

Living Group Climate in Estonian Prisons and Secure Facilities for Adolescents and Young Adults

Report of three measurements

A joint Research Report of the University of Applied sciences Leiden (The Netherlands), together with
the Criminal Policy Department of the Estonian Ministry of Justice

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Summary

Improving living group climate in secure facilities for adolescents and prison climate has been shown to enhance treatment motivation and motivation for behavior and school, reduce violence inside residential facilities and prisons, and reduce recidivism but also promote successful participation into society. Therefore the Ministry of Justice of Estonia and Leiden University of Applied Science have started a program to improve social climate in several Estonian facilities in May 2015. The method consists of measuring Group Climate (youth perception) and Prison Climate (inmate's perception) three times and give all involved feedback about the results and recommendations for improvement. This report concerns an overview of the three measurements that took place in May 2015, December 2015 and October 2016 in both prisons and residential facilities who participated in this study.

In this report we have made a distinction between secure youthcare and prisons. The climate results of the secure youthcare were far more better compared to the prisons. Also in the results we can note a slow improvement over time in the secure youthcare, where results in Estonian prisons did not show improvements at large. Between facilities there are some differences. In the prisons, Tartu and Viru have respectively a slightly better climate and a slightly improving climate. Tallinn has shown a declining climate. In the secure youth section, Kaagvere and Tapa were slightly improving and Tallinn made a quite an improvement.

We did not find an overall improvement in the Prison section. For Tallinn this can be explained by the closing down of Harku Prison and the subsequent moving to Tallinn. Tough both facilities were outdated prisoners in Harku experienced a very good social climate, for which staff was mainly responsible. Viru prison underwent a 'storming' period during the time of the research with understaffing and incidents as a major problem and the youth section was locked down. The January measurement shows some first inklings of change. In Tartu only one measurement was taken.

In the secure youth section we see small improvements at Kaagvere and Tapa, which could be explained by the subsequent moving to different buildings and new staff. Normally such relocations show a backlash on the climate as building, staff and youth need to get accustomed. In this light Kaagvere and Tapa have done well during the measurement period. The improvements of Tallinn Centre of Children at Risk is huge.

Creating a feedback-loop of climate measurement, feedback and education of staff and repeated measurement could contribute to a more positive climate in Estonian youth prisons and secure youthcare against relatively small cost. Returns for society could be manifold.

[Recommendations for policy and practice](#)

Climate monitoring and improvement in Estonian (youth) prisons and secure youthcare is a relatively simple way to contribute to improvements in society. We therefore recommend to perform these measurements and feedback regularly and incorporate this into quality standards as has been done in the Netherlands and across Europe (Belgium and Germany). Providing feedback about one's own professional behaviour and discussing results helps staff to align more to organisational goals and contribute to society. In general recommendations for the Prison Service, when we combine results with interviews some organisational change in the prison system is recommended towards a more evidence based approach, based on modern scientific insight. The system could benefit from an approach which is based on providing for basic psychological needs of prisoners as formulated in empirically one of the most important theories of our time which can also be applied to the forensic sector: 'Self determination Theory' (SDT) by Ryan and Decy (2017, Stams & van der Helm, 2017). These principles state that motivation for change and behaviour is contingent on providing for more 'relatedness' (responsiveness of staff in our measurements), 'competence' with inmates ('Growth' in our measurements) and 'autonomy' (inmates who can within the rules of the institution make some decisions for themselves) as opposite to repression (in our measurements).

Some of the new policies, implemented at Tartu Prison (communication courses for guards) and Tallinn centre for Children at Risk (more autonomy for children) clearly demonstrate these successes.

In the individual reports, many recommendations were given, but to improve climate a focus on basic psychological needs is paramount in order to fulfil obligations of the prison service and secure youthcare to society: providing for a climate which promotes reduction of crime and problem behaviour and future successful participation in Estonian society.

1. Introduction

Leiden University of Applied Sciences and the Criminal Policy Department of the Estonian Ministry of Justice have formulated a joint project in order to lower juvenile and young-adult recidivism and improve outcomes of Estonian youth and young adults with severe behavioural and criminal problems. This document reports on the research outcomes of work carried out in May 2015, December 2015 and October 2016 in all Estonian prisons and residential facilities that participated in this study. The goal of the research was to measure the living group climate in these institutions by means of quantitative (Prison Group Climate Inventory; Van der Helm, Stams, & Van der Laan, 2011) data and provide feedback and advise to management, staff and youth. Based on the results, conclusions are outlined about the results of the living group climate and consequently has been formulated for the Estonian Ministry of Justice. The Estonian prisons and residential facilities can also use the results to evaluate their practices and (further) improve their living group climate.

Juvenile delinquency and recidivism constitute serious problems in society (Loeber & Farrington, 1998). In order to address these problems, incarcerating adolescent delinquents in most western societies not only serves the goals of punishment and deterrence, but is also aimed at rehabilitation and recidivism reduction (Gatti, Tremblay, & Vitaro, 2009; Liebling & Maruna, 2005). A long history of adverse childhood experiences, including maltreatment and neglect (Lamers-Winkelmaan & Visser, 2009; Prinzie, Hoeve, & Stams, 2008; Spinhoven et al., 2010), a criminogenic environment after detention and lack of aftercare contribute to diminished possibilities for positive enduring change and recidivism (Biehal, 2010; Farrall, Bottoms, & Shapland, 2011; Pritikin, 2008; Loeber, van der Laan, Slot, & Hoeve, 2008; Wikstrom & Butterworth, 2006). Some researchers have ascribed lack of positive intervention effects to the deprivational effects of incarceration. Deprivation expresses itself in recidivism (Listwan, Sullivan, Agnew, Cullen, & Colvin, 2013), criminal cognitions, reactance (Liebling & Maruna, 2005), brutalization, deviancy training (Shapiro, Smith, Malone, & Collaro, 2010) learned helplessness (Huizinga & Henry, 2008; Loughran, 2009) and internalizing and externalising symptoms (White, Shi, Hirschfield, Mun, & Loeber, 2009; Witvliet, 2009). Incarceration could also increase psychopathology (Heynen, Van der Helm, Cima, Stams, & Korebrits, 2015), maladaptive coping strategies and decreased treatment motivation (van der Helm, Klapwijk, Stams, & van der Laan, 2009).

In youth prisons, the social environment has been described in terms of group climate, which can be relatively open (rehabilitative) or closed (repressive,) (Van der Helm et al., 2009). A structured, safe and rehabilitative environment at the living group is designated as an 'open' climate (Van der Helm, Stams, & van der Laan, 2011). An open group climate, with sufficient support from group workers, ample opportunities for growth and a safe atmosphere is thought to foster affiliation, perspective taking, treatment motivation and empathy (Barrett & Wager, 2006). This climate is thought to buffer against aggression at the living group by eliciting prosocial behavior, which counteracts aggressive tendencies resulting from unstable- and callous and unemotional personality traits (Heynen et al., 2015; Janzing & Kerstens, 2002). A repressive living group climate is characterized by distrust among inmates and

between inmates and group workers, contributing to mutual hostility and recidivism. Hostility among inmates is associated with aggression and violence as a means to maintain control (Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010; Thomaes, Bushman, Stegge, & Olthof, 2008; Van der Helm, Boekee, Stams & van der Laan, 2011). A repressive group climate has been shown to result in low self-worth, anxiety, and aggression (Ostrowsky, 2010; Thomaes, 2007; Heynen, et al., 2015). While inmates' aggression can elicit repression by staff in order to maintain control, repression can subsequently aggravate aggression in inmates. This transactional mechanism (Sameroff, 2009) has been designated as a 'deviance amplifying feedback cycle' (Patterson & Bank, 1989), a 'coercive cycle with reciprocal negative reinforcement' (Gravine & Patterson, 2006) or a 'pathology amplifying cycle' (Bugental, 2009) and can result in a rapid deteriorating group climate, resulting in severe violence.

Maintaining a structured and rehabilitative environment requires a delicate balance between flexibility and control (Clark Craig, 2004; Liebling, & Arnold, 2004; Liebling & Price, 2001; Van der Helm & Stams, 2012; Wortly, 2002). Control incorporates safety, a predictable day structure and effective rule keeping and is needed to avert chaos, anarchy and violence among adolescents who are often used to living in aversive environments, and are afraid of and/or distrust other people (Sato, Uono, Matsuura, & Toichi, 2009). Flexibility or innovation are needed to practice newly acquired social competences and to stop a negative spiral of social fears, a tendency to evaluate ambiguous stimuli in the environment as negative, and socially inadequate or rigid hostile behaviors (Miers, 2010; White, Shi, Hirschfield, Mun & Loeber, 2009; Van der Helm, Matthys, Moonen, Stams, Giesen & van der Heide, 2013). Too much reliance on control, however, can turn into repressive control and coercion, which creates more fear and depression and fosters distrust and damages (therapeutic) relationships between staff and inmates (De Dreu, Giebels & Van der Vliert, 1998; De Valk et al., 2015; Wortly, 2002).

Flexibility is considered important from the perspective of the 'Risks-Needs-Responsivity' (RNR) principles of successful rehabilitation (Langdon, 2007). The RNR principles state that the intensity of the behavioral intervention matches the risk for recidivism, that treatment should target criminogenic needs, and that treatment should be fine-tailored to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strength of the offender (Andrews & Bonta, 2007). Fine tailoring needs flexibility in treatment as opposed to a 'one size fits all' method. In youth prisons, this arduous task of reconciling two seemingly opposite goals (the need for control to avert chaos and violence and flexibility to promote learning and rehabilitation) is especially the domain of group workers and their professional behavior.

The professional behaviour of group workers in a closed forensic setting is subject to many (external) influences. Working with adolescents who are often victims as well as perpetrators, and who display serious externalizing and internalizing behaviour (Vermeiren, 2003) requires efficacious professional behaviour of guards or group workers. For this, education, task maturity ('knowledge, experience and skills that the specific task requires') Herschey & Blanchard, 1977), a shared social identity with high motivational attitudes and safety are important conditions according to organizational literature (Fiedler, 1964; Furnham 1997; Haslam, 2004). An organizational culture that combines flexibility (innovation) and

control (structure) and inspiring (transformational) leadership (Bass, & Bass, 2009) may shape conditions for group workers to create a flexible and open living climate (Fiedler, 1964; Hershey & Blanchard, 1977; Jaffee, 2001).

Years of research on secure facilities in the Netherlands has shown mere imprisonment to be criminogenic, but an open institutional climate in a secure setting can be effective in reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for Estonian youth and young adults with severe behavioural and criminal problems (for an oversight see: Souverein, Van der Helm & Stams, 2012; Stams & Van der Helm 2017).

2. Research Method

2.1 Procedure

Over a period of two years, three measurements took place in three prisons and three residential youth facilities conducted by researchers of the University of Applied Sciences and advisors and researchers of the Estonian Ministry of Justice. The project consisted of quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research included administering questionnaires to the adolescents (Group Climate Inventory). The questionnaire was translated to Estonian and Russian. All questionnaires were distributed by the Estonian team members and the researchers. They explained in Estonian why the research was conducted and that the answers would be completely anonymous. If necessary, a staff member translated into Russian for the Russian youth. In the prisons the adolescents were invited by the researchers in their cell. After half an hour they came back to collect the completed questionnaires. In secure youth care the adolescents participated at the unit. All questionnaires were provided with a code that would secure the anonymity, but that also enables analyses on unit level.

After each measurement the research team from Leiden made a research report for each institution with the results of the quantitative and qualitative research. We also had feedback meetings with management, staff and adolescents from each facility. For the feedback meetings we used leaflets for staff and adolescents (see attachment 2 for an example). In this overall report we only describe the results of the quantitative research from the three measurements.

2.2 Sample

Inmates in prison

In the first measurement Viru Prison and Harku prison participated in the research. A total of 95 inmates participated in the research. In the second measurement Viru and Harku prison also participated, a total of 113 inmates participated. In the third and last measurement Viru Prison, Tallinn Prison and Tartu Prison participated. The inmates from Harku were then moved to Tallinn Prison. Tartu Prison participated for the first time. A total of 214 inmates participated in the research.

Measurement	Number of participants
First measurement	95
Second measurement	113
Third measurement	214

Adolescents in secure youth care

All the institutions, Kaagvere, TCCR and Tapa participated all three measurements. At the first measurement 70 adolescents participated, in the second measurement a total of 68 adolescents participated. In the third and last measurement a total of 38 adolescents participated in the research.

Measurement	Number of participants
First measurement	70
Second measurement	68
Third measurement	38

2.3 Material: Group Climate Inventory

The group climate was measured with translated- and back translated Estonian and Russian versions of the Prison Group Climate Inventory (GCI; Van der Helm, Stams & van der Laan, in press). The GCI consisted of 4 scales and 36 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = 'I do not agree' to 5 = 'I totally agree'. The support scale (12 items) assessed professional behaviour and in particular the responsibility of group workers to specific needs of the inmates. Paying attention to inmates, taking complaints seriously, respect and trust were important characteristics of support. An example of a support item is: 'group workers treat me with respect'. The growth scale (9 items) assessed learning perceptions, hope for the future and giving meaning to the prison stay. An example of a growth item is: 'I learn the right things here'. The repression scale (7 items) assessed perceptions of strictness and control, unfair and haphazard rules and lack of flexibility at the living group. An example of a repression item is: 'You have to ask permission for everything here'. The group atmosphere scale (7 items) assessed the way inmates treated and trusted each other, feelings of safety towards each other, being able to get some peace of mind and having enough daylight and fresh air. An example of an atmosphere item is 'We trust each other here'. The adolescents were also asked to rate the elements of the living group climate with a grade from 1 to 10 (1 being the most negative grade and 10 being the most positive grade) and to explain why they had given this grade. In this way, the adolescents could freely give their opinion about the elements, while the scales consist of the average of several items together. A confirmative factor analysis was performed over the data which provided evidence for good validity both Estonian and Russian version and also good reliability.

2.4 Quantitative analysis

All quantitative data were analysed with the program SPSS. A scale score was generated by cumulating all relevant items and subsequently dividing the sum through the number of items the scale contained (only when at least 80% of the items in the scale were answered). Therefore, the number of respondents could differ over scales.

The average of the Estonian prisons was compared to the Dutch reference group from adult prisons ($n = 266$) and to the previous measurements in December and May 2015. The results of the total sample of the Estonian youth care are compared to the Dutch reference group from residential youth care ($n = 566$) and to the previous measurements in December and May 2015.

To make these comparisons, the effect size Cohen's d was used (Cohen, 1992). With this measure, averages of different samples can be compared. The Cohen's d can either be positive or negative. In the table below, it is shown which values indicate which effect size.

Value	Effect size
> 1.30 or < -1.30	Very strong effect
Between (-).80 and (-)1.29	Strong effect
Between (-).50 and (-).79	Medium effect
Between (-).20 and (-).49	Small effect
Between -.19 and .19	No effect

3. Results of living group climate

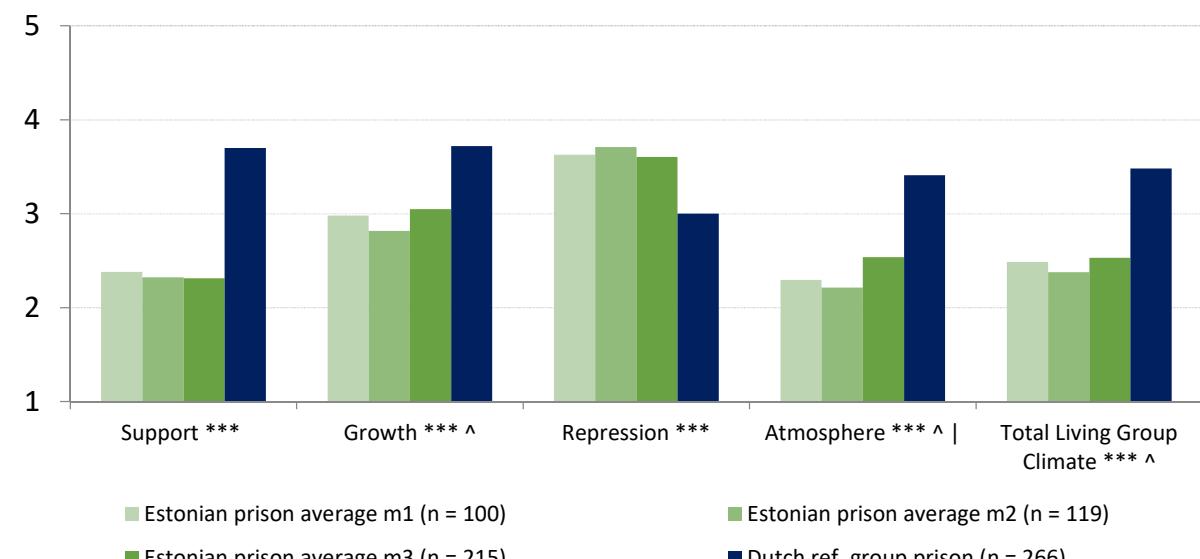
The description of the results of the group climate is separated between the results of the prisons and the secure youth care institutions. First we will describe the development of group climate in Estonian prisons, followed by a description of each institution. Next we will describe the development of group climate in secure youth care institutions, followed by a description of each institution.

3.1 Development of the living group climate over three measurements in Estonian prisons

The results of the group climate in Estonian prisons compared to the Dutch Reference group show that the inmates are less positive about the total group climate ($M = 2.53, d = -1.84$). The inmates experience less support ($M = 2.31, d = -2.25$), a more negative atmosphere ($M = 2.54, d = -1.30$), more repression ($M = 3.60, d = 1.02$) and less possibilities for growth ($M = 3.05, d = -.84$).

The results over three measurements show that the total group climate is experienced most positive at the last measurement. However the differences between the measurements are small. In the last measurements Tartu prison participated for the first time, this might declare the differences in the experienced group climate. On the separate scales it is shown that the differences between the measurements are very small. However, one difference is found on the individual scales, the inmates experience a slightly more positive atmosphere compared to m1 ($d = .30$).

Figure 1. Mean scale scores Estonian prison of GCI m1 - m3



Results Estonian prison average m3 compared to the Dutch reference group from adult prisons:

* = small to medium deviation ** = medium to large deviation *** = large to extra large deviation

Results Estonian prison average m3 compared to the Estonian prison average m2:

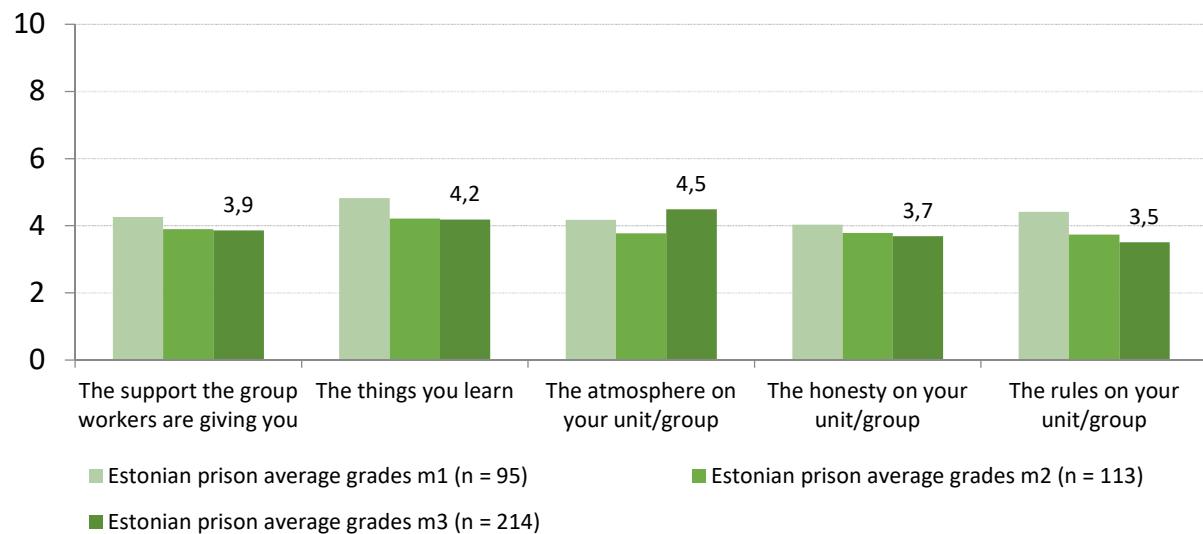
^ = small to medium deviation ^^ = medium to large deviation ^^^ = large to extra large deviation

Results Estonian prison average m3 compared to the Estonian prison average m1:

| = small to medium deviation || = medium to large deviation ||| = large to extra large deviation

The inmates were asked to grade different elements of the living group climate with a school mark ranging from 0 = 'not good at all' to 10 = 'very good'. The inmates of the Estonian prisons graded all elements as insufficient. Figure 2 shows a small decrease of the grades on all elements compared to the previous measurements, except for the element *The atmosphere on your unit/group*.

Figure 2. Average grades for the living group climate elements m1 - m3

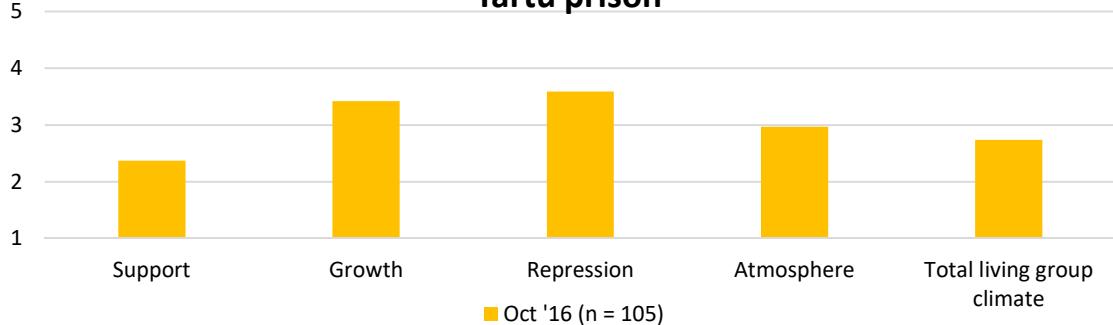


3.2 Development of the living group climate over multiple measurements in Estonian prisons per institution

3.2.1 Tartu prison

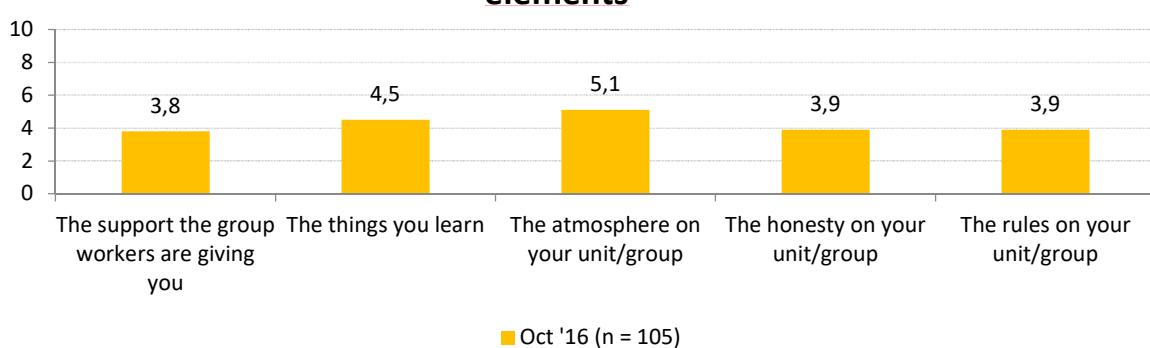
The first time Tartu prison participated in the research was at the third measurement in October 2016. A total of 105 inmates participated. Because this was the first measurement the results could not be compared with an earlier measurement. The results are presented in table 3 in the appendix.

Figure 3. Average scores of the living group climate in Tartu prison



The inmates of Tartu prison experience a slightly below average living group climate ($M = 2.74$). They experience a slightly above average amount of repression ($M = 3.59$) and a slightly below average amount of support ($M = 2.37$) and positive atmosphere ($M = 2.97$). However, the inmates also experience a slightly above average amount of possibilities to grow ($M = 2.37$).

Figure 4. Average grades for the living group climate elements

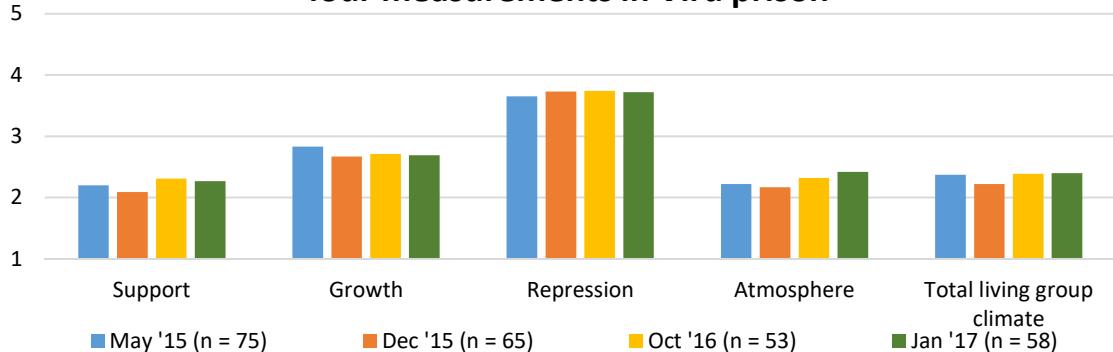


The inmates of Tartu prison graded all elements of the living group climate as insufficient. They grade the support of the workers, the honesty at the unit and the rules at the unit as most negative. The atmosphere among inmates is graded slightly more positive, but still insufficient.

3.2.2 Viru prison

Because an additional measurement has taken place in Viru prison, four measurements will be discussed. A total of 58 inmates participated in the fourth measurement in January 2017. These results are compared to the previous measurements in October 2016, December 2015 and May 2015. The results are presented in table 4 in the appendix.

Figure 5. Development of the living group climate over four measurements in Viru prison

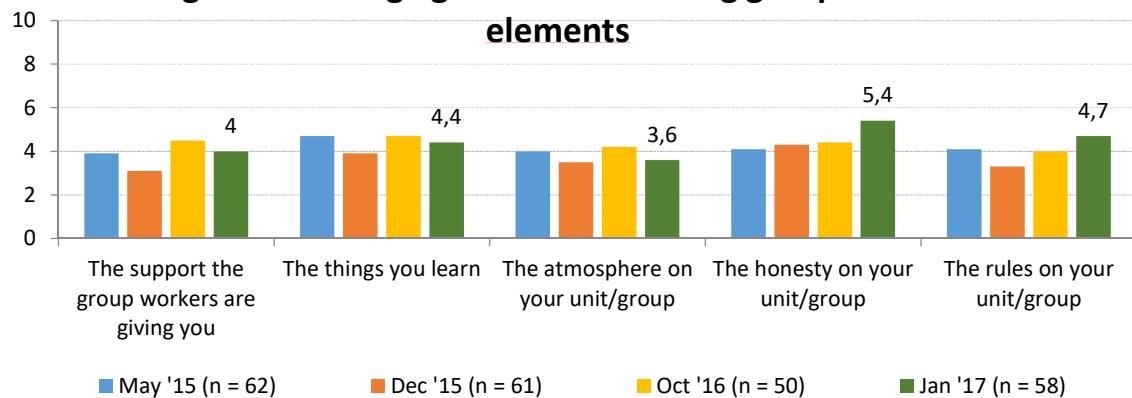


Compared to the measurement in May 2015 (m1) the total living group climate scale indicates a negligible difference. The results of the individual scales show that the inmates do experience more repression ($M = 3.72, d = .50$) and slightly less possibilities for growth ($M = 2.69, d = -.34$). However, at the same time they also are slightly more positive about the group atmosphere ($M = 2.42, d = .31$). The score on the scale *Support* does not differ noteworthy from m1.

At the last measurement the inmates from Viru prison experience a slightly more positive living group climate compared to the measurement in December 2015 (m2; $M = 2.40, d = .29$). The results of the individual group climate scales indicate that the inmates experience slightly more support ($M = 2.27, d = .27$). The scores on the other scales do not differ noteworthy from m2.

Compared to the measurement in October 2016 (m3) the total living group climate scale indicates a negligible difference. Also the scores on the individual scales show no noteworthy differences compared to m3.

Figure 6. Average grades for the living group climate elements

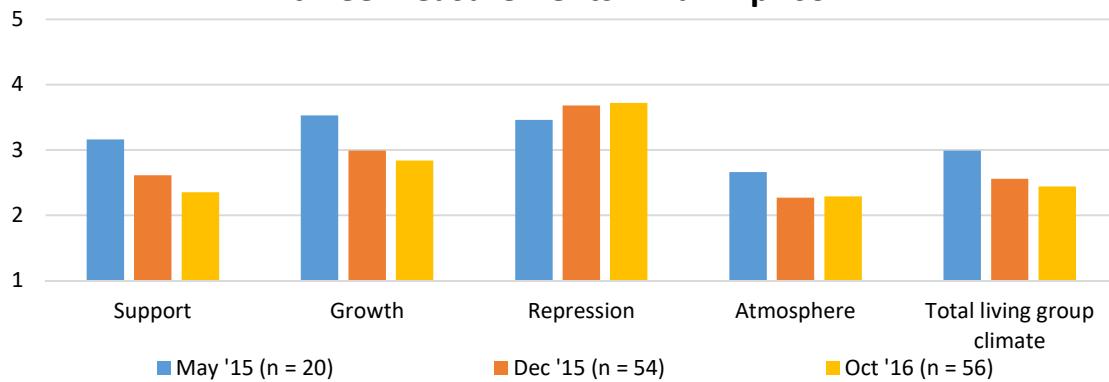


The inmates of Viru prison graded all elements of the living group climate as insufficient in the fourth measurement. However, figure 8 shows a small increase of the grades on the elements *The honesty on your unit/group* and *The rules on your unit/group* compared to the previous measurements.

3.2.3 Harku /Tallin prison

A total of 56 inmates participated in the third measurement in October 2016. These results are compared to the previous measurements in December and May 2015. The first and second measurement took place in Harku Prison, the last measurement took place after the move to Tallin Prison. The results are presented in table 5 in the appendix.

Figure 7. Development of the living group climate over three measurements in Tallin prison



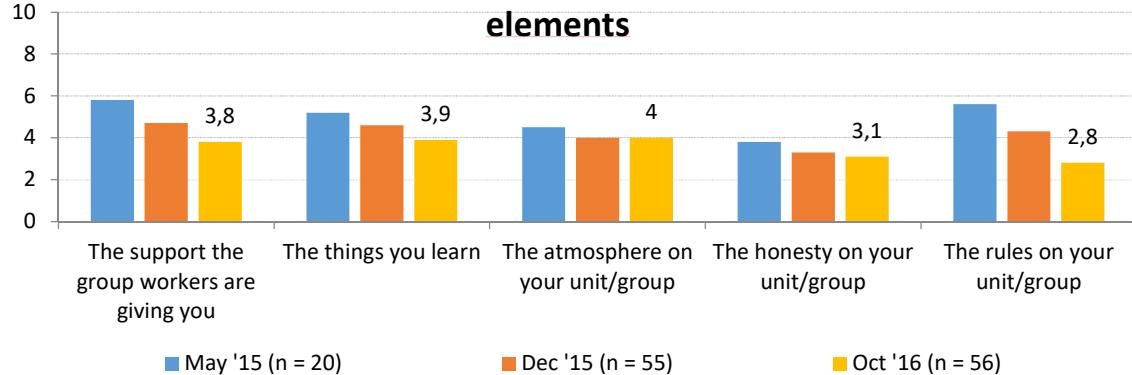
Compared to the measurement in May 2015 (m1) the inmates of Tallin prison experience the living group climate more negative ($M = 2.44$, $d = -.93$). They experience less support ($M = 2.35$, $d = -1.06$), less possibilities for growth ($M = 2.84$, $d = -.87$) and a less positive atmosphere ($M = 2.29$, $d = -.42$). Also the inmates experience slightly more repression ($M = 3.72$, $d = .38$) compared to m1.

In comparison with the measurement in December 2015 (m2) the total living group climate scale indicates a negligible difference. The results of the individual group climate scales show that the inmates

do experience slightly less support ($d = -.33$). The scores on the other scales do not differ noteworthy from m2.

Overall the results show that the inmates are more negative about the group climate after they moved from Harku to Tallin Prison. The group climate in Harku was quite good. Specically, the possibilities for growth and the support. However in Tallinn prison these elements are experiences more negative.

Figure 8. Average grades for the living group climate elements



The inmates of Tallinn prison graded all elements of the living group climate as insufficient. Figure 10 shows a decrease of the grades on all elements compared to the previous measurements. This undescribed the scale scores from the group climate. The inmates are less positive after they moved from Harku prison to Tallinn prison.

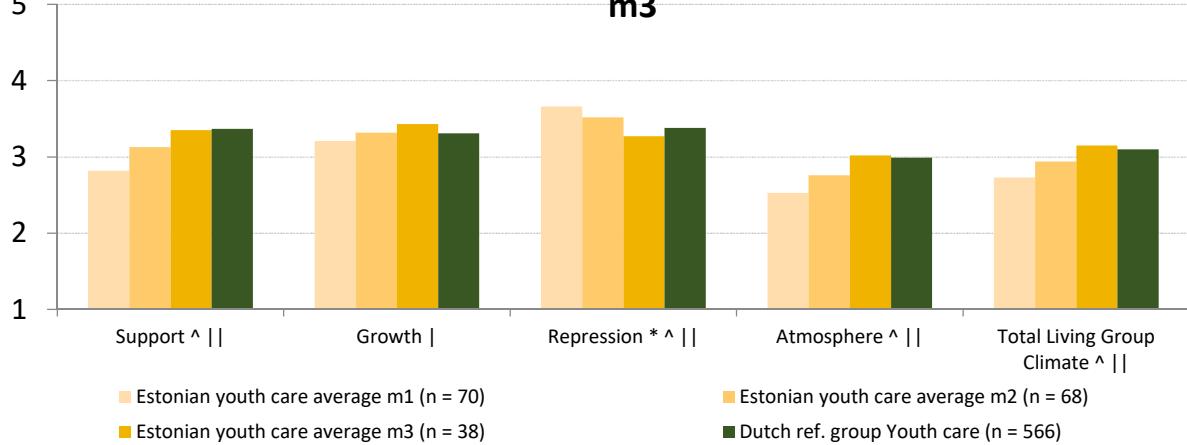
3.3 Development of the living group climate over three measurements in Estonian secure youth care

The results of the total sample are compared to the Dutch reference group and to the previous measurements in December and May 2015. The results are presented in tables 2a – 2c in the appendix. Compared to the Dutch reference group, the total living group climate indicates a negligible difference. However, the scores on the individual scales show that the adolescents experience slightly less repression ($M = 3.27$, $d = -.22$). The scores on the other scales do not differ noteworthy from the reference group.

Compared to the measurement in May 2015 (m1) the adolescents experience a more positive living group climate ($M = 3.15$, $d = .64$). They experience more support from group workers ($M = 3.35$, $d = .64$), are more positive about the group atmosphere ($M = 3.02$, $d = .60$) and they experience less repression ($d = -.54$). Also the adolescents experience slightly more possibilities for growth compared with m1 ($M = 3.43$, $d = .23$).

The results also indicate that the adolescents are slightly more positive about the living group climate compared to the measurement in December 2015 (m2; $d = .35$). They experience slightly less repression ($d = -.38$) and they are slightly more positive about the group atmosphere ($d = .31$) and the support they receive from group workers ($d = .28$). The scale *Growth* indicates a negligible difference compared to m2.

Figure 9. Mean scale scores Estonian youth care of GCI m1 - m3



Results Estonian youth care average m3 compared to the Dutch reference group:

* = small to medium deviation ** = medium to large deviation *** = large to extra large deviation

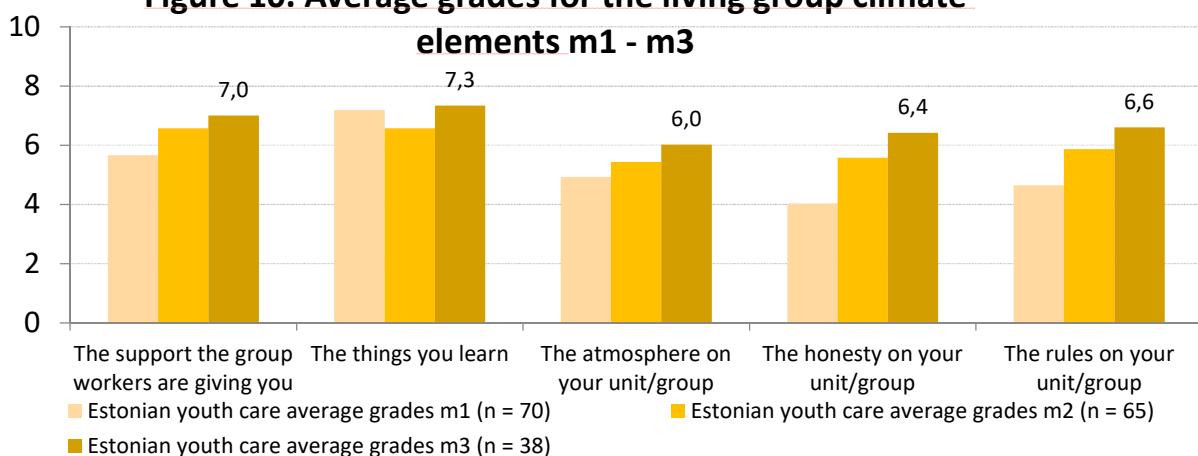
Results Estonian youth care average m3 compared to the Estonian youth care average m2:

^ = small to medium deviation ^^ = medium to large deviation ^^^ = large to extra large deviation

Results Estonian youth care average m3 compared to the Estonian youth care average m1:

| = small to medium deviation || = medium to large deviation ||| = large to extra large deviation

Figure 10. Average grades for the living group climate elements m1 - m3



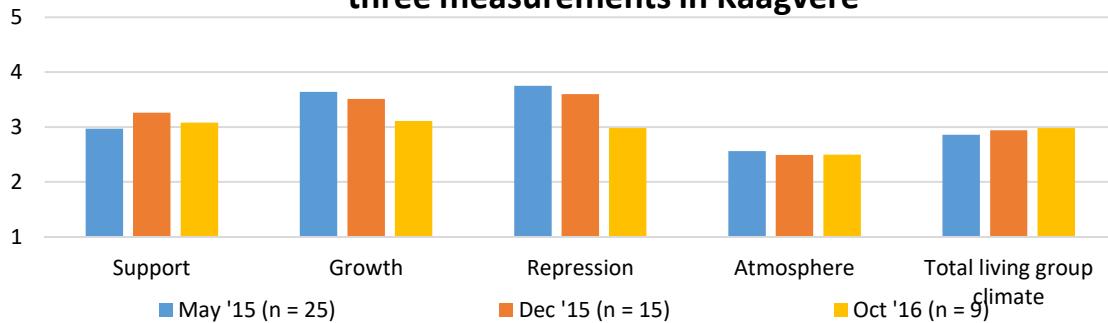
The adolescents were asked to grade different elements of the living group climate with a school mark ranging from 0 = 'not good at all' to 10 = 'very good'. The adolescents of the Estonian youth care institutions have given a positive grade to all elements. Figure 4 shows an increase of the grades on all elements of the living group climate compared to the previous measurements.

3.4 Development of the living group climate over multiple measurements in Estonian secure youth care per institution

3.4.1 Kaagvere

A total of 9 adolescents participated in the third measurement in October 2016. These results are compared to the previous measurements in December and May 2015. The results are presented in table 6 in the appendix.

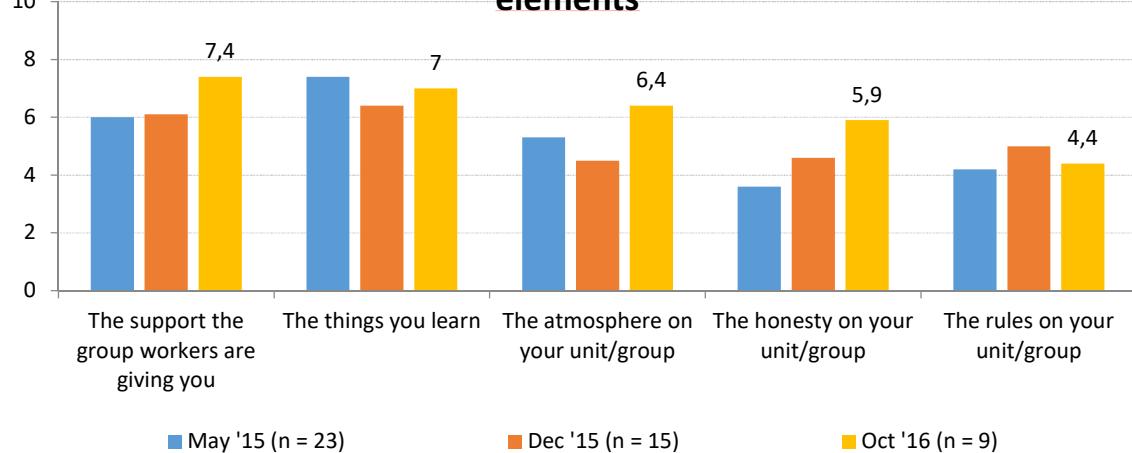
Figure 11. Development of the living group climate over three measurements in Kaagvere



Compared to the measurement in May 2015 (m1) the adolescents of Kaagvere experience a slightly more positive living group climate ($M = 2.98$, $d = .23$). This is mainly because the adolescents experience less repression ($M = 2.98$, $d = -1.02$). However, they also experience less possibilities for growth ($M = 3.11$, $d = -.59$). The scores on the scales *Support* and *Atmosphere* do not differ noteworthy from m1.

In comparison with the measurement in December 2015 (m2) the total living group climate scale indicates a negligible difference. Though the results of the individual scales show that the adolescents experience less repression ($d = -.86$), but also less possibilities for growth ($d = -.44$) and less support from the group workers ($M = 3.08$, $d = -.27$). The score on the scale *Atmosphere* does not differ noteworthy from m2.

Figure 12. Average grades for the living group climate elements

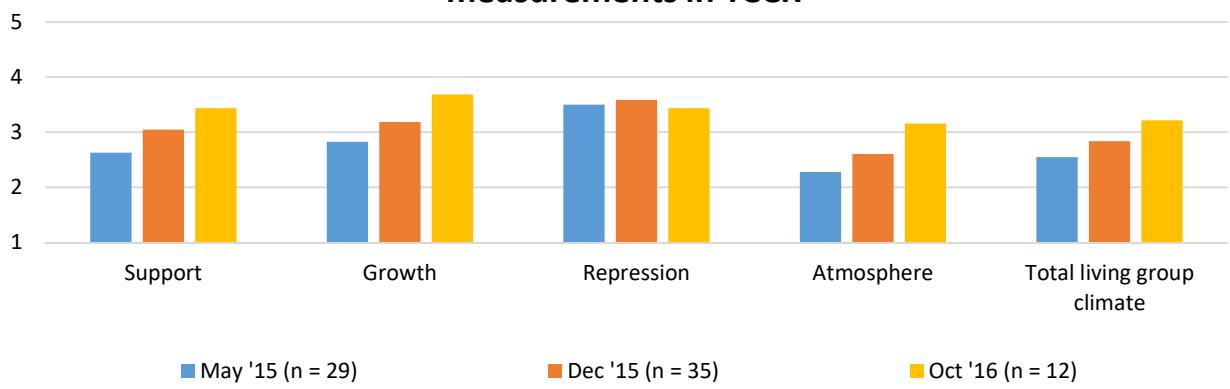


The adolescents of Kaagvere have given a positive grade to the elements *The support the group workers are giving you*, *The things you learn*, *The atmosphere on your unit/group* and *The honesty on your unit/group*. Only the element *The rules on your unit/group* is graded as insufficient.

3.4.2 Tallinn Centre for Children at Risk (TCCR)

A total of 12 adolescents participated in the third measurement in October 2016. These results are compared to the previous measurements in December and May 2015. The results are presented in table 7 in the appendix.

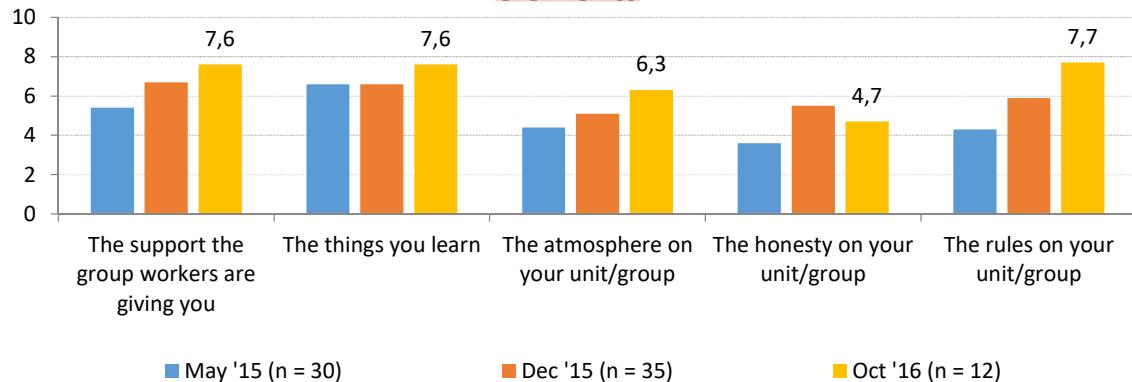
Figure 13. Development of the living group climate over three measurements in TCCR



Compared to the measurement in May 2015 (m1) the adolescents of TCCR experience a more positive living group climate ($M = 3.22$, $d = 1.10$). They experience a more positive atmosphere ($M = 3.16$, $d = 1.44$), more possibilities for growth ($M = 3.69$, $d = 1.13$) and more support from the group workers ($M = 3.44$, $d = 1.10$). The score on the scale *Repression* does not differ noteworthy from m1.

In comparison with the measurement in December 2015 (m2) the adolescents also experience a more positive living group climate ($d = .67$). They experience a more positive atmosphere ($d = .84$), more possibilities for growth ($d = .64$), more support from the group workers ($d = .57$) and slightly less repression on the group ($M = 3.44$, $d = -.23$) compared to m2.

Figure 14. Average grades for the living group climate elements

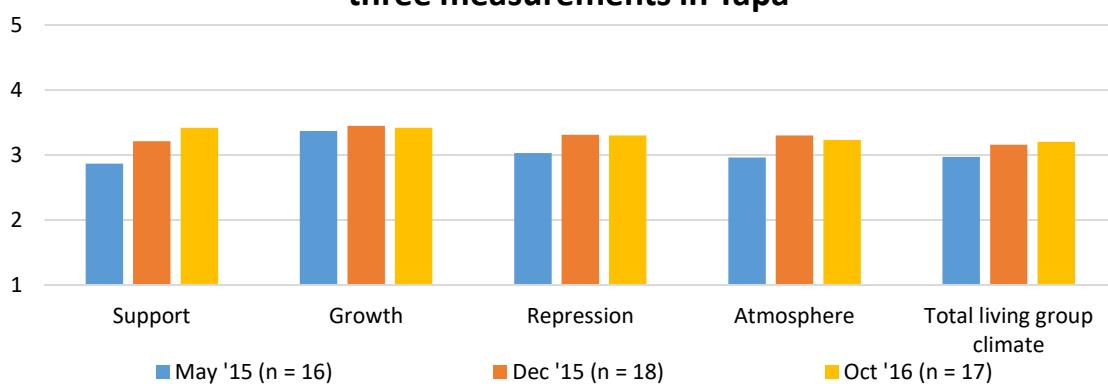


The adolescents of TCCR have given a positive grade to the elements *The support the group workers are giving you*, *The things you learn*, *The atmosphere on your unit/group* and *The rules on your unit/group*. Figure 14 also shows an increase of the grades for these elements compared to the previous measurements. Only the element *The honesty on your unit/group* is graded as insufficient.

3.4.3 Tapa

A total of 17 adolescents participated in the third measurement in October 2016. These results are compared to the previous measurements in December and May 2015. The results are presented in table 8 in the appendix. It is important to notice that during the three measurements the adolescents moved to a new building between measurement one and two.

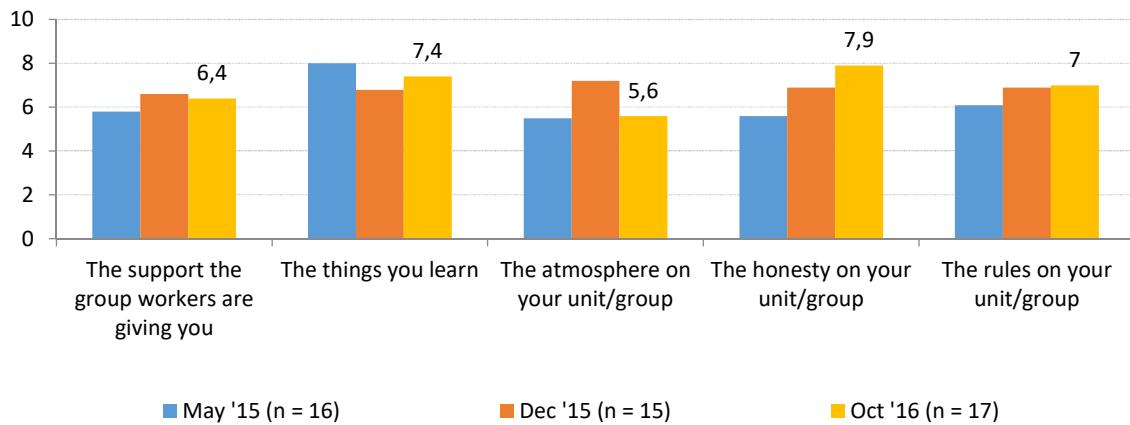
Figure 15. Development of the living group climate over three measurements in Tapa



Compared to the measurement in May 2015 (m1) the adolescents of Tapa experience a slightly more positive living group climate ($M = 3.20$, $d = .37$). This is mainly because the adolescents experience more support of the group workers ($M = 3.42$, $d = .70$), but they also are slightly more positive about the group atmosphere ($M = 3.23$, $d = .31$). However, the adolescents do experience slightly more repression compared to m1 ($M = 3.30$, $d = .36$). The score on the scale *Growth* does not differ noteworthy from m1.

In comparison with the measurement in December 2015 (m2) the total living group climate scale indicates a negligible difference. The results of the individual group climate scales show that the adolescents do experience slightly more support from the group workers ($d = .23$). The scores on the other scales do not differ noteworthy from m2. Over time the results show that the adolescents experience a more positive group climate after the move to a new building. Specially the support and atmosphere are experienced more positive.

Figure 16. Average grades for the living group climate elements



The adolescents of Tapa have given a positive grade to all elements of the living group climate (figure 16). The results show an increase of the grades for the element *The honesty on your unit/group*. *The atmosphere* is just graded sufficient and is experienced less positive than the second measurement.

4. Discussion

Results

In this report we have made a distinction between secure youthcare and prisons. The climate results of the secure youthcare were better compared to the prisons. Also in the results we can note a slow improvement over time in the secure youthcare where results in Estonian prisons did not show improvements at large. Between facilities there are some differences. In the prisons, Tartu and Viru have respectively a slightly better climate and a slightly improving climate. Tallinn has shown a declining climate. In the secure youth section, Kaagvere and Tapa were slightly improving and Tallinn made a quite an improvement.

We did not find an overall improvement in the Prison section. For Tallinn this can be explained by the closing down of Harku Prison and the subsequent moving to Tallinn. Though both facilities were outdated, prisoners in Harku experienced a very good social climate, for which staff was mainly responsible. Viru prison underwent a 'storming' period during the time of the research with understaffing and incidents as a major problem and the youth section was locked down. The January measurement shows some first inklings of change. In Tartu only one measurement was taken.

In the secure youth section we see small improvements at Kaagvere and Tapa, which could be explained by the subsequent moving to different buildings and new staff. Normally such relocations show a backlash on the climate as building, staff and youth need to get accustomed. In this light Kaagvere and Tapa have done well during the measurement period. The improvements of Tallinn Centre of Children at Risk is huge.

Limitations

The study was conducted during a transitional period in Estonian secure youthcare and re-allocation of one prison, this has probably affected results. Furthermore, this was the first use of translated and backtranslated instruments in Estonian and Russian language. Though psychometric properties were good and interviews (not reported here) and 'schoolmarks' generally backed up results, more research is needed. Also response during different measurement waves varied with the changing environment in our sample population. Therefore results should be interpreted with caution. Due to the unfamiliar language, the Dutch researchers were dependent on the Estonian researchers for translation.

Although this worked out very easily during the interviews, it could be that some of the information was lost because of the translation.

Conclusions

Creating a feedback-loop of climate measurement, feedback and education of staff and repeated measurement could contribute to a more positive climate in Estonian youth prisons and secure youthcare with relatively small cost. Returns for society could be manifold.

Recommendations for policy and practice

Climate monitoring and improvement in Estonian (youth) prisons and secure youthcare is a relatively simple way to contribute to improvements in society. We therefore recommend to perform these measurements and feedback regularly and incorporate this into quality standards as has been done in the Netherlands and across Europe. Providing feedback about one's own professional behaviour and discussing results helps staff to align more to organisational goals and contribute to society. In general recommendations for the Prison Service, when we combine results with interviews some organisational change in the prison system is recommended towards a more evidence based approach, based on modern scientific insight. The system could benefit from an approach which is based on providing for basic psychological needs of prisoners as formulated in empirically one of the most important theories of our time which can also be applied to the forensic sector: 'Self determination Theory' (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2017, Stams & van der Helm, 2017). These principles state that motivation for change and behaviour is contingent on providing for more 'relatedness' (responsiveness of staff in our measurements), 'competence' with inmates ('Growth' in our measurements) and 'autonomy' (inmates who can within the rules of the institution make some decisions for themselves) as opposite to repression (in our measurements).

Some of the new policies, implemented at Tartu Prison (communication courses for guards) and Tallinn centre for Children at Risk (more autonomy for children) clearly demonstrate these successes.

In the individual reports, many recommendations were given, but to improve climate a focus on basic psychological needs is paramount in order to fulfil obligations of the prison service and secure youthcare to society: providing for a climate which promotes reduction of crime and problem behaviour and future successful participation in Estonian society.

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Appendix

1. Total living group climate results Estonian prison and youth care

Table 1a.

Average Scores on the GCI of the Estonian prison average m3 (n = 215) compared to the Dutch reference group from adult prison (n = 266)

Estonian prison m3						
	n	M Est. prison average m3	SD Est. prison average m3	M Ref. group	SD Ref. group	d
Support	215	2.31	.80	3.70	.35	-2.25
Growth	215	3.05	1.01	3.72	.51	-.84
Repression	215	3.60	.78	3.00	.29	1.02
Atmosphere	215	2.54	.91	3.41	.29	-1.30
Total Living Group Climate	212	2.53	.65	3.48	.33	-1.84
<hr/>						
The rules on the unit	215	2.99	.89	-	-	-
Own physical safety	208	3.86	1.00	-	-	-
Others' physical safety	206	3.35	.79	-	-	-
Safe atmosphere	215	2.43	.79	-	-	-
Total safety	214	3.12	.60	-	-	-

Table 1b.

Average Scores on the GCI of the Estonian prison average m3 (n = 215) compared to the Estonian prison average m1 (n = 100) and the Estonian prison average m2 (n = 119)

Estonian prison m3									
	n	M Est. prison average m3	SD Est. prison average m3	M m1	SD m1	M m2	SD m2	d	
Support	215	2.31	.80	2.38	.83	-.08	.23	.79	-.01
Growth	215	3.05	1.01	2.98	.85	.07	2.82	.96	.24
Repression	215	3.60	.78	3.63	.61	-.03	3.71	.58	-.15
Atmosphere	215	2.54	.91	2.29	.70	.30	2.21	.75	.39
Total Living Group Climate	212	2.53	.65	2.49	.57	.07	2.38	.61	.25

Table 1c.

Average Grades for the Living Group Climate Elements

Estonian prison m3			
	n	M	SD
The support the group workers are giving you	214	3.9	2.58
The things you learn	214	4.2	3.02
The atmosphere on your unit	214	4.5	2.82
The honesty on your unit	213	3.7	2.68
The rules on your unit	214	3.5	2.85

Table 2a.

Average Scores on the GCI of the Estonian youth care average m3 ($n = 39$) compared to the Dutch reference group from residential youth care ($n = 566$)

<i>Estonian youth care m3</i>						
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> Est. youth care average m3	<i>SD</i> Est. youth care average m3	<i>M</i> Ref. group	<i>SD</i> Ref. group	<i>d</i>
Support	38	3.35	.81	3.37	.26	-.04
Growth	38	3.43	1.03	3.31	.34	.16
Repression	37	3.27	.69	3.38	.18	-.22
Atmosphere	38	3.02	.84	2.99	.26	.04
Total Living Group Climate	38	3.15	.65	3.1	.23	.11
<hr/>						
The rules on the unit	39	3.44	.87	-	-	-
Own physical safety	36	4.04	.97	-	-	-
Others' physical safety	35	3.48	.87	-	-	-
Safe atmosphere	38	3.38	.97	-	-	-
Total safety	38	3.54	.67	-	-	-

Table 2b.

Average Scores on the GCI of the Estonian youth care average m3 ($n = 38$) compared to the Estonian youth care average m1 ($n = 70$) and the Estonian youth care average m2 ($n = 68$)

<i>Estonian youth care m3</i>									
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> Est. youth care average m3	<i>SD</i> Est. youth care average m3	<i>M</i> m1	<i>SD</i> m1	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i> m2	<i>SD</i> m2	<i>d</i>
Support	38	3.35	.81	2.82	.82	.64	3.13	.73	.28
Growth	38	3.43	1.03	3.21	.88	.23	3.32	.88	.12
Repression	37	3.27	.69	3.66	.76	-.54	3.52	.66	-.38
Atmosphere	38	3.02	.84	2.53	.78	.60	2.76	.77	.31
Total Living Group Climate	38	3.15	.65	2.73	.67	.64	2.94	.57	.35

Table 2c.

Average Grades for the Living Group Climate Elements

<i>Estonian youth care m3</i>			
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The support the group workers are giving you	38	7.0	2.55
The things you learn	38	7.3	2.73
The atmosphere on your unit	38	6.0	3.22
The honesty on your unit	38	6.4	3.13
The rules on your unit	38	6.6	3.00

2. Total living group climate results Estonian prison per institution

Table 3.
Average Scores on the GCI of Tartu prison m3 (October 2016)

Tartu prison			
	n	M Tartu m3	SD Tartu m3
Support	104	2.37	.72
Growth	105	3.42	.91
Repression	105	3.59	.67
Atmosphere	103	2.97	.78
Total Living Group Climate	105	2.74	.62

Please note that there are no previous measurements of Tartu prison available

Table 4.
Average Scores on the GCI of Viru prison m4 (January 2017) compared to the previous measurement in May 2015 – m1 ($n = 75$), the measurement in December 2015 – m2 ($n = 65$) and the measurement in October 2016 – m3 ($n = 53$)

Viru prison												
	n	M Viru m4	SD Viru m4	M May '15	SD May '15	d	M Dec '15	SD Dec '15	d	M Oct '16	SD Oct '16	d
Support	58	2.27	.79	2.26	.69	.01	2.09	.72	.27	2.31	.91	-.05
Growth	57	2.69	.79	2.96	.81	-.34	2.67	1.00	.04	2.71	1.00	-.02
Repression	55	3.72	.62	3.40	.65	.50	3.73	.56	.01	3.74	.70	-.03
Atmosphere	58	2.42	.78	2.20	.62	.31	2.17	.74	.19	2.32	.85	.12
Total Living Group Climate	58	2.40	.57	2.47	.47	-.13	2.22	.55	.29	2.39	.61	.02

Table 5.
Average Scores on the GCI of Tallinn prison m3 (October 2016) compared to the previous measurement in May 2015 – m1 ($n = 20$) and the measurement in December 2015 – m2 ($n = 54$)

Tallinn										
	n	M Tallinn m3	SD Tallinn m3	M May '15	SD May '15	d	M Dec '15	SD Dec '15	d	
Support	54	2.35	.82	3.16	.71	-1.06	2.61	.78	-.33	
Growth	56	2.84	1.03	3.53	.43	-.87	2.99	.89	-.16	
Repression	56	3.72	.87	3.46	.42	.38	3.68	.61	.05	
Atmosphere	53	2.29	1.01	2.66	.71	-.42	2.27	.78	.02	
Total Living Group Climate	55	2.44	.75	2.99	.36	-.93	2.56	.63	-.17	

3. Total living group climate results Estonian youth care per institution

Table 6.

Average Scores on the GCI of Kaagvere m3 (October 2016) compared to the previous measurement in May 2015 – m1 (n = 25) and the measurement in December 2015 – m2 (n = 14)

Kaagvere									
	n	M Kaagvere m3	SD Kaagvere m3	M May '15	SD May '15	d	M Dec '15	SD Dec '15	d
Support	9	3.08	.73	2.97	.78	.15	3.26	.57	-.27
Growth	9	3.11	1.02	3.64	.74	-.59	3.51	.75	-.44
Repression	9	2.98	.92	3.75	.54	-1.02	3.60	.47	-.86
Atmosphere	9	2.50	.88	2.56	.56	-.08	2.49	.38	.01
Total Living Group Climate	9	2.98	.52	2.86	.54	.23	2.94	.26	.09

Table 7.

Average Scores on the GCI of Tallin Centre for Children at Risk (TCCR) m3 (October 2016) compared to the previous measurement in May 2015 – m1 (n = 29) and the measurement in December 2015 – m2 (n = 35)

TCCR									
	n	M TCCR m3	SD TCCR m3	M May '15	SD May '15	d	M Dec '15	SD Dec '15	d
Support	12	3.44	.64	2.63	.82	1.10	3.05	.73	.57
Growth	12	3.69	.67	2.83	.84	1.13	3.19	.90	.64
Repression	12	3.44	.57	3.50	.80	-.09	3.59	.67	-.23
Atmosphere	12	3.16	.51	2.28	.70	1.44	2.61	.78	.84
Total Living Group Climate	12	3.22	.50	2.55	.70	1.10	2.84	.63	.67

Table 8.

Average Scores on the GCI of Tapa Reformatory School for boys (Valgejõe) m3 (October 2016) compared to the previous measurement in May 2015 – m1 (n = 16) and the measurement in December 2015 – m2 (n = 18)

Tapa									
	n	M Tapa m3	SD Tapa m3	M May '15	SD May '15	d	M Dec '15	SD Dec '15	d
Support	17	3.42	.96	2.87	.55	.70	3.21	.87	.23
Growth	17	3.42	1.22	3.37	.58	.05	3.45	.93	-.03
Repression	16	3.30	.61	3.03	.85	.36	3.31	.75	-.01
Atmosphere	16	3.23	.92	2.96	.79	.31	3.30	.76	-.08
Total Living Group Climate	17	3.20	.81	2.97	.34	.37	3.16	.61	.06