



LEAVING CARE

Issue 1
June 2018

Hi! We hope you are doing well and that you are as excited about the *Leaving Care* project as we are. Here comes the first newsletter for 2018, bringing many updates.

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS FINDINGS

Supporting young people who have grown up in alternative care is essential so that these young people can lead independent lives. This is why SOS Children's Villages has undertaken different initiatives to better understand the situation of young people leaving care and the factors that can determine a successful transition to a self-reliant life as adults.

The *Leaving Care* project builds on findings from the [Prepare for Leaving Care](#) project (2017-2018). These findings include:

- Young people want to start preparing for the transition to independence two to three years before actually leaving alternative care.
- Care leavers lack the support network that children growing up with their families have.
- Care leavers want to be supported by care professionals who approach them in a respectful manner.
- Care leavers want tailor-made responses that meet their individual needs.

The Prepare for Leaving Care Practice Guidance and Training Manual, developed together with CELCIS and initially implemented in Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy and Croatia, seek to address these challenges.

PROJECT KICK-OFF

The kick-off took place on 24-26 April in Vienna, with participants from the six project countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Italy and Romania. During the **2,5 days** participants took a closer look at the different project work packages, clarified roles and responsibilities and developed strategies for mitigating possible challenges. It was a productive meeting!

Participants agreed that by the end of the project (April 2020) the following outcomes will have been reached:

- Scoping exercise including peer to peer interviews
- Training of 12 Master Trainers (2 in each country)
- Delivery of national trainings (including a youth module) to 385 care professionals in the 6 project countries
- A digital one-stop-shop ([YouthLinks](#)) in 5 project countries
- Development of National Policy Recommendations
- European Leaving Care Conference
- Final Project Evaluation

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.

About the project:

Leaving Care – An Integrated Approach to capacity building of Professionals and Young People (2018-2020) aims to embed a child rights based culture into child protection systems which improves outcomes for children and young people in particular in the preparation for leaving care.

Project partners include FICE Austria, SOS Bulgaria, SOS Estonia, SOS Hungary, SOS Italy, SOS Romania and FONPC.



Stay in touch!

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PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH CARE EXPERIENCE

Youth participation is central and integral to all project activities. National Young Expert Groups (YEGs) are organised in each of the implementing project countries to ensure that the voices of young people with care experience are heard. The young people select two peers from each National YEG to represent them as members of the International YEG and the Project Steering Group. At the end of the project, the YEG members will assess their involvement in project activities and the extent to which their input is reflected in key tools and project outputs.

Fabienne, from Austria, who lived two years in an alternative care facility is excited that young people are playing a central role in training care professionals. “(Care professionals) do their best, of course,” she says, “but because I lived there all the time, I saw a lot of things they aren’t able to see.” She looks forward to sharing her insider perspective through this project.

SCOPING

Project partners are now in the middle of the scoping exercise. The aim of this activity is to identify progress and challenges at a national and local level in terms of care leaving policy, implementation and capacity to deliver. The scoping exercise includes a mapping of the leaving care system, a questionnaire and peer-to-peer interviews.

The information supplied by the project partners and young people with care experience will be analysed by a team of experts at CELCIS and will then inform the preparation of the Training of Trainers, the co-development of the Youth Module and the national trainings as well as the national recommendations and the content of the digital one-stop-shop (YouthLinks).

WHAT’S COMING UP

By the end of August, **the scoping report** will be shared with all project partners and create the basis for our future work. Project partners will also finalize their selection of **Master Trainers** and **Youthlinks Coordinators** by the end of the summer. All Masters Trainers will receive pre-course work in preparation for their first Training of Trainers in September. The Youthlinks Coordinators will be invited for a virtual training on the platform and start working on the content for their group together with the young people with care experience.

Wishing you all a relaxing summer!

Quotes from young people with care experience who attended the kick-off:

“Care professionals have a very important responsibility. Many times there are professionals who do not have the necessary skills, who do not have adequate training or they are not empathetic enough. ... It is important that the professionals receive ongoing training because things are changing constantly.”

Norbert, Hungary

Sometimes in my country I see the care professionals doing their work by the book and not really having the human interaction that is so needed in this work. That is why I am here at this workshop. I am really happy that SOS Children’s Villages is focusing on training both the professionals and the young people that left or are leaving the care system.”

Andreeas, Romania