Partners Search

The project:

Priority III – Capacity building for legal and other practitioners such as social and health workers, youth workers and the police to pilot and roll out multi-disciplinary evidence-based child-friendly practices in the area of diversion

Although many European Nations have long established legislation and procedures regarding the interviewing processes of children who have been involved in a crime, either as a victim, as a witness, or even as perpetrators, there has never been an effort in streamlining these judicial interview procedures into the form of an interview protocol, much less one that can be utilized across the European States. Furthermore, the economic crisis that has plagued the countries in the European South in recent years, has led to socio-economic shifts that have ripened the probabilities for increased criminal activity and victimization, particularly with regards to minors. In addition, there has been an increased global societal emphasis on issues regarding children and teenagers, such as abuse, bullying and electronic aggression, a fact that in turn has led to increased numbers of minors to report such offenses and consequently to be put under legal procedures, and interviewed with sketchy and patched up procedures, due to the lack of centralized direction.

Therefore, it has become apparent that there is a significant necessity for the design and implementation of an interview protocol that ensures on one hand that the basic human rights of minors will be met in a child-friendly manner and on the other that the procedures administered by forensic and legal experts will be clarified and simplified, utilizing expertise from many forensic disciplines, including but not limited to forensic psychology, forensic medicine, social work, law, etc.

The proposed project focuses on the aforementioned problem and aims at providing solutions at two trajectories: a) Child-friendly justice Protocols for Minors b) education and training programs for legal practitioners and legal institutions on children’s legal rights. More specifically, the proposed project aims at:

- Designing interview protocols for child witnesses and victims varying from early childhood to adolescence
- Designing interview protocols for minor perpetrators varying from early childhood to adolescence
- Testing and implementing the protocols across various key regions in Europe.
- Utilize best practices, policies and legislation currently in existence and transition them into protocols and specific modules.
- Delivering procedures that uphold the fundamental rights of the child and ensure that the minor does not suffer from re-victimization or harassment from the procedure itself or the officials involved.

These objectives are designed for the following target groups:
• Children aged from early childhood through to late adolescence
• Children of minority and vulnerable populations such as Roma, immigrants, Muslims, etc.

It is expected that a specific protocol will be designed for each developmental age for the minors, while a training manual and a training program will be designed for each group of practitioners, targeting each group’s specified needs.

**Organisation's Background and Experience**

The Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development (EPEKSA) is a politically independent centre of scientific research and social intervention operating as a non-profit, civil society organisation. The objective of the Society is the promotion of the principles of social justice, solidarity and equality, as found in the documents and founding declarations of international organizations and national constitutions.

As far as it concerns the administrative division of the Society, EPEKSA is being managed by the Board of Directors. The Scientific Council guarantees the scientific validity of the publications. In both Boards, participate prominent individuals from the Academic Community and the society. EPEKSA’s activities include implementation of National and European programmes, publicity actions, surveys conduction, scientific researches implementation, conferences and workshops organisation and publications. In addition, EPEKSA has cooperated successfully in the past and maintains strong cooperative ties with the Greek Government, Greek Ministries, Universities in Greece and abroad, The European Commission, World Health Organization and numerous other scientific, research and government entities.

Based in Athens, the workforce consists of forty six (46) scientists of the social, economic and political science. In EPEKSA’s actions are involved as freelancers scientists, researchers and activists. In addition, there are over sixty (60) volunteers active in promoting Society’s objectives.

Moreover, EPEKSA has seven (7) branches in seven different Greek cities and has implemented more than thirty (30) programmes (National and European) and action plans the last ten years. These programmes are related to poverty and social inequality, public employment policies, social inclusion policies, social protection, health and long term care, family policy, gender, child policies, social and sustainable development, education and vocational training, migration, corporate social responsibility, youth.

EPEKSA has created Working Groups, consisting of the aforementioned scientists, aiming to raise awareness for social matters among society. EPEKSA’s staff has worked in, similar to this program, projects, in the research field and at publicity actions. A plethora of them had to do with Youth for Social Cohesion, Corporate Social Responsibility, Health, Employment, Migration, Social Security, Social Economy, Social Exclusion, Gender-Family-Child and Culture.

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