventions.
- 3) Developing and implementing the interventions at the parent and the school level and building up instruments that ascertain and assess the quality of the implementation.

In each of these areas there were times when the project team was working to its limits. But it seems that for the current and the forthcoming wave we can confidently build on the achievements of the past year.

Parent Interview

Response Rates

We had initially expected to achieve a participation rate of 60-65% of our target population. Given the experiences of similar studies in Germany and Switzerland this appeared to be an ambitious but realistic target. Several measures were taken to achieve high participation rates. These included the translation of the questionnaire into nine languages and the training of interviewers in these languages, early information at parent-teacher evenings, information letters to all parents translated in 10 languages with a support letter by the head of the ministry of education, incentives for participating parents, an unlimited number of contact efforts by interviewers, as well as support letters by community gate-keepers and “door-knocking” for some immigrant groups.

During the first weeks of the interviewing period 47% of the parents returned a response slip indicating preferred dates for the interview – greatly facilitating the work of our field staff.

Interviewers actively contacted all remaining parents and explained them the goals of the study as well as the importance of participation. In some cases more than 20 telephone calls were necessary before an initial contact could be made. Also, given serious difficulties in reaching and recruiting Albanian parents by phone we began to use door-knocking as an alternative strategy. Here a male and a female interviewer visited parents that could not be contacted by phone. It was found to be an effective though expensive approach.

Table 1 shows the final parent participation rates achieved for each language group. Overall, we completed 1241 interviews corresponding to a total participation rate of 74%. Participation rates vary between a high of 88% for German speaking parents and a low of 53% for Tamil speaking parents. Differences in participation rates between immigrant groups appear to reflect variation in degrees of social integration and socio-economic status. Note that “English” was our default second contact language for all parents that were not included in any of our main interview languages.

Table 1 Parent and Child Interview Participation Rates by Language Group

Parent Contact Language	% of Target Sample	Active Response (Response slip)	Recruited through telephone contact	Total parent participation rate	Additional Child Interviews	Total Child Participation Rate
German	47.1%	62.4%	25.3%	87.7%	4.3%	92.0%
Spanish	5.0%	47.0%	27.7%	74.7%	9.6%	84.3%
Italian	4.4%	37.8%	32.4%	70.3%	9.5%	79.8%
Portuguese	7.0%	29.7%	36.4%	66.1%	5.9%	72.0%
Serbian/Croatian	9.5%	23.3%	41.1%	61.4%	8.3%	69.7%
English	7.6%	30.7%	31.5%	62.2%	18.9%	81.1%
Turkish	4.8%	26.3%	33.8%	60.0%	3.8%	63.8%
Albanian	9.0%	15.9%	37.1%	53.0%	17.9%	70.9%
Tamil	5.3%	31.8%	21.6%	53.4%	22.7%	76.1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>47.0%</i>	<i>27.0%</i>	<i>74.0%</i>	<i>8.6%</i>	<i>82.6%</i>
<i>N</i>	<i>1668</i>	<i>739</i>	<i>452</i>	<i>1241</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>1378</i>

Note: Data sorted by total parent participation rate.

Conduction of the Interviews

Interviewers were individually responsible for setting up the interviews. 86.7% of the interviews were conducted at the home of the primary caretaker. 3.6% were interviewed at their workplace, another 4.8% wished to be interviewed in a project office and the remaining 5% of the interviews were conducted in other places such as coffee shops.

On average, the interviews lasted 66 minutes, slightly longer than the 60 minutes initially planned. Interviewing time did not significantly vary by education background, but interviews did take longer if the respondent's native language was different from any of the languages that we could offer (e.g. Arabic, French).

93% of the interviews were conducted with the biological mother. 6% (Table 2) were conducted with the father and 1% with another person, usually an institutional caretaker. The proportion of male interview partners was below 10% in each language group.

The mean age of the participants is around 40 with the mothers being roughly 3 years younger than the fathers.

Sample Characteristics

The very pronounced multi-ethnicity of the sample is one of the most distinctive features of the z-proso study. As shown in Table 2 only a minority, namely 40%, of the participating parents were born in Switzerland. The largest minority group originates in the former Yugoslavia Republic with about an equal share of Serbo-Croatian and Albanian speaking parents. Other large minority groups are from Germany, Portugal, Turkey, and Sri Lanka. 20% of

participating parents come from a large variety of other countries (category "other").

Many migrant parents came to Switzerland around 1990 and over 75% were already adults upon arriving. Accordingly, almost half of the sample parents do not speak German with their children.

The migrant population is also characterised by a much lower average level of education, with roughly one third of the migrant parents having at most completed compulsory education. In contrast this share is below 5% among Swiss-born parents.

Table 2 Selected Sample Characteristics

	Mother	Father
Interview Partner <i>in %</i>	93.5	5.5
Year of Birth <i>Median</i>	1967	1964
Country of Birth <i>in %</i>		
Switzerland	42.6	40.7
Former Yugoslavia	14.5	14.7
Germany	5.8	3.9
Portugal	4.9	4.8
Sri Lanka (Tamil)	3.9	4.1
Turkey	3.8	4.8
Italy	2.4	3.7
Spain	1.6	1.9
Other	20.5	21.5
Immigration Year <i>Median</i>	1992	1989
Age at Immigration		
<i>% of migrant pop. over 18</i>	75.5	75.8
Mother Tongue		
<i>% Non-German</i>	55.8	58.5
Language spoken with Child		
<i>% Non-German</i>	45.2	n.a.
Highest Education Level		
<i>% Compulsory School Only</i>		
Born in Switzerland	5.1	3.4
Born outside Switzerland	37.0	32.6

Child Interview

Instruments

The first child interview consisted of five main instruments. They were chosen to provide further information (in addition to the teacher and parent assessments) on child problem behaviour and to measure mechanisms believed to mediate between contextual (family and school) risk factors and individual behaviour.

The *Sensation-Seeking Game* is an instrument developed by Françoise Alsaker (1) from the University of Bern and slightly adapted for this study. It is basically a cardboard game in which the child is told to go on a long trip. When moving a token along a line the child meets a series of situations. At each point it is asked to choose between two alternative routes. Each alternative represents a riskier and a safer situation, e.g. a fast motorbike versus a slow train or a roller-coaster versus a carousel. In addition to the "stops" developed by Alsaker we included three choices with a view to measuring "gratification delay" instead of risk seeking.

The *How Do You Do It?* game is a modified version of the social problem-solving instrument developed by Dodge, Coie and Crick (2). It consists of six short stories, each supported by a drawing that represents a conflict situation. The first story, for example, shows a child waiting to get on a swing while another child has already been on the swing for a very long time. The drawings are adapted for boys and girls. For each story, the child is asked to tell the interviewer how it would try to solve this conflict. The interviewer elicits up to four different solutions. The responses are recorded as full text and simultaneously pre-coded by the interviewer.

The ACES is an instrument originally developed by David Schultz (3) from the University of Maryland. It is designed to assess emotion recognition abilities amongst children. The instrument consists of two parts. One part is a series of short verbal statements (e.g. "Juan walks down the hall. A big kid walks right at Juan and tells him to get out of the way."). For each statement the child is asked to guess how the child might feel in this situation. It can choose among four basic emotions, namely sad, happy, angry, and scared.

The other part follows the same logic but the child is now shown photographs of faces instead of verbal stimuli. As we believed that the photographs should reflect the ethnic composition of the sample

children we developed a new set of pictures rather than using the pictures created by Schultz. They were taken by one of our graduate students who worked with a drama teacher. The emotional content of the pictures was validated amongst primary school children, grade 9 pupils and education science students before being used in the main study.

Tom and Tina is a new instrument designed to measure self-reported social behaviour amongst primary-school children. It is based on Tremblay's Social Behaviour Questionnaire (4), but was adapted for computer-aided anonymous completion with children. The instrument consists of a series of drawings that display specific problem behaviours or pro-social behaviours. In each drawing, one child is highlighted by means of more intense colouring. At the beginning of the game the interviewee is explained that this is "Tom" or "Tina" (depending on the child's gender) and that he/she should imagine being this child. He/she is then asked by the computer the specific question related to the drawing (e.g. "Do you sometimes kick somebody at school, like Tina/Tom"). There are "Yes" and "No" buttons at the bottom of each screen and the child is instructed how to use them.

The final *Coach Game* shows the children a traditional yellow public-transportation coach. The child is told to imagine that he/she could go on a nice fieldtrip and that he/she may select up to six children from his/her class to join in. This instrument is used as a basic sociometric measure to compute popularity and rejection scores within the class.

Preparation and Setting

Setting up child interviews in 114 classes was a major logistical exercise. For each class, our partners from the z-ok project provided us with a one-week time slot that had previously been agreed with the teacher. Schools provided us with separate rooms to conduct the interviews in. The interviewer introduced herself to all children of the respective class before commencing the first interview. She also explained the study by way of a short story on what it means to do research.

On average the face-to-face interviews with the children lasted 43 minutes. Almost half of the children completed the interview within less than 40 minutes while 7% needed over an hour for the full interview. At the end of the interview the children could select one of our hand-sewn cloth stickers

produced in Nepal that show various girls and boys faces in different colours.

Feedback from teachers and parents suggested that most children found the interviews interesting and good fun. To obtain fuller information on the quality of the child's participation interviewers were asked to fill out an observation questionnaire: 86% of the children were motivated and actively participating in the interview while about 2% of the children were somewhat resentful to participate in the interview.

Response Rates

All parents that had given prior consent to participation (at the parent interview) were given advance notice of the upcoming child interviews. Yet we also considered it worthwhile to ask parents who had declined participation for themselves whether they would grant permission for the child interview and the teacher assessment. We assumed that at least some parents may consent to research limited to school while objecting to intrusion in their private sphere. We therefore distributed through the classes a letter to the non-participating parents asking them to return a signed form if they agreed in their child's participation in the interview.

An additional 121 parents corresponding to 7.2% of the sampling frame provided us with the written consent (see Table 1). We received particularly many additional agreements from those ethnic groups that had been most underrepresented in the parent interviews (especially Albanian, Tamil, and Serbian). Hence child and teacher data are available for over 60% in each language group with 90% participation for children with a German-speaking background.

The Teacher Assessment

Teacher assessments are scheduled to take place about every six months during the course of the study with five planned measurements. They provide important information about short term variation in child problem behaviour and the effectiveness of the interventions. Furthermore, previous studies suggest that teacher assessments may be amongst the most valid and reliable measures of child problem behaviour.

Contents

The first teacher questionnaire consisted of individual assessments for each participating child and one short questionnaire on core aspects of school and classroom climate.

The child assessment is designed as a one-page form that includes four major elements.

- 1) 48 items of the Tremblay Social Behaviour Questionnaire with a five point Likert Scale. We eliminated or adapted some items used in the parent assessment as they specifically covered behaviours at home (e.g. not obeying his/her mother).
- 2) Five items aimed at direct measurement of change in child behaviour across five behavioural domains.
- 3) Five items measure the child's social role in the class (popular, bullied, rejected, dominant).
- 4) Three items that assess the academic performance of the child in the class (mathematics, language, motivation).
- 5) The questionnaire includes a scale to assess classroom and school climate as well as questions about the perceived quality of teamwork amongst the teachers. We also ask how the teachers perceive the study and whether they believe that it may be useful to them.

Preparation and Setting

The teacher assessments are designed as paper-and-pencil questionnaires. Three waves take place contemporaneously with the child interviews meaning that questionnaires are distributed and collected by our interviewers. The two assessments between the child interviews are distributed by the city of Zurich internal messenger service and sent back to the project team by mail.

Because of teachers' time constraints (additional involvement in the PATHS implementation and frequency of assessments) we keep the assessment as short as possible. In our pre-tests filling in one individual assessment took between 3-5 minutes meaning that a class of 15 children can be assessed within about 1-2 hours.

Given that the completion of these forms is compulsory for teachers in participating schools, teacher assessments are available for all children that participate in the study.

Programme Implementation: Triple P

Preparation and Implementation

The family support programme Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme (6)) was used in this study as a universal prevention programme. It consisted of four 150 minutes sessions in small groups and up to four subsequent telephone contacts to support parents in further developing their parenting goals. The course was supported by a programme manual, video sequences and many overhead slides. Triple P was offered to all parents in those schools randomly allocated to the treatment condition. In order to better reach important migrant minorities Triple P was not only offered in German but also in Albanian, Portuguese, Turkish, and English.

For the German courses experienced trainers that were accredited and recommended by Triple P Switzerland were recruited. As to the non-German courses new trainers had to be found and subsequently trained and licensed by Triple P Switzerland. Ultimately five bi-lingual trainers experienced in working with migrant groups were recruited and trained to deliver the courses.

To maximise participation for the Triple P various measures were taken to promote the programme: From the beginning of the school year onwards trainers attended parent-teacher meetings in the intervention group and explained Triple P to parents and teachers. Also, our interviewers were instructed to inform the parents of the programme and its contents and motivate them to participate after the interview. Furthermore, the enrolment letter emphasised that the course was offered free of costs and that a free nursing/childcare service was available. Additional effort was made to motivate Turkish, Albanian and Portuguese speaking parents as initial information suggested very low enrolment rates. The bilingual trainers contacted every parent personally by phone and explained the goal of the programme.

Triple P courses took place in May and June 2005. A total of 41 Triple P courses were organized by z-ok. 33 courses were held in German or Swiss German, three courses in Turkish, two in Portuguese, and one course each in English and Albanian. One of the German courses was for women only. All other courses were open to both men and women. Parents could attend as a couple or individually. Courses were held in all neighbourhoods of Zurich, mainly using schools or community centres as con-

venient locations. The z-ok team also made sure that courses were available throughout the week (except Wednesdays and Sundays) and both during daytime and on evenings. 21 certified Triple P trainers (19 female, 2 male) from the greater region of Zurich held one to four courses.

Participation Rates

329 parents of 259 children enrolled for one of the courses. This corresponds to 31.5% of the full intervention sample (whether participating in the longitudinal study or not) and 41.5% of the parents who agreed to participate in the study. 24 parents enrolled for the Triple P course while not agreeing to participate in the parent interviews. Overall, these participation rates correspond to those reported in studies with similar universal interventions.

Enrolment rates vary greatly between the language groups. High participation rates were found amongst parents speaking German 62.1% and Turkish 61.5%. However, enrolment was below 40% amongst all other language groups. In particular, offering foreign language courses had only limited success. Thus, enrolment rates amongst Albanian and Portuguese parents were only marginally higher than those of other immigrant groups with a comparable socio-economic status (i.e., Serbian/Croatian or Tamil speaking parents).

Table 3 *Enrolment in Triple P by Mother Tongue of Caretaker*

Language Group	% of Study Participants	% of Total Sample
German*	62.1 %	47.9 %
Turkish*	61.5 %	40.8 %
English*	37.5 %	27.3 %
Portuguese*	34.1 %	19.7 %
Italian	33.3 %	26.7 %
Other languages	32.9 %	29.7 %
Albanian*	28.6 %	14.5 %
Tamil	25.9 %	19.1 %
Serbian/Croatian	17.5 %	17.3 %
Spanish	27.6 %	22.7 %
<i>Average</i>	<i>41.5 %</i>	<i>31.5 %</i>

* Course available in native language of primary caretaker.

8 out of the total 329 parents withdrew participation before the start of the courses (mostly because of lack of time). 38 of the enrolled parents did not show up at the any programme unit, but many among them are the partner of a parent who did attend the programme.

291 parents went to at least one course unit. 64% of these were present at all four programme units and 82% attended at least three units, while a non-negligible 18% dropped out after one or two sessions.

Among those participating in the course satisfaction with the programme was generally very high. 89% of the parents returning the questionnaire (N=253) were satisfied or very satisfied with the programme.

Programme Implementation: PATHS/PFAD

Preparation for Implementation

The PATHS programme did not exist in a German version prior to the z-proso study. Therefore a fully operational German version of PATHS had to be developed. We chose to call it PFAD (Programm zur Förderung Alternativer Denkstrategien). The development included a) the translation of the English text, b) the adaptation of the contents and methods to Swiss Schools, and c) the production of a user-friendly manual and all necessary teaching materials.

Students of the Department of Education at the University of Zurich were recruited to translate the manual, which consists of 46 main units. Sample lessons were given to three educators with different teaching backgrounds for further feedback and input including feedback on the design of the manual. For pre-tests four classes with different student compositions were selected. In each class the teacher taught several lessons of PATHS and provided detailed feedback on the manual and their experiences in the classroom. The first experiences with PATHS were mainly positive and showed that the programme worked also in schools with multicultural backgrounds.

The next task was to build up a training course for the teachers. Since nobody within the project team had any relevant experience Kees van Overfeld, the developer of the Dutch version of PATHS, was invited for a preparatory meeting. He provided very valuable information for the design of the training module.

The two-day teacher training courses were held in April 2005. It was offered twice and at each training about 30 teachers participated. The training included background information on the wider project, the theoretical background of PATHS, an

introduction to its core concepts and exercises, and role-plays for the teachers.

Implementation and Quality Control

The developers of PATHS emphasise the importance of high programme fidelity as a critical element of the effectiveness of the programme. For various reasons the implementation model developed for U.S. schools needed to be adapted in the z-proso context. The City of Zurich introduces PATHS in second grade classes only and not in the entire school. Various elements that refer to motivating the whole staff of a school therefore did not apply to our setting. Also, consultation with representatives of the city of Zurich education authorities made it clear that many of the teachers would consider weekly classroom observations as overly intrusive even if they were highly motivated. This may be because Swiss primary school teachers are used to a high curricular autonomy in comparison to most other countries.

We therefore have implemented a modified concept to ensure the integrity of the implementation of the PATHS curriculum. On top of the training these measures included:

- 1) A personal coach allocated to every participating teacher. All coaches are part of the PATHS team and are supervised.
- 2) Regular meetings amongst PATHS coaches ensure that advice to teachers is given consistently and that problems can be addressed effectively.
- 3) At least five classroom visits by PATHS coaches followed by detailed feedback provided to the teachers. Possibility for further feedback by email or telephone.
- 4) Four PATHS newsletters during the study period.
- 5) A mid-year brush-up course for all teachers.
- 6) Optional small discussion groups
- 7) An end-of-year final assessment meeting with all teachers.

Various measures are in place to assess the quality of programme implementation. In particular, teachers fully report on the number and contents of the delivered lessons. Furthermore PATHS coaches assess all attended lessons by means of a standardised evaluation questionnaire.

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- 6) See: <http://www1.triplep.net>

Project-Related Publications

(Currently published or accepted for publication)

- Eisner, M. (2003). Towards more effective youth violence prevention - An Overview", in: Council of Europe (ed.). *Violence in Schools - A challenge for the Local Community*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 23-41.
- Eisner, M. (2003) Améliorer la prévention de la violence chez les jeunes: aperçu général", in: Conseil de l'Europe (ed.) *Violence à l'école - un défi pour la communauté locale*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 27-46.
- Eisner, M. & Ribeaud, D. (2005). A Randomized Field Experiment to Prevent Violence. The Zurich Intervention and Prevention Project at Schools, ZIPPS. *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice*, 13(1), 27-43.
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- Eisner, M. & Jünger, R. (2006, forthcoming) Gewaltprävention durch die Förderung emotionaler und sozialer Kompetenzen in der Schule: Das PATHS/PFAD Curriculum, *Praxis für Rechtspsychologie*.
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