

35th FICE International World Congress, Split, Croatia

SHAPING TOMORROW'S CARE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Quality and innovation in alternative care



FICE HRVATSKA

35th FICE International World Congress Split, Croatia

SHAPING TOMORROW'S CARE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH:
Quality and innovation in alternative care



23.10 - 25.10



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Hotel Zagreb
@fice35split

fice35split@gmail.com

www.fice35.com



Book of abstracts



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Story of FICE International World Congress



FICE International (Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives) is a global network of organizations and professionals in the field of child and youth care and out-of-home care from more than 45 countries. FICE maintains contacts with UNESCO, UNICEF, the Council of Europe and ECOSOC. It is also a member of the UN-NGO-Group on the Rights of the Child and member of ENSACT.

The first FICE international scientific world congress was organized in 1948 in Trogen, Switzerland and has so far passed through almost all European countries, but this is the first time that it will be organized in Croatia, Split on beautiful Adriatic coast.

The organization of the FICE international scientific World Congress in the region has been a tradition since early 60s:

- In 1964 in Ljubljana „Activity and engagement of youth through children’s communities“*
- In 1974 in Banja Luka „Analysis of the possibilities and goals for the treatment and rehabilitation of at-risk youth“*
- In 2006 in Sarajevo „Building a positive future despite a childhood of hardships“*

The last, 34th FICE international conference was held in Tel Aviv, Israel.

FICE international world congress



FICE International 35. jubilee World congress in Split, Croatia



FICE Croatia is honored to organize the 35th World Congress of the
FICE International network
in Split, Croatia
23rd to 25th of October, 2024

OUR VISION

FICE35 is organized together with active participation of youth and care leavers in creative environment and in inspiring process of mutual learning.

FICE35 is an opportunity to exchange knowledge, experiences, and good practices, to join forces in project activities, to look for innovative solutions to address new challenges, to set higher goals for services, and initiate changes for promoting the wellbeing of vulnerable children in out-of-home care

FICE35 represents the venue for professional exchange of care-leavers, practitioners, academics, decision makers and students united in improving tomorrow's care for children and youth through quality services, joint actions and innovative approaches

FICE35 in Split Croatia



Anna Schmid

President
FICE INTERNATIONAL



Lucija Vejmelka

Congress chair
FICE Croatia



James Anglin

Scientific board chair
Professor emeritus
University of Victoria



Marijana Majdak

Scientific board chair
University of Zagreb,
Faculty of Law,
Department of Social Work



More than 120 presentations, keynote lectures, panel discussion and professional events! FICE35 World congress is opportunity for experts, practitioners, and academics from different countries to meet and share innovative initiatives and ideas in child care research and practice. Program brings together numerous international and national participants, experts in the field of alternative childcare and child and youth protection.

Welcome to all participants to the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split, Croatia 23rd to 25th of October, 2024.

*"SHAPING TOMORROW'S CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH:
Quality and innovation in alternative care"*

Welcome to FICE35 World congress



Petra Hrvoj
President of FICE Croatia
Congress coordinator
 FICE CROATIA



Roberta Matković
Congress coordinator
 Teaching institute for public health



Tena Bosak
FICE35 core team member
 FICE CROATIA



**Danijela Perić
 Krstulović**
FICE35 core team member
 Center for missing and
 exploited children Croatia



Ljiljana Čulić
FICE35 core team member
 Center for missing and
 exploited children Croatia



Goran Šimić
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Meet FICE35 team

FICE INTERNATIONAL NATIONAL SECTIONS



- 1. FICE Austria
- 2. FICE Brazil
- 3. FICE Bulgaria
- 4. FICE Canada
- 5. FICE Croatia
- 6. FICE Finland
- 7. FICE Germany
- 8. FICE Israel
- 9. FICE Japan
- 10. FICE Kenya
- 11. FICE Luxembourg
- 12. FICE Romania
- 13. FICE Serbia
- 14. FICE South Africa
- 15. FICE Spain
- 16. FICE Switzerland
- 17. FICE The Netherlands
- 18. FICE USA
- 19. FICE Zambia



Associated national sections, still in the process of becoming full members:

- FICE Lesotho
- Nenesz (FICE Hungary)



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u zajednici Maestral Split

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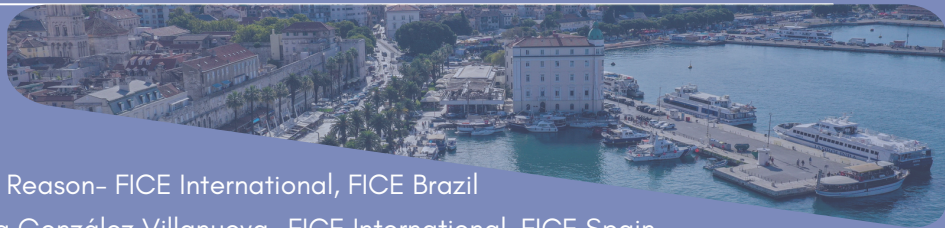
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KEYNOTE & PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

IFCE35 World congress



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KEY NOTE LECTURE

23.10.2024.

10.00-10.45

Fallacies of Care: Critical Thoughts on the Family and Group Binary Narrative

Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi, Faculty of Community Services, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada

Kiaras Gharabaghi is a respected academic leader with over 20 years of experience in community engagement and program development. Dr. Gharabaghi is Full Professor in Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Child and Youth Care, specializing in child and youth care ethics, organizational change, and international practice. He is also the Dean of the Faculty of Community Services. Kiaras has worked as child and youth care practitioner, family therapist, and administrative leader in residential settings for over 20 years, and continues to consult and coach residential teams, executive leaders and organizational change processes across the sector. Kiaras has been involved in residential service discussions and activities across Canada and the United States, as well as Europe, and many jurisdictions in the Global South. He was the Co-editor of the popular journal Child and Youth Services for ten years, and now serves on several editorial boards for child and youth service related journals.

In this presentation, Dr. Gharabaghi critically assesses the narratives of family-based care as good and group-based care as problematic, a binary that is deeply intertwined with an anti-institutional ideology that ignores both evidence and context. In reality, family-based care and group care are both reflections of institutional habits and professional arrogance that continue to mitigate the rights and strengths of children and youth, their families and their communities. Dr. Gharabaghi acknowledges that complacency toward poor practices have significantly impacted the promise of therapeutic group care. At the same time, replacing such complacency in the therapeutic care context with complacency with respect to poor practices in family-based care is not a meaningful approach. Instead, high quality care systems will always unfold in spaces between formal and often regulated institutional practices and informal, usually community-driven ways of being. In this context, we do not need binary narratives. Instead, we need care systems that focus on rights, community capacity building, and everyday practices that build identity, character, social capital and connections. To achieve these goals, we must recognize the important roles of a spectrum of service settings that are not mutually exclusive.



KEY NOTE LECTURE

23.10.2024.

11.15-12.00

Old Challenges and New Changes in Alternative care for children: Time to Redefine the Goals

Prof. Branka Sladović-Franz Department of Social Work, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Branka Sladović Franz is Tenured Professor, Supervisor and Family mediator. Professor Sladović Franz is Croatian leading expert in the field of social work with children and in-care children, with active role and insights into numerous processes of child welfare reforms, research, transformation and deinstitutionalization of care for children. Experience in providing support in various phases of transformation of child care sector and institutions for children. Prof. Sladović Franz is founder and the head of the postgraduate specialist study Family Mediation. She is providing the supervision of professionals in child alternative care, psychosocial work and family mediation. She gives education and trainings to social welfare specialists in the field of family assessment, child protection and resolution of family conflicts. She has been passionate advocate for better and more advanced care for every child without adequate parental care in over 30 years of professional experience in the field of child care.

Prof Sladović Franz in her keynote invited lecture will present regional and Croatian child care specifics. Croatia has a long history of good quality care for children without adequate parental care, but compares to other social work fields, alternative child care has changed the most in the past decades and her informative lecture will enable the participants of the international congress closer understanding of the local context

Lecture will incorporate evidence-based guidelines for necessary refinement of the goals of alternative care and especially:

- valorisation of each type of care for a particular group of children in accordance with their needs and overall well-being through the life path theory and
- trauma-informed approach acknowledging trauma before, during and after alternative care, aimed at successful reintegration with the family and/or transition to adulthood and
- a higher levels of cooperation of all stakeholders and systems in which children fulfil their rights.



KEY NOTE LECTURE

25.10.2024.

9.30-10.15

Internet safety and future directions in prevention, detection and treatment of high risk children

Tomislav Ramljak, Center for missing and exploited children Croatia

Tomislav Ramljak, a social worker by profession and working as the head of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children Croatia, founder of Croatian Safer Internet Center providing the Hotline for Missing Children in the Republic of Croatia and Helpline. His specialism is directed towards the protection of children on the Internet, he is a lecturer at numerous professional national and international conferences. Permanent court expert for the protection of children on the Internet.



Internet safety for high-risk children is complex due to the multi-problematic conditions in which children usually grow up - often with weak parental support, mental health difficulties and interpersonal relationship problems that could lead to separation from their families and placement in childcare.

Risk of exposure to harmful content and contacts in the online environment is increased for children already in the treatment or children from minority groups (half-day stay programs, behavioral treatment programs for children and youth, victims of peer violence etc.). These children are particularly vulnerable to online dangers such as exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and predatory behaviors leading to sexual exploitation and sextortion, given their need for structured care and the instability they may face in their home environments. Roma children are also considered to be an extremely vulnerable group in the context of online safety. One of the primary reasons Roma children are considered a high-risk group is their socioeconomic disadvantage. Poverty, discrimination, and limited access to resources often characterize their communities. These factors can hinder their ability to have adequate supervision and education about online safety. Additionally, the digital divide can limit their access to technology and the Internet in general, making them more vulnerable to grooming, online scams, cyberbullying, and other risks.

Any issues flagged online should be timely detected and addressed holistically with the support and team-work of different professionals in child surroundings (teachers, therapists and other professionals). In terms of treatment, a multidisciplinary approach is crucial. Behavioral treatments for high-risk children needs to include online safety components, addressing both emotional resilience and the practical steps to navigate digital spaces safely.

Future directions should include development of tailored interventions for children in these vulnerable circumstances. Mandatory and regulated partnerships between police, specialist organizations, online service providers, educators, social workers, and technology companies should ensure creation of positive and protective digital environments. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics, may offer new ways to detect risks, while public policy must prioritize safeguarding these high-risk groups in an increasingly digital world.

Plenary session

23.10.2024.

12.00-12.30

Breaking the cycle of poverty- Insights on the implementation of the European Child Guarantee from the European Commission

Valeria Spazzoli, policy assistant to DG EMPL Director
for Social rights and Inclusion,

The 2021 European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan sets three EU headline targets for 2030 on employment, skills and poverty, welcomed by EU political leaders. The poverty target sets the aim to reduce by 2030 the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million compared to 2019 level, out of whom at least 5 million should be children.

Last year, almost 20 million children across the EU were still at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In 2023, it was 24.8% of children compared with 20.6% of adults. These predicaments mean not only suffering in childhood – which is unacceptable – but also form a part of a vicious circle of poverty that is transmitted between generations. The earlier we address this challenge, the greater our chances of success. It has been predicted that investing in early childhood education and care can yield positive annual returns. This is why action and investment in early childhood development are needed, aiming to eliminate – or at least minimise – the impact of household's poverty on health of its children, and to include those children in quality education as early in their lives as possible. The EU policy framework to combat child poverty and to break the cycle of disadvantages is broad and it includes various policy response from increasing participation in the labour market for parents to protecting children's rights.

Key words: European Child Guarantee; Breaking the cycle of disadvantages; child poverty; access to services; social protection

The presentation will shed light on the 2021 Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee (the Guarantee) and its implementation. This is the EU instrument to break the cycle of disadvantages for children. It aims to prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing access of children in need to a set of key services, thereby also contributing to upholding the rights of the child by combatting child poverty and fostering equal opportunities. The main provisions of the Guarantee will be presented together with a state of play of the implementation at national level, with practical examples of national measures and projects financed through the European Social Fund + (ESF+).

Despite the limitations in the EU competences in the area and the soft nature of the Guarantee, this has proved to be an effective instrument backed by strong political support. In the future, stepped up efforts to implement the guarantee would be needed at national level.

In June 2024, Commission President Von der Leyen stressed the importance of strengthening the Guarantee in her political guidelines and she tasked designated Commission Executive Vice-President Minzatu to prevent and fight social exclusion, through education and childcare, healthcare and other key services.





FICE International working group: **IMPLEMENTING QUALITY IN ALTERNATIVE CARE**

**Bettina Terp, Dr. Jim Anglin, Dr. Christian Posch, Dr. Anna Schmid, Patrick Reason,
Denis Čulahović**

“Implementing quality in alternative care” is an ongoing thematic bundle within FICE International. The intention is to stimulate the discussion on quality in alternative care. For this, we will present our findings from the ongoing process within FICE International.

“Quality in alternative care” is a vast idea and not easy to define. Together we try to develop a better understanding of quality.

Key words: Quality, Participation, Training

24.10.2024.
9.00-9.45

PLENARY ROUND TABLE



YOUTH PANEL: Big 5- problems of alternative care from the view of care leavers expert group

Denis Ćulahović- Serbia, Anda Jeleć- Bosnia and Hercegovina, Petar Čurila- Croatia, Martina Vidović- Croatia, Romena Van Dooren- Netherland, Patricia Dades- Brazil, Tanja Abou- Germany, Nimali Kondadeniye Gedara- Sri Lanka, Surja- India, Chase Jeffreis- Zimbabwe

Who are we? What do we want? We are care leavers expert group. We want a better life if not for us then for future generations. To make life of people in alternative care easier.

The big 5 problems which are making the most problems in our system. It was the support, income, mental health, education and work.

People from alternative care are often leaving the system with lack of information about themselves. They don't have anyone to explain it to them. Some people are often forced to leave the care system before 18th birthday because that is the rule for the system in their country.

Key words: Care leavers, Big 5, Alternative care system

24.10.2024.

PLENARY ROUND TABLE



FICE International working group: INSIGHTS FOR SUPPORTING DISPLACED YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Patrick Reason, Marianna Bilyk, Dr. Marianna Onufryk, Dr. Alex Schneider

Caring for displaced youth and children comes with its own set of challenges. It involves understanding their trauma, creating a safe environment, and addressing their specific needs. Displaced youth and children often experience trauma, which can show itself in various ways, such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues. They may mourn the loss of their home, loved ones, and familiar routines, which can lead to emotional distress and difficulty adjusting. These young people may come from diverse cultural backgrounds, so caregivers must be aware of and sensitive to their cultural values and practices. Language barriers can also create communication challenges, affecting their ability to express themselves and access support services.

The objective of this round table is to explore the unique challenges faced by caregivers in supporting displaced youth and children. This includes understanding the impact of trauma on these young individuals, identifying effective strategies for creating a safe and supportive environment, and addressing their specific emotional, psychological, and cultural needs. The study aims to provide insights into the best practices for caregivers to help displaced youth and children overcome their difficulties, adjust to new environments, and thrive despite their challenging circumstances.

Caregivers play a crucial role in the lives of displaced youth and children by providing stability, support, and opportunities for growth and healing. developing emotional literacy skills can empower caregivers to enhance well-being, foster positive relationships, and create a conducive environment for displaced youth and children. Let's prioritize emotional literacy to equip future generations with the necessary tools for personal and academic success.

Key words: Displaced youth and children, training, peer support, community involvement, Emotional Literacy

24.10.2024.

11.00-11.45

PLENARY ROUND TABLE

PANEL DISCUSSIONS & YOUTH PROGRAM

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PANEL DISCUSSION

24.10.2024.

12.45-13.45

PANEL DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON FOSTER CARE

“Embrace a child - create
a home”

Powered by
“Croatia for Children“
Foundation



ZAKLADA
HRVATSKA
ZA DJECU

Main goals of the panel discussion is to enrich the professional discussion, to identify possibilities and risks of improvement of foster care for children as well as to generally contribute to promotion of foster care. Expert panellists will share their experience with foster care for children and discussion will contribute to deeper understanding of needs and challenges of children in foster care. Pannell discussion is planned as empowering event for current and potential foster parents. Foster parents are trained and authorised partners in providing extremely sensitive and important service of accommodation and care to children without adequate parental care. It is necessary to advocate for the further investment in the sector and to provide available, competent and supported experts and services that will adequately address the needs of all included in the foster care process.

Key questions:

1. What are the current key needs of children in care, foster parents and professionals?
2. How to motivate citizens to become foster parents?
3. What services are needed to ensure and maintain the quality of care for foster children?

Panel discussions are guided and focused conversation that brings together multiple experts or stakeholders to explore a specific topic, share their perspectives, and engage in interesting sharing of the perspectives



PANEL DISCUSSION

25.10.2024.

11.30-12.30

PANEL DISCUSSION FOCUSED AT ONLINE SAFETY

DIGITAL WELL-BEING IN THE FIELD OF CHILD CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

Powered by Safer Internet Center Croatia



The goal of this discussion is to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the complex construct of digital well-being and to discuss the impact of technology on the upbringing of children and young people in the modern, digital world, with a special focus on children in care and their specific risks and multi-problem experiences. We will find out the opinions of the panellists about emerging question: Is the digital well-being of children in care reachable goal ahead of us (and how to achieve it) or it is just an unattainable myth –considering the digital gap and powerful corporations that stand behind the carefully programmed algorithms that our children are exposed to on a daily basis?

The audience will have the opportunity to interactively participate in shaping open knowledge about the important issue of risk and safety of children without adequate parental care but also how the technology is improving their life. Let's find out how the digital world is affecting their level of well-being and how can we influence on the raise of the level of digital well-being and maintain of this level while children is growing up in alternative care!

Key questions:

1. Is digital well-being for children in care reality or unreachable myth?
2. How to strengthen prevention, detection and treatment of problematic internet usage in child care?
3. How we can promote, establish and maintain digital resilience and safer internet use in child care?

Panel discussions are guided and focused conversation that brings together multiple experts or stakeholders to explore a specific topic, share their perspectives, and engage in interesting sharing of the perspectives



YOUTH PROGRAM

24.10.2024.

19.00-20.30

PRESENTATION OF POSITIVE PRACTICE OF PROJECTS AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Youth program in cooperation with: **Kinder perspectief**



Open Mic/Debate: Listen, share, and debate!

@ YOUTH CENTER KOCKA- RAZRED

Interactive event invites young people, care leavers, experts, and professionals from the youth sector, as well as anyone interested, to discuss statements proposed by young members of the International Careleavers Community & the Safer Internet Centre Croatia Youth Panel. This is a unique chance to hear diverse perspectives and foster collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by young people today.

Best practice: The perfect child and youth care worker through the eyes of children and youth currently using youth care

Youth participation is core value and strength of FICE International events and activities



YOUTH PROGRAM

25.10.2024.
10.15-11.00

THE DIGITAL WORLD FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE - YOUTH PANEL CSI.HR

The Center for a Safer Internet's youth workshop investigates how large online platforms affect mental health and how we, as their users, understand the mechanisms on which they are based. The focus is on giving young people a space to express their experiences and perspectives on the digital world, allowing adults to learn first-hand about the issues and challenges they face. The workshop is interactive and the active engagement of the participants is encouraged.

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Croatia



Youth participation is core value and strength of FICE International events and activities



ORAL PRESENTATIONS

IFCE35 World
congress



ORAL PRESENTATIONS IN PARALELL SESSIONS

23.10.2024.

14.00-15.30



Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

What Residential Care May Learn From Kindergarten

Friedhelm Peters

FICE Germany
Germany

The main question to be discussed is the idea of residential care to become an unconditional offer within the framework of an 'infrastructure for growing up'. While Kindergarten is very low-threshold and is available for nearly every child (in many countries), residential care in most countries is extremely high-threshold and selective and stigmatizing through its procedures.

From the theoretical framework of 'life-world orientation' („Lebensweltorientierung“) resp. Every-day-orientation („Alltagsorientierung“) as well as taking 'participation' into account, the 'Kindergarten' (or Kita) seems to have advantages in at least the following areas: Voluntariness, inclusivity and large variety of children, unconditionality i.e. no attribution of problems or identification of dysfunctional parenting etc., integration into the living environments and every-day-life, involvement of parents.

Key words: advantages of Kindergarten, high selectivity of residential care, participation, special approach

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Complaints procedure as a means of concealment: Implementing participation rights in residential group care

Claudia Equit

Elisabeth Thomas

University of Münster
Germany

The study "Participation in Residential Group Care" (2019-2022), funded by the German Research Foundation, examines how participation and complaint processes are implemented in young people's everyday lives and how these processes are embedded in the organizational culture of the respective living groups. It also examines whether and to what extent complaint procedures prevent young people's victimization.

The qualitative study encompasses group discussions with 233 young people and 168 residential care management professionals in four different federal states. The documentary method was used to reconstruct participation and complaint processes and to build a typology of organizational subcultures (Bohnsack et al. 2019).

The organizational subcultures in the residential groups determine whether the formal procedures for implementing participation rights enable the full participation of young residents or whether these procedures merely serve tokenistic participation and disguise the victimization of young people. Implementing participation rights is associated with considerable discretionary space in residential groups and social providers.

Key words: complaint, complaint procedure, participation, organizational culture, residential group care

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

How is deinstitutionalization implemented in the Finnish system?

Julia Kuokkanen

Laura Holmi

The Central Union for Child Welfare
Finland

Finnish Child Welfare Act is based on the principle of mildest intervention. Alternative care is always a last resort intervention, however approx. 1 percent of children are taken into care. How is the system working in practice? Can it respond to simultaneous and overlapping disruptions in society and fulfill its primary function: to ensure that every child's best interests are met. Currently the system does respond to the needs of all children. We need to develop preventive services, family care, participation and care for children with severe needs.

Key words: child protection, alternative care, deinstitutionalization

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Working with traumatized children during traumatic times: Residential child care educators' compassion fatigue and work engagement

Marzia Saglietti

Matteo Alpini

Gianni Fulvi

Sapienza University of Rome

Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità per Minorenni di tipo familiare

Italy

Despite the challenging conditions in Residential Child Care, especially during the pandemic, there is limited research on how these factors affect compassion fatigue (CF) and work engagement (WE). This study examines the individual, work, and organizational conditions of RCC educators in Italy using the Job Demands-Resources Model to better understand these influences and develop strategies to enhance their well-being.

This work aims to examine educators' CF and WE, focusing on the individual, work, and organizational factors that influence these outcomes.

The survey involved 215 residential care educators who were on duty during the summer of 2023. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, bivariate, and non-parametric analysis.

Results showed concerning CF: over a third of participants experienced high Personal Burnout, more than one quarter scored high in Work Burnout and another one quarter was high in Client BO scores. One into two educators suffered from moderate to severe manifestations of Secondary Traumatic Stress, together with relatively high levels of WE. Significant variations were found across individual, work, and organizational variables. We further analyzed job resources and demands, risk and protective factors, and developed strategies to mitigate CF and enhance WE in residential care for children.

With this paper we provide indications for recruitment and workplace retention.

Key words: Staff training; Supervision; Child care; Child protection; Out-of-home care

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Motivation to Work in Child and Youth Residential Care

Luiza Nobre Lima

Sara Barbosa

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra

Centre for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
Portugal

The intrinsic motivation to care when the exercise of a profession requires caring for others has a significant impact in the fulfillment of a professional role. This is a particularly important requirement in Child and Youth Residential Care Homes (RCH) since it influences the quality of care and support provided to the youngsters placed in these facilities. Frequently, the motivation of the caregivers in RCH lies in a socially oriented job, which serves the community and contributes to the future generation or to society.

This qualitative study aims to explore the intrinsic and extrinsic motives that led professionals to choose to work in RCH and the motivational facilitators and barriers that can threaten their performance, longevity of employment and well-being.

Participants were 18 professionals (1 male) from 10 RCH, who were interviewed according to a semi-structured script drawn up for this specific purpose.

Through Thematic Analysis, preliminary results reveal that providing care and curiosity about RC were important motivations to work on the field. Barriers to motivation were more reported than facilitators (e.g., shortage of human resources and insufficient training; challenging behavior of young people; lack of organizational policy).

Findings may have implications to counteract turnover within RCH.

Key words: Child and Youth Residential Care, caregivers, motivation, facilitators, barriers

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Supporting Care Leavers' Transition through Aftercare Outreach Program

Kiran Modi

Udayan Care
India

Across the globe, care leavers are disadvantaged youth in terms of their participation in society in many ways as compared to other youth who have had a normal and healthy childhood and adolescent experience. They struggle with the lack of health care, housing support, educational and vocational skills training, job placements, emotional wellbeing, legal aid, social and interpersonal skills support, all of which are indispensable and required for independent living. They often have a lower level of education and are mostly unemployed, or less well paid often, and are also more likely to have a lower life satisfaction (Breu & Stephan, 2020). The increased importance of formal education and training for employment leads to an extended transition phase of care leavers to adulthood where they are confronted with new disadvantages at multiple levels (Trout et al., 2008). Care leavers in comparison to other youth have two overlapping transition processes including transition to adult life from teenage along with moving out of the residential care system which both happen on turning 18 years of age (Zeller & Kongeter, 2013).

Even though the juvenile laws of India {the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, its Model Rules of 2016 and the Child Protection Scheme}, mandates Aftercare support to youth leaving care on turning 18, issues of care leavers are often not addressed to a great extent. Based on the years of experience as practitioners, and the concerns of Care Leavers as stated in the study titled, 'Beyond 18' (Modi et al, 2020), conducted by Udayan Care, an NGO headquartered in Delhi, started the Aftercare Outreach Program (AOP), in 2020. This program supports aftercare youth (care leavers) in their transition process on turning 18 years of age and beyond, in order to make them independent and job-ready. AOP is designed to address care leaver's issues, based on the 8 interdependent domains of support required, as depicted in the 'Sphere of Aftercare'; a theoretical framework proposed in the research study, Beyond 18.

This presentation will deliberate on the need for such interventions at various levels from different locations across India, in order to address care leavers' concerns, thereby recognizing and addressing the trauma and challenges they face during the transition and beyond. It will present the needs of the care leavers before joining the AOP program and share a few success stories of care leavers leading an independent life. It aims to demonstrate a good practice framework in India for care leavers to facilitate their transition towards mainstreaming through support and guidance at various levels so that they can eventually become contributing members of the society.

Key words: care leavers, transition, after care

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Predictors of Mental Health During Young People's Transition From Out-of-home Care in Austria

Wolfgang Hagleitner

Stephan Sting

Fred Berger

Maria Groinig

Susanne Rossnagl

Thomas Maran

Department of Education, University of Innsbruck, Austria

Department of Educational Science, University of Klagenfurt, Austria

Department of Education, University of Innsbruck, Austria

Institute for Social Pedagogy and Organizational Studies, University of Hildesheim, Germany

Department of Education, University of Innsbruck, Austria

Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Bolzano, Italy

Care leavers are often disadvantaged in terms of their mental health compared to the general population. The factors influencing care leavers' mental health in the third decade of their lives have so far not been studied systematically.

Based on a resource model, external contextual factors before, during and after out-of-home care are examined with regard to their positive or negative effects on mental health. Multiple hierarchical regression analysis with pairwise deletion and bootstrapping was used to identify predictors of mental health. The final model explains 27% of the variance in the dependent variable "mental health" and is significant.

The sample consists of 121 care leavers, born between 1987 and 1997 and aged between 20 and 29 at the time of the paper-and-pencil survey. The participants had been in out-of-home care for at least two years and left care at the age of 16 or later.

Emotional abuse by parents ($\beta = -.187$; $p = 0.027$) before out-of-home care is negatively associated, but a longer length of stay ($\beta = .202$; $p = 0.023$) and support from friends ($\beta = .227$; $p = 0.015$) during out-of-home care, as well as an independent economic status ($\beta = .326$; $p < 0.001$) and a romantic relationship ($\beta = .160$; $p = 0.044$) after the transition show positive correlations with mental health.

The results point to the need for support in building social relationships and sufficient psychosocial support during and after out-of-home care.

Key words: Care leaver, mental health, out-of-home care, emotional neglect, social resources, transition

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

What Happens After Care? Care Leavers and Independent Living

Anja Mirosavljević

Ivana Borić

Ivana Maurović

Gabrijela Ratkajec Gašević

University of Zagreb

Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences

Department of Behavioral Disorders

Croatia

When it comes to young people transitioning out of alternative care, it is important to note that their transition to adulthood and independence is sudden and uneven, occurs under pressure, and happens much earlier than for their peers (Mednes et al., 2011; Sulimani-Aidan et al., 2019). Young people leaving care are a vulnerable group with complex needs facing many challenges as they leave care. They are at greater risk of unsuccessful transition to adulthood and are more likely to have poor developmental or life outcomes due to the difficulties they face. For this reason, it is important that they are supported in leaving care process.

The goal of this presentation is to explore and analyze the process of leaving alternative care through the perspectives of professionals working in residential institutions in Croatia.

The focus groups were conducted with participants from 20 children's homes and correction institutions. The data was processed using thematic analysis.

Isolated themes are: Care leavers' readiness to leave care, Needs and challenges of care leavers, Challenges for professionals in the care leaving process, Process of leaving care, Good practices and Recommendations.

The findings provide guidelines for the further development and improvement of the process of young people leaving care in Croatia.

Key words: care leavers, residential institutions, professionals' perspective, Croatia

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Contribution of In-care Factors to the Care Leavers' Access to the Employment

Gianvincenzo Nicodemo

Paola Cardinali

Pegaso Telematic University

Universitas Mercatorum Telematic University

Italy

Young individuals transitioning from out-of-home care often encounter an abrupt cessation of the support they have grown accustomed to. Formal assistance from social workers and youth workers diminishes or ceases altogether, depending on the policies and legal frameworks specific to supporting care leavers in various jurisdictions. Access to employment is a critical aspect of the transition for young people leaving care.

The study is based on a scoping review of findings from recent studies that explore factors either promoting or hindering care leavers' access to employment. The study adhered to the JBI scoping review protocol and involved searching three databases. Ultimately, 25 relevant studies were selected from the initial pool of 326 studies. The factors influencing access to employment for care leavers were categorized into three distinct aspects: pre-care, in-care, and post-care, focusing on the contribution of in-care factors. The study is based on a scoping review. The findings from the scoping review primarily focus on in-care factors. It outlines the actions social educators should take during the out-of-home period to improve care leavers' access to employment once they leave care.

The work provides valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers regarding care leavers' employment opportunities.

Key words: Care leavers, employment, scoping review, out-of-home care

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Care Leaver Statistics (CLS) – longterm Study in Germany

Tanja Abou

Institute for Social and Organizational Education at the University of Hildesheim
Germany

Care Leaver Statistics (CLS) is the first long-term study in Germany on leaving care of young adults leaving residential child and youth care. The study examines questions of societal

participation among care leavers in various areas of life, including leisure activities, social relationships, housing, health, education, training and studies, employment, participation, and finances. Adolescents and young adults from care are surveyed over a period of seven years using questionnaires. The participants are young adults, aged 16 to 19 at the time of the initial survey, living in residential care, other assisted living arrangements, or with foster families. Participants were selected from institutions and housing groups through a multi-stage random sampling process. The session will provide insights into the results of the first wave of surveys and an outlook on the upcoming ones. The study will examine the participation in the life course of young adults from care.

Key words: leaving care, long term study, out of home care, quantitative Study

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Hand-in-hand Activities - a Retrospect; In Loving Memory of Professor Emmanuel Grupper, A Visionary Educator and Researcher Whose Pioneering Spirit Helped Forge the "Hand in Hand" Task Force

Dr. Alex Schneider

Marianna Bilyk

Yelyzaveta Moroz

Sviatoslav Onufryk

FICE Israel, Israel

Charitable organization "Ukrainian Education Platform", Ukraine

FICE International's "Hand-in-Hand" initiative supports Ukrainian children affected by the war. This presentation reflects on the activities from 2022 to 2024. In August 2022, FICE International launched the "Hand-in-Hand" task force, which is headed by Dr. Alex Schneider and Marianna Bilyk and aims to support children affected by the Ukraine war. The goal is to support Ukrainian children by prioritizing their safety, education, and overall well-being through collaboration with international and Ukrainian partners. The task force creates safe spaces and provides mental health support through training courses, trauma care lessons, and roundtable talks. Participants have contributed to keeping children safe, providing education, and supporting displaced families. They have also been involved in planning to improve mental health and protection programs in the future. The Hand in Hand task force has been making commendable efforts to support vulnerable children affected by the Ukraine crisis. They provide essential social-emotional resources and ensure access to education and other necessary services, significantly impacting the lives of these children and young people.

Key words: Ukrainian children, War support, Child safety, Education, Mental health

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

My life journey book; an activity book designed for children to document their experiences of fleeing their home country

Martine Tobé

Elianne Zijlstra

Marianna Bilyk

Kinderperspectief, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Ukredu, Ukraine

The development of the My Life Journey book was prompted by the war in Ukraine, which forced many children to seek safety in other countries. The sudden onset of the conflict meant that children had to flee abruptly, exposing them to stressful life events and considerable uncertainty about their futures. To help mitigate traumatic stress, it is crucial to provide children with opportunities to share their experiences.

The My Life Journey Book is an activity book designed to support children in expressing their feelings and experiences before, during, and after their displacement. The book allows children to document their journey, memories of Ukraine, and hopes for the future. By engaging with this book, children can enhance their resilience by recognizing their strengths and sources of support. The book features a mix of games and reflective questions about their journey, daily life in Ukraine and the host country, and things that bring them joy, such as favorite music, food, and superheroes.

Ukredu spread "The My Life Journey" book in Ukraine, Poland, and Italy, focusing on children who were on the move. Additionally, a second version was made for children displaced within Ukraine, which was crucial as they remained in a war-torn country, longing for their native cities and villages.

In our presentation, we will share the background of the My Life Journey book and practical insights from its implementation in real-world settings.

The My Life Journey Book is developed by FICE Netherlands, Lifebook for Youth, University of Groningen and Lifebook for Youth.

Key words: activity book, child displacements, child journey

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

The Best Interests of the Child in Decision-Making in Migration Procedure in the Netherlands

Elianne Zijlstra

Anniek Dommerholt

University of Groningen

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, as in other EU countries, there is a tension between children's rights and migration law. One of the fundamental principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is Article 3, which states that the best interests of the child shall be a primary

consideration in all actions concerning children. The aim of this project is to ensure that the

the best interests of the child are taken into account in all decisions in migration proceedings involving children. At the request of lawyers, we carry out Best Interests of the Child (BIC) assessments in individual cases. These BIC assessments are based on the Best Interests of the Child methodology (Van Os, 2018; Zijlstra, 2012), which is in line with the guidelines provided

by the Committee on the Rights of the Child for assessing and determining the best interests of the child (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013). Pedagogues and psychologists, who are members of their respective professional associations, carry out BIC assessments on a voluntary basis. These BIC reports are then used by the children's lawyers in the migration proceedings. The submission of BIC reports contributes to the consideration of the best interests of the child in decision-making by the immigration authorities in the Netherlands (Van Os et al., 2022).

Key words: Best interests of the child, children's rights, migration law, asylum seeking children, migrant children

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

The Study of Emotion Regulation Skills of Adults and Emotional Wellbeing in Children Under Their Care During The First Months of War in Ukraine

Anastasiia Shyroka

Oksana Senyk

Tetiana Zavada

Anna Kornadt

Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine

University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

War is an emotionally difficult experience for both adults and children. At the same time, children have significantly fewer emotional regulation skills and need adults to stabilize their emotional state. However, in the situation of the ongoing war the extent to which caregiver's emotional regulation contributes to children's mental health remains unknown.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of caregivers' emotional regulation to children's mental health in the context of the ongoing war.

340 caregivers (98% mothers) of children aged 3-17 who fled from 23 different regions of Ukraine to safer places in Ukraine (N = 99) or abroad (N = 241, 28 different countries) completed an online survey. At the time of the survey, most caregivers (90%) had already been in a safer place for a month or longer. They were asked to complete the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ), Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) and to report on the child's traumatic war experiences and child's mental health, using the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS). Up to 33% of the variation in a child's mental health were determined by the younger child's age, previous mental health problems, the quality of the child's relationship with caregiver and caregiver's emotional dysregulation ($F(5, 286) = 29.4, p < .001, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .328$). Up to 13% of the child's PTSD symptoms were determined by the younger child's age, the number of experienced traumatic events, the degree of the caregivers' basic needs satisfaction, lower caregiver's acceptance of the war situation, higher ability to positive reappraisal, emotional dysregulation ($F(6, 333) = 9.68, p < .001, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .133$).

In a situation of displacement and ongoing war, caregivers' emotional regulation matters, although not the only factor that contributes to a child's mental health. On the one hand, this study relieves caregivers of excessive responsibility, as in critical situations their ability to cope with their own emotions is not the only thing that affects the child's mental health. On the other hand, the study emphasizes the importance of supporting the emotional stability of adults as a strategy for improving children's mental health.

Key words: Caregivers' emotional regulation, children mental health, displacement, child-parent relationships, displacement, ongoing war.

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

The "What's Up?" Survey of Adolescents in Residential Care During the Israel-Hamas War

Ben Alfasi

Anna Reznikovski-Kuras

Tal Arazi

Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute
Israel

Immediately after the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs of the State of Israel sought to assess the needs of youth in its residential facilities.

Examine the status and unique needs of adolescents in residential facilities.

Quantitative research using an online survey among youth aged 12 and above in residential care.

Difficulties reported due to the war: 58% were sad or depressed; 50% were concerned or stressed; 49% were nervous or upset.

48% felt the staff were supportive and attentive.

The secondary objective of the survey, of sending a message to the adolescents that the staff cared for their wellbeing, was achieved. Therefore, we recommend adopting "What's Up?" surveys among adolescents in residential care, particularly in times of crisis.

Key words: residential care, children and youth at risk, times of crisis

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

ORAL PRESENTATIONS IN PARALELL SESSIONS

23.10.2024.

16.00-17.30



Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

”Dealing with history“ - Questions of Recognition, Support and Memorialization regarding child abuse in out-of-home care institutions

Diana Düring

Department of Social Work, Ernst Abbe University of Applied Sciences, Jena
Germany

Over the last 20 years lots of activities took place in Germany to investigate, to compensate and to raise awareness for the suffering of those children and youth who experienced humiliation, violence and abuse in out-of-home care institutions in the second half of the 20th century. I would like to give an overview about research strategies and core findings concerning the history of out-of-home care institutions in the German Youth Welfare History (focus on East Germany) and present examples of memorizing and raising public awareness for that part of youth welfare history which aim to reduce stigmatization and prejudices against survivors and care leavers. I would like to discuss what insights would be possible if we compare different approaches of commemoration and compensation dealing with institutional violence in the history of out-of-home care across countries, societies and during different eras.

I will also provide some insights into an ongoing research project on education during Namibia's colonial era under German governance.

Key words: historical research, memorialization

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Search for foster families for adolescents in Italy: motivations, socio-demographic characteristics and factors encouraging availability

Marco Giordano

”Aldo Moro“ University of Bari

University of Salerno

Italy

According to government data, there is a slow decline of foster care in Italy, especially for teenagers, caused by an insufficient number of available foster families. The need to provide an intense stimulus to foster care is clear.

Understand some of the common reasons and favorable factors that lead people to choose to engage with foster care for teenagers

The study conducted individual qualitative interviews with 126 foster parents of teenagers, transcribed and analyzed using Atlas.ti software. Analysis was theoretically founded on the Grounded Theory developing a not-preconceived system of categories that ‘captures’ the meanings of interviewees’ answers. Multiple encoding cycles were conducted to open, classify, and interpret the data. The importance of the foster parents’ intrinsic motivations were reaffirmed. Additionally, results revealed that foster parents connected to foster parents’ associations/networks and religious groups and foster parents with previous experience in parenting, foster parenting, or working with teenagers are more available toward fostering adolescent. The results suggest that social services, both in Italy and other countries, should emphasize intrinsic motivations in the recruitment campaigns of foster parents and to direct the proposal towards groups of people with the listed characteristics.

Key words: teenagers foster care, recruitment of foster families, foster care services

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

A Holistic Approach in the Alternative Care of Children with their Mothers in Brazil: Empowering 'The Failed Mother' for the Child's Best Interest

Patrick Reason

Associação Beneficente Encontro com Deus/ FICE
Brasil
Brasil

This presentation introduces the innovative Joint Care Service, a residential care model designed to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents while strengthening family ties and community living.

The aim of this presentation is to showcase the structure and principles, as well as offer practical examples from the Joint Care Service, emphasizing its innovative role in preserving family ties and reducing trauma.

Developed over twenty-three years of practice, the service's objectives, methodologies, and actions will be outlined that ensure quality service delivery and meet the rights and needs of families in care.

By empowering women who may be labeled as "failed" by welfare services and societal opinion, with sufficient, culturally sensitive and empathetic support, they can fulfill their protective role, which is ultimately in the best interest of the child.

The Joint Care Service model has been recognised in the 2024 Brazilian National Care Plan as necessary for broader adoption and adaptation on a national scale.

Key words: Family Preservation; Empowering Mothers; Child Well-being; Joint Care Service

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Evaluation of Satisfaction With the Half-day Care Service at the Center for Community Services Izvor, Selce

Davor Vukelić

Katja Borovac

Ivana Azinović Vukelić

Doris Antić

University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka

Center for Community Services Izvor Selce

Croatia

Center for Community Services Izvor Selce is a social care institution providing a half-day care service for children, offering organized activities, professional help, and support that cannot be met within the family. During the summer semester of 2023, under Full Professor Bojana Čulumlić from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka and caregiver

Davor Vukelić, an evaluation of satisfaction with Centre for Community Services Izvor Selce's half-day care service was conducted. The general aim of the research is assess satisfaction with the half-day care service at the Centre for Community. The scientific purpose is to expand knowledge about preventive social care while the applied purpose is to use the results to develop and expand outside the institution social services.

The respondents were child users (N=41), their parents (N=40), school staff (N=42), half-day care staff (N=11), social work department staff (N=5), and local government unit staff (N=5). The study used a quantitative-qualitative methodological framework. Identified good practices include educational activities, psychological support for children, and preventive activities. Areas for improvement include infrastructure and equipment, prevention of peer violence, support and cooperation. The findings of this research strengthen the potential for developing new social services and improving existing ones.

Key words: Centre for Community Services Izvor Selce, evaluation of satisfaction, half-day care service

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

“Young people leaving foster care: perspective of foster care parents“

Ivana Maurović

Anja Miroslavljević

Gabrijela Ratkajec Gašević

Andrea Ćosić

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Behavioral Disorders
Croatia

Youth leaving foster care often have lower levels of educational attainment, great economic and housing instability, as well as great number of unresolved adverse childhood experiences. Consequently, they are in risk of poor outcomes in adulthood and in need for additional support in the care leaving process.

The aim of this study is to explore the process of young people leaving foster care in Croatia through the perspective of eight foster parents, members of some NGO focused on foster care. All participants were female, with the mean age of 59,5 years.

Key results indicate that, from foster care parents' perspective, foster care youth are not ready to leave care and need more support than they currently have. They highlighted positive examples of process of leaving care but also stressed recommendations for its improvement: standardization of the criteria for leaving care, establishing a continuous and quality housing support system, standardizing financial support for foster care youth, ensuring that youth leaving care receive priority in employment, ensuring support for young people 2-3 years after leaving care, developing higher-quality post-treatment care for youth with complex needs, mentorship programs for youth, etc. All this recommendation, together with other results will be discussed in presentation.

Key words: foster care youth, leaving care process, foster care parents

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Objective and subjective findings about the response of European countries to the emergency situation created by Russia's War against Ukraine, with a special focus on inclusive education

Marianna Onufryk

Georgette Mulheir

National Deinstitutionalization Office in Ukraine, Ukraine
Consultant of European Disability Forum, Great Britain

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in February, 2022, precipitated the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. The war has affected every Ukrainian child. Refugee children with disabilities, in particular, are in danger of falling between the cracks of three systems - refugee response services; disability services; and child protection services. Within this challenging context, the European Disability Forum (EDF) has completed four pieces of research on the impact of the war in Ukraine on children with disabilities. The research aims to make visible and provide a greater understanding of the situation of Ukrainian children with disabilities. The reports investigated the following issues: Ukrainian children with disabilities and their families seeking refuge; Ukrainian children with disabilities seeking refuge with their foster families; Evacuation and protection of children with disabilities from institutions; The risks and realities of inappropriate and illegal adoption of Ukrainian children with disabilities.

2 main general conclusions Family is protection. Children living in birth families and foster families are considerably better protected than children living in institutions. While all children who evacuated faced risks and hardship during the journey, the presence of their parents and foster parents reduced the impact of those risks. Moreover, families strive tirelessly to navigate their way through complex systems to ensure their children receive the support they require. Children's institutions were often transported with too few carers and placed in unsafe and ad hoc institutional environments that cannot meet their needs and expose them to risk. It is worthy of note that, eight months on from the start of the war, most families and foster families report that their children with disabilities are included in their new communities and are mostly accessing the services they require. Many children evacuated from institutions remain stuck in the ad hoc, inappropriate and unsafe institutional conditions in which they were placed immediately after evacuation. Inclusion in formal systems reduces risk. Refugee children with disabilities have a right to be included in education, health and social protection systems on an equal basis with children who are citizens. Access to these support services have ensured that the overwhelming majority of birth families who participated in this research felt safe and included in their new communities. Foster families who had been officially included in the child protection system of the receiving country had more access to adequate services and support than those who had not been included. Children in institutions who were not included in child protection systems remained at a high risk of abuse and neglect. They are also more likely to be the subject of arbitrary decisions that are not made in their best interest and that may compromise their safety.

Key words: children with disabilities, inclusion, migrant families, unaccompanied children, institutionalized children.

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Legal Protection of Unaccompanied Children and Children Separated from Their Families from Ukraine Located in the Territory of the Republic of Croatia: Qualitative Research Findings

Aleksandra Korać Graovac

Irena Majstorović

Lucija Vejmelka

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law
Croatia

Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb in cooperation with UNICEF Office for Croatia, participated in the international project " Strengthening national capacities for improved protection of unaccompanied children and displaced children from Ukraine" which is carried out as part of the wider activities of the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in cooperation with the organization Child Circle, in 7 countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Turkey. The aim of the research was to examine and systematize the opinions and experiences of experts related to the legal protection of unaccompanied children and displaced children from Ukraine, including children evacuated from alternative care from Ukraine.

The presentation will include a short overview of the project activities as well as one part of the qualitative research conducted with experts in Croatia through semi-structured interviews.

The results of the research shows how access to international protection and protection of children from risks is ensured and how appropriate it is for individual situations. The results also indicate the need for structural changes to the system to improve the guardianship system, as well as the need for additional forms of support and support in specific circumstances. The contribution of the research is reflected in a better understanding of the provision of legal protection, especially by the institution of guardianship in extraordinary situations such as the acceptance of children from Ukraine in Croatia. The above findings can be a guideline in the development of future practice in working with children in emergency situations and particularly significant are recommendations based on the project results.

Key words: Legal protection of unaccompanied children, children from Ukraine, qualitative research

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

The Transition to Adulthood of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors

Lise Hacquebord

Elianne Zijlstra

Wendy Post

Monika Smit

University of Groningen, The Netherlands

In 2023, 5804 unaccompanied minors asked for asylum in the Netherlands. Most of them were 16 or 17 years old. Until 18, they are assigned a guardian and once they receive their residence permit, most of them are placed in a small care facility, where a mentor helps them settle and prepare for independent living. When these unaccompanied minor refugees turn 18, the guardianship ends and in most cases they have to move out of the facility they live in. On top of that, things like education, finances and insurance change when they turn 18. Arriving without their parents, usually not having a rich social network and not completely knowing the language and the culture of their new country – all these elements make the transition to adulthood even more challenging for these youngsters.

To gain more knowledge about the transition to adulthood of unaccompanied minor refugees, their self-sufficiency and their wishes and needs with regard to the guidance they receive, we set up a longitudinal study (n=92) and we organized focus group sessions with professionals. Data collection is still going on. In this presentation, the first results from the focus group sessions will be presented.

Key words: Unaccompanied minor refugees; transition to adulthood; self-sufficiency

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Transnational Family Dynamics of Unaccompanied Refugee Adolescents During the Transition to Adulthood

Kjell Winkens

Elianne Zijlstra

Wendy Post

Monika Smit

University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Unaccompanied adolescents generally have little time to navigate choices and challenges in planning their futures before aging out of care. Although physically separated from their families when they arrive in their host country, adolescents are not isolated from them, as earlier studies show that transnational contact is relatively common. However, little is known about the content of this contact and the influence of family on adolescents' lives in their host country. This study addresses that gap. In this ethnographic project, unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands were followed for a period of 2 years through semi-structured interviews and

informal contact moments. Particular attention was paid to the building of trust and rapport.

Adolescents had frequent contact with their families and maintained a shared sense of 'family'

despite physical separation. Apart from discussing their aspirations and dilemmas, minors also

discussed practical questions and shared small talk. While contact could be experienced as supportive towards adolescents' wellbeing, it could also cause pressure or worries.

Adolescents also felt implicitly or explicitly responsible for their families' wellbeing. Transnational family ties can influence adolescents' choices and wellbeing, and should be

taken into account when working with unaccompanied minors.

Key words: Unaccompanied minors; Transnational family life; Transition to adulthood

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Protective and Safe Behaviours: Empowering Children and Young People to be as Agents of Change in feeling Safe and Preventing Peer Violence

Coenraad de Beer

SOS Children's Villages International
Austria

The Safe Behaviours (SB) capacity-building programme by SOS Children's Villages equips and empowers children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds, alongside Child and Youth Care (CYC) practitioners and professionals, to promote personal safety and resilience while better preventing and responding to peer violence.

This presentation showcases the SB programme and invites participants to explore strategies and initiatives that actively involve children and young people in the prevention of peer violence. Children and youth without adequate parental care frequently experience violence, neglect, and abuse, making them disproportionately vulnerable to unsafe situations. By equipping them with preventive strategies, the SB programme enables them to act as agents of change, creating safer environments for themselves and their peers. The programme also targets CYC practitioners and other professionals working with vulnerable children. The findings indicate that a comprehensive approach, encompassing proper training, organizational support, and effective policies, is essential for preventing and responding to peer violence. Prioritizing the well-being and active involvement of children and young people is key to successful implementation. Participants will gain insight into an initiative that empowers children and young people to become proactive agents in preventing violence.

Key words: Personal safety; peer violence prevention; empowerment

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Fostering Compassionate and Affiliative Residential Care Homes: Findings from a Compassionate Mind Training Program delivered to Caregivers

Laura Santos

Daniel Rijo

Maria do Rosário Pinheiro

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Coimbra

Centre for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
Portugal

Children and youth in residential youth care (RYC) present complex needs, requiring emotionally available caregivers who can help them to heal and thrive. However, caregivers are daily exposed to emotional demands that might compromise their mental health and the quality of care they provide. A Compassionate Mind Training program for Caregivers (CMT-Care Homes) was developed, to protect caregivers' mental health and to foster an affiliative climate within RYC. A Cluster Randomized Trial enrolling 154 youth and 127 caregivers from 12 Portuguese residential care homes (RCH) was conducted to test the program's effects and its maintenance across time.

RCHs were randomized to treatment and control groups. While only caregivers received intervention, both caregivers and youth completed self-report measures at three timepoints.

Results suggested that caregivers from the treatment group showed improvements in (self)compassion and mental health outcomes across time, while the control group tended to deteriorate. Youth and caregivers from the treatment group noticed a safer RCH emotional climate and felt safer with others. At 6-month follow-up, improvements were retained by caregivers, but not by youth.

The CMT-Care Homes brings a compassionate approach to RYC practices, that seemed to be promising in promoting caregivers' mental health, safer relationships and affiliative environments.

Key words: residential youth care, staff training, compassion, cluster randomized trial

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

KINGS trauma-focused and inpatient family treatment: target group characteristics and reported care activities in daily practice

Lysbert Zeinstra

Anne-Marie Huyghen

Annemiek Harder

Jana Knot-Dickscheit

Erasmus University Rotterdam

University of Groningen

Erasmus University Rotterdam

University of Groningen

The Netherlands

Children growing up in families experiencing multiple and complex problems are at increased risk for child maltreatment and complex trauma. KINGS is an innovative Dutch inpatient treatment program that aims to reduce post-trauma consequences for children and their parents experiencing multiple problems. The program focuses on intensive treatment of both the parent, child, and parent-child interactions, whereas most (trauma or residential) treatment programs or guidelines focus on either parents (i.e., adults) or children.

This presentation provides a detailed description of the (1) target group characteristics and (2) content and structure of KINGS, based on a qualitative content analysis of 12 enrolled families' case files.

Findings show all families experience a wide range of problems as well as protective factors across seven domains of functioning: child, parent, child rearing, family, context, social network, and mental health care. KINGS focuses primarily on change-oriented activities (e.g., working on communication, trauma) and promoting practitioner-client collaboration (e.g., managing expectations), with less emphasis on activating social and professional networks. Parent-focused activities predominate, largely through practice and psychoeducation.

Detailed information on the characteristics and content of family-centered and trauma-focused care could help improve the interpretation of whether, why, and for whom such interventions are effective for vulnerable families.

Key words: Families with complex and multiple problems; Child maltreatment; Family treatment; Cumulative risk; Elements of care

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

The Measure of Separation of a Child from the Family in International and Croatian Law and Practice

Daniel Rupić

Branka Rešetar

Faculty of Law, University of J.J. Strossmayer in Osijek
Croatia

The family is the best environment for the growth and development of the child, and the child's right to family life enjoys a high level of international and national protection. The parents enjoy the right to family life with their child and their right to parental responsibility. This right is not absolute - when there is a danger to the child's life, health and development or a threat of neglect and/or abuse of the child within his own family, the child may be separated from his/her family, and the parents right to parental responsibility may be limited or taken away. The aim is to analyze the international and national legislation and practice focusing on human rights and child's rights in the context of child protection and alternative care. Analysis of international and national legislation and practice, regulations, scientific and professional literature, and selected decisions of the national courts regarding separation of the child from the family. The findings should answer the question how the Croatian legal system regulates the protection of the rights of the child and the rights of the parents in the context of the separation of the child from the family, whether the procedures for the separation of the child in the Republic of Croatia are in accordance with the principle of proportionality, and whether the goals are achieved in practice imposing a measure. The paper should help to understand the complex area of achieving a balance between the protection of the child from neglect and abuse on the one hand and the protection of the right to family life of the child and parents on the other side.

Key words: child protection, family life, care proceeding

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Innovations in the Residential Youth Care in The Netherlands

Ymke Riemersma

University of Groningen
The Netherlands

Residential youth care (RYC) is often considered undesirable due to the high costs and impersonal living environment. Nevertheless, some youth remain in the residential care system for many years. RYC in the Netherlands has traditionally been characterized by short-term placements, groups with large numbers of young people (8-12), often located on a campus with several RYC units. In recent years, alternative residential care settings have been developed in the Netherlands aiming to better meet the needs of youth with complex problems. We use the term alternative RYC to refer to settings that are located in neighborhoods, that provide long-term and individualized care, and that have a maximum number of eight youth per house (usually six youth). In the present study, which started in 2019, we focus on the outcomes of traditional and alternative residential youth care in the Netherlands. We sought to gain insight into the perceived living environment in traditional and alternative RYC settings. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using Q-methodology. We used a Mokken Scale and Mann-Whitney analyses to explore the differences in living environments between alternative and traditional RYC. To analyze our qualitative data, we used thematic coding. We found that youth, parents and professionals in home-like groups experienced significantly more sensitivity from professionals than in traditional RYC. Alternative RYC may provide more opportunities than traditional RYC for youth to experience an environment with sensitive professionals and a positive group atmosphere.

Key words: Residential youth care, living environment, innovations

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Contributing to Community Mental Health by Reducing the Negative Impact of Traffic and Social Exclusion

Lucija Marcelić

Ivana Blajić

Liana Brkić

The Center for Providing Services in the Community Zadar
Croatia

The aim of the mobile team is to reach as many families as possible in which behavioral problems in children are present, to contribute to reducing the sense of exclusion due to traffic isolation, and to improve the quality of life and their mental health. For this purpose, the mobile team provides professional help and support to individual family members, as well as the whole family, respectively, in overcoming difficulties, acquiring specific skills needed to deal with current and future challenges, and strengthening the mental health of children and young people. The mobile team consists of experts in different fields and represents a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the problem. The added value of the mobile team is evident in the establishment of a coordinated system of support for the mentioned families by strengthening cooperation with the Institute for Social Work and ensure a more comprehensive monitoring of users. Life in the rural parts of Zadar County presents numerous challenges for families, especially for those families in which children have been assessed as being at risk of behavioral problems or already exhibiting them. Such families often experienced discrimination because until 2021 there was no comprehensive support to solve the problems they face regarding children's mental health. The Center for Providing Services in the Community Zadar recognized this and founded a mobile team that started working as a pilot project, and later on became a recognized social service. The aim of the presentation is to present the work of the mobile team and its impact on improving the mental health of our users.

Key words: Support, mobility, mental health

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Family in the center - Improving the quality of non-institutional social services of the Split Family Center, presentation of the implementation and results of the project

Katarina Anđić

Maja Proso

Family Center, Split-Dalmatin Regional Service
Croatia

The project "Family in the center - improving the quality of non-institutional social services of the Family Center Split" was financed by the European Social Fund, Operational Program Effective Human Potential, 2014-2020. The project was carried out by the Family Center, Regional office for the Split-Dalmatia County and was carried out in the period from June 2021 to October 2023. The purpose of the project is to improve the quality of non-institutional services by strengthening the capacity of the Family Center. The target groups are children and young adults without adequate parental care, children and young people with behavioral problems, children with developmental disabilities, people with addiction problems, victims of domestic violence, adults with disabilities, their families and professionals who work with them. The project carried out:

1. activities related to reducing the number of users of accommodation services as an institutional form of care outside their own family and improving the quality and expansion of non-institutional social services.
2. Activities to strengthen the capacity of experts/persons who work with members of target groups to organize and provide non-institutional social services and implement the deinstitutionalization process.
3. Activities related to raising public awareness of the importance of the deinstitutionalization process and the rights of vulnerable groups with an emphasis on the right to live in the community.

The project had an impact on increasing the professional competences of professionals from the Family Center, with the aim of improving the quality of services for users, and the held professional meetings worked to raise awareness about the rights of children and young people. Then, experts from the social welfare, health, justice and education systems who work with vulnerable groups were trained in the project, which contributed to the promotion of multisectoral cooperation.

Educational activities were also carried out with parents, foster parents and teachers, which, in addition to increasing competence and knowledge, also guarantees project sustainability even after completion.

Keywords: Presentation of project activities, family center, prevention of separation of children from families

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Project of Association for Psychosocial Support Feniks "Tinel"- Support to and Development of Foster Care and Parenting

Sanja Kuvačić

Vedrana Radić Brajnov

Association for psychosocial support Feniks

Institute for social work

Croatia

Through the project IMPULS – strengthening the capacity of CSOs for the provision and development of new social services, co-financed with the funds of the ESF, we were developing new social services for children in foster care. We wish to present the results of providing these new services: the Tinel 1 service enabled foster children to meet and socialize with their parents and other relatives in a suitable and organized space („Tinel“), instead of, as was previously the case, and many are still held, in shopping centers and cafes. The Tinel 2 service allowed foster parents to occasionally, for a short time, in some urgent situations (seeing a doctor, social-service experts, etc.) leave their child in the care of Tinel volunteers who have been trained for this purpose by the professional team of the association. Also, as part of this service, various educations for foster parents, adoptive parents and parents were held, which increased parental competences and thereby improved child care. Furthermore, informal get-togethers of foster parents, adoptive parents and children were held in Tinel, which in this way additionally connected and created a network of mutual support. We hope our results may inspire other CSOs to develop similar services.

Key words: Social services, foster care, parenting

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Family Center Split: Support Program for Social Inclusion of Children and Young People - "All Together"

Sanja Kuvačić

Family Center Split, Croatia

The "All Together" program aims to enable children and young people who are at risk of social exclusion to participate equally in the life of the local community, through their involvement in the activities in the community – sport and dance clubs, foreign language schools, music and IT schools, cultural and artistic events, and other facilities. Children and young people participate in the activities for free, according to their own interests and wishes. In certain activities (such as cinema or theater) entire families participate. In the past 14 years, more than 900 children have been involved in various activities for free, some of them during many years. The implementation of the program is largely based on the solidarity of service providers, who agree to accept at least one child in their activities for free or with a reduced membership fee. This solidarity is one of the values and goals of the project as it helps sensitize the community to the needs of children who are at risk of social exclusion. We wish to present the contribution of the Program to children's welfare and to inspire interested experts to develop similar initiatives. Solidary and engaged community can ensure equal opportunities for all children.

Key words: Social inclusion, solidarity, togetherness

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Integrated model of care for children whose parents have addiction problems

Jelena Klinčić

Lidija Bandić

University Psychiatric Hospital Vrapče, Zagreb

Reto Center Zagreb

Croatia

Throughout history, addiction treatment programs and the child care system have worked separately to address the needs of parents with addiction disorders. There is a clear need for comprehensive integrated treatments that are simultaneously focused on the mother's recovery from addiction and the child's holistic development. Research on integrated parenting programs shows the need to expand individual recovery to family recovery. It is necessary to systematically think about ways to provide help and support to families in which parents have addiction problems, in which children live at developmental risks, so that separation does not occur at all.

Key words: maternal addiction, integrated rehabilitation, parenting support, comprehensive child care

Oral Presentations:
DAY 1

ORAL PRESENTATIONS IN PARALELL SESSIONS

23.10.2024.

17.30-18.30



Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Young People Leaving Care: Perspectives of Professionals from Centers of Social care

Gabrijela Ratkajec Gašević

Anja Miroslavljević

Ivana Maurović

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences
Croatia

Youth leaving alternative care often face significant economic and housing instability, stemming from the numerous challenges they encounter. Their complex needs increase the risk of an unsuccessful transition to adulthood and poor developmental or life outcomes, necessitating crucial support during the care-leaving process.

This study aims to explore the care-leaving process from the perspective of social care professionals.

Six professionals with an average age of 55.2 years participated in focus groups. Deductive thematic analysis was conducted according to predefined themes: readiness for leaving care and needs during the process, difficulties and challenges faced, implementation of the process, collaboration with stakeholders, examples of good practice, and youth homelessness.

Key findings indicate that young people are inadequately prepared for leaving care due to systemic neglect and expectations for them to mature faster than their peers. They lack sufficient family support and are unprepared for real-life challenges. Coordination with families is insufficient, and the capacity for change within families is questionable. The quality of care is problematic, especially for those in foster care, who are in the worst position due to inadequate support and oversight of foster families. Increasing the number of mobile support teams for foster families is recommended. The care-leaving process is poorly planned, with insufficient collaboration among service providers. Risks of homelessness are exacerbated by poor financial management, difficulties in finding adequate housing, and insufficient housing support.

Comprehensive strategies are needed to address these issues and reduce the risk of homelessness among care leavers.

Key words: leaving care process, professionals from centers of social care, complex needs of leaving care users, comprehensive strategies for care leavers

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Children and Youth at Risk in Residential Care in Israel: An Examination of their Characteristics, Needs and the Interventions Used to Treat Them

Anna Reznikoveski-Kuras
Hadas Shapira

Myers-Joint-Brookdale Institute
Israel

In the past few years, residential care facilities (RCFs) in Israel have undergone changes in policy, structure, and therapeutical approaches. In addition, professional literature shows that in the last decade, children and youth in RCFs have dealt with more complex challenges than before.

Develop questionnaires to examine the current characteristics and needs of children in RCFs, as well as the compatibility of the intervention strategies used to treat them.

A questionnaire including closed-ended questions as well as open-ended questions, was distributed in January 2023, to all RCFs. The social workers filled out the questionnaire, regarding 3,441 children (response rate of 53%).

Findings show compatibility between most strategies of intervention and children's characteristics and needs. However, other differences in interventions used for children according to their characteristics (gender, age, sector, sexual orientation, seniority in RCFs), cannot be explained.

These questionnaires will be incorporated in a computerized system for the daily use of the workers at RCFs and will enable better policy planning and standardization. Such ongoing monitoring will enable policy makers and field professionals to give more suitable and costumed care to the children in the facilities.

Key words: Israel, Assessment of children and youth in out-of-home care, needs and interventions

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

Evaluations of programs intended for children and youth – how are they carried out and what are they for?

Lara Rašić

Croatian Institute for Social Work, Regional Office Osijek

Helena Vusić

Croatian Institute for Social Work, Regional Office Krapina

The number of active programs that are implemented with the aim of meeting the needs of children and youth and improving their social, emotional, and educational development is growing rapidly, but not all of them are equally successful in achieving their goals. For this reason, program evaluations became an indispensable part of the program plan, and they refer to a systematic process of collecting useful, valid, and reliable data about the current or future program, its outcome, and its effectiveness. Evaluations of programs intended for children and youth are carried out not only for the purpose of monitoring the achievement of the set goals of the program but also for the purpose of spreading knowledge about the current needs of children and youth and the possibilities of responding to their needs, and for the purpose of active participation in decision-making about future programs. Needs assessment, process evaluations, outcome evaluations, and efficiency evaluations are four types of evaluations, and they can be carried out internally and externally. There are different quantitative, qualitative, and mixed evaluation methods that are used in conducting each type of evaluation, and their selection depends on the area of program implementation, target group, duration, complexity, program goals, and innovation. The aim of this paper is to expand knowledge about the implementation of evaluation and ways of involving children and youth, and to explain the ways of using the results of the conducted evaluation.

Key words: program evaluation, types and methods, inclusion of children and youth, purpose of program evaluation

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Experiencing Life in Organized Housing From the Perspective of Young People

Josipa Radas

Liana Brkić

The Center for Providing Services in the Community Zadar
Croatia

The Center for Providing Services in the Community Zadar has begun its transformation in 2021 with the projects "For a better tomorrow, for happier mornings"; by introducing new non-institutional social services, one of the most important of which is organized housing with comprehensive and occasional support for children and youth without parents and/or without adequate parental care and for children and young adults with behavioral problems. Organized housing is a form of care in which upbringing and life are expertly based on pedagogical theory and practice, experiential pedagogy and have a family atmosphere. Children and young people see organized housing as a more humane and natural form of accommodation where educators are more attached and available for help and support. On the other hand, they see the lack of differentiation of treatment and the fluctuation of educators and their educational styles as negative aspects of life in organized housing. In general, they see organized housing as currently the best form of care for children, when they compare it to institutional housing. In the last fifteen years, processes of transformation and deinstitutionalization have been gradually implemented in Croatia with the aim of placing children and young people from institutional forms of accommodation in alternative more natural environments, all in accordance with research results that indicate negative developmental outcomes of institutionalization. These processes are based on the paradigm of children's rights; that every child has the right to live in a family, and as a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the state should provide them with life in a family environment.

Research objectives are to gain an insight into the experiences of young people who live or have lived in the organized housing of The Center for the Providing Services in the community of Zadar in the context of deinstitutionalization and transformation. This research uses a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews.

Children and young people see organized housing as a more humane and natural form of accommodation where educators are more attached and available for help and support. On the other hand, they see the lack of differentiation of treatment and the fluctuation of educators and their educational styles as negative aspects of life in organized housing. In general, they see organized housing as currently the best form of care for children, when they compare it to institutional housing. From the results, it is possible to conclude that the transformation process brought many useful innovations in the Centers' field of activity, especially in childcare. However, it is also necessary to evaluate certain changes in order to compensate for possible shortcomings in the current offer of services, but also in the child care system in general.

Key words: deinstitutionalization, transformation, childcare system, organized housing, user perspective

Abstract

Crisis Management - The Social Welfare System's Response to the Needs of Displaced Persons from Ukraine

Milena Koren

Katarina Špehar Fiškuš

Marina Milić

Ministry of Labor, Pension System, Family and Social Policy
Ministry of Labor, Pension System, Family and Social Policy
Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Study Center for Social Work
Croatia

Previous experiences in crisis management (Croatian War for Independence, floods, pandemic, Covid-19, earthquakes) have brought professional experiences that contribute to a faster and more efficient response to the crisis caused by the war events in Ukraine. This has resulted in more prepared reactions and more efficient activities that have a stronger focus on resolving the newly emerging crisis. The authors of the paper will present forms of formal support of the social welfare system in the process of accepting and caring for displaced persons from Ukraine in the territory of the Republic of Croatia. Data relevant to the topic of the paper are processed using qualitative methodology. The aim of the paper is to present a model of crisis management in the social welfare system, which was created as a response to the consequences of the war events in Ukraine. The crisis management model in this specific situation provides an overview of the activities and interventions of the social welfare system, in coordination with other systems, summarizes what has been done so far and provides guidelines for actions in possible upcoming crises in order to address the challenges caused by crises of various causes in an effective manner, especially when the focus is on caring for members of a vulnerable group.

Key words: Crisis management, social welfare system, displaced persons from Ukraine

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

Abstract

”Are we doing enough? Presentation of the activities of the Foster Care Team of Split-Dalmatia County“

Tanja Marčac Srdarević

Marta Nekić

Institute for social work

Croatia

Foster-care is considered to be the most useful form of providing accommodation to children without appropriate parental care. As such, it has many positive aspects, especially in satisfying children's needs for secure attachment, security, predictability, developing of children's self and potentials. Foster-care in Croatia is regulated by Foster Care Law which prescribes the area of work for Foster Care Teams. Speakers will present areas of work of the Foster Care Team of Split-Dalmatia County and some specifics of foster care in Split-Dalmatia County. Defining and questioning some areas of foster-care accessible for further development and will leave

space for bringing other conclusions of how to further develop foster-care.

Over the last couple of years in the area of foster care in Split-Dalmatia County many positive changes have been done. Still, there exists an urge that the social welfare system has to make better adjustments according to changes in characteristics of foster-care in general and children who have assumptions to enter into the foster-care system with their specific needs and state.

Key words: Foster-care, social care law, practice, adjustment

Oral Presentations: DAY 1

ORAL PRESENTATIONS IN PARALELL SESSIONS

23.10.2024.

11.45-12.45



Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

Research On Adequacy Of The Compensation And Leaves For Foster Parents' Work And Allowances For Children In Foster Care

Martina Štabi

Martina Tomić Latinac

UNICEF Office for Croatia
Croatia

The foster care system in Croatia serves as a vital safety net for children facing challenging family situations. Foster care has a long history in Croatia, and in recent years, the country has gone through a reform process of the foster care system. Despite continuous promotion efforts from the side of government and partners, changes in the legal framework and the increased financial support, the number of foster families is insufficient to meet current needs, and foster families are unevenly distributed across Croatia. To generate evidence that will contribute to further development of the foster care system in Croatia, a comprehensive assessment of the adequacy of foster care allowance for children in foster care and of the package of support comprised of the compensation fee, leaves and other social benefit for foster parents was conducted by UNICEF in collaboration with the Economic Policy Research Institute. The analytical assessment was developed with a mixed methods approach. It combined primary and secondary data sources through qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. The assessment revealed that the current foster care allowance, while variable by age and specific needs of children, lacks a clear and transparent methodology for its determination. Based on the itemized budgets developed for this study it was assessed that the current allowance only partially covers the actual costs of raising a child in foster care. Moreover, the structure of the current allowance falls short of providing foster parents with the financial flexibility to address extraordinary expenses as they arise. Also, the compensation package for foster parents does not fully cover the additional burdens associated with fostering. A comparative analysis of the foster care system in Croatia with those in Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden highlighted the variation in foster care systems. Lastly, challenges with the provisions of support services was found to have a great impact on the motivation of foster parents to start or to continue to provide foster care. Drawing on the main findings, the study recommended three directions of reform focused on 1) restructuring the foster care allowance, 2) revising the package of compensation for the work of foster parents and on 3) strengthening the foster care system.

Key words: foster care, foster care allowance, compensation for the work of foster parents

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

”Advisory Forum STRENGTHENING YOUTH: Bridges To Independence“ supported from the Federal Ministry of Youth for the period from 2023. to 20247.

Josef Koch

FICE Germany -Internationale Gesellschaft für erzieherische Hilfen (IGfH)
Germany

The university and FICE Germany have been working together for many years. In the projects, researchers (university) and experienced practitioners (FICE) work together in the context of leaving care for young people in special life situations to create new, suitable forms of assistance. Participants will learn how the ESF programme “STRENGTHENING YOUTH: Bridges to Independence” in Germany supports municipalities in initiating offers for young people and young adults on the threshold of independence with special support needs. We offer the 72 participating municipalities the opportunity to exchange ideas with each other and with experts at specialist events, as well as individual advice and a self-study course. Through continuous monitoring, data on the living situation of young people and their support needs are systematized and evaluated together with the municipalities. <https://beratungsforum-jugend.de/service-fuer-kommunen/>. Interested in exchanging information about support options for care leavers in local communities. Municipal support projects should include a holistic approach to social integration, particularly with regard to the transition to the training and labor market as well as the issue of housing. Central topics can include: • Outreach youth social work • Low-threshold advice/clearing • Case management • Testing new forms of housing.

Key words: Innovative models of out-of-home care; Cooperation, Standards of quality

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

Family Construction Between Normative Expectations And Diversity - The Relationship To Fathers and Mothers During the Transition from Care to Adulthood

Stephan Sting

Georg Streissguertl

Julia Weissnar

University of Klagenfurt
Austria

The presentation is based on the FWF research project "Relevance of family in the transition from care to adulthood" (FWF project P35300-G), which investigates the references to the family during the process of leaving care. Fathers are a group that receives little attention in the field of child and youth welfare. We will therefore present selected results that highlight relationships with fathers in particular. The study is based on an open, qualitative research approach using grounded theory methodology and qualitative structural network analysis. The reconstruction of family dynamics and family-related orientations follows the young adults' subjective structures of perception, interpretation and meaning. Data is collected with problem-centred interviews and egocentric network maps. The study contains a participatory element with a reference group of co-researchers accompanying the research process as advisors. The results show heterogeneous father-child relationships, ranging from absent fathers to hindered and sometimes secret relationships to supportive fathers. The tension between socially prescribed images of biological parents, the divergent experiences and the felt need for distance gives rise to a diversity of family constructions that influences father-child-relationships and that have an impact on the biographical trajectories during leaving care.

Key words: Care leavers research, family constructions, father-child-relationship

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

The Need For Support In Recognising And Correcting Internalised And Externalised Problematic Behaviour Of Children In Care In Lithuania

Jolanta Pivorienė
Odeta Merfeldaitė

Mykolas Romeris University Litva
Litva

Problematic behaviour is a common problem in care, and the ability to recognize and understand it is essential for effective help for children. Investing in support and training for caregivers and staff can have a positive impact on children's well-being, on the quality of caregivers work and, on their decision to continue fostering. This study aimed to explore what support caregivers would most need in identifying and correcting internalised and externalised behavioural problems of children in care. Methodology and questionnaires were developed by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Two methods were used to ensure the validity of the questionnaires: double translation and member check or respondent validation. Non-probability sampling was used. The questionnaires were distributed through the care centres, i.e. the staff working in the care centres filled in the questionnaires themselves and sent them to the caregivers they coordinated. The samples were: 54 care centre staff and 67 caregivers. The study shows that caregivers more than care centres staff able to identify internalised and externalised problematic behaviour of children in care, and care centre staff find it more difficult to make decisions about helping children and caregivers with internalised than with externalised problematic behaviour. When analysing the ability of care centre staff and caregivers to recognise and correct children's problematic behaviour, it was found that care centre staff feel more able to help children than caregivers. The survey shows that caregivers both decide on and feel they can find the extra help they need for the children in their care when they show problematic behaviour. However, when it comes to self-help, it is found that they find it difficult to decide on additional help for themselves, even if they know they can find it. Based on the findings of the study, it could be recommended to strengthen the following capacities of care centre staff: to recognise children's internalised problematic behaviour; to help caregivers to deal with internalised and externalised behaviour of the children in their care; to decide on additional support for caregivers. Caregivers are most in need of help in deciding on additional support for themselves when children in their care show internalised and/or externalised problematic behaviour.

Key words: Internalised problematic behaviour of children in care, externalised problematic behaviour of children in care, the need for help in recognising and correcting problematic behaviour of children in care.

Abstract

Coping Strategies of Youth and Organizational Change in out-of-home Care During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Claudia Equit

Elisabeth Thomas

University of Münster Germany
Germany

The JuPa study analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social participation, development, and educational disadvantages of young people living in out-of-home care. JuPa (Enabling social participation of young people in out-of-home care during the pandemic), funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, is a joint project of the Universities TU Dortmund and Münster. The qualitative part (JuPa Quali) comprises interviews with youth in out-of-home care. Evidence-based criteria to compensate for the pandemic-related disadvantages for young people are developed in a participatory manner with care experienced persons and professionals and based on the survey results. The presented findings are based on the qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker 2022) of 40 semi-structured interviews with youth who had experienced the COVID-19 pandemic in out-of-home care. The interviews focus on four relevant fields: school, family, peers, and child welfare. The results highlight the strains, coping strategies, and long-term consequences of young people concerning pandemic-related restrictions. The efforts made by out-of-home care facilities and implications for organizational change will be discussed. Insights into crises and organizational change beyond the pandemic will be highlighted.

Key words: Coping strategies, organizational change, social participation, out-of-home care, COVID-19 pandemic

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

Challenges In The Implementation Of Schutzkonzepte (Protection Guidelines)- Spotlight On Youth Welfare Offices. Results From A Nationwide Survey In Germany

Sehresh Tariq

Institute for Social and Organizational Pedagogy, Germany

Child protection policies and procedures are essential but challenging to implement effectively in daily practice. Challenges arise from a lack of qualified staff and limited time, resulting in potential gaps in protection measures. In Germany, 17,000 children were victims of sexual violence in 2022, with the actual number likely to be higher (Statista 2023). For 15 years, Germany has been developing Schutzkonzepte (protection guidelines) in child and youth organizations, which play a crucial role in child protection. The purpose of the "Fokus Jugendamt" project was to assess the current state of child protection procedures in German youth welfare offices. The study aimed to evaluate existing procedures, identify gaps, and understand the challenges professionals face in implementing Schutzkonzepte. The study used a quantitative approach through an online survey of German Youth Welfare Office staff conducted in 2022. A total of 771 respondents participated. The survey identified implemented and missing protection procedures in youth welfare offices. It highlighted significant challenges faced by staff, including inadequate resources and insufficient time. The findings emphasize the need for improved resources and support for staff to enhance the implementation of child protection procedures.

Key words: child protection, schutzkonzepte, youth welfare offices, implementation challenges, quantitative survey

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

Let's get serious! Raising Standards of Training and Professionalising our Workforce, a Therapeutic Approach

Dave Roberts

The Mulberry Bush
United Kingdom

The Mulberry Bush, in the UK, has always placed high quality training at the heart of staff development but sixty years into our history we reached a point where high quality training did not meet the government requirement for residential child care staff. This presented the organization with a unique challenge; how to prove outstanding practice meant "Outstanding."

This presentation outlines the development of our award-winning Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People, exploring the complex relationship between a learning cohort and a working cohort and how the organization managed the tensions and benefits of both.

The presentation will highlight how practice developed, how students gained a deeper understanding of the needs of traumatised children and families and how students developed their sense of self-reflection through work-based learning. The presentation will discuss the need for greater professionalisation of care work with children in the UK and how this training programme goes some way towards this.

The presentation will concludes by considering the wider implications for therapeutic organizations in developing their own training programmes and how this can support professionalisation of such important work.

Key words: professionalizing workforce, staff training.

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

Relationship Between Structural And Process Quality With The Workload And Job Satisfaction Of Professionals In Home-Based Family Support

Wolfgang Hagleitner

Guido Thaler

Nadine Kritzingner

Tobias Finger

University of Innsbruck

Austria

Home-based family support is becoming increasingly important in the context of child and youth welfare. As a preventative support, their aim is to avert threats to children's welfare, strengthen the autonomy of families and avoid placement in out-of-home care. Although the quality of family support often has an impact on the success of subsequent, often out-of-home care, little is known about the framework conditions and the effectiveness. An ongoing study is investigating the correlation between characteristics of structural and process quality and the workload and job satisfaction of professionals. We assume that characteristics of structural and process quality are related to the satisfaction and workload of the professionals with effects on the performance of the professionals. N = 455 professionals from all federal states and over 50 providers in Austria completed an online questionnaire. Using multiple linear regression analyses, structural and procedural characteristics are examined with regard to their effects on the job satisfaction and workload of professionals. The results provide action and management knowledge for authorities, providers and specialists. They help to reduce staff turnover and have an indirect effect on the quality of professional work.

Key words: Child and Youth welfare, home-based family support, quality development, workload, job satisfaction

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

Abstract

Psychological Profile Of the Portuguese Caregivers Of Children And Youth In Residential Care

Laura Santos

Mónica Campos

Luiza Nobre Lima

University of Coimbra
Portugal

Among the several roles that caregivers play in the lives of Children and Youth placed in Residential Care (RC), they are also expected to develop and maintain a therapeutic relationship that enables these youngsters to repair the impact of their developmental traumas. The need to take on all these responsibilities poses the inevitable question of qualification and ability of these professionals, stressing the importance of their personality traits, skills and values. Nevertheless, research reveals that the profile of the professionals working on these settings is not specifically oriented to work with children and youth at risk, thus compromising the quality of care they provide. The aim of this study was to establish the sociodemographic and psychological profile of Portuguese professional caregivers of children and youth in RC. Participants were 121 professionals (58.7% technical professionals; 41.3% direct care workers) from 48 RC Homes, aged between 23 and 63 years old (84.3% female), who completed self-report instruments on personality, compassion, resilience and attachment. Technical professionals have significantly more education and training to work within these settings and are more extrovert, kind, connected and comfortable with closeness with others than care workers. Findings indicate the need to train care workers on interpersonal relationships.

Key words: child and youth residential care, caregivers, profile, sociodemographic, psychological

Oral Presentations: DAY 2

ORAL PRESENTATIONS IN PARALELL SESSIONS

23.10.2024.

14.00-15.30



Abstract

Online Safeguarding: Possible Courses Of Action For Residential Support Workers In Cases Of Cyber Violence In Residential Child And Youth Welfare Facilities

Natascha Einspieler

Dorothea Hartl

FH Campus Wien

Austria

This paper examines the prevention and intervention measures in relation to cyber violence in selected social media for ten- to seventeen-year-olds living in long-term residential child and youth welfare facilities. The focus is on the use of media by staff working in facilities in the northeast of Austria. The main research question aims to shed light on the current situation in residential child and youth welfare facilities and to extend existing knowledge. For the qualitative research, professionals from the social sector and social research were interviewed about their expertise and practical experience. Interviews were conducted with six residential care workers and six experts from the fields of media-related work with children, young people and families, victim protection and youth culture researchers. The qualitative content analysis according to Kuckarts and Rädiker (2024), was used for the evaluation. The research findings show that there are gaps in the knowledge of residential support workers. A negative attitude social media and a lack of interest in the lives of children and teenagers can increase the risk of minors becoming victims of cyber violence. To counteract cyber violence, the staff of residential institutions need to have an open attitude, individualized rules and empathetic communication.

Key words: Residential support workers, cyber violence, media competence, residential care facilities

Oral Presentations:
DAY 3

Abstract

Safer Internet Center Croatia Youth Panel – Practical Insights And Experiences

Martina Nikolić Đurin

Melani Đurković

Tea Čičić

Center for Missing and Exploited Children Croatia – Safer Internet Center Croatia
Croatia

Participation of children and young people in Croatia is acknowledged, but often remains superficial and formal. Frequently, decisions affecting children are made without their input, and information is withheld from them for the convenience of adults. With youth panels, we shape activities targeted at young people, evaluate developed materials and create content on topics they deem important. Through these Youth panels, we also promote active participation from vulnerable populations, including children with behavioral problems, those from rural areas, families with low socio-economic status, minorities, and others engaged in Center's for Missing and Exploited Children half day treatment. Present the youth panels consisting of young volunteers from the Croatian Safer Internet Center (SIC Cro), which represent a valuable resource at the Center for Missing and Exploited Children Croatia. In this oral presentation, we will showcase some of the achievements of our SIC Cro Youth Panel, explore the opportunities provided by their involvement, and discuss the challenges we have encountered along with the strategies we employed to overcome them. This session will be an insightful contribution for experts interested in youth engagement, participatory approaches, and the practical aspects of fostering children's involvement in safety initiatives.

Key words: Youth panels, volunteers, participation

Oral Presentations: DAY 3

Abstract

Empowering Youth For Adulthood: An Online Escape Room Approach

Bas Rodijk

Stichting Kinderperspectief
Germany

This presentation explores the innovative development of an online escape room designed to empower youth with crucial skills and confidence as they transition into adulthood.

The objective of this presentation is to showcase how an online escape room, developed through a collaborative effort, aims to build essential skills and confidence in youth to better prepare them for adulthood. The methodology involves collaboratively designing and implementing an online escape room with interactive challenges, incorporating feedback from youth, educators, and caregivers to ensure it effectively builds skills and confidence for transitioning into adulthood. The main finding (so far, as the game is still in the development phase) is that the approach of working together with young people, social workers, and government employees, each with their own background, provides valuable new guidance for the escape room.

The implications of this presentation highlight that the online escape room can significantly enhance youth readiness for adulthood by providing engaging, skill-building experiences and fostering self-reflection, ultimately supporting their transition into independent and confident adults.

Key words: online Escape Room, Youth Empowerment, Skill Building, Adulthood Preparation

Abstract

Self-Harming Behaviour In Children And Adolescents

Hanna Heidenreich

Dorothea Hartl

FH Campus Wien

Austria

This project is dedicated to children and adolescents with self-harming behaviour in residential care facilities. It focuses the manifestations and functions of self-harming behaviour, the extent to which it can be dealt with appropriately in residential care facilities, the psychosocial interventions required for this and why individual treatment and support in a one-on-one setting can be an essential tool of meeting the needs of adolescents who are particularly vulnerable in everyday care. Ten expert interviews were carried out and evaluated using the content-structuring qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz and Rädiker (2022), and as a result the main research question was answered: What options are available to social work and social education professionals working in residential care facilities to ensure a secure care for the children and adolescents exhibiting self-harming behaviour? The findings indicate that specific procedures, basic attitudes, competences and processes are necessary for professionals to be able to guarantee a safe guidance of self-harming children/young people. The evaluation also confirms that jointly developed crisis plans, which are evaluated regularly, are supportive and that needs-oriented and individualized work in a one-on-one setting has a stabilizing and development-promoting effect, which is why more intensive implementation of these services is required

Key words: self harming, children, adolescents

Oral Presentations:
DAY 3

Abstract

Remembering And Being Remembered In Residential Child And Youth Care

Tanja Abou

University of Hildesheim Foundation
Germany

Anyone who has spent part of their childhood or youth in residential child and youth care services faces a unique challenge in creating a cohesive image of themselves as a young person in adulthood. Care leavers are usually disconnected from familial, generational memories and the narrative memory aids provided by consistently present adult caregivers (Guerrini, Leitner, Ralser: 2020). With the end of residential care, the shared daily life in the residential group, the cohabitation, and the shared memories also come to an end. While youth welfare records can be used in later life for "Supported Memory" (ibid.), they are only kept for a limited period and are static, externally defined documents. The voices of the young people are missing, and usually, only pragmatic or negative aspects are recorded (Hoyle et al, 2020). Based on this deficit, "Supported Memory" through records and reports is supplemented by "Supported Memory" through direct conversations. In the course of the autoethnographic survey, interviews were conducted with the contributors' former caregivers. It becomes evident that undocumented everyday stories constitute a "Narrative Inheritance" (Goodall 2005) for which there is no systematic transmission within the care system. It becomes clear that forgetting and being forgotten is a structural challenge in residential child and youth care and that there is a need for a conceptual framework to preserve and transmit "Narrative Inheritance" in this context.

Key words: Biographical Work, Doing Family, Narrative Inheritance

Abstract

Employment Status And Best Support Practices For Care Leavers In South Asia

Surja

Nimali Kumari

Udayan Care

Their Future Today, New Horizon and Global Care leaver
Community
India

This presentation focuses on the employment challenges faced by care leavers in South Asia, specifically in Cambodia, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka. Due to a lack of job readiness, employability skills, and employment opportunities, many care leavers find themselves trapped in cycles of poverty and vulnerability. Even after securing jobs, retention and career growth remain significant hurdles. This presentation aims to identify gaps in existing support systems and provide recommendations to enhance employment outcomes for care leavers through proper skill development, access to resources, and reduction of stigma. The purpose of this presentation presentation is to assess the challenges care leavers face in accessing employment and career growth, and to highlight effective interventions that can bridge these gaps by providing the right skills, access, and support at crucial stages of their development. The research draws from a primary survey of of care leavers aged 18 to 34 across Cambodia, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka. The survey examines job-readiness challenges, access to skill development, technology, and necessary legal documents. It also addresses discrimination and stigma in the workplace, providing a comprehensive view of the hurdles faced by care leavers. The survey revealed critical gaps in support systems, such as inadequate vocational training and job- readiness programs. The presentation will explore best practices that have successfully provided care leavers with employability skills and opportunities, offering concrete solutions for future interventions. The presentation emphasizes the need for targeted, holistic support systems and policy reforms to enable care leavers to thrive professionally. It will propose recommendations to improve employment status, combat stigma, and foster an inclusive job market for care leavers in South Asia.

Key words: Care leavers, employment challenges, skill development, support systems

Oral Presentations: DAY 3

Abstract

Transforming Lives: The Journey Of Supporting Youth Leaving The Care System In Brazil

Patricia Rodrigues

Movimento Pró Convivência Familiar e Comunitária
Brazil

Brazil has a long history of defending human rights, particularly regarding the protection of children and adolescents. Brazilian legislation, anchored in the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA), guarantees the right to family and community life, recognizing it as essential for the full development of children and adolescents. However, significant challenges remain in its implementation, particularly concerning children living in institutional care. The Movement for Family and Community Living, with which I am affiliated, seeks to promote public policies and initiatives that strengthen family and community ties, either by preventing institutionalization or by promoting family reintegration and adoption. The purpose of this presentation is to share Brazilian experiences in the field of family and community living, focusing on the advocacy actions and practices developed by the "Além do Acolhimento" Movement and the "Fazendo História" Institute. We aim to highlight the challenges faced, strategies adopted, and results achieved, exploring how collaboration between different sectors (government, NGOs, academia, and civil society) can contribute to transforming the reality of vulnerable children and adolescents. Although this is not a formal academic research paper, the presentation is based on a qualitative analysis of data and reports collected through our practical work in the field of human rights, advocacy, and family living. We use case studies from our fieldwork, as well as policy studies and relevant legislation, to support our recommendations. The presentation discusses how initiatives aimed at strengthening family and community bonds, combined with a more robust social protection system, have been crucial in ensuring better outcomes for children and adolescents in institutional care in Brazil. Our advocacy efforts have focused on implementing programs that prevent family separation and creating more effective policies to support families in vulnerable situations. The Brazilian experience demonstrates that, while the journey is challenging, progress can be made in promoting family and community living through collaborative efforts between different actors. However, much remains to be done in terms of public policies that ensure safe deinstitutionalization and provide adequate support to families. We believe that international exchange of experiences, such as in this FICE event, can enrich and strengthen local initiatives.

Key words: Family Living, Human Rights, Advocacy, Institutional Care, Family Reintegration

Oral Presentations: DAY 3

Abstract

Intercultural Relations Among Theoretical Perspectives And Professional Practices In Child And Family Social Work

Chiara Cocchi

Nadia Rania

Francesca Lagomarsino

University of Genova

Italy

In Italy and other European countries with a well-established history of immigration, social services for children and families are both quantitatively and qualitatively the most involved in dealing with individuals of foreign origin. This contribution presents the findings of a systematic review of the Italian social service literature, focusing on the integration of the intercultural paradigm, beginning with the field of child and family care. The method employed is PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) on three databases (Social Services Abstracts, Scopus, and Google Scholar) characterized by a different degree of specialization. The results show that reasoning about intercultural competency in the social work setting lags behind that in the school setting. In other words, teachers continue to receive more attention. However, the available studies offer some new insights into the shaping of the three components - attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral (Deardorff 2009) - of this competency attended by practitioners. The findings could serve as a basis for conducting an empirical study aimed at understanding overlaps and gaps between the perspectives in the literature and the actual content provided in social work degree programs and refresher courses.

Key words: Systematic review, intercultural competency, social work, child care

Oral Presentations:
DAY 3

Abstract

Putting Children First: Changing the Narrative of looked-after Children in India

Kiran Modi

Gurneet Kalra

Leena Prasad

Jamia Millia Islamia

Udayan Care

India

Udayan Care, an NGO, headquartered in New Delhi, has an innovative group home model for 'children without parental care' (CWPC), implementing the indigenously developed LIFE (Living in Family Environment) strategy in its 17 'Udayan Ghars' (Sunshine care homes). The purpose of these Ghars is to nurture these children, who have been orphaned, abandoned or abused and in need of care and protection. With child participation as a core pillar, Udayan Care developed a Questionnaire to Assess the Needs of Children in Care (QANCC) in 2011, as a longitudinal study. Developed by a cadre of professionals, the tool was conceived to ascertain whether children in the 'Ghars' felt that their rights were being fulfilled and their needs were being addressed. Longitudinal results until 2017 showed that, on an average, 76.8% of children felt their needs were being met. Upon identifying areas of unmet needs, interim measures were taken to improve the quality of care, such as enhanced psychosocial support, workshops and life skills trainings, establishing specialized committees to address children's education, health and aftercare needs, and revision of care plans for children, the results of which demonstrated a rise in the mean scores. Workshops involving child participation were initiated and continue to be conducted regularly. This paper has two objectives, one to perform deductions of the previous years' data (2011-12 to 2016-17) and demarcating the differences with year 2018-19 data and second, there is an update on efforts made to establish reliability and validity and create a standardized tool that can be implemented by other child care institutions in India. The study illustrates how effective listening to the direct voices of children and incorporating their inputs into actual care practice go a long way in improving holistic wellness of children living in alternative care-settings.

Key words: children, child protection, support

Oral Presentations:
DAY 3

Abstract

The Verbatim Formula: Curating an Alternative Form of Care Through Arts-based Practice-based Research

Maggie Inchley

Queen Mary University of London
United Kingdom

The Verbatim Formula (TVF) is a UK-based creative practice-based research collective based at Queen Mary University of London that works with care-experienced people (12–30 years) as experts in their own experience, and with professional artists. Since 2015, TVF has created verbatim performance and digital art that centres young people’s voices to challenge structural issues within the British care system. TVF has developed a range of methodological tools that combine artistic practice with research. TVF’s most recent work at the Foundling Museum in London produced a site-specific gallery performance that responded to the exhibition, ‘Tiny Traces: African and Asian Children at London’s Foundling Hospital’. This presentation will explore how care leavers become creative curators with TVF, practising care for the project, and for each other in the research ensemble. The presenter will demonstrate verbatim performance techniques and discuss the project’s co-designing and creative work. The presenter will argue that by sharing ownership and decision-making, and through innovative co-designing approaches, TVF elevates well-being, agency and empowerment. Verbatim performance techniques acknowledge powerfully the expertise of care-experienced people, while providing anonymity and solidarity to those sharing their lived experiences.

Key words: creative arts, verbatim performance, co-design

Abstract

New Legislation in Hungary - Does the Law Really Combat Child Abuse in the Child Protection System?

Judit Zeller

University of Pécs, Faculty of Law
Hungary

In 2024, child protection in Hungary reached a critical juncture. For decades, professionals have been combating the physical, verbal, and sexual abuse occurring in children's homes. Numerous ombudsman and NGO reports on children's rights have highlighted these issues.

However, it was the actions of former foster care residents and the downfall of a president that finally brought child protection to the forefront of the government agenda. Following these events, new child protection legislation was introduced in the spring. This bill includes criminal law provisions, eliminating the statute of limitations, denying offenders mitigating measures, and ensuring that sex offenders are never exempt from adverse legal consequences. Failing to report abuse would be classified as a new criminal offense. The bill also addresses guardians, permitting children over 14 to contest the appointment of their guardians. For child protection workers, the legislation mandates an annual good conduct checks for all individuals working with children. The bill has faced several criticisms. The central concern is whether tightening criminal law and increasing regulation of child protection workers can genuinely improve the quality of the child protection system. My presentation invites the audience to explore and discuss this question in detail.

Key words: law, children, child protection

Oral Presentations:
DAY 3

Abstract

Dilemma of HIV Status Disclosure and its Effects on Viral Load Suppression (VL) Among Sexually Active 14 – 19-Year-Old Adolescent Boys in Siaya County, Kenya

Simon Otieno

Charles Olang'o

Erick Nyambedha

Maseno University
Kenya

Stigma related to HIV status disclosure is associated with ART non-adherence and mortality particularly in the developing world. Worldwide, adolescents aged 14-19 constituted 69% of HIV-related deaths, with boys on ART making up 68% of such deaths in areas such as Siaya County of Kenya in 2020. Influence of stigma-related to HIV status disclosure on viral load suppression among Sexually Active 14 – 19-Year-Old Adolescent Boys in Siaya County, Kenya

Cross-sectional survey design on a target population of 263 adolescent boys on ART . The correlation between disclosure to partners and VL suppression ($r=.072$; $p=.122$) and multiple sexual partners and VL suppression ($r=.023$; $p=.353$) were found not to be significant, while that of disclosure to partners and multiple sexual partners ($r=.391$; $p=.000$) was significant.

HIV status disclosure to partners has a direct effect on multiple sexual behaviour.

Key words: adolescent boys; ART Adherence; HIV Status Disclosure; sexually active partners; VL Suppressio

WORKSHOPS

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WORKSHOPS

Creating Futures: An Innovative Approach to Empowerment and Quality Development in Residential care, Co-created by Young Experts in Switzerland and Hungary

Anna Schmid

FICE Switzerland
Switzerland

The ability to take charge of their own lives and realize their own ideas of the future sustainably is crucial for young people in residential care. Our workshop showcases the Creating Futures approach which improves youth homes' ability to promote this self-empowerment. Together, Young Experts, leaders and staff develop concrete innovations in their youth homes. This not only strengthens their empowerment but also improves overall organizational quality. The approach was developed with leaders, staff and over 200 Young Experts from youth homes in Switzerland and Hungary, under the auspices of FICE Switzerland in collaboration with its Hungarian counterpart NENESZ. Currently, it is being shared with additional youth homes and further developed regarding its sustainable implementation.

Presentation incl. video; expert conversations for exchange of experiences and ideas with the

participants. The unique Creating Futures blend of participation and empowerment with organizational and quality development opens new and promising perspectives for residential care.

Key words: Organization, quality, participation, empowerment

Workshops : DAY 1

WORKSHOPS

Developing a Culture of Looking After Our Staff - It's Everyone's Responsibility“

Dave Roberts

University College London/The Mulberry Bush
United Kingdom

We all work in stressful and demanding situations, and too often the emotional toll falls on us as professionals. This leads to stress, sickness and too often an inability to make sense of the complex situations, children and families we are working with. This workshop will look at how the development of a culture based on reflective supervision can not only promote improved mental health and resilience but lead to the improved outcomes we strive for in our work. The workshop will use examples of where developing a culture of reflective practice has helped staff to not only 'survive' the intense emotional projections of working with children's trauma but to develop as professionals and as carers. Reflective practice can help professionalize our workforce and maintain emotional well-being of staff.

Key words: Staff wellbeing, supervision, reflective practice

Workshops : DAY 1

WORKSHOPS

Working Differently with Families and Communities – Leave Them the Driver Seat

Robert van Pagée

Founder Eigen Kracht Centrale
The Netherlands

When problems occur in Families, and Communities alike, and before help is given, they are first offered to widen their circle of Family, friends and neighbors, discuss their needs and issues and create within their group their own plan for a solution. Independent community coordinators – fellow citizens facilitate this process. This activating, democratic citizens decision making approach can be used in almost all situations where people are in need of a plan or a strategy. Especially when the government is about to intervene in family life as in Child Protection, Mental Health and Evictions. Cultural background does not matter when it is about making a plan in one's own circle. Citizens appreciate this process and their plans are resilient and with less costs since Families also bring in their own resources. Moreover, they take responsibility for matters that otherwise would have been disregarded by professional strangers. However, the professional and family system do not easily mesh, they each have different structures, ambitions and cultural procedures. Therefore an employment driven system–world will not easily mainstream family group conference practice. Where there is no legislative prescription for this, the methodology vacuum will be filled by bureaucratic designed procedures.

Conferencing is a strong bridge between the life- and the system world to create a plan of all together by cooperation and dialogue. Each family should have a right to this family approach instead of interventions in their life.

Key words: family, group, process

Workshops : DAY 1

WORKSHOPS

Put Children First: End Orphanage Volunteering and the Institutionalisation of Children

Valerie Philpott

IFSW

Ireland

Orphanage volunteering is a key driver for the institutionalization of children. Orphanages in some countries are being created to meet the demand from well-meaning tourists, volunteers, and donors, fuelling the trafficking of children and perpetuating what is now termed an 'orphanage industry.' Yet, there is an abundance of research that clearly highlights the harmful impact of institutional care to children. Furthermore, institutions separate children from their families, communities, and cultures. Despite well-intentioned motives, individuals continue to seek out volunteer opportunities in orphanages believing they are making a positive contribution. This campaign by Comhlámh, an Irish based NGO centers around developing public awareness, and targeting specific groups (including university students, teaching and nursing unions, volunteer sending agencies) on the negative impact of orphanage volunteering as well as advocating for change with government and policy makers to encourage a state response. Drawing attention to the link between orphanage volunteering and institutionalization, and to highlight orphanage volunteering, as a particular driver of institutional care. Connections can also be made between institutionalization and social exclusion.

Highlighting our obligations as global citizens and signatories of the UNCRC and other international instruments (e.g. UNGA Resolution on Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and the 2019 UNGA Resolution on the Rights of the Child with a Focus on Children without Parental Care, UNCRPD), as well as EU obligations for EU members. Emphasizing the role of education and awareness in reducing orphanage volunteering and institutionalization of children. Emphasizing the role of advocacy at government level (policy and decision makers) to ensure implementation of UN instruments, EU Law where relevant, and policy. Spur enthusiasm and inspire a call to action for similar campaigns in other states. Participant activities (using Word cloud; a quiz) to introduce the topic Presentation on the Put Children First: End Orphanage Care Campaign. States as well as other actors and individuals must take greater responsibility for the proliferation of orphanage volunteering and take active steps to reduce its prevalence.

Key words: Institutional Care, Orphanage Tourism, Orphanage Volunteering.

Workshops : DAY 1

WORKSHOPS

Ethical Challenges and Considerations for Child and Youth Care Practice in Out of Home Care

Heather Modlin

Kelly Shaw

Amal Youth and Family Centre
Nova Scotia Community College
Canada

Child and youth care in Canada, and internationally, has embraced the importance of ethical standards for decades. We have Codes of Ethics and access to training and (in some jurisdictions) post-secondary courses to guide us. What we often neglect are opportunities to talk frankly about the challenges we face each day as we endeavor to engage ethically and relationally with children, youth, families, our colleagues and the agencies in which we work. Join us for an interactive session exploring the ethical challenges and considerations inherent in out of home care. Discussion points will include education, training and supervision of direct care staff, along with experiences and strategies for maintaining an ethical stance. Participants will explore ethical considerations in out of home care.

Key words: Child and youth care, ethics

WORKSHOPS

Strengthening Quality Care in Alternative Child and Youth Care Through a Dual Practice-oriented Training for Professional Caregivers

Monika Lengauer

Christian Posch

FICE Austria
Austria

The workshop focuses on the question of productive forms of initial and further training for staff in the alternative care of children and youth. 20-minute presentation & discussion. In the presentation milestones and didactic approaches of an Austrian Curriculum development project are presented. The subsequent discussion focussed on best practice examples of productive training formats for professional care persons. Important conclusions relate to productive didactic elements for experience-based and theory-led learning, theory-practice transfer and promoting methods of (self-)reflection.

Key words: Practice orientation in training, theory- practice-transfer

WORKSHOPS

Empowering Care Leavers: Navigation with the Care Leaver Portfolio

Elke Maurer

Anton Magometschnigg

Jugend am Werk

Austria

At Jugend am Werk in Graz, in collaboration with social work students, we have developed a Care Leaver Portfolio. This portfolio offers succinct answers, engaging links, and pertinent information for individuals transitioning from care and embarking on independent pathways. Our aim is to provide a user-friendly reference tool that builds upon the support and skill-building received during care and education, offering a concise and unobtrusive guide for young individuals navigating the complexities of independence. 15 minutes
Presentation of the developed tools to start a discussion about what are the specific needs of young adults after leaving care and how they should be supported effectively? Cross-organisational tools to support care leavers; development of different perspectives of young people and educators what is useful and necessary to support after care. Supporting a way to independence, self responsibility, free decision-taking and concrete regional knowledge.

Key words: Care leaver support

Workshops : DAY 1

WORKSHOPS

Intergenerational Programs as an Intervention with High-Risk Youth

Merle Griff

Beverly DiSabato

Sarah Adult Day Services, Inc.

USA

These intergenerational programs, developed through a series of multi-year research projects, were designed to meet the therapeutic needs of seniors, children, and youth. To identify best practices for influencing behavior and fostering change in children and youth by incorporating seniors into the therapeutic process. The presentation of data results will offer guidelines for developing and adapting similar programs in various settings, with a focus on discussing two therapeutic approaches: art therapy and play therapy. Participants will receive guidelines for pairing seniors of varying functional abilities with children of different ages and needs. Additionally, they will be provided with the criteria for participation in each type of program, along with standard operating procedures for developing and maintaining these programs. Seniors are often overlooked as valuable contributors to influencing youth behavior, yet they can be instrumental in motivating young people to change non-productive behaviors.

Key words: Intergenerational, adolescents, seniors, grandparents

WORKSHOPS

Resilience and Adaptation: Navigating Emergencies in Youth Villages and Boarding Schools in Israel

Yossi Zagoury

Ministry of Education
Israel

This unique workshop will delve into the resilience and adaptive strategies specifically tailored for the unique challenges faced by youth villages and boarding schools during emergencies. It will concentrate on ensuring the stability and continuity of education for at-risk youth, particularly those separated from their families. This workshop is urgently needed to deepen the understanding of the operational challenges and psychological impacts on at-risk youth during emergencies. It aims to develop strategic approaches for empowering these institutions and their students to face future crises with resilience and preparedness. In Israel, 221 boarding schools and youth villages serve as a sanctuary for approximately 23,000 students. Governed by the Ministry of Education, these institutions support students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, many of whom are considered at-risk due to their family and community circumstances. These students often come to the villages and schools after experiencing expulsion, emotional trauma, and educational challenges. These institutions are pivotal in supporting vulnerable youth, offering a consistent and secure environment, especially during crises.

Workshop Discussion Topics:

- Analysing student responses to stress and developing crisis management strategies
- Comparing youth crisis management across different countries
- Building a network for collaboration between therapeutic and educational youth villages
- Creating a forum for developing contingency plans for diverse student populations, their families, and the professionals who support them during emergencies

The workshop will conclude with discussions on:

- The necessity of dedicated educational and therapeutic staff for non-evacuee students during emergencies
- The dual responsibilities of staff in guiding students and managing their family challenges during conflicts
- The need for evacuation protocols due to the vulnerability of boarding institutions in times of war
- Innovative solutions to staffing crises, such as integrating volunteers, service year participants, and military personnel

Workshops : DAY 1

WORKSHOPS

Insights And Support Strategies For Caregivers Who Worked For Displaced Ukrainian Youth During The Last Two Years

Alexander Schneider

Marianna Bilyk

Sviatoslav Onufryk

Fice Germany

Ukraine

Israel

This workshop aims to provide valuable insights and a better understanding of working with Ukrainian children and teenagers who have been compelled to leave their home country. It offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and supporting displaced Ukrainian children and teens' unique needs. It highlights the significance of cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and the well-being of both the children and their caregivers. This workshop is designed to be highly interactive, focusing on the challenges and opportunities Ukrainian youth uprooted from their homes face. Through engaging activities, dynamic group discussions, and informative presentations, participants can share their knowledge and experience about the unique needs, perspectives, and strengths of Ukrainian children and teens who have experienced displacement. The workshop will be collaborative, aiming to formulate practical strategies and define the required resources with your valuable input. Your knowledge and experience are crucial in helping caregivers support the well-being and development of these young people and navigate the complex and challenging process of adjusting to a new culture and environment. The workshop will incorporate interactive activities such as role-playing exercises to practice learned strategies and group discussions for sharing experiences related to each topic.

WORKSHOPS

Empowering Communities: A Holistic Approach To Tackling Generational Child Poverty

Elena Matachova

Martina Raytchinova

Eva Okonofua

Romania

CONCORDIAI has designed to address child poverty and social exclusion across Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Kosovo and Moldova, especially among children and youth from alternative care services or care leavers and the support services they offer for caretakers. Through interactive discussions and practical exercises, participants will explore innovative strategies to foster rights-based solutions within their communities. Objective is introduce participants to the holistic CONCORDIA Day Centre Model addressing generational child poverty and social exclusion, especially among children and youth from alternative care services or care leavers, facilitate discussions on integrating various services to meet the diverse needs of children, youth and families or other caretakers and provide practical tools and insights to empower practitioners in implementing similar initiatives in their regions. Focus on the prevention of family separation and how to empower parents with disadvantaged backgrounds to look after their children. Proposed Activities are interactive case studies exploring real-life scenarios/challenges faced by children and youth in alternative care and their caretakers: "On the way to self[1]determined life", group brainstorming sessions to identify collaborative approaches for addressing root causes and challenges within communities. The workshop is tailored for 20–25 practitioners actively engaged in children's welfare, including social workers, educators, community organizers, and policymakers. Expected outcomes are increased understanding of the interconnectedness of services in tackling child poverty and providing family strengthening, enhanced capacity to implement integrated approaches within participants' respective organizations and networking opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among professionals.

Key words: poverty, opportunities, children

WORKSHOPS

Work Discussion as a Means of Developing Case Understanding Competencies

Robert Kampe

University of Applied Sciences
Austria

Work Discussion is a specific form of reflecting in work processes within a seminar-style small group setting. This workshop will provide participants with insights into the Work Discussion method and its use as a research method, as well as for developing specific competencies in case understanding within the psychosocial field. The workshop will have two parts. First, participants will receive a brief introduction to the method. Second, they will discuss a prepared observation protocol in specific setting. The discussion of the protocol will be guided by the workshop leader. Participants need to reflect on the situation described in the protocol, considering both their thoughts and feelings, and then express these verbally. Afterward, the group will collectively reflect on the situation and latent meaning of the manifest behavior

the collective reflection on work-related situations provides deep insights into the possibilities of latent meaning. This allows for a differentiation of behavior and offers a deeper understanding of its background and goal.

Key words: Psychoanalysis, Work Discussion, Case understanding, research tool

WORKSHOPS

Dare To Care - Training Therapists, Counselors, And Psychologists To Support Adolescents In Managing Anxiety And Improving Mental Well-Being

Janina Pavić Jadrić

Amalija Hrepić Gruić

Psychological center Antičević

MoST

Croatia

This workshop series is designed to train therapists, counselors, and psychologists working with adolescents aged 13 to 18 who experience anxiety. The "Dare to Care" workshop aims to provide care workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to support adolescents in managing anxiety effectively. The goal is to equip care professionals with practical tools and techniques to support adolescents in managing anxiety, enhancing their social skills, academic performance, and mental health. Presentation: Understanding anxiety and its effects.

Practical Work: Techniques for managing anxiety, including deep breathing and meditation.

Role-Playing: Scenarios to practice new strategies. Skills Training: Developing problem-solving techniques to help adolescents overcome negative thoughts. By the end of the workshop, participants will understand anxiety's impact on adolescents and learn to implement coping strategies. The staff will be equipped with skills to help adolescents with mental health problems.

Key words: youth, mental health, staff training

WORKSHOPS

Higher Education Child Protection Volunteering for the Empathetic Professionals and Independent, Successful Adults of the Future

Beáta Dudás Korinek

Judit Zeller

University of Pécs, Faculty of Law
Hungary

Students for Children, Hungary's first university-based child protection volunteer program, turns 15 this autumn. During these years, 400 student volunteers were trained and supervised by two lawyer-psychologists and a lawyer-coordinator. The volunteer program helped them get acquainted with the Hungarian child protection system and meet and mentor children in foster care. In 2019, we presented the program at the FICE 2019 conference in Tel Aviv, promising to evolve our method and tailor it even more to the needs of children. In 2024, we would like to present our developments and introduce a new partner, the There Is Life After Foster Home Foundation. The chair of the Foundation, and our new team member, Iván Wiesner is a former foster home resident himself. In Hungary today, nearly 25,000 children live outside the family in state care. Institutions are overcrowded; the system is lacking 2000 foster parents, and the number of early school leavers is constantly increasing, especially among children in need of specialised care, for whom learning may be their only chance to become independent and successful adults. The situation outlines a considerable need for all initiatives to support a successful future for the children. Iván works with our students to mentor young people in children's homes in different ways, and we would like to showcase this innovation in our interactive presentation. We believe that the results of a research project could be used to adapt our method to other universities.

Key words: child, child protection, university student, volunteering, mentoring, empowerment, young professional

WORKSHOPS

Participation of Families in Residential Youth Care - A Solution-focussed View for Working in Child Protection

Andrea Jedinger

University of applied sciences Vienna
Austria

Workshop to work on the own attitude towards the involvement of the family network from a solution-focussed perspective.

Solution-focussed work in social work concentrates on identifying and developing strengths, opportunities and resources within the family system and the family's social network that can be used to ensure the safety, belonging and well-being of the child. Strengths include past and current efforts to protect protection of children from harm, maintaining loving parent-child relationships, access to extended family and other support systems.

When a child or adolescent is placed in an inpatient facility in the course of external care, contact with the system of origin sometimes falls out of focus. A basic attitude of the solution-focussed approach is the involvement of the family and the inclusion of resources.

The aim of the workshop is to encourage practitioners to reflect on the extent to which family resources are utilised from the start of external care and the reasons for the current lack of contact, in line with the FICE quality criteria. Theoretical input will be used to develop options from solution-focussed work with families in child protection that ensure the child's well-being and enable the involvement of the family network. Contribution of practical experience, reflection on previous procedures and attitudes, ideas for future steps to involve the family. The family system and its environment are an important resource for the child, even in residential care - it's our duty to activate and involve them.

Key words: Solution-focus, child protection, participation, parental work

WORKSHOPS

Building Child and Youth Care Practitioner Capacity: Accessible and Affordable Competency Development for Care Providers

Michelle Briegel

Pennie Sibbald

Mount Royal University
FICE Canada
Canada

The Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta, Canada (CYCAA) works to improve professional standards for Child and Youth Care Counsellors (practitioners or workers) by providing support, education and opportunities to enhance skills and abilities. In many areas, there is limited access to child and youth care-educated individuals and education programs to provide the knowledge and skills needed for this important work. Care positions are often filled with individuals that are well-meaning but unprepared. As a response to this need, CYCAA has created an affordable and comprehensive online learning program available to anyone with internet access. This program is based upon the Child and Youth Care Competencies recognized by the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board in Canada. Three levels of learning; Foundations of Child and Youth Care, Core Competencies in Child and Youth Care, and Advanced Practice in Child and Youth Care, empower participants to expand upon their existing knowledge and continue their development while positively impacting practice through reflective activities. CYCAA has created an affordable and comprehensive online learning program for youth workers, available to anyone with internet access. To familiarize participants with the online learning platform.

Key words: online learning, CYC competencies

WORKSHOPS

Together: Strengthening the participation of children and young people without or at risk of losing parental care

Florence Treyvaud Nemptzov

Margherita Brasca

Almas Khan

Coenraad de Beer

Mount Royal University

SOS Children's Villages

"Together" is a trans-national EU co-funded project (2022-2024) which focuses on working in partnership with children and youth from vulnerable backgrounds, to enhance their rights in responses to crisis situations such as Covid-19 and other emergencies (e.g. conflicts, cost of living).

Within the project, a peer-to-peer training for children aged 11-17 has been developed which aims at empowering children and youth by increasing their knowledge and understanding of children's rights and participation processes. It also aims at building their capacity to participate in public decision-making processes and creates the opportunity for children and young people to meet with local authorities and professionals to discuss key topics linked to their participation.

A key strength of the project is the participation of children and youth from vulnerable backgrounds throughout all activities, including in co-developing and delivering the peer-to-peer training.

Within the workshop, participants will be invited to experience one of the interactive peer-to-peer training sessions that will be delivered by one of the young people who was a trainer within the project.

Participants will have space to reflect on their experience and ask questions. Participants will take away a good example of safe and meaningful child and youth participation.

Key words: Child/youth participation; empowerment

ROUND TABLES AND THEMATIC SESSIONS

IFCE35 World
congress



ROUND TABLE 1

Children as "system disrupters" and what could the organization do?

Christian Posch

Anton Magometschnigg

It seems that more and more children can no longer live in typical organizational forms, such as small group homes, and as a result, they often drop out of child and youth welfare services altogether (Menno Baumann, 2012: "Kinder die Systeme sprengen"). We want to explore how organizations need to structure themselves to effectively support children who have difficulty living in institutional settings, ensuring high-quality care for all involved. Our approach involves deeply understanding each specific case and the situation of the child and family through hypothesis-based methods, with the goal of finding and creating suitable forms of support and settings. We build on Schwabe's hypothesis-driven social diagnostics (Mathias Schwabe, 2021) to seek specific solutions.

After a brief presentation with a practical example and the basic ideas of understanding and setting construction in specific cases, we aim to enter into a discussion to develop potential solutions for children and organizations facing challenging situations.



23.10.2024.

14.00-15.00

ROUND TABLE
in parallel sessions

ROUND TABLE 2

What children in alternative care need today and what modern training for care givers / social pedagogues should look like – an international exchange!

Christian Posch

Monika Lengauer

At the round table, after a short technical input, we want to discuss the following topics together: Generation Alpha? What do children/young people need in alternative care today? What kind of personalities should the "good enough" carers be today and how should they be able to act appropriately to the situation? What do they absolutely need to know and above all be able to do today? How should an adequate training program for alternative care look like, what should it achieve and what should it focus on?

Based on the individual national experiences, strengths and future perspectives, we want to learn from each other and together try to filter out some important (international) lines and principles for future professional work and training in alternative care.



23.10.2024.

17.30-18.30

ROUND TABLE
in parallel sessions



White Papers on the Role of Small-scale Residential Care for Children, Foster Care and Institutions Providing Education and Accommodation to Children in Europe

Ivana Zadro

Martina Tomić Latinac

UNICEF Office for Croatia

23.10.2024.

17.30-18.30

After decades of evidence-based advocacy and policy dialogue, many governments in the region have achieved significant progress on the reform and deinstitutionalization of their national childcare systems. They have reduced reliance on harmful institutional care by introducing new community-based services to support families, and new family-based services for children who need alternative care. However, many children still grow up in institutional environment, there is a trend of establishment of small-scale residential care facilities and foster care remains unavailable for those children in need for out-of-home placement.

Therefore, UNICEF prepared and published 3 White Papers that have been developed within an iterative process to stimulate discussion and reach a common professional position on issues related to:

- the use of small-scale residential care as part of transition e as part of transition to a family and community-based care and as part of a well-established childcare system
- the development of foster care, and
- the role of boarding schools for vulnerable children in Europe (and in Croatian context this is particularly relevant to institutions providing education and accommodation for children with disabilities).

A white paper is a guiding document that informs readers concisely about the complex issue and is used to promote certain viewpoints, raise awareness on the critical issues and promote certain policy commitments.

White Papers on the role of small-scale residential care for children, foster care and institutions providing education and accommodation to children in Europe aim to promote better decision-making among policymakers, local governments and service providers, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as child welfare and other allied practitioners.

Key words: White paper, alternative care, foster care, vulnerable children

THEMATIC PANEL DISCUSSION in parallel session *with*

UNICEF office for Croatia



What is it like, being a foster parent? - Presentation of a Foster Parent Story of Foster Care Team of Split-Dalmatia County“

Vedrana Radić Brajnov

Institute for social work
Croatia

The path from the desire to become a foster parent to the everyday life of foster parenting is very challenging and variable. It demands continuous adaptations to fostered children, family dynamics to the social-welfare system. Presentation of life of foster-care parents with all challenges, difficulties, resources of satisfaction. Learning from experience of foster-care practice.

Key words: Challenges, resources of satisfaction, handling difficulties (advantages and disadvantages of social welfare system).

THEMATIC PANNEL
DISCUSSION
in parallel session

with

FOSTER PARENTS

25.10.2024.

14.00 - 15.30

ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

IFCE35 World
congress



Abstract

Supporting Yourself, Your Colleagues And Those You Care For In Your Professional Practice

Morwenna Farnan

Mulberry Bush Organisation
United Kingdom

Presentation of collaborative work between the Mulberry Bush Organisation, Ukraine Education Platform and FICE Special Task Force “Hand in hand”. Since the invasion of Ukraine, the Mulberry Bush Organisation has been offering sessions of support and training to educational, social care and psychology professionals to develop their understanding of psychodynamic and therapeutic principles. These sessions of training support have been adapted with the Ukrainian people in mind and the psychological impact of full-scale invasion. While sessions have been thoughtfully adapted the topics have remained challenging of the attendees instilling the three core principles of the Mulberry Bush Organisation throughout: Psychodynamic Approach, Reflective Practice and Collaborative Working. The aim of the project was to enable continued professionalization within the workforce during this time of adversity by sharing the knowledge gained in the seventy-five years of the Mulberry Bush Organisation. The sessions continue to run online via Zoom ensuring individuals from all over Ukraine can attend through both taught sections and networking discussions. This is an ongoing working relationship and the response from the collaboration has only been positive whilst the continued commitment of Ukrainian professionals is honourable. The Mulberry Bush Organisation is thankful that we can support our colleagues in any way and will continue to do so.

Key words: Psychodynamic, Reflective Practice, Collaborative Working

Online presentations

Abstract

Empowerment Of Youth At Risk In Residential Care In Israel

Ilana Tischler

Ben Shemen Youth Village
Israel

The Ben Shemen Youth Village is home, to 130 students at high risk who were referred by the Ministry of Welfare, and to approximately 270 students at a variety of levels of risk referred by the Ministry of Education. Approximately 400 students live in the Village.

Fifteen years ago, the students' academic achievements were very low, based on the assumption, that these students "were unable" to attain high academic achievements. After the changes we implemented, the difference is startling. In 2023, the school's matriculation rate was 96% (higher than the national average),

This presentation will focus on the structure of personal program for each student, goals, collaborating with the student, follow-up, implementation, and challenges. We will also take an in-depth look at the partnerships we have created with external organizations that allow us to offer our students empowerment opportunities - academia, cycling, arts, and veterinary medicine and the implementation of these programs.

All the programs mentioned above have one main goal, to develop dreams, motivation, interest and high-quality learning among our students, who come from deprived backgrounds, and need mentoring to change their lives.

Online
presentations

Abstract

Future Expectations of Adolescents Aging Out of Residential Care in Brazil

Luciana Cassarino Perez

Carne Montserrat

Jorge Castella Sarrier

Brazil

The future expectations of adolescents aging out of care significantly influence their short- and long-term outcomes. In Brazil, a large portion of young people leave foster care without any support. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate what variables favor better future expectations among Brazilian care leavers. The study participants were 190 care leavers between 14 and 18 ($M=15.92$, $SD=1.00$), 44.2% girls and 55.8% boys, from three Brazilian capitals. Data were collected using a sociodemographic questionnaire, the Perceived Life Chances scale, the Social Support Appraisals, the Personal Well-Being Index - School Children, and the Readiness to Leave Care questionnaire. The discriminant analysis technique was used to identify profile characteristics that significantly distinguished two groups: adolescents with high and low future expectations. The results reveal that: (1) what most contributes to the increase in future expectations is perceived social support;(2) the greater the readiness to leave care and life satisfaction, the better the future expectations; (3) participating in a public policy of job insertion decreases care leavers future expectations. The results emphasize that support for developing independent living skills should be complemented with socio-emotional support and that care leavers should be actively involved in the decision-making process regarding their transition to adulthood.

Key words: foster care; care leavers; future expectations; social support.

Online
presentations

Abstract

Enhancing Adolescent and Family Wellbeing in South East Europe: Insights from the FLOURISH Study

Anita Burgund Isakov
Nevena Čalovska

Faculty of Political sciences, Belgrade University
Association of systemic family therapists
Serbia

Assessing population health and economic development has evolved to encompass a broader examination of wellbeing, which manifests continuity from youth to later life stages. Notably, economic progress in low-income (LIC) and lower-middle-income countries (LMIC) has positively impacted mental health among children and youth. However, recent escalations in adolescent violence in South East Europe emphasize the necessity for tailored interventions.

This study endeavors to tackle adolescent wellbeing in this region, aiming to enhance it through the implementation of interventions such as Parenting for Lifelong Health (PHL) group-based socio-behavioral programs at the individual and family levels.

The FLOURISH pilot study, guided by the Multiphase Optimization Strategy (MOST) framework, focuses on the Preparation phase to adapt and pilot the intervention for adolescents, caregivers, and staff in North Macedonia and Moldova considering contextual factors for sustainable implementation and ensuring high fidelity and family participation, with the aim of optimizing and evaluating the program through subsequent trials.

The results will delve into the advantages and obstacles of contextualizing PHL interventions within the South East European context, with a specific focus on Macedonia and Moldova, where the FLOURISH study successfully scaled these interventions.

The implications underscore the criticality of contextualization, necessitating attention to cultural, socioeconomic, political, and community dynamics that influence adolescent and family wellbeing. This research emphasizes the indispensability of holistic approaches to confront the diverse challenges encountered by adolescents and their families in the region, offering insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers alike.

Key words: adolescent wellbeing; contextualisation of interventions; FLOURISH study

Online
presentations

Abstract

The "AEF Social Lab", an innovative social platform for the child and family assistance system in Luxembourg

Marzenka Krejcirik

Magali De Rocco

Luxembourg Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth
Luxembourg

The AEF Social Lab consults professionals, children, young people and (foster) families within the child and family assistance sector. It publishes reports with recommendations to improve quality within the sector.

Through two surveys, gaining an understanding of:

the safety of children and young people in the context of various forms of assistance

- how participation, protection and complaints are experienced within the system.

"Protection is...": quantitative and qualitative survey using a questionnaire based on the "three houses" method of Signs of Safety

"Letters for the future": qualitative survey using letters, based on the same method

Service users and professionals' perspective on positive & negative aspects and ideas for improvement (regarding participation, protection and complaints) is invaluable to ensure quality in the sector.

Participation, protection and complaints are interlinked; promoting one impacts all the others. The following have a direct impact on children and young people's well-being and safety:

- professionals' attitude, know-how and ethics & their relationship with service users
- systemic aspects, including the availability of resources (human, structural, financial, etc.)
- group size, home-like environment, placement in foster families vs institutions
- wide range of participation opportunities and complaint mechanisms.

Key words: Participation, protection, safety, complaints, child and family assistance

Online
presentations

Abstract

Czech Residential Childcare: Current Problems, Future Visions

Alois Danek

AMBIS vysoká škola, Praha; Czech

Czech residential childcare has undergone significant changes in recent years. The paper's main aim will be to present the current situation in the Czech Republic with an emphasis on the intensive efforts of the whole field of residential childcare to improve the quality of the services provided. We will present the results of several in-depth research studies highlighting the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and the significant involvement of multidisciplinary teams. FICE ČR commissioned this research to major Czech universities in order to obtain materials for improving the educational process in the participating institutions. We will outline the future direction of residential childcare in the Czech Republic. In the discussion, we will reflect on the role of residential childcare in the coming global society.

Key words: Czech residential child care, changes, problems, visions

Online
presentations

Abstract

A View on Youth Homelessness: Pathways, Challenges and Support Systems

Marijana Kletečki Radović

Ela Rukavina Lapov,

University of Zagreb Faculty of Law, Social Work Study Centre
Nursing home Oaza
Croatia

One of the key risks that increases the likelihood of youth becoming homeless is the experience of living in alternative care. This was highlighted in research conducted with young people aged 15 to 29 who are currently homeless and staying in a shelter in Zagreb. The study presents the findings of qualitative research aimed at understanding the lives of homeless youth through their personal experiences of pathways to homelessness, focusing on the causes of homelessness and the support they need to escape it. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, analyzed by thematic analysis procedure and organized into the following topics: youth experiences growing up, causes of homelessness, sources of social support, and the needs of young people to exit homelessness. The results of the research showed that young homeless people have a background in alternative care, often with multiple placements while in care. Key factors contributing to homelessness included aging out of the care system, broken family relationships, mental health issues, and unemployment. The findings also show that young homeless individuals primarily rely on formal support systems and express a strong desire to break free from homelessness and become independent. They emphasize the need for practical assistance, access to social welfare assistance, professional support and empowerment, as well as emotional support from trusted individuals. This research underscores the importance of providing targeted, systematic support to help these young people overcome the challenges they face on their path to a stable and independent life.

Key words: youth homelessness, alternative care, pathways to homelessness, support

Online
presentations

Abstract

Role and position of foster carers' own children in the family from the perspective of experts

Maja Laklija
Maja Karačić

University of Zagreb Faculty of Law, Social Work Study Centre
Minister of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy

The aim of the research is to gain insight into the perception of the role and position of foster carers' own children (biological and/or adopted) in the family from the perspective of experts employed in Regional offices of the Croatian Institute for Social Work (N=8). Data were collected through focus groups and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that experts recognize the importance of informing, preparing and questioning foster carers' children opinion and giving consent for the family to engage in foster care. Experts emphasize the positive aspects of the influence of foster care on the role and position of foster carers' children; e.g. making new friends, more compassion and willingness to help others, brother/sister bonding, taking responsibility in care for foster child and developed new skills. As difficulties they emphasize: sharing things, space, parental attention and time, exposure to behavioural problems of a foster child and content brought by foster children (which they had not witnessed before), changing roles and responsibilities in the family (partially or completely imposed), rivalry and jealousy, witnessing how parents cope with the stress of foster care and dealing with family stress, conflicts and losses. Experts point out that it is primarily the responsibility of the foster parents to indicate if their child has any difficulties or needs for support, but also the reluctance of the foster parents and their children to turn to them for support due to a conflict of their roles (support providers as well as those who decide on the license). Furthermore, experts recognize children of foster parents remain mostly "invisible" from experts due to numerous organizational factors and emphasize the need for active engagement in protecting the wellbeing of foster carers' children and creation of support programs for them.

Key words: foster carers' children, role, challenges, experts

Online
presentations

Abstract

Action Plan "The Hearth of Slavonija for Families from Ukraine"

Ivan Čaleta

Tomislav Ramljak

Lidija Štelcer

Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
Croatia

The high trauma caused by the events of war requires a special approach to people coming from the war-affected area, and the uncertainty of the duration of the war requires the establishment of an operational system that will enable, and above all facilitate, their integration into the new community. Restore the displaced people's confidence and security in the environment in which they live and to enable them to actively participate in the new community, i.e. in its social, cultural, economic and every other aspect. Through this project, the Center tried to do all the above and help Ukrainians adapt to life in Croatia. Through the Day Center for displaced persons, we conduct various creative, culinary, sports and other activities for children and adults, as well as Croatian and English language courses.

Key words: conflict, refugees, Ukraine

Online
presentations

Abstract

Civil Society Organizations as a Resource in the Deinstitutionalization Process – Social Services of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Croatia

Ana Budimir

Marijana Hinek

Center for Missing and Exploited Children Croatia

Croatia

Contemporary society faces diverse and complex challenges that surpass the capacities of public institutions. Behavioral issues among children and youth necessitate innovative solutions beyond what public institutions can offer. Various professionals have recognized the need to expand social and educational measures, with civil society organizations proving to be excellent collaborators. The Center for Missing and Exploited Children (the Center), a non-governmental

The organization established in Osijek in 2006, exemplifies progress in addressing the needs of children and young adults with behavioral problems through quality cooperation with public social welfare institutions. In 2014, the Center initiated the deinstitutionalization of services for children and youth with behavioral issues in Slavonia. This began with relocating the treatment of a half-day stay program from an educational institution to the Center, implemented through the project “Legosi u Centru”. The Center continues to explore new ways to establish half-day stays and other social services, currently operating eight such programs across five counties, serving over 100 children daily. This service supports youth transitioning out of the social care system, helping them develop independence and new life skills. Recognizing its importance, the Ministry continues to fund this service, integrating it into the social services network. 1. To showcase the innovative role of civil society organizations in expanding social and educational services for children and youth with behavioral issues, highlighting the Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s collaborative efforts with public institutions in Croatia. 2. To present the successful implementation and expansion of the “Legosi u Centru” project as a model for deinstitutionalization, emphasizing its impact on youth transitioning out of the social care system and the development of independent life skills. Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s innovative approach to deinstitutionalization and its successful collaboration with public institutions demonstrates the vital role of civil society in addressing the complex needs of children and youth with behavioral issues, while fostering their independence and integration into society.

Key words: deinstitutionalization, social services, half- day stay stay, organized housing with intermittent support, children with behavioral problems, prevention

Online presentations

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

IFCE35 World
congress



Impact Of Maltreatment, Shame And Self-Criticism On Psychological Difficulties In Adolescents From Community And Residential Youth Care

Laura Santos

Rita Ramos Miguel

Maria do Céu Salvador

Luiza Nobre-Lima

Daniel Rijo

University of Coimbra, Portugal

Maltreatment experiences are recognized as a primary contributor to psychological distress, yielding both immediate and enduring effects. However, the role of specific emotional and cognitive processes on the link between maltreatment and psychological difficulties is less clear. To propose a conceptual model that attempts to integrate the experience of childhood maltreatment with shame and self-criticism involved in psychological difficulties.

A variable- (structural equation modeling) and a person-centered approach (latent profile analysis) were conducted to examine the role of maltreatment experiences, shame and self-criticism on psychological difficulties among adolescents from community (N= 272) and residential youth care (RYC) settings (N= 313).

Variable-centered results showed maltreatment experiences were only indirectly (via shame and self-criticism) associated with psychological difficulties. Person-centered analysis was performed exclusively for RYC adolescents, and allowed to identify three profiles based on lower, medium and upper levels of maltreatment, shame and self-criticism. The upper-profile was associated with higher levels of psychological difficulties.

Not only maltreatment experiences, but also shame and self-criticism, seem to play an important role in psychological difficulties during adolescence. Clinical practice should consider assessment and intervention protocols also targeting shame feelings and self-criticism in order to counteract psychological difficulties.

Key words: Residential Youth Care; Shame; Self-criticism; Psychological difficulties; Adolescents

Poster

Assessing Occupational Stress in Residential Youth Care: Validation of the Stress Questionnaire for Residential Youth Care Professionals

Laura Santos

Andreia Ferreira

Diana Ribeiro da Silva

Maria do Rosário Pinheiro

Daniel Rijo

University of Coimbra

Centre for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention

Portugal

Occupational stress is commonly experienced by professional caregivers working in Residential Youth Care (RYC). Although the influence of stress has been studied on this helping profession, there is still no measurement tool to assess the potential sources of stress for these professionals.

This poster presents the validation study of the Stress Questionnaire for Residential Youth Care Professionals (Stress-RYCaregivers), a self-report questionnaire assessing different sources of occupational stress experienced by RYC professionals.

Dimensionality and psychometric properties were investigated using a sample of 360 professional caregivers (88.6% female) working in 41 Portuguese residential care facilities.

A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the 25 items grouped into six factors (i.e., Caring of Children and Young People, Work overload, Career progression and salary, Relationships at work, Training activities and Home-work interface). All subscales showed adequate internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Construct validity in relation to external variables was also found.

This questionnaire may be useful for research and practice, in order to assess and understand the causes of stress faced by professional caregivers and to design tools to prevent it.

Key words: Residential Youth Care; Staff; Occupational stress; Questionnaire; Psychometrics

Psychometric Properties of the Emotional Climate in Residential Care Scale for Youth

Laura Santos

Joana Martins

Diana Ribeiro da Silva

Marcela Matos

Maria do Rosário Pinheiro

Daniel Rijo

University of Coimbra

Centre for Research in Neuropsychology and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention

Portugal

Increasing attention has been given to residential climate as a therapeutic tool, yet available measures are still scarce.

This study aims to validate a brief self-report measure to assess the emotional climate of residential care homes (RCH) as perceived by youth: the Emotional Climate in Residential Care Scale for youth (ECRC-Y).

Participants were 372 youth (61.8% girls), aged between 12 and 24 years old, living in 33 Portuguese RCH. The ECRC-Y was adapted from the Emotional Climate in the Classroom Scale, which is a 15-item measure based on an evolutionary approach, assessing the emotional climate according to three affect regulation systems: threat, drive, and soothing systems. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed, and measurement invariance was tested for sex.

The CFA indicated a tri factorial measurement model, in agreement with the theoretical model. The ECRC-Y showed adequate internal consistency and construct validity in relation to external variables. Measurement invariance was supported for the ECRC-Y. Girls presented higher levels of threat related emotions, when compared with boys.

Overall, the ECRC-Y is an appropriate self-report measure that may be useful for research and practice purposes within residential care, giving information about the emotional climate of RCH as perceived by youth in care.

Key words: Residential Youth Care; Emotional climate; Youth; Questionnaire; Psychometrics

Who's At Risk? Key Predictors And Prevalence Among Youth At The "Most" Support Center In Croatia

Janina Pavić Jadrić
Amalija Hrepić Gruić

Psychological center Antičević
MoST
Croatia

WHO (2022) stated that 22% of children aged 5–19 have some mental health issues. According to WHO (2022), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most common problem among younger children (4.6% of children), while anxiety is the most common problem among adolescents of both genders (around 4.5%), being even more prominent in adolescent girls (around 5.5%), and sometimes linked to depression. In a 2021 report, UNICEF highlighted the prevalence of mental disorders in two age groups. Among children aged 10–14, 13.5% of boys and 11.2% of girls had some mental disorder, while among those aged 15–19, 14.1% of boys and 13.9% of girls had some mental disorder (WHO, 2022). Across both age groups, the most common mental disorders were anxiety and depression, affecting 42.9% overall, with 31.4% in boys and 56.3% in girls (WHO, 2022). The prevalence of mental health issues, especially anxiety and depression, has since risen, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the increasing prevalence of anxiety and related mental health issues among children and adolescents, it is important to investigate their correlates and predictors, highlighting the need for targeted intervention programs and comprehensive assessments to better understand and address these challenges. The study aimed to examine the prevalence of anxiety symptoms and predictors of somatization among children and youth at the MoSt Support Center in Croatia.

This study aimed to examine the prevalence of anxiety symptoms and predictors of somatization among children and youth at the MoSt Support Center in Croatia using the Fear and Anxiety Scale for Children and Adolescents (SKAD-62; Vulić-Prtorić, 2004). The hierarchical regression analysis revealed that the first block of predictors, comprising age and gender, collectively explained 17% of the variance in somatization. When additional predictors, namely other symptoms, were included in the second block, they accounted for 95% of the variance in somatization. The exceptionally high percentage of explained variance in the second block is attributed to the overlap of some items between the subscales and the somatization scale.

The results of the study emphasize the significance of a comprehensive initial evaluation among children using services from the Centre. Since other symptoms account for much of the variance in somatization, it is important to include a wide range of psychological symptoms during the assessment process to capture the real issues underlying somatization.

Given that additional symptoms have higher explanatory power, treatment programs should focus on addressing these specific psychological problems. The Center's treatment programs are built upon cognitive-behavioral interventions (CBT) and it is essential to plan CBT treatment to target individual symptoms identified at assessment.

Key words: Anxiety, somatization, children, adolescents

Poster

Transfer Of Knowledge In Regional Research Of Online Sexual Harassment: Experience Of Preparation Of Deshame Montenegro

Ena Grbović

Bojana Miletić

Vuk Vuković

University of Montenegro
Montenegro

This research is important for understanding how youth use the internet and how to protect them from potentially harmful influences. In the region, there is a lack of research, competent researchers and scientific knowledge about the problematic use of the Internet. The need for gathering and continuous investment in a regional research hub with the aim of exchanging knowledge and models of good practice and improving research competencies in this area has been shown. Considering that the problematic use of the Internet knows no borders, especially in a region that shares language understanding. This is precisely why an expert response is needed, focused on coordinated, multidisciplinary regional cooperation in research, prevention, detection and treatment of problematic Internet use. This will be the first study on this topic in Montenegro. Challenges in preparing this research could be related to forming a multidisciplinary team engaging experts from psychology, social work, education, as well as internet and information technology specialists as well as collaboration with institutions in part of establishing partnerships with schools, non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation to ensure support and access to necessary data. Then, collecting accurate and honest data from youth can be challenging due to the sensitivity of the topics. Ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality is essential. The preparation of the deSHAME research in Montenegro is a complex process that requires careful planning, multidisciplinary collaboration, and a sensitive approach to the topic. Given the coordination of the deSHAME team from Croatia and csi.hr the transfer of knowledge and the preparation of the research itself is facilitated. Despite the challenges, such research is crucial for creating a safer online environment for youth and providing support in preventing risky behaviors on the internet.

Key words: deSHAME, research, Montenegro, Croatia

Poster

Curriculum For The Dual Practice-Oriented Continuing Professional Development

Monika Lengauer

Christian Posch

Fice Austria, Austria

Strengthening quality care in professional alternative child and youth care in group homes through continuing professional development

Project to be presented: Our curriculum is designed to enhance the quality of care in alternative group homes across Austria by promoting development and health across federal and organisational boundaries. Developed by a dedicated team of 20 experts from 16 organisations between February 2021 and December 2022, this initiative ensures uniform professional standards and high-quality care for children and youth in Austria.

Project essentials: Collaborative Development: 20 experts met for 730 hours, supported by a group focused on learning methods, and input from managers, researchers, and support systems.

Based on Quality Standards: Follows the FICE 2019 standards, addressing the inconsistency in current training programs.

Dual Training Approach: Combines real-world experience with reflective learning for practical and theoretical integration.

Support for Professionals: Aims to reduce professional turnover through structured supervision and professional development.

Our goal: to ensure that every child and young person in Austria receives high-quality care, regardless of their location, in accordance with UN guidelines.

Poster

Alternative Modes in Alternative Care – Being like a Donkey

Ljiljana Ban

Stichting Kinderperspectief
Croatia/Netherlands

In 2022, Stichting Kinderperspectief launched the Alternative MOD/DOM – regional magazine for experts in alternative care for children and youth. So far, 4 issues have been published and distributed online as well as in 500 hard copies (of each issue) sent to all alternative care organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. The main idea of the magazine is to be highly practical, functioning as a platform for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences. The focus is on presenting alternative perspectives—approaches that go beyond

conventional methods to achieve the highest quality in alternative care. Main objectives of the workshops were: to promote the Alternativni MOD/DOM magazine and its philosophy of alternative, out-of-the-box way of thinking, importance of teamwork and sharing ideas within the professional community to encourage professionals, based on practical self-experience, to refresh their work with new activities to bring joy and laughter in everyday working life of professionals. In 2024 Kinderperspectief implemented Alternative MOD workshops gathering 174 people from 27 alternative organizations, in 3 countries, 13 cities, 14 workshops in only 11 days. Participants reactions and level of satisfaction with the workshop and the presented (alternative mod) idea was beyond of any expectation. Large number of participants indicated

a huge scope of pressure and hard topics they are under daily on their work and stressed that they are tired from constant lectures, discussions, presentations and all similar old fashion sitting methods which don't bring anything new to their practice. For many of them, this workshop provided the opportunity to laugh, refresh, connect, take a breath after a long time. Simple activities with clear instructions and afterwords connections to the practice and examples of possible use were something that was recognized as valuable resource.

Little donkey Mago, the mascot of the workshop, was immediately accepted by professionals.

Similarity of recognition and fate that donkeys and child and youth care workers share in the community was recognized immediately but donkeys also opened the space to remind professionals of their qualities and strengths. And that part was especially valued and underlined as important in the evaluations. Bright, easy, enthusiastic and fun approach is deeply needed in the social care system in BiH, Croatia and Serbia. It refreshes professionals with energy and enthusiasm. Overwhelmed with work and constant new demands, professionals tend to overlook their qualities but reminders on that, like this workshop or the magazine, are needed as they contribute to a quality of the care for children.

Key words: Thinking out-of-the-box, teamwork, sharing ideas, awareness of the personal qualities

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The Experiences With "Prolonged Expert Treatment" Carried Out By Center For Providing Services In Community Zagreb – Dugave: The Perspective Of Professionals

Ivana Đurek Setinšek

Marijana Majdak

Center for providing services in the community Zagreb
University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law, Department of social work
Croatia

The prolonged expert treatment (PSP) is carried out at primary schools as a special form of preventive work with children of primary school age who manifest problems in their behavior and their primary environment.

The aim of this paper is to present the experiences of experts involved in the implementation of prolonged expert treatment.

In this research qualitative methodology was used for collection and analysing data.

This research provides insight into all the risky behaviors and diagnosed forms of behavior expressed by children who are included in the program of the extended professional procedure.

The participants highlighted the positive and negative aspects of their work. The negative aspects, related to cooperation with the professional service, the social work institute and parents, were often more prominent than the positive ones, while positive perception is on the part of children.

Participants provide a comparison between the previous and current functioning of the program and identify positive and negative changes. Special attention is paid to the topic of a clear definition of the program in theory and practice, where participants offer concrete suggestions for improving the program.

The contribution of this research is significant, in addition to researching experiences and gaining a clear insight into the implementation of the prolonged expert treatment, we have very clear and concrete proposals for improving the program based on the experiences of the participants.

Key words: Children, problem in behavior, prolonged expert treatment

Weird Or Wonderful

Davorka Kovačić Borković

Public Health Institute of Split-Dalmatia County
Croatia

Numerous findings indicate that awareness and recognition of emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, emotional literacy, learning stress management strategies in everyday life, and creative expression have a positive effect on mental health. This is precisely the goal of the project conducted in the 2021/22 school year during the pandemic and the complex situations faced by young people. The project is led by the Public Health Institute of Split-Dalmatia County, and project activities were carried out in collaboration with the Female student dormitory in Split. The first project activity was titled "Be a Photo Hunter," where members of the multimedia section of the female student dormitory each month created a photography or text on a given theme. At the end of each month, a collage of photos was published on social media. This allowed students to spend their free time more meaningfully during the period of isolation and to think creatively about the given themes, contributing to the preservation of mental health. The social media posts raised broader public awareness about the importance of maintaining mental health. In the second part of the project, eight mindfulness workshops were conducted. Mindfulness is a scientifically proven method that helps focus on the present moment, one's own thoughts and feelings, and learning ways to cope with the demands of the fast-paced and stressful lives that adolescents lead. Students of second grade of high school, 43 of them, were actively participating and expressed satisfaction

with the workshops, as shown by evaluation forms regularly conducted after each workshop. Given the early separation from their families, the dormitory represents a substitute family for the students, and the quality of this institutional care is crucial for the mental health of the adolescents.

Key words: adolescents, emotions, mindfulness

DeSHAME Croatia: Online Sexual Harassment Of Children: Comparison Of Single-Parent And Two-Parent Families

Roberta Matković

Lucija Vejmelka

Tomislav Ramljak

Miroslav Rajter

Public Health Institute od Split-Damatia County

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law

Centre for missing and exploited children Croatia

University of Zagreb

Croatia

Numerous studies point out that children who grow up in single- parent families are more likely to face numerous internalized and externalized difficulties compared to children who grow up in traditional families. When we include some other variables in addition to the type of family and the level of difficulties, then we notice that single-parent families, especially if we are talking about families with mothers, face lower economic income and unemployment, less social support, worst living conditions, relocation and numerous other challenges which actually has a direct consequence on the child's development, not the type of family in which the child grows up. Parenting has always been challenging, and in the era of widespread use of digital technologies, the role of parents has become even more complex.

The aim of this paper is to compare the level of witnessing, experiencing and perpetrating online sexual harassment in children who grow up in single-parent and two-parents families

Two quantitative surveys were conducted, deShame 1 in 2021 with high school students (total sample 2016) and deShame 2 in 2023 with parents (total sample 1715). For the purposes of this paper, only respondents living in single-parent and two-parent families (high school students 1977, parents 1692) were taken into account.-parent and two-parent families (traditional and mixed). The results of research among children show that children from single-parent families witness, commit and experience online sexual harassment less often, with these differences being statistically significant for witnessing and experiencing. The results on the sample of parents show that parents of two-parent families talk to their children statistically significantly more often when they notice a problem, when the child expresses a problem and regardless of whether there is a problem, while single parents statistically more significantly point out that they do not have time to talk about online difficulties and that they more often witnessed how malicious content of female persons about their bodies on the Internet is directed. No statistically significant differences were found in other observed variables. These findings can serve to empower parents in single-parent families, through the acquisition of time management skills. Also, parents in two-parent families may have more time and may talk more with their children about online risks, but they need to be additionally informed about the risks their children face, especially in terms of sexuality and harassment, so that the conversation is targeted and aimed at support and understanding.

Key words: online sexual harassment, parents, children, one-parent families, two-parent families

Poster

Implementation Of The Act On The Treatment Of Children And Adolescents With Emotional And Behavioural Problems Or Disorders In Education And Training (Zoomtvi) In Slovenia

Mitja Krajnčan

Katja Kajnčan

Matej Vukovič

Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Koper
Slovenia

We have investigated how professionals from specialist centers, social work centers, youth judges and paediatric psychiatrists, as key stakeholders, who are responsible and competent to treat children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems or disorders as professionally as possible and in accordance with the legislation, find and implement the most appropriate forms of assistance for them, evaluate the implementation of the Act on the Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Emotional and Behavioural Problems or Disorders in Education and Training (ZOOMTVI) and the cooperation between them. Based on the opinions of experts from various fields, we wanted to identify the shortcomings of the system of assistance to children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems or disorders, which should be eliminated and changed, and what new forms of assistance and cooperation between stakeholders would be reasonable and necessary to introduce in the work with children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems or disorders in Slovenia. The results of the research are also important for understanding the competences and cooperation between social work centers, specialist centers, paediatric psychiatrists and youth judges.

Key words: behavioral problems; children and adolescents

Experts' Experiences Of Challenges On The Way From Foster Care To Adoption

Gabrijela Čuljak,

Slavica Blažeka Kokorić

Ivanka Dugan

Centre for Providing Services in the Community "Kuća sretnih ciglica"

Social Work Study Center of the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb

Croatian Social Work Institute, County Service of Varaždin County

Croatia

Multiple studies have shown that frequent transfers of children to different placements can increase developmental risks and retraumatize children in alternative care. To prevent these risks, social workers should consider placing children in foster families who are interested in adopting a child. In the Republic of Croatia, there is a lack of research and good practice standards in this area. This poster presentation presents the results of qualitative research aimed at deepening knowledge about experts' experiences and opinions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of placing children with foster parents who are also open to adoption. The research involved 10 social workers with extensive experience in foster care and adoption. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed through thematic analysis. The results indicate that experts highlight avoiding retraumatizing children, better preparation for adoption, and increased possibility of adopting "difficult-to-place children" as the most significant advantages of the foster-to-adopt approach. As obstacles and challenges, experts identify the risk of misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations of foster parents, the need to prepare foster parents for an uncertain outcome, and the fear and resistance of foster parents towards child's biological family. In conclusion, recommendations for the improvement of the foster-to-adopt process were highlighted.

Key words: foster care, adoption challenges

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Introduction of New Social Services in the Local Community - Mobile Teams and Family Associates

Magdalena Katičin Gusić

Maja Đolonga

Center for providing services in the community Maestral Split
Croatia

Our goal was to establish a service that would empower parents and help them take adequate care of their own children to prevent placing their children in institutions. Using EU funds through project, Center Maestral established service of psychosocial support for families. Psychosocial support empowers parents in difficult life situations, empowers children who have difficulty coping with their parents; divorce, have problems in relationships with peers, at school and suffer from various psychological or developmental difficulties. Our work in the community is an important factor in the process of deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes, considering that we visit families at risk of child separation and provide them with help in strengthening the family, improving the relationship between parents and children, and creating a healthy and stimulating environment for growing up, education and children's education. In addition to primary families, we provide support to foster and adoptive families. A mobile team (social worker and a psychologist) provide services mostly going to the users; homes and also in counseling center located in Kaštel Stari and Split. Through the project, which was carried out for three years, psychosocial support services were provided for more than 70 families, within which we worked with approximately 280 users and 20 individuals under the age of 25.

Key words: mobile team, family associates, psychosocial support, new social services

Poster

Incidence Of Crisis Situations In Slovenian Expert Centres For Residential Care

Katja Vrhunc Pfeifer

Matej Vukovič

Urša Rozman

Department of Social Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Koper
Slovenia

The paper looks in detail at the crisis situations that are becoming more frequent and intense in the new social reality. They are particularly intense and challenging in expert centres for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems/disorders. Educators in expert centres deal with an increasingly diverse and specific population, the escalation of which often leads to crisis situations that affect both staff and users. It is precisely for the latter reason that we decided to investigate how educators assess the most common crisis situations that arise in expert centres, how intense they are and how challenging they are. In the quantitative part of the research, we used a questionnaire designed by the author and distributed to all educators in Slovenian expert centres. Later, we carried out the qualitative part of the research, where we also conducted semi-structured interviews with principals, counsellors and educators in all Slovenian expert centres. We found out how they deal with crisis situations and what are the most effective interventions when escalations occur. The research thus presents a comprehensive overview of crisis situations occurring in Slovenian expert centres and offers suggestions for effective interventions.

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Research On The Aetiological And Phenomenological Specificities Of Children And Adolescents In The System Of Upbringing And Education

Mitja Krajnčan

Matej Vukovič

Department of Social Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of Primorska, Koper
Slovenia

In a study involving 331 kindergarten teachers, 222 primary school teachers, 245 secondary school teachers, 180 residential care teachers, 121 children with special needs classification committees, 93 social workers from social work centres, 22 paedopsychiatrists and 15 family judges, professional judgements were made regarding the causes and manifestations of behaviour. The most recent research in this field is largely from the last century, and given the dynamics of social change, we were interested to see whether these items had changed in relation to the research of Myszker, Ferrington, Van der Doef, Bregant, etc. We have used factor analysis to create new tables, which we will present at the congress.

Key words: children, upbringing, education

Poster

Abstract About A Study On Kids@Highrisk

Kozak Tanja

Arbeitskreis Noah Vienna

Austria

Since 2014 we have evaluated the background and habits of the kids we are working with.

We try to show what kind of risiko factors make the life of our kids so high risk and that the background may led to later traumatic diagnoses and bad social behaviour. We can see that those kids have many parameters which lead to problematic behavior which end in aggression and criminal careers. It is necessary to value the datas we have since 2015 to show how important youth care at high risk is and to show what working with systems at risk means.

Key words: Systemsprenger, system crusher, kids at high risk

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«Ridni» Charitable Foundation / Spilnota project

Marta Krasnogor

Charitable Foundation "Ridni"

Ukraine

The communal institution "Spilnota" in collaboration with the Lviv City Council is a two-year formation program for teenagers residing in the institution and 250 young people from vulnerable categories in the city of Lviv who attend thematic classes and events.

The "Spilnota" space is a unique center aimed at providing comprehensive support and development for youth, helping to break the cycle of orphanhood by preparing teenagers for independent life. Here, youth (both boys and girls) from orphanages and families in difficult life circumstances, affected by the war, aged 16 and above, will live and study. The concept of the space involves creating a safe place for the all-around development of youth to ensure their prosperous future.

Our goal: to prepare teenagers for independent life, create an environment for developing their skills, talents, and self-awareness, form a community of active and successful young people, and lay a strong foundation for moral and civic positions.

The project is created with the support of the Charitable Foundation "Ridni" and the Children's Service of the Lviv City Council. Representatives of the business community have also contributed to the creation of the space, particularly the construction and development company "Avalon," which provided the premises for the project, and the international company GETEC, which helped with financing. Thanks to the support of our partners, we are able to create the best conditions for the children we care for.

Key words: Spilnota project, support, Ukraine

Poster

“We take off the labels”

**Nenad Borosak, Ivan Fabijanic, Jadranka Juranic,
Lucija Mesar, Marija Pavlek, Irena Rogina, Tea
Ottopal, Tamara Kotarski**

Zagorje Community Services Center
Croatia

The Zagorje Community Services Center is a social care institution that provides social services to children, younger adults without adequate parental care, children at risk of developing behavioral problems, children and youth with behavioral problems, and primary and foster families. In the past, the only institution for the female population with behavioral problems in Croatia, it still carries the stigma of the "infamous orphanage". In accordance with modern trends, the institution went through the process of deinstitutionalization, expanded its services and user group, but the users of this institution are still carrying "labels".

Objective is to reduce stigmatization of children and young people in care.

In order for users and children in alternative care in general to have a chance to join an independent life in the community like their peers, a social and media campaign against stigmatization called "We take off the labels" was launched.

The campaign was symbolically launched this year on the occasion of the International Day of Care. As part of the campaign, the public wants to be educated about the many stigmas imposed on users by the fact that children and young people are in care. It was the users of this institution who stood in front of the camera lens in order to contribute to the fight against the stigmatization they encountered or still encounter, and thus posters with a strong message were created. Posters are shared on social networks of the local and professional community the media, in schools, institutions. Influencers have also joined.

Key words: stigmatization, labels, behavioral problems, youth in care

Poster

What children keep in their hearts adults know nothing about

Teodor Sabolić

Iva Ivančević

Marina Kolmačić

Center for providing services in the community Varaždin
Croatia

In the last four years the mental health of all categories of the population, especially vulnerable groups, has been seriously threatened due to various crisis situations such as the COVID-19 virus pandemic, earthquakes in Croatia, inflation and severe economic crisis, the current war in Ukraine, etc. Children and young people also have a hard time dealing with numerous challenges and new situations, in addition to the so-called common challenges that comes with the period of adolescence. Experience, as well as scientific research, tell us that there are more and more children and young people who show certain types of mental health problems. Also, there is a lack of treatments, services and programs in our society. Along with the children, their teachers and their parents also sometimes have difficulties in dealing with the daily challenges caused by the impaired mental health of their students/children - some do not know how to approach them or do not know where to seek professional help and support for them and their children.

The general goal of this project was to improve the quality of mental health of students in upper grades of elementary school.

Specific goals of the project:

1. educate and empower teachers about the importance of mental health and techniques when working with children and young people
2. educate children and their parents about the importance of mental health, empower them, and inform them about where and when they can seek for additional and professional help.

During 2023 pilot project was conducted in VII Elementary school Varaždin - 1 workshop with school staff (20), 8 workshops with children (118), 1 workshop with parents (61). During 2024 project was conducted in V Elementary school Varaždin - 1 workshop with school staff (23), 16 workshops with children (106). Implications include educated and empowered teachers, they learned new techniques for working with children and young people who have mental health issues, and are informed how, when and where to direct children with mental health issues. Children and their parents were educated about the basics of mental health, importance of mental health, empowered with self-help tools, and are also informed where they can seek for additional professional help if needed.

Key words: Mental health; youth; workshops;

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Family in the Center - Improving the Quality of Non-institutional Social Services of the Family Center Split, Overview of the Implementation and Results of the Project

Katarina Anđić

Maja Proso

Family Center, Regional Office Split-Dalmatia
Croatia

Family Center, Regional Office Split-Dalmatia
Croatia

The project "Family at the Center - Improving the Quality of Non-Institutional Social Services of the Family Center Split" was financed by the European Social Fund, Operational Program Efficient Human Resources, 2014-2020. The project was implemented by the Family Center, Regional Office Split-Dalmatia and was carried out from June 2021 to October 2023. The purpose of the project is to improve the quality of non-institutional services by strengthening the capacities of the Family Center. The target groups are children and young adults without adequate parental care, children and young people with behavioral problems, children with developmental disabilities, people with addiction problems, victims of domestic violence, adults with disabilities, their families and experts who work with them.

The project implemented:

1. Activities related to reducing the number of beneficiaries of accommodation services as an institutional form of care outside one's own family and improving the quality and expansion of non-institutional social services.
2. Activities to strengthen the capacity of experts/persons working with members of target groups to organize and provide non-institutional social services and implement the deinstitutionalization process.
3. Activities related to raising public awareness of the importance of the deinstitutionalization process and the rights of vulnerable groups, with an emphasis on the right to live in the community.

The project had an impact on increasing the professional competencies of professional workers from the Family Center, with the aim of improving the quality of services for beneficiaries, and the professional meetings held worked to raise awareness of the rights of children and youth. The project also educated experts from the social welfare, health, justice and education systems who work with vulnerable groups, which contributed to promoting multi-sectoral cooperation.

Educational activities were also carried out with parents, foster parents and teachers, which, in addition to raising competencies and knowledge, guarantees project sustainability even after completion.

Key words: overview of project activities, family center, prevention of separation of children from families

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