



Realising Children's Rights – embedding child rights in the daily practice of care professionals

WEBINAR SUMMARY

12 December 2017

I. Experts:

Florence Treyvaud Nemptzov is a Project Manager of cross-national EU co-funded projects at SOS Children's Villages International, that aim at building the capacity of care professionals to embed child rights in their daily practice when working with children and young people growing up in alternative care.

Krešimir Makvić, the National Advocacy Advisor in SOS Children's Village in Croatia, is a professional educator with extensive experience in working with children and youth. He has strong experience in leading successful advocacy initiatives to achieve sustainable change for children, ensure full enjoyment of their rights and promote changes that with policy implications.

Julia Kovalenko is an Advocacy and Child rights advisor at SOS Children's Villages in Estonia, involved in promoting actions aiming to prevent violence against children, especially those in alternative care. She is responsible for initiating and maintaining dialogue with the authorities and other stakeholders with a goal to improve the quality of alternative care and provision on child rights to all those in care.

II. Content:

In this webinar, speakers presented the results of the two-year EU co-funded project "Training Professionals Working with Children in Care" (2015-2016), implemented in eight European countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Romania. In addition, speakers discussed a training handbook "Realising Children's Rights" which was developed throughout the project, and the training itself.

About the project

The project's main goal was to build the capacity of care professionals to adopt child rights approach in their practice with children in alternative care, as well as to engage with key national and European stakeholders and raise awareness about the need to sustain such trainings.

At the beginning of the project research was carried out in all participating countries and baseline study was produced to assess the situation in terms of child rights, child rights knowledge and trainings that are already available. The training was developed based on the outcomes of this analysis and presents important component of capacity building for professionals working with children in alternative care. To ensure long-term sustainability of the project, significant effort was put in creating sense of ownership among the local actors and decision makers. For this purpose, National steering group was created in each participating country. Young people were involved in the project, and in two countries an additional module was created where young people were trainers themselves. Finally, communication strategy was designed to raise awareness about the lack of the training, but also to



increase the visibility of the project, promote project results and national recommendations that were developed based on this project results and experiences.

About the training

In most cases two days in-person training was organized, while in France and Italy additional youth participation module was added. Participants were mainly social workers, psychologists, social pedagogues, pedagogues working in children's homes and juvenile homes, representatives of Centres for social welfare, and foster parents.

Based on the experience from this project, for those who would like to implement something similar it is recommended to:

- Have 20-25 people per training, since the training is very interactive (10-15% is theoretical input from the trainers and the rest are interactive workshops)
- Have 2 trainers, to ensure all participants will receive needed attention
- Organize regional trainings within the country, as a valuable chance for networking among different care professionals
- Have mixed group of participants, to provide more opportunities to share different perspectives and points of view

The training was build on four General principles defined in the UN Child Rights Convention. The main aim was to familiarize participants with the Convention, and to show them how to use this document in their everyday work.

Post training assessment – conclusions

Three types of evaluations were carried out as part of the project – pre-training evaluation to assess prior participants' knowledge, evaluation immediately after the training and post-training assessment, which was carried out two months after the training ended. The results have shown that:

- More training is needed for all professionals working with and for children/youth
- All stakeholders need to have the same understanding of what it means to apply a child rights-based approach (including professionals from education or justice system for example)
- Children/young people should also receive appropriate training in children's rights and children's responsibilities
- Listening to children in all matters and decisions that affect their lives is the most important issue
- Caregivers need training in managing difficult behaviour of children and young people. They need strategies to cope with challenging children in relation to a child rights based approach

Experience of Estonia

The project has been implemented at the same time when comprehensive reform of the alternative care system in Estonia started. The state representatives were involved not only in the National Steering Group, but also during project development, to ensure their support to the project and implementation of developed activities after the project ends. Key actors from practical level were involved as participants in the trainings,



to achieve better understanding of the topic, to see the issues from different perspectives, and engage in discussions on relevant topics with professionals. At the same time there was an ongoing communication about project implementation, and regular meetings with those involved in the project.

Based on the experience from the project implementation in Estonia, following recommendations were formulated:

- Child rights should become a part of an obligatory training for care professionals (foster families, care workers and social workers)
- Updated trainings should be offered every 3 years to all care workers and follow-up trainings should be organized
- Positive parenting trainings need to be available to care workers and foster families
- Regular roundtables for care workers and other professionals should be organised and address various aspects related to children in care
- Professional education for social workers should include child rights module

As a result of this project, the partnership with the state and institutions in charge of training care professionals and foster families in Estonia has been significantly improved. Child rights module has been included into the renewed curriculum obligatory for all care workers, while obligatory training for foster parents now includes a more thorough part on child rights.