



**Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) "Growing with Children's Rights"
Good Practices and Initiatives**

Multidisciplinary Approach to the Protection of Traumatized and Abused Children

Child Protection Centre of Zagreb, Croatia

Country(ies): Croatia

Title of practice: Multidisciplinary approach to the protection of traumatized and abused children

Main scope/theme:

- Child-friendly services and systems: child-friendly justice, child-friendly healthcare, education
- Eliminating violence against children: sexual violence, corporal punishment, domestic violence, bullying, harassment and cyber bullying

Managing organisation(s): Child Protection Centre of Zagreb, <http://www.poliklinika-djeca.hr/english/>, contact person: Gordana Buljan Flander, phone: +38598453114, gordana.flander@poliklinika-djeca.hr

Brief description: The key purpose of the work of the Child Protection Centre is providing multidisciplinary help and support to children with various traumatic experiences, which include neglected and abused children, children at risk of abuse as well as providing support to their families. The primary activities of the Centre include assessment and treatment of children and families, research and scientific work, publishing, raising public awareness, education and training of professionals from other institutions, as well as forensic evaluations ordered by courts. The multidisciplinary team of the Centre consists of psychologists, psychiatrists, a paediatrician, social workers, rehabilitators and social educators, nurses and a jurist, who all work together to provide protection and support to traumatised children.

Timeframe: Started in 2003, ongoing (part of the healthcare system).

Type of activities:

- 1) Assessments and treatment of children and their families, which include individual assessments and diagnosis of the difficulties that children experience, planning and conducting individual treatments according to the child's needs, organising and

- conducting group psychotherapy for children, support and socialisation groups, as well as support groups and personal development groups for parents;
- 2) Multidisciplinary team work and supervision - working in multidisciplinary teams, respecting the specific knowledge and skills of every professional and coordinating for the benefit of the client, attending case reviews, promoting cooperation with other child protection institutions;
 - 3) Training professionals from other child protection institutions in the issues of child abuse and neglect, treatment/therapy of psycho-traumatised children, forensic interviewing and forensic evaluation of abused children, child development, etc.;
 - 4) Continuous research and scientific work with the aim of expanding the knowledge in the field of psycho-traumatisation and victimisation of children, analysing cases in the everyday work of the Centre (recent research topics include experiences and behaviour of children on the Internet and Facebook, exposure of children to abuse via the Internet, bullying, prevalence of child abuse and neglect, etc.);
 - 5) Raising public awareness by publishing handbooks and leaflets, continuous communication with the public at large via the media and the website;
 - 6) Preparing forensic evaluations ordered by courts and conducted by permanent court evaluators, expert witnesses in the fields of psychiatry and psychology, as well as encouraging judges to interview children on the Centre's premises, so that the whole procedure could be audio and video recorded and used as evidence in court procedures.

Results and outputs: 15 publications, in the form of handbooks and leaflets regarding child development and child abuse (e.g. "It happened, what now?", "Attachment and violent behaviour in youth - why is love important?", "Sexual development of the child", "Bullying among children", "Cyberbullying", "Supporting the mourning child", "Hyperactive child", "25 questions (and answers) for professionals working with abused and neglected children", "Child neglect", "Witnessing family violence" etc.) free of charge for parents, children and professionals (in collaboration with the City of Zagreb), 300 000 copies printed and distributed, also available online: <http://www.poliklinika-djeca.hr/english/publications/>

Target groups: Children and adolescents, parents, professionals working with children, public at large

Success factor(s): Since 2003, 11 372 children and families have been included in the project; 300,000 copies of the publications have been printed and distributed free of charge; ongoing cooperation with other national and international child protection institutions, such as child welfare centres, health institutions, police, courts, schools, kindergartens, parents, doctors, NGOs; education provided to over 200 volunteers in Brave for the child helpline; Multidisciplinary Team Award in 2008, awarded by The International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN); signing up for the Council of Europe Pact of Towns and Regions to Stop Sexual Violence against Children in 2013

Estimated budget and human resources: The estimated budget is about 900 000 euros per year, financed by the Croatian Health Insurance Fund and the City of Zagreb. The Center currently has 34 employees.