



Ministero della Giustizia

DIPARTIMENTO GIUSTIZIA MINORILE E DI COMUNITA'
UFFICIO IV DEL CAPO DIPARTIMENTO
Studi, ricerche e attività internazionali

Project Summary

“FACT FORM MINORS. Fostering Alternative Care for Troubled Minors”
JUST/2015/RCHI/AG/PROF Application n. 400009578

Project title

Fact for minors Fostering Alternative Care for Troubled Minors

Project Subject

Juvenile Justice System; Juvenile delinquency

EU Funding area

European Commission, Directorate General Justice and Consumers – JUST/2015/RCHI/AG/PROF/9578 - *Action grants to promote and protect the rights of the child by supporting transnational project aiming to build capacity for professionals in child protection systems and legal professionals representing children in judicial proceeding*

Member States involved

Italy, Spain, Finland, Germany, Portugal + Belgium (Belgium in particular will be involved exclusively during the phase of communication and dissemination, and will be responsible for the development of an e-learning platform).

Name of the applicant organisation

CNCA - Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza

Project partners

1. Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research (IPRS), Italy;
2. Istituto Don Calabria, Italy;
3. Ministry of Justice, Dept. of Juvenile and Community Justice, Italy;
4. Christliches Jugenddorf Deutschland (CJD), Germany;
5. Catholic University of Porto, Portugal;
6. Finnish Youth Research Network, Finland;
7. Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Deu, Spain;
8. International Juvenile Justice Observatory, Belgium.

National Authorities

Behörde für Arbeit, Soziales, Familie und Integration, (BASFI), Germany
Justice Ministry, Portugal

National Ombudsman, Finland
Justice Ministry Catalunya, Spain

Introduction

The issue of children which show evidence of psychological, psychiatric, or personality disorders serving penal sentences in alternative care communities is of the important problems being discussed at the International and European level. The receptivity to this topic is evidenced by the presence of several International agreements, research studies and EU Directives. One of the main concerns in the European context is the lack of a multidisciplinary and multiagency approach, both therapeutic and socio-educational to dealing with said minors. Unfortunately, in many European countries, the therapeutic, and socio-educational care of these children are assigned to different institutions and agencies. The division of roles and responsibilities between the various agencies and actors in regards to these “special” cases is rarely well defined and this may cause uncertainty about who should be responsible for what. Alternative care communities usually rely heavily on the local health services for providing psychiatric services and psychological support for the children being hosted, but there are significant differences in the organizing of this co-operation both regionally and individually. Another relevant problem is the lack of common procedures, tools, and terminology used to make a diagnoses, making it difficult to formulate judgements that guide the actions of social workers, teachers, psychologists and psychiatrists. As a result, children with special needs do not receive proper care, often entailing severe consequences for them– both in clinical terms, with the growth of chronic diseases; and in social terms, with children becoming more vulnerable and hence at risk of future delinquency.

The Project “Fact for Minors”, developed in response to the **EU Call for proposals JUST/2015/RCHI/AG/PROF** (*Action grants to promote and protect the rights of the child by supporting transnational project aiming to build capacity for professionals in child protection systems and legal professionals representing children in judicial proceedings*) intends to address these issues through the development and testing of a new approach to foster-care in addition to the improvement of the coordination between different agencies that work with these children. Furthermore, the project is expected to achieve a formal agreements between the main public entities involved in the project in each of the five participating countries, regarding the treatment and the procedures designed for the protection of the children targeted by the project. The process leading to such accords will thus be viewed as a demonstration of the systematic changes supported by the project; as well as a commitment of the public bodies involved in the area of child protection; and as an improvement of the overall rights of the child.

The partnership and the core project team

FACT FOR MINORS project involves n.6 Member States (IT, DE, PT, FI, ES, and BE) but in only 5 of these countries will all project activities be implemented - with the exception of Belgium, which will be involved solely with regards to the activities of communication and dissemination as well as the development of an e-learning platform. This is a reflection of the specific expertise of the IJJO (*International Juvenile Justice Observatory*) in the field of communication and training regarding Juvenile Justice.

The partnership consists of 9 Project Partners (1. CNCA, National confederation of socio-educational communities, Italy (APPLICANT); 2. Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research (IPRS), Italy; 3. Istituto Don Calabria, Italy; 4. Ministry of Justice, Dept. of Juvenile and Community Justice, Italy, Italy; 5. Christliches Jugenddorf Deutschland (CJD), Germany; 6. Catholic University of Porto, Portugal; 7. Finnish Youth Research Network, Finland; 8. Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Deu, Spain; 9. International Juvenile Justice Observatory, Belgium) coming from 6 European MS (IT, DE, PT, FI, ES, and BE). The initiative's support of the **n. 4 National Authorities** (Behörde für Arbeit, Soziales, Familie und Integration, (BASFI), Germany; Justice Ministry - Portugal; National Ombudsman, Finland; Justice Ministry Catalunya - Spain) will represent a further strength for the project's actions. Furthermore, the Institutions that have

formally expressed their support for the project, will take part in a transnational board called “**The Transnational Advisory Board**” (TAB). The board devise strategies and provide guidelines for the establishment of similar boards in the respective partner countries. The project partners will thus work in close cooperation with the respective supporting entities in their countries in order to create **National Advisory Boards (NAB)**. These will be composed of the “Representatives of National Public Entities” involved in the child protection system and will be set up in each of the 5 countries involved (IT, DE, ES, FI, PT, with the exception of Belgium) with a leading role in the coordination of project activities. It’s main task will be to steer and support the project actions, to monitor the development of trials, and to verify the achieved results.

Description of the project

FACT FOR MINORS project involves n.6 Member States (IT, DE, PT, FI, ES and BE). The core of the project is the development and testing of new intervention methods aimed at enhancing the capacity of professionals (i.e., health practitioners, social workers, youth workers, the police, etc.) whose work concerns children in alternative care as a consequence of penal measures so as to better address the needs of children with psychiatric/personality disorder. The major project aim will be to strengthen the capacity of all professionals working with and for children in alternative care, and to boost inter-agency cooperation, with the support of the major institutional actors involved in the child protection system. The cooperation of national public entities will be crucial in order to achieve the signature of “formal agreements” regarding the treatment and the procedures to be followed for the protection of the children targeted by the project. The process leading to said signature will thus be viewed as a proof for the systematic changes supported by the project; as well as a commitment of the involved public bodies in the area of child protection; and as an overall improvement of the rights of children.

The project will develop at a **national level** (in IT, DE, ES, PT and FI) as well as at the **transnational level** (with the addition of BE). It will target professionals working for or with children in alternative care (i.e., social workers, health workers, justice practitioners, psychologists, police officers) with a view to strengthening the professionals’ capacity to respond to the challenges posed by children with psychiatric or personality disorders while in alternative care communities. The activities designed to expand the capacities of said professionals will be carried out at **national level**, seeking the development of the most appropriate methodology.

This will be realized by means of:

- the collection of previously successful models of intervention and the identification of potential interventions to be re-adapted and transferred to new contexts;
- the identification of potential settings for capacity building and the engagement of the professionals to be involved in the capacity building process;
- the assessment of the existing needs and strategies with respect to children with mental health disorders;
- the development of the new intervention methods aimed at enhancing the capacity of professionals and to boost interagency cooperation;
- the testing of new methods of intervention.

At this stage, the support of the **NAB (National Advisory Board)** will be crucial in order to facilitate the implementation the treatment and the procedures targeted by the project in addition to reaching national accords helping to render said procedures more effective and concrete.

In addition to these national activities, the project will carry out “**transnational activities**”.

In particular, the project will effectuate two meetings of transnational exchange in which each partner will bring two experts/stakeholders from their respective countries to reflect on the identified models intervention and their potential transferability to new contexts (Transnational Meeting 1); and on the progress of the national capacity building and the difficulties encountered and devise new strategies to adjust the

methodology and guarantee the maximum impact of the implemented action (Transnational Meeting 2). The implementation of the capacity building activities will be constantly monitored and evaluated by all project partners so as to allow for re-adjustments of the methodology developed with a view to ensuring the most appropriate outcomes for the targeted children.

In addition to these transnational meetings, an “*EU capacity building process*” will also be launched with the e-learning platform developed by the **IJJO** (*International Juvenile Justice Observatory*) in close cooperation with the Applicant and all project partners. The IJJO will have a leading role in the partnership, in relation to the communication and dissemination project activities as well.