

# TRAINING PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN CARE

The project **Training Professionals working with Children in Care** consists of a training on children's rights for alternative care professionals organised in five different Italian cities (Cagliari, Naples, Rome, Trento and Verona), as well as sessions involving children in alternative care in local care facilities.

The project focuses on children's rights, and particularly the **themes of right to be heard and to participation**, which will be covered in detail during a joint session for both children and adults. The idea is to provide a forum where they can talk and listen to each other, ask questions, exchange views, and offer advice and recommendations.



SOS VILLAGGI  
DEI BAMBINI  
ITALIA

## ON A LOCAL LEVEL: MEETINGS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### FIRST MEETING:

This meeting takes place in the afternoon and lasts around two hours. The participants are given a snack, before the facilitators present the project and ask them to reflect on their care experience and on right to participation.

### SECOND MEETING:

This all-day session (a few days after the first meeting) includes a break for lunch and an afternoon snack. This time the three or more groups that attended the first meeting individually<sup>1</sup> are brought together for a joint discussion. The aim is to continue the discussion from the previous days. The combined group will be asked to think of advice and questions they can share with the adults at the joint session that will take place a few weeks later.

### THIRD MEETING:

This session takes place around two weeks after the group started working on their presentation for the adults. It serves as a rehearsal for the meeting the following afternoon.

### FOURTH MEETING:

The fourth session lasts around three and a half hours. It includes a couple of hours of discussion with the adults who have completed the course, a half-hour break with a snack, and a closing session when the course participants can tell us how it went and what we can take away from the exchange of views among the children, and between children and adults.

## ON A NATIONAL LEVEL: PROJECT IN.FO. CLOSING SESSION 23-24 OCTOBER 2016, ISTITUTO DEGLI INNOCENTI, FLORENCE

This two-day event is attended by representatives of the children who attended the courses in Cagliari, Naples, Rome, Trento and Verona, and by the care professionals who took part in training in those cities.

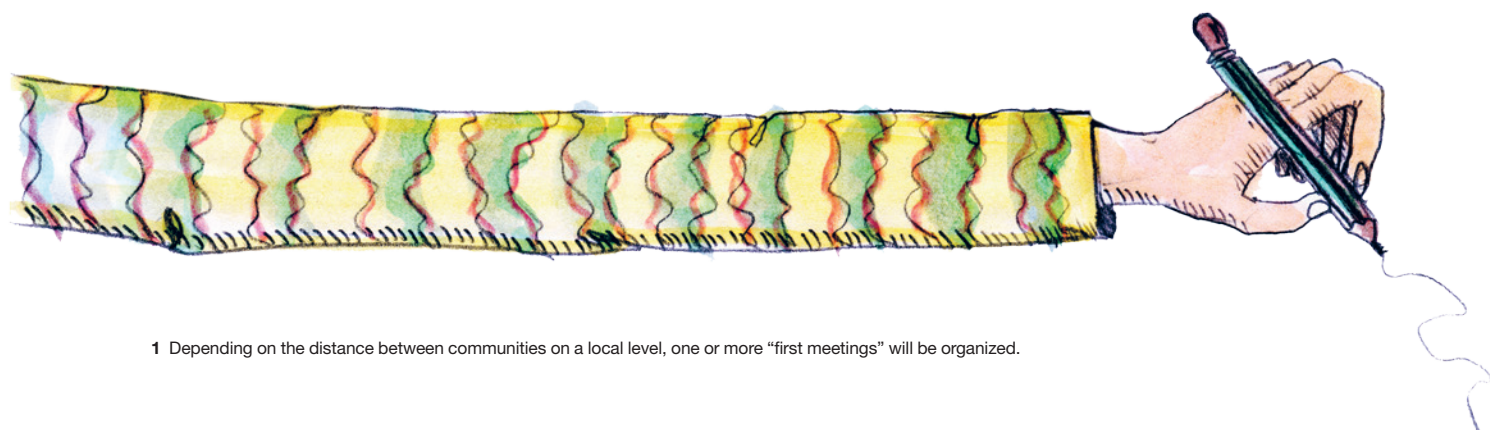
There will be an opportunity for an exchange of views among the children and between children and adults. The event will also be attended by representatives from the project's National Steering Group, which in turn is composed of adults who work with children and children's rights with a particular focus on children who have lived in alternative care.

The key objectives of this final event are to spread the results of the project and share a list of the recommendations that emerged from the meetings held in the various cities.

## ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: CLOSING EVENT PARIS, 8-9 NOVEMBER 2016

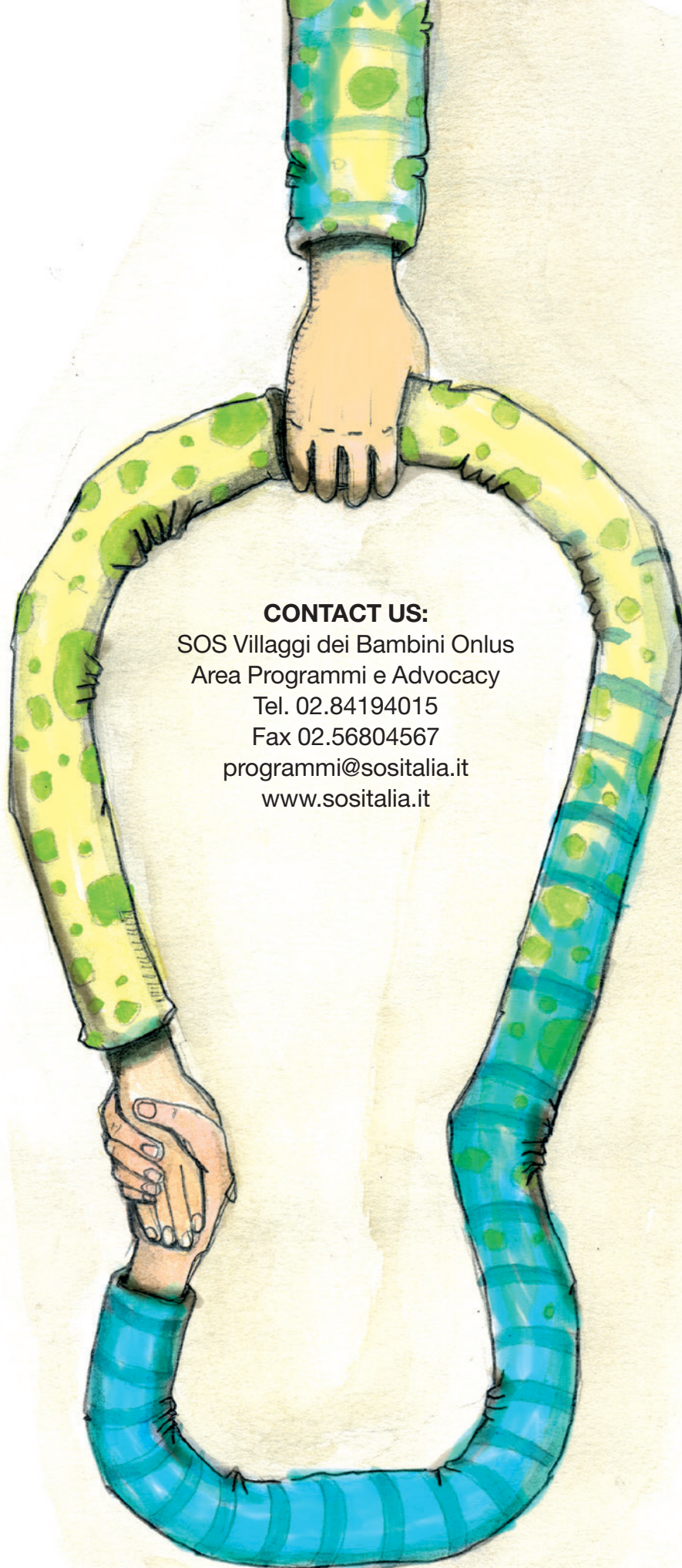
It is a two day meeting: on day 1 an open round table where young experts, project partners from different countries and European authorities and organizations discuss about the main themes and outcomes of the project. On day 2 young experts and project partners discussed the implementation process and sustainability plans.

The key objectives of this final event are to spread the results of the project and share a list of the recommendations that emerged from the meetings held in the various cities.



<sup>1</sup> Depending on the distance between communities on a local level, one or more "first meetings" will be organized.





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# WORKSHOPS WITH CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE

## PROGRAMME – FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND CARE PROFESSIONALS

- B1** - focus group with various professionals
- B2** - presentation of the project to care professionals
- B3** - presentation of the project to children  
and young people in care + first workshop
- C1** – second one-day workshop with children  
and young people the day after B3

## TRAINING

1-2 weeks after the initial sessions: a two-day training for professionals, with two hours of face-to-face discussion with children during the second afternoon.

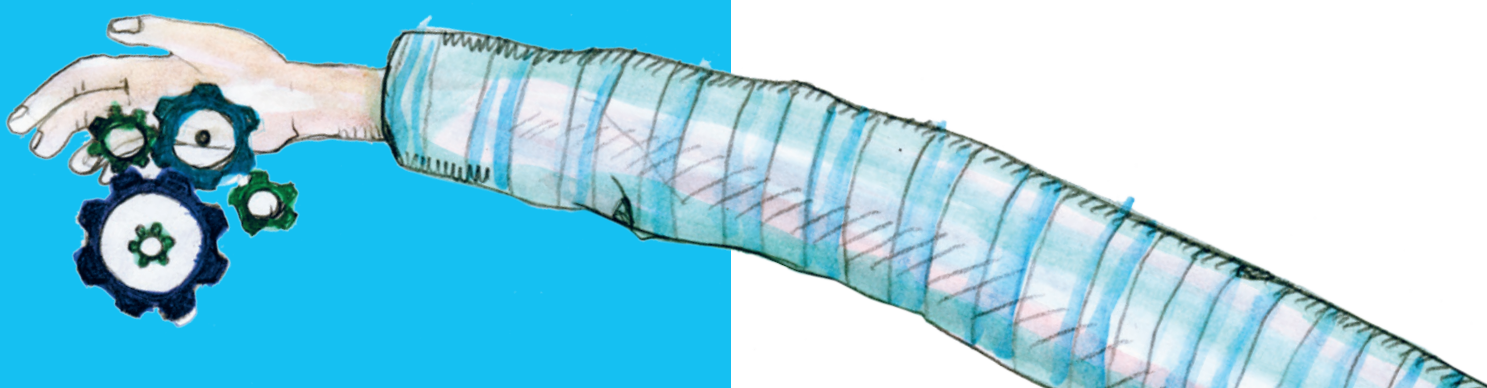
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## SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

- ▶ 12-17 years of age
- ▶ Interested in taking part in the project
- ▶ Able to miss a few hours of school
- ▶ Agree to take part in the project, with permission to be away from school and a consent form for the use of images and audio or video recordings

(We decided to reach out to more care facilities to increase the chances of having a fair number of children, which we estimate to be 20).





## B2 – SESSION WITH CARE PROFESSIONALS (AROUND 30 MINUTES)

In each care facility, we meet with care professionals (from now on CPs) to present the project (they should have received information from their community leader, who in turn should liaise with the local person of reference). We describe the theme of the training and the work with children, including the part where they may be involved in the training itself.

This session is also an opportunity to have information about children's specific needs and to answer their questions about the project and its various stages. If necessary, we remind them at this point of the need for consent forms, explaining the reasons (audio recordings enabling us to follow the discussion and keep a log of the session content; photos and videos to document the course), and bring them copies of these.

**Materials provided:** consent forms, project leaflet and a short reminder of the different phases of the project that will involve them.

## B3 – FIRST SESSION WITH CHILDREN (TWO HOURS IN THE AFTERNOON)

In each care facility, we meet with children who are the right age and who are interested in taking part in the project activities. We present/summarise the project, specifically the project activities and the goals we set for them (they should have already received some information from their caregivers) and their role in the training for CPs. At the same time, we give the children the *Discover your rights!*<sup>2</sup> poster. This serves as an introduction to the leaflet and guide which will be given to them later.

The presentation of the facilitators and the project - *Training Professionals Working with Children in Care* (see **confidentiality and possibility of audio recording**<sup>3</sup>) acts as an introduction to the first session, whose aim is to get the children thinking about care and the right to participation.

After asking the children to introduce themselves one at a time (within the same community, we have a round of introductions and possibly an icebreaker<sup>4</sup>), we give each of them a **post-it note and ask them to write**

**down a fact, situation, episode, feeling or memorable experience that they vividly remember concerning their alternative care.** If possible, facilitators will endeavour to use these exact words so as not to influence the children in their choice of an episode. If there is silence, or if children seem to be struggling, facilitators can rephrase the instruction ("On the post-it note, write down a keyword to do with something positive or negative that happened recently or when you first went into care").

After giving the group time to think about what to write on the post-it note, as soon as the children have completed the task, they will be asked to stick it on a wall, board or other space chosen beforehand by the facilitators.

Afterwards, children will be asked to tell the rest of the group what they wrote on their post-it note. This will stimulate a discussion during which children can add similar or different stories and experiences to those of their peers.

Once everyone has described their post-it note, facilitators will assess (depending on the time and the amount of content produced by the group) whether to ask about other experiences or stories they might have ("*Do you want to add anything that didn't occur to you before? Anything we haven't covered yet to do with your alternative care?*").

At the end of the session, facilitators will remind the group of the **next scheduled project dates (group session, preparatory session and participation in the training course, etc.)**, explaining that they will **return to this initial activity in a few days' time**, during the C1 group session.

At the end of the first session we give each child a leaflet. We finish with a snack and say goodbye until C1 (one or two days later).

### AT THE END OF THE SESSION WITH CHILDREN

► Between the end of this session and the following session C1, facilitators review the information that emerged from the first discussion by dividing the post-it notes and any other stories/topics told by the children into the four themed categories identified in the leaflet (post-it notes in two different colours).

► At the end of the session with children, the facilitators draft a summary report of the session for internal project use.

**Materials provided:** *Discover your rights!* poster, copies of leaflets, post-it notes in two different colours, flip-charts, pens and markers, masking tape, snacks.

<sup>2</sup> To arouse interest in and facilitate the approach to the *Discover your rights!* booklet, which was a part of the project, we also hand out the poster and leaflet summarising this and use them during the course.

<sup>3</sup> During the presentation, reference should be made to the confidentiality of the subjects covered with the children (names, details, etc.) and the importance of documenting their contribution (through notes, recordings, etc.) during the various stages of the course. For this reason, we ask children if we can make an audio recording of the session (the audio recording will allow facilitators to follow the conversation before summarising its content, and will also allow to avoid any interpretation, synthesis or inference).

<sup>4</sup> Possible icebreaker: ball exercise, where someone starts by saying his or her name and something about himself or herself, and then throws the ball to someone else, who will have to repeat what the previous person said and introduce himself or herself in the same way, before throwing the ball to another person. Alternatively: in pairs, everyone introduces themselves to their partner, before introducing their partner to the rest of the group (this takes a bit more time, but creates a friendly and intimate atmosphere – without going too far, since children can say what they want).

## C1- SECOND SESSION WITH CHILDREN

### (FULL DAY FROM 10:00 TO 17:00 – FEW DAYS AFTER B3 SESSION)

At this session, the group is composed of different subgroups which know each other and have already worked on these subjects before. The aim is to drill down into the points that emerged with the help of the guide, in preparation for the session with adults on the training course.

#### 10:00-12:30 TEAM-BUILDING AND PRESENTATION OF CATEGORIES

This larger group is composed of children aged 12 to 17 from different care facilities. We begin with a fun and creative team-building activity, *the group portrait*, in which the children draw a character who represents the group. The picture can then be used as a reference for participants for the remainder of the course.

#### THE GROUP PORTRAIT

Children are given one or more numbered cards, each containing a precisely worded question (concerning a feature of a hypothetical “character”, e.g. name, age, how long he or she has been in care, etc.). Children will then write down the answer to the question or questions on the piece of paper (they can also make up an answer). The cards will then be collected and sorted in ascending order by the number written on the back of the card. The presenter will link each answer to a sentence (he or she may have to improvise) (e.g. her name is Bianca, she has been in care for three years, etc.).

One by one, as the character takes shape, one of the children will draw the person on a board (based on the features described), in a way that takes everyone’s contribution into account. The character can be drawn in secret and then revealed at the end, or drawn gradually in front of the other children.

We then return to the first session, presenting the four themed categories for the post-it notes they wrote at the previous session:

1. Your care experience
2. Participation and access to information
3. Your personal care plan
4. Leaving care

During the plenary session, we will explain the categories and the distribution of the post-it notes. Children will be invited to discuss these, adding other categories or rewording them if they want.

#### 2. L'ACCESSO ALLE INFORMAZIONI



#### LUNCH BREAK FROM 12:30 TO 13:30

#### 13:30-15:30 WORK IN SUBGROUPS AND SHARING OF RESULTS

After the lunch break, we ask children to divide into groups (ideally four groups of three to five people, one for each category: if necessary, a different number may be used in order to focus on specific categories, depending on how many children there are). The aim is to identify one key point for each area which encompasses or represents the discussion on that topic. This will then be phrased as advice or a question for the care professionals they will meet.

The results of the group work are shared during a plenary session **from 15:00 to 15:30**. During this stage, each group will present the results of its work and explain how they have been working at the advice/recommendation to be presented to the adults. The idea is that the whole group (see initial group portrait) will agree on the findings. If not, an attempt will be made to come up with an alternative proposal which takes into account the views of each group member. They are given one hour and a half 13:30-15:00.

#### SNACK BREAK FROM 15:30 TO 16:00

#### 16:00-17:00 GROUP WORK ON THE PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a snack break, the group continues working together to prepare for the joint session with adults on the training course. We will ask children to describe how they were involved in the project and what prompted them to take part; how they tackled the subject and what advice/questions the group came up with. During this stage, the group will decide who does what in the next meeting (the day before the session with adults): should there be a spokesperson, and how will the presentation be given (Boards? PowerPoint? Photos? Use the same boards, or create new ones?). After discussing it as a group, children may be asked to divide into smaller groups to work on the presentation of individual recommendations.

This will also be an opportunity to explain to the children what will happen at the session with adults (exchange of views with adults after the presentation of the course by both groups, which will be a chance to ask questions, request explanations, etc.).

At the end of the session, we hand out the *Discover your rights!* booklet.

**Materials provided:** pre-prepared boards with category images and post-it notes from session B3, copies of the guide, blank post-it notes, blank boards, pens and markers, masking tape, lunch and afternoon snack.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING FOR CARE PROFESSIONALS

### AFTERNOON OF THE FIRST DAY OF TRAINING FROM 15:00 TO 17:00

The session with children and facilitators will take place during the first afternoon of the training course, parallel with the training. This will be a kind of “rehearsal” for the presentation that the children will give the following day.

### AFTERNOON OF THE SECOND DAY OF TRAINING FROM 14:00 TO AROUND 17:30

*General programme for the exchange of views between the adults and children*

**14:30** welcome and introduction of the adults and children (initial icebreaker)

**14:45-15:15** children present what they’ve done in the previous meetings and their recommendations

**15:15-15:30** Care professionals present the training they took part in to the children in a simple and entertaining way, focusing mainly on the 4 pillars of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**15:30-16:00** debate (trivia, questions, clarification of the two group presentations, etc.).

Closure of the meeting with a group activity:  
“What can I take away from this experience?”

### SNACK BREAK FROM 16:00 TO AROUND 16:30

### 16:30-17:30 CLOSING SESSION

One of the facilitators will take the children to another room at the training venue for the closing session, so that they can have a dedicated moment. The children will be asked the question “What can I take away from this course and from today’s session?”, wrapping up outputs from the various stages of the course (using the flyer that will be given to them). They will also be asked to complete a short evaluation form.

### FACILITATOR NEEDS TO CHECK:

- ▶ Possibility of audio recording during session B3, plenary session C1, training and closing session (SOS release form for the use of photos and images)
- ▶ Possibility of filming the exchange of views between adults and children during the training
- ▶ Room layout (preferably work in a circle to avoid “sides”)
- ▶ Possibility of involving a member from young experts group<sup>5</sup> (in B3 sessions, or in B3 and C1 sessions, and during the two afternoon training sessions if possible). If one of them is involved, he/she will need some time (before the activity starts with the children) to define his/her role in the following meetings of the group of children.



<sup>5</sup> The Young Experts Group is composed of young people from 17 to 25 years-old who took part in the National Steering Group meetings and was involved from the very beginning of the project in each and every phase.

\* The initial phase 2015-2016 of this project was supported by the European Union.



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