



Childhood without Abuse – towards a better child protection system in Eastern Europe

Newsletter
March 2009 - November 2009

Welcome to the last issue of Childhood without Abuse Project Newsletter providing information on the project's activities and initiatives undertaken in Eastern Europe in the field of child protection. Please distribute this Newsletter widely within your organization and to your partners. Newsletter is also available at www.canee.net.

Childhood without Abuse Project, coordinated by the Nobody's Children Foundation from Poland, aimed to raise East European public's and professionals' awareness and expertise in relation to the problem of child abuse and neglect. It was implemented from 2005 to 2009 in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine, thanks to financial support of Child Abuse Programme of the OAK Foundation. During these years hundreds of professionals participated in **trainings** and **supervisors** devoted to different aspects of the problem: prevention, diagnosis and intervention, legal protection of children and families, interdisciplinary help, and, the focus of this year's activities - **child abuse in institutions**. Three complex **social campaigns** were inaugurated in each country. Several **publications** for children, parents and professionals were issued. The Project contributed to the improvement of child protection systems in participating countries and was a source of inspiration and support for many.

OAK Foundation commits its resources to address issues of global, social and environmental concern. The organisation aims to improve the environment for children so that they can grow safely and securely free from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking.
www.oakfnd.org



Project partners profiles

Bulgaria



Social Activities and Practices Institute (Институт по социални дейности и практики) is dedicated to the welfare and

protection of children at risk. The organisation's mission is to develop social work as a helping profession enhancing the social inclusion of vulnerable groups in the social life of Bulgaria. www.sapibg.org

Latvia



Center Against Abuse "Dardedze" (Centrs Pret Vardarbību "Dardedze") provides holistic assistance to children who have suffered from abuse and to their families. Professionals

working in the Center offer intensive treatment aimed at reducing emotional, physical and social effects of violence on the child. www.centrsdardedze.lv

Lithuania



Children Support Center (Paramos Vaikams Centras) ensures psychological well-being

of children, adults and whole families affected by violence or sexual abuse. The organisation works simultaneously in different fields, ranging from providing psychological guidance and counselling, through developing interdisciplinary training and cooperation programmes for professionals and volunteers, to raising public awareness. www.pvc.lt

Macedonia



First Children's Embassy in the World "Megjashi" (Прва Детска Амбасада во Светом "Меѓашу") defines its task as child protection and preventing cases of child abuse for sexual or economic purposes. "Megjashi"

works on developing the public's awareness of children's rights by organizing social and educational campaigns and by strengthening the NGO movement for children's rights. www.childrensembassy.org.mk

Moldova



National Center for Child Abuse Prevention (Centrul National de Prevenire a Abuzului Fata de Copii) works for reducing the level of

violence towards children through prevention and education. NCCAP familiarizes the society with the main problems of abused children by publishing and disseminating awareness-raising materials and by organizing social campaigns promoting children's rights. www.cnpac.org.md

Poland



Nobody's Children Foundation (Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje) provides a broad scope of assistance to abused children. The Foundation's activities are targeted at physically, emotionally, and sexually abused and neglected children, their parents and guardians, as well as professionals dealing with cases of child abuse. www.fdn.pl

Ukraine



Child Well-Being Fund (Український фонд "Благополуччя дітей") provides various kinds of services aimed at improving the situation of children in Ukraine. To develop their full potential, CWF trainers organize educational activities targeted specifically at children and youth, and work on creating favourable conditions for their protection. www.childfund.org.ua

Recent project activities

Meetings, site visits, conferences

Kyiv, Ukraine, 19th – 20th March 2009



In Kyiv coordinators of the Childhood without Abuse Project met to discuss the future of the project and achievements up to date. Participants described current situation of child abuse systems in their countries and their ongoing activities. After the meeting coordinators took part in the **site visit** in the **Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports**. Representatives of the Ministry presented their efforts related to campaigning in favour of better child protection in Kiev, education of social services officers and combating trafficking in children. The meeting and the site visit was organized by Ukrainian partner in the project - **Child Well-Being Fund**.

Swansea, UK, 13th – 17th September 2009



In September representatives of the partner organizations participated in the **7th BASPCAN Congress** in Swansea. The Congress gathered almost 600 child protection professionals from Great Britain and abroad and proved to be an excellent opportunity to become familiar with different aspects of child abuse prevention and therapy. On 16th September, following the Congress, **coordinators meeting** was held. The meeting was attended by Tanya Kovacheva representing OAK Foundation and prof. Kevin Browne, who introduced preliminary outcomes of evaluation of 5 years project implementation. Study visits to the following local organisations working with children experiencing various psychological or developmental difficulties were organised: **Stepping Stones Children's Centre** providing services for pre- school children who have a diagnosed disability using variety of innovative tools and methods; **Sexual Abuse Referral Centre** diagnosing physical condition of children who suffered abuse; **NSPCC Therapeutic Service Ty Findlay** running individual and group therapy for children who experienced abuse; **Swansea Sure Start programmes** supporting parents of small children.

Warsaw, Poland, 26th – 28th October 2009



Representatives of partner organizations were hosted on the international seminar "Improving prevention and intervention in cases of child abuse in Eastern Europe" that was organised in the frame of the **6th Conference "Helping children – victims of crime"**. During the conference model solutions for preventing crimes against children and their consequences and recent theoretical and empirical findings pertaining to the problem of violence against children were presented to 550 professionals working in the area of mental health, legal interventions and social services. The conference was organised by the **Nobody's Children Foundation**, Social Policy Department of Warsaw City Hall and Ministry of Justice. During the **site visit** held after the conference, the participants became familiar with the activities of the Nobody's Children Foundation: Mazowiecka" Child Advocacy Centre, "Good Parent - Good Start" Programme, Helpline.org.pl, Helpline for Children and Youth 116 111. After the study visit project coordinators summed up lessons learned from 5 years of the project realisation, achievements and their sustainability as well as gaps in child protection systems still existing.

Studies and reports

This year the studies conducted in the frame of the project in 2005 were repeated. The aim of the studies was to assess changes in the level of public and professionals' awareness on the topic of child abuse that took place during the project implementation, between 2005 and 2009. Studies were conducted in all seven countries participating in the project. The studies included two elements:

- Two **Omnibus** questions asked to a nationwide, representative sample of adults:

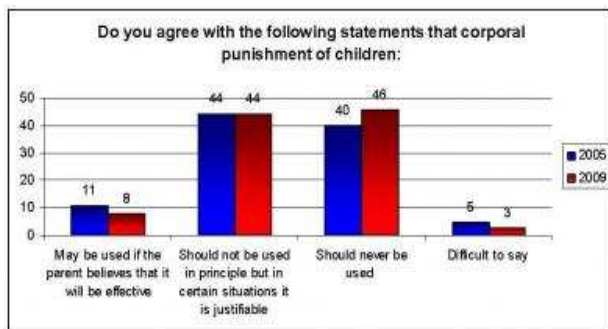
What percentage of children in our country experience corporal punishment (or beating as punishment) in their families?

In your opinion, is beating a child as punishment a childrearing method, which:

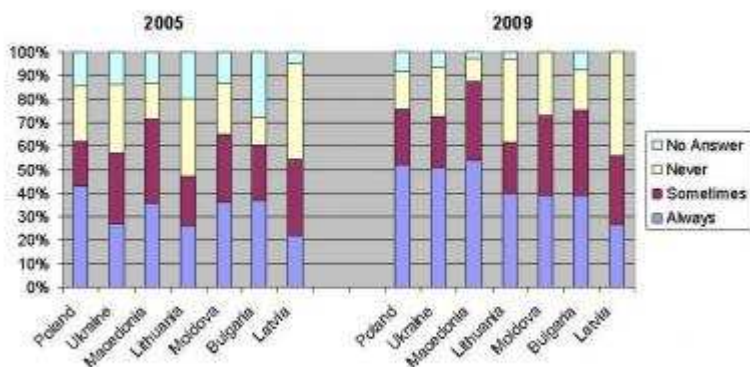
- 1) may be used whenever the parent believes it is going to be effective
- 2) should not be used in general, but is justified in some situations
- 3) should never be used
- 4) it's difficult to say

- A **survey of teachers' attitudes** toward child abuse. The teachers in the selected elementary schools in capital cities were asked to fill in self-administered questionnaire consisting of 87 items. Apart from assessing teachers' attitudes toward the problem of child abuse, the questionnaire measured professionals' experience in undertaking interventions in such cases and their evaluation of the effectiveness of the child protection system in their countries.

Some of the results of the studies:



The table shows comparison of the summary results of the public attitudes research (Omnibus study) in all 7 countries conducted in 2005 and 2009. Significantly more persons are now convinced that physical punishment of children should never be used. At the same time less respondents thought that parents have the right to use corporal punishment even if they believe in its effectiveness.



The table indicates answers gave by the teachers to the following question: *In cases of child abuse that you have encountered in the past year, did you take any actions?* Generally, in all countries professionals became more inclined to take intervention in cases of child abuse. At the same time number of teachers not having point of view on this matter significantly decreased, what can be understood as an effect of raised awareness of the problem and ways to deal with it.

Other reports prepared by partner organizations this year:

- **Analyses of the situation of children in institutions:** the documents contain available data, research results, official numbers of children in institutions and alternative care, description of different types of placement for children and procedures for reporting abuse.
- **Reviews on sexual abuse in residential institutions:** the reviews focus mainly on statistical data and research observations available, legal regulations and good practices identified in each country. Bulgarian, Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian reviews have been produced in the frame of "Sexual Violence against Children in Residential Institutions" project, supported by the European Commission in the frame of Daphne III Programme and coordinated by Social Activities and Practices Institute.
- **Flow charts of child protection systems:** The flow charts attempt to show existing procedures for handling cases of alleged child abuse cases, institutions that have the responsibility to intervene, and main operational connections between them.

All the reports mentioned above are available for downloading on www.canee.net.

Trainings and supervisions

Bulgaria

In November Social Activities and Practices Institute organised **international supervision** with Ortoodoxy Salomon, clinical psychologist and family therapist working in the centre for abused children in Nancy in France. Two cases from the practice of the Crisis Centres in Shumen and Pazardjik were analysed during the supervision. **Trainings** held this year in Bulgaria gathered social workers, psychologists and pedagogues. The themes referred to prevention against child abuse and development of services for support of victims of violence and prevention of institutional abuse.

Latvia

In November two **trainings** on the topic "Child abuse in institutions – recognizing, helping, stopping" for professionals working in care institutions were organised by Center Against Abuse "Dardedze". Participants were introduced to the phenomenon of child abuse in institutions and possible causes were identified. Resilience approach as an effective methods in working with children in institutions was also analysed. In July professionals from care institutions participated also in **supervisions** focused on prevention of child abuse in institutions.

Lithuania

In June and in September Children Support Centre run **trainings** for psychologists and pedagogues on identification of sexual abuse and primary intervention skills. The trainings will be replicated in kindergardens and primary schools. At the same time **supervisions** for psychologists, social workers and child psychiatrists dealing with cases of child abuse were held. In November professionals from Latvia, Poland and Lithuania gathered in

Vilnius to participate in **international supervision** - SAFE® Mentor training - organised by Children Support Centre. The supervision was run by Dr. Karl-Heinz Brisch from Munich. SAFE®Mentor trainings are designed to prepare professionals to organise and run SAFE® Parent programmes promoting secure attachment in their own working environments. The goal of the programme is to teach parents how to foster secure attachment with their infants and to prevent the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Macedonia

In July **supervision** on the theme "Overview of the system of child support and the institutionalization in Macedonia" was organised by the First Children's Embassy in World – Megjashi. The participants, professionals from different institutions and organisations directly engaged in child protection system activities, prepared a flow chart of the system using their experiences and knowledge. The structure of the system and collaboration between its elements were discussed. The supervision was run by Gordana Pirkovska – Zmijanac, trainer for children rights. The **training** held in September gathered representatives of almost all residential institutions in Macedonia and other relevant state agencies. The theme of the training was "Institutionalization, respect of the child rights and protection against the child abuse within the institutions".

Poland

In April the Nobody's Children Foundation organized **supervision** for foster families on the topic of professional assistance to abused child placed in alternative care. The supervision was run by the Nobody's Children Foundation's expert Jolanta Zmarzlik. In-depth **trainings** preparing professionals to work with children who experienced sexual abuse were held this year. The trainings are one of the components of the Warsaw Network of Assistance to Sexually Abused Children gathering non governmental organizations and institutions, including residential institutions, assisting child victims of abuse. The aim of the Network is to fill the gap in the child protection system in Warsaw and build capacity of local institutions and organisations to provide assistance to sexually abused children.

Ukraine

Child Well-Being Fund organized two **trainings** for psychologists, social pedagogues and teachers working in general and boarding schools, representatives of departments of educations and non-governmental organizations. The trainings were conducted under the theme "Exposure of cases of violence and neglect towards children", taking into account school environment. The participants will replicate the trainings in the frame of their work in different types of schools. **International supervision** held in August was conducted by Daniela Popescu, psychologist, director of the National Centre of Child Abuse Prevention in Moldova. The event was organized for specialists who work in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention. Subsequent **supervisions** were devoted to child abuse and neglect prevention work in schools (October) and implementing the training course for school staff, parents/carers and children on the issues of child abuse prevention (November).

Other initiatives in the East European region



Dzimba Safety Programme in Latvia

Dzimba Safety Programme is a new child-focused child abuse prevention initiative for young children, their parents and teachers run by the **Center Against Abuse „Dardedze”** in Riga. An unique character - Dzimba have been developed to serve as a mediator between children and adults and to provide children with skills enabling to recognize dangerous situations, dangerous people, safe and unsafe touch, different types of secrets and to say „no". The programme is addressed to a wide target group as it is by no means only child's responsibility to stay safe. Programme methodology includes interactive tools such as role plays, songs, games and videos.

Second Step Programme in Lithuania

The „Second Step” programme is a structured and easy to use school violence prevention programme, which the **Children Support Center** began implementing in Lithuania in 2004. „Second Step” helps children learn vital social and emotional skills. It is geared toward preventing aggressive behaviour in children, and teaching children how to manage their emotions, avoid acting impulsively, resolve conflict, solve problems and understand the consequences of their behaviour. Since the introduction of the programme, teachers using it in their classrooms have responded positively and confirmed positive long term effects. According to teachers, children learn to be more spontaneous, are not afraid to voice their opinions, and are able to find more varied solutions to problems.



Safe Children Project in Bulgaria

The project has been carried out by **Centre for Inclusive Education** since 2007 and lasted till the end of 2009. The aim was to better protect vulnerable children through recognizing and implementing an international "Keeping Children Safe" standards for child protection by non governmental and governmental structures in Bulgaria who work directly with children. There are over 300 NGOs in Bulgaria licensed by the State Agency for Child Protection to work with children. Many of them are still not sufficiently aware of the importance of building child protection measures into their work.



Celebrations of Global Education Day in Macedonia

This year Macedonian organization **First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi** again participated in the Global Action Week Campaign for Education that is internationally celebrated every year by the Global March against Child Labour. The main objective of the campaign was inclusion of every child in education and providing literacy for all children. The events accompanying the campaign took place on 20th - 26th April 2009 in different cities in Macedonia. The main event, called "The Big Read" happened on Main Square of Skopje, and also on public places in other cities in Macedonia. On that day many scholars, teachers, parents, local public figures and others read stories from "The Big Read Storybook" and their own pieces about the importance and the power of education.



Perception of children's rights violence in Macedonia

The field research report on perception of children's rights, discrimination and children's exposure to violence has been issued in Macedonia on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The research was conducted by the **First Children's Embassy in the World - Megjashi** among 2 234 students in total. The survey showed that the number of children who are not familiar with their rights remains high, although Macedonia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993. Another conclusion is that violence is present everywhere in extremely high percentage (family, school, street, among peers). In most cases it remains invisible because the children are afraid to talk about it.



Polish Charter of Rights of the Child-Victim/Witness

The Charter was prepared by the **Nobody's Children Foundation** in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Coalition for Child-Friendly Interviewing. The Charter is a non-binding act. Nevertheless, the Foundation hopes that it will serve as a guide in setting the right ways and procedures of prosecution and legal proceedings for law enforcement authorities and supporting organizations in respecting the rights of minors in criminal proceedings. In future perspective the Charter is to unify the practices applied in Poland in handling abused children and children-witnesses.



First child-friendly interviewing room in Ukraine

On 27th May 2009 child-friendly interviewing room was opened by **Child Well-Being Fund Ukraine** in Kyiv. The establishment of such room in Ukraine became possible as a result of cooperation of Child Well-Being Fund and Nobody's Children Foundation and with financial support of Bread for the World (Germany). Appropriate standards have been followed - the premise consists of three rooms (waiting room and interviewing room and observation room for specialists) and it is equipped with a two-way mirror, video camera, microphones and recorder. In the same building is located the Child's City Centre which provides psychological support for children and families and a shelter for children.



"How to interview a child" in Ukrainian

Child Well-Being Fund adapted a guide for professionals interviewing child witnesses "How to interview a child". The book was originally written by Alicja Budzyńska and published in Poland by the Nobody's Children Foundation. The publication consists of a set of practical guidelines for organising and carrying out interviews of children who take part in legal proceedings and examples of helpful questions and questions that should be avoided. The author emphasizes importance of assessing psychological state of the child and its developmental stage.



Children in the Union - Rights and Empowerment (CURE)

CURE is a project run by the **Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority** in Sweden together with its partners in nine member states of the EU - Belgium, Croatia, Romania, Finland, France, Italy, UK, Portugal, Slovakia. It is devoted to the problem of children as victims of all sorts of crimes in the criminal justice systems of the EU. The project is focused on the legal status of child-victims as well as on raising awareness on best practices aimed to protect the child victim from experiencing hardship in criminal justice system. In the frame of the project information on the situation of children victims of crime will be gathered and recommendations directed to the European Commission will be developed. The main target group are professionals, policy makers and NGOs working in the criminal justice system. www.childvictims.se



Innocenti Social Monitor 2009 : Child well-being in Central and Eastern Europe

The study examines challenges for the well-being of children after two decades of transition in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The report is based on information from administrative and survey sources to identify critical economic and social trends and assess the impact of policies on children in the period immediately preceding the current crisis. As the report shows, important improvements in living standards of children took place in the region. However, disparities in the distribution of benefits and in particular the vulnerability of children to the process of change persist, one of the reasons being the difficulties of policy makers to reach population groups most at risk and to provide adequate support to reduce inequalities and exclusion.

You will find more information on East European initiatives on www.canee.net