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Safe Spaces, Thriving Children - Embedding Trauma-Informed Practices into Alternative Care Settings



Co-funded by the Rights,
Equality and Citizenship (REC)
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Background

Children and young people in alternative care are highly vulnerable to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), with research showing that 75% of children in alternative care have experienced trauma prior to their alternative care placement.

Despite these common experiences, many care professionals are unequipped or inadequately trained in how to care for children and young people who have experienced trauma. Yet, these children need care professionals with the right skills, experience, and knowledge of psychosocial and mental health, in order to build trust and strong caring relationships, and to help them overcome these adverse experiences.

About the project

CELCIS has partnered with SOS Children's Villages International and their member associations in six European countries - Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary and Serbia - to develop and deliver training for care professionals, and support for organisations providing alternative care services to embed trauma-informed practices into their daily work. The partnership will also formulate policy recommendations to help ensure that child protection systems support children and young people who have been affected by trauma.

'Safe Places, Thriving Children – Embedding Trauma-Informed Practices into Alternative Care Settings' is a two-year project (2020-2022) co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. Through the project, our aim is to provide children and young people growing up in alternative care with the appropriate support in order for them to thrive and develop to their full potential. We do this by providing those who care for and work with children with the tools and knowledge required to understand trauma and address the needs of children and young people affected by it through trauma-informed care practices.

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The main characteristics of trauma-informed care are:

- Awareness - Everybody who provides alternative care is aware of the processes that affect children and young people who have experienced trauma
- Structural change - The organisational structure and care framework in place involves understanding, recognising, and responding to the effects of trauma
- Safety - Physical, psychological and emotional safety for both children and caregivers is ensured
- Empowerment - The care is set up in a way that helps children rebuild a sense of control and empowers them to be active in their recovery process

The project targets adults and professionals working with children and young people without parental care in Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary and Serbia. In Greece, Serbia, and Belgium, the project activities will also benefit those working with unaccompanied migrant and refugee children.

So that the quality of services provided to children and young people can improve across the welfare sector, the project also involves professionals from health, education, and the judiciary, to share working practices and establish understanding between services.

Key project activities

Over the course of the project, we will develop and implement:

1. An e-learning programme that aims to reach around 1,000 professionals from the social, educational, health and justice sectors, to equip them to better understand and identify adverse childhood experiences and their impact on the development of children.
2. Face-to-face training sessions to equip 400 to 500 child care professionals in the target countries with the skills to implement a trauma-informed approach in their work with children and young people in alternative care.
3. Organisational development workshops to embed trauma-informed care practices in around 18 selected organisations providing alternative care to approximately 1,000 children in order to promote sustainable, systemic change.
4. Policy recommendations to encourage the commitment of public authorities in supporting and implementing trauma-informed care practices on a national level. The adoption of these policy recommendations has the potential to impact on the wellbeing of 40,000 children living in alternative care across the countries involved in the project.

CELCIS' role in the project is to:

- Conduct a scoping exercise, consisting of a desk review and interviews with care experienced people and care professionals to understand the situation and specific needs in each of the project countries, to inform the development of all project deliverables
- Develop a practice guidance, a manual that seeks to improve the understanding and practice of those who care for and work with children

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who live in alternative care on the issue of trauma and, in particular, its psychosocial impact. This forms the backbone of all project activities

- Develop training manuals and implement a training of trainers programme, to prepare national trainers to implement training for adults who care for and work with children in alternative care on the issue of trauma, across all six project countries
- Develop an evaluation framework for all project activities, to evaluate the impact of our work

[Visit the Project Page](#)

Co-funder

This project is co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. Responsibility for this content lies solely with SOS Children's Villages International. The European Commission is not responsible for any information contained here.

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