

YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD THE WAY!



The effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child remains a major challenge all over the world. It is even more the case for the most vulnerable children, and particularly for those in care.

This is the reason why SOS Children's Villages International, in partnership with the Council of Europe, Eurochild and with support from the European Commission, initiated a European project designed to promote a child rights-based approach in professional practice. A training module has been created and piloted in eight partner countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Romania.

In France, this project was coordinated by SOS Children's Villages, with support from the National Federation of Child Protection Associations and from the Defender of Rights. The National Centre for Territorial Civil Service (INSET) of Angers is a training partner.

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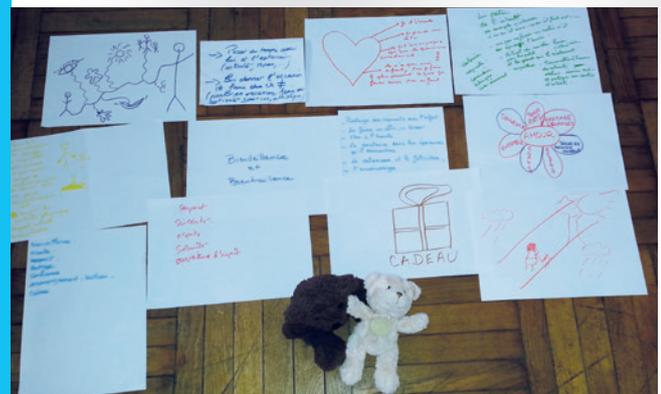
While designing the project, the partners were committed to placing a significant emphasis on youth participation. In France, the choice was made to shape young people's contribution together with them.

To initiate this collaboration, young people with alternative care experience (members of the National Federation of Departmental Associations Supporting Children in Care - Fédération Nationale des Associations Départementales d'Entraide des Personnes Accueillies en Protection de l'Enfance, FNADEPAPE) and young people with expertise in child rights (child rights ambassadors - jeunes ambassadeurs des droits auprès des enfants, JADE) were invited to participate in the project's National Steering Group. These young people very quickly outlined how they would like to participate: **create their own training session, which would conclude the European training module, and directly facilitate** this session for the professionals.

A group of nine people aged 16 to 24 participated in this unique experience:

- ▶ **Léo**, member of the FNADEPAPE, **Julie**, **Alisson** and **Jotam**, members of social life councils at the project partners' facilities¹, and **Gabrielle**, who participated in the consultation for the development of the law of 14 May 2016
- ▶ **Fouzy** and **Maité**, who participated in the peer research project «Des jeunes sortant de la protection de l'enfance font des recherches sur leur monde»² («Young people leaving care analyse their own environment»)
- ▶ **Victoria** and **Clara**, two former child rights ambassadors (Defender of Rights).

This group was supported by **Véronique Dimicoli**, trainer and actor, author of two theatrical works, one on



child rights, produced with the children of the SOS Children's Village of Persan (93), and the other one on child protection, presenting the results of the peer research. They gathered for a weekend of hard work and then for several meetings, during which the key words were seriousness and conviviality – the two components necessary for a nice creative environment! After an introduction on the European project and an overview of the objectives and techniques of training facilitation, the exchanges quickly focused on the links between the needs and rights of children in care, illustrated by many experiences and stories.

¹Sauvegarde 44 and SOS Children's Villages

²Research coordinated by Pierrine Robin, University Paris Est Créteil, in collaboration with SOS Children's Villages, the association Apprentis d'Auteuil and the departmental councils of Hauts de Seine and Val de Marne, with the support of the National Observatory for Children at Risk.

THE TRAINING SESSION DEVELOPED AND FACILITATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

The half-day training session is organised into three parts:

- ▶ The **needs game**, developed by the group offers a **sensitisation path**, in which professionals' practices are analysed both based on the experiences of looked-after children and young people and from the child rights perspective.
- ▶ The **change game**, an activity that is more common in training workshops, confronts participants with orders they have to follow in a very limited amount of time, which symbolises how violent the change endured can be.
- ▶ The **engagement charter** which follows these two activities full of emotion, enables each participant to focus again on his or her own professional context and identify how this training will change his or her professional practices and attitudes towards children in care. It can be in any kind of format, whether playful or poetic, etc ...



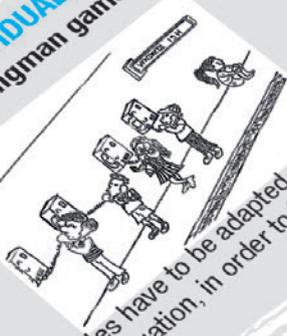
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NEED FOR INFORMATION
two texts (extracted from diary - text written by a young adult about reading his own file)
Informing is not an easy task, but how does it compare to the consequences (short, medium and long term) of lack or absence of information for the child?

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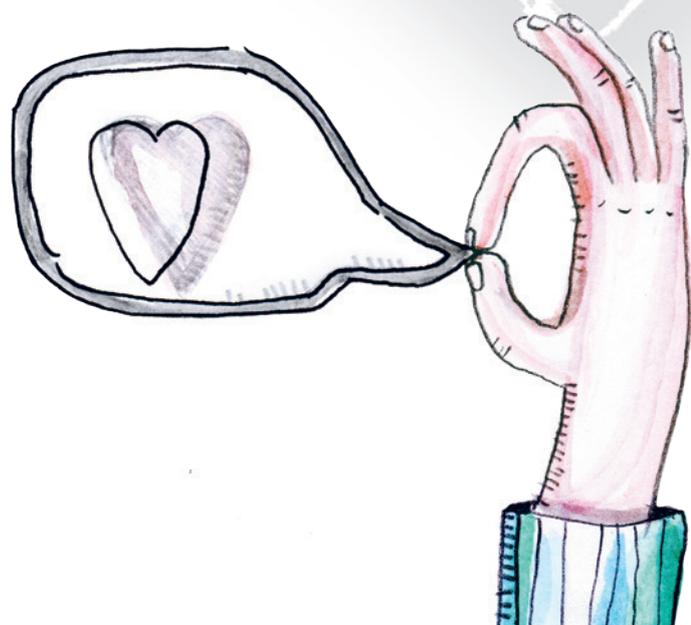
NEED FOR NO STIGMATISATION
active reading of scenes
A starting point to reflect on how to deal with confidentiality and information sharing in order to protect children from stigmatisation.

NEED FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT
The Hangman game



Rules have to be adapted depending on the situation, in order to fulfil child rights.

NEED TO BE LISTENED TO
video story in a loop
The story loses all its sense by being continuously repeated by all professionals surrounding the child.



FOCUSING ON THE BASIC NEEDS GAME

Objective:

sensitise care professionals to the basic needs and rights of young people in care.

The concept:

▶ The game focuses on a number of basic needs and uses the hopscotch model. Each square is dedicated to one need, and an activity based on a real-life event illustrates this need.

▶ Participants are split up into two groups and take turns acting the roles of children and professionals. They have to succeed in each activity to be able to move to the final square and get a piece of the puzzle, which will reveal **the ultimate need: the need for care and love**.

▶ During the whole game, cooperation is fostered so that the instructions can be fulfilled and the wealth of professional experiences and practices can be underlined.

WHAT DO THE PROFESSIONALS THINK?

What I really enjoyed:

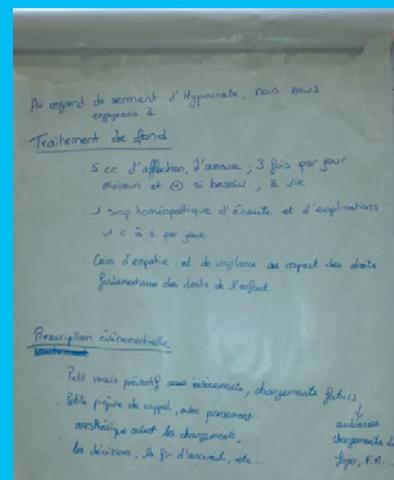
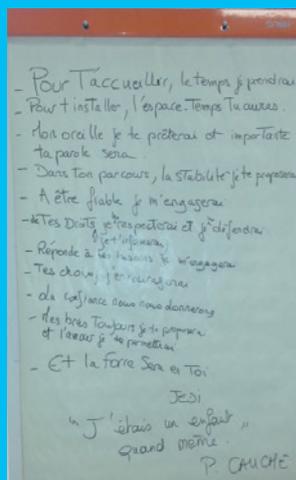
“ The fact that young people came to talk to us about child rights through games and their own experiences. I really felt touched.

“ I don't want to sound demagogic, but I just want to express my admiration for this session: fresh, surprising, dynamic and thought-provoking.

“ The change game enabled me to put myself into young people's shoes, to understand the adaptability this requires from them, sometimes without any explanation or support, without understanding the expectations of the professionals taking care of them.

“ The feeling of really being closer to the experiences and perceptions of young people.

What they committed to:



The young people enjoyed this training, and they enjoyed meeting professionals.

To learn more or get in touch with them, please send an e-mail to: sdelcroix@sosve.org