



Criminal Justice - JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4498 project: "ALTERNATIVE TRACKS – integrated approach to minors offenders and their families" "This project was funded by the European Union"

Benchmarks of Comparative Patterns of European Partnership Project as Good Practices for Juvenile Crime: *UK, Italy, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal* .



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Introduction

Our project - "ALTERNATIVE TRACKS - integrated approach to minor offenders and their families" is a European partnership project aimed at strengthening sentences as alternative punishments for juvenile crime in six participating countries: *UK, Italy, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal*. More specifically, it is intended to develop the rights of "children" and young adolescents (It is noted that the use of the term "children" is recognised - by the International Convention - to indicate both children and young adolescents under the age of majority) and multi-disciplinary methods of intervention for juveniles to promote social reintegration of minor offenders.

The partnership approach is intended to highlight the different ages of minor offenders from six European countries, at which ages they are punishable, the different National criminal laws and the various measures of prevention, rehabilitation or deprivation of liberty of minors in the states in addition to changes according to age. The project also aims to strengthen the knowledge and professional skills of public and private actors (such as, law enforcement officials, the judiciary institutions & NGOs) engaged in prevention and reintegration work in order to guarantee a better protection of children and their rights. The international and European frameworks provide all European countries with more detailed guidance and recommendations to support their efforts to establish a system of juvenile justice administration and further relevant international documents, as well as a comprehensive juvenile justice policy.

The same need is highlighted in the vast international law that has dealt with the protection of children and the administration of juvenile justice both within the United Nations and the Council of Europe. International law, better known as the Beijing Rules, adopted by the UN Resolution 40/33 of 1985 serves as the "Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice".

The overall objective of the project is to map and scope good practices of comparative implementation of programmes for juvenile crime in all six participating countries: *UK, Italy, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal* identifying innovative approaches to projects and services alternative to detention, and to build a Vademecum, which includes:

- socio-educational service designed to promote overall wellbeing of the child deviant, encouraging self-expression, respect for dignity and autonomy, promote recovery and social education of minors subjected to judicial penalties, reduce the risk of possible aggravations for precautionary measures and / or relapse following the resignation preventing juvenile delinquency;
- paths motivational orientation and individualised social-work aimed at educational law,
- restorative justice aimed to empower offenders and the expression of suffering of victims, involvement of the families of the offenders in programme of re-education, rehabilitation and re-integration.

The aim is to describe similarities and differences of intervention selected by the project partners from all six European countries, to strengthen and improve the reintegration of children in conflict with the law, with special focus on rehabilitation. In examining interventions selected by all participating partners in our project in reducing youth reoffending, there were key themes as benchmarks that emerged from the projects that were chosen as good practices by each partner from all participating countries.

Overview of the Different and Punishable Ages of Minor Offenders in Six European Countries (Italy, UK, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria & Portugal)

The general overview of the criminal juvenile justice system among six European partners namely, *Italy, UK, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal* in the field of youth justice, is fraught with complexities and differences. The very definition of a child, the classification of crime or penal custody for children and the extent to which aspects of youth justice is recorded, vary enormously throughout Europe (*Criminal Justice - JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4498*). For instance, the terms 'juvenile' and 'young person' may in some European Countries refer to a person under 18 years old and in others simply to a person who is treated differently by the criminal justice system from an adult. Most European systems have distinct ways of dealing with young people under the age of 21 years old in conflict with the law. In some European countries, those deprived of their liberty will be detained in 'youth custody' until their mid 20s and distinct procedures will be applied to young people over the age of 18 during the sentencing process (*Muncie 2004*). Furthermore, the age of criminal responsibility appears to have different meanings across Europe. The official age of criminal responsibility may not be the earliest age at which a child can be involved with the justice system due to being in conflict with the law (*Criminal Justice - JUST/2013/JPEN/AG/4498*). For instance, in the *UK*, it is simply not possible to come before the criminal courts or to be arrested under the age of criminal responsibility, which is at the extremely low age of ten. However, the *Italian* system determines that if the minor is younger than 14 years at the time of an offence, he/she is not imputable, whereas if he/she is between 14 and 18 years, together with a proven ability to be compos mentis, he/she is liable. Similarly in *Romania*, the minor under the age of 14 is not criminally liable. However, a minor who is aged between 14 and 16 is criminally liable if it proves that he/she committed the act with discernment, where a minor who has attained the age of 16 has criminal responsibility according to the law. Additionally, in *Portugal*, the criminal age applies to young people up to 21 years who, between 12 and 16 years old, have practiced acts qualified as crime by the law. The criminal age in *Bulgaria* is between the ages of 14-18, whereas the criminal age of a minor in *Greece* is between the ages of 8- 18 years old.

Below is a table of representation of Age of Criminality in all Six Partnership Countries.

Table 1:

Country	Minimum age of criminal responsibility
Italy	14
United Kingdom	10
Greece	13 (but educational measures can be imposed from the age of 8)
Romania	14
Bulgaria	14
Portugal	16

The variations in all the six European Countries, namely, *Italy, UK, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal* in the field of youth justice have wide ranging differences of approach towards juvenile justice across Europe. Furthermore, the differences in variations

suggests that youth crime has become an increasingly political issue and that for this reason it has been especially difficult to implement international standards for many countries that will compile with universally. The differences of age in the criminal justice systems is indicative of the difficulties of setting standards in this area which could account for why most European countries have failed to adhere to the most important international treaty in this area and the United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Furthermore, many countries appear to have placed reservations on some of the key issues on youth justice. Despite the prevalence of non compliance from some of the countries, juvenile justice is the subject of international guidance that is extremely comprehensive and detailed.

Benchmarks of Comparative Patterns in Youth Justice: Approaches Across Six European Countries

The Role of the Family as a Socialisation Agent as Benchmark for Alternative Justice

Benchmarks for good practices of implementation of programmes for juvenile crime in the *UK, Italy, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal*, have been identified as innovative approaches to alternative detention. These benchmarks for good practices from all participating countries strengthen "*The role of the Family as a Socialisation Agent*" to identify the risk factors associated with the early onset of offending and assess the effectiveness of early intervention programmes: this is not solely dependent upon economic factors but upon the quality of the emotional security which gives children the level of confidence and self-esteem which is necessary for their personal growth. The family is where children learn respect for others and themselves.

Effects of Family as Socialisation Agent

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is one of the best-known theories of personality in stages of development and offers a model for understanding socialisation and the potential identification of risk factors associated with the early onset of offending. In each stage of a child's development, there are influences or agents of socialisation who have an impact on the child. Early in a child's development, the **family** is, of course, the strongest agent, but as the child advances to preschool age, programmes or schools begin to exert influence. At school age, peers are active socialisation agents. According to Erik Erikson's theory, for the first eight years, where most of juvenile criminality occurs, the *family, school, community, and peers* play a role in how children learn to interact with the world around them. **Socialisation** is a lifelong process during which children can learn about social expectations and how to interact with other people. Nearly all of the behaviour that we consider to be 'human nature' is actually learned through socialisation and it is during socialisation that children learn about behavioural and social norms that help them fit into society. Although families are the primary agents of socialisation, some of the most important socialisation that occurs in childhood include - school and peers, to name but a few.

One of the good practices of the projects identified that is unique to the *UK* as part of Crime Reduction for juveniles were implemented in "*Pre-school and Sure Start*" Programmes (*Sure Start, 2005*). *The UK-approach* "On Track" (*A. France, Hine,*

Armstrong, & Camina, 2004) which – situated between primary and secondary crime prevention - is part of the *Crime Reduction Programme* and includes a series of projects aimed at identifying the risk factors associated with the early onset of offending and assess the effectiveness of early intervention programmes. The interventions-which were either done directly with children, using a non-stigmatising universal approach, or indirectly, through support and training to parents and professionals - include *Pre-School education*, with *Home Visiting, Parent Support and Training, Family Therapy, Home School Partnership and Specialist Interventions*. This evidence-based programme has been currently evaluated positively.

Another *UK* programme, focused on early prevention is "Sure Start" (*Sure Start, 2005*). This was designed as a unique approach to early intervention for children aged 0-4, their *families and communities*. Rather than providing specific services, the initiative, influenced by the US programme Head Start, aims to change existing services. It is run through local programmes in the most deprived regions of the country and aims to achieve better outcomes for *children, parents and communities* by increasing the availability of childcare for all children; improving children's health, education and emotional development; and supporting parents in their role and in developing employment aspirations. There are around 520 local programmes which are also run in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, covering about 800 children in each area. New facilities are being provided including drop-in centres, childcare and mobile health clinics. Each programme is managed by a partnership of statutory agencies (including health and education professionals), childcare professionals and voluntary and community groups, as well as parents, who work together to develop an integrated approach to services for families. This partnership, which is different in each programme, was seen as one of the most innovative features in Sure Start.

Re-Socialisation and Re-Integration of Juveniles as Benchmark for Alternative Justice

One of the good practices from *Romania* that supports the notion of Re-Socialisation and Re-Integration of Juveniles was the Romanian Ministry of Justice project conducted with a method of pairing 50 juveniles from rehabilitation centres in Buzias with 50 students with very good results in school. The most important objective of this project was to establish and strengthen a relationship between the two groups of children, establishing peer-mentoring relationship. The minors from the rehabilitation centre had the chance to learn from their peers about a better way of life away from crime. Additionally, the peer mentoring provided opportunities for juveniles who are disadvantaged and strengthen social integration for the prevention of delinquent behaviour.

Best Interests of the Child as Benchmark for Alternative Justice

Juvenile justice in *Bulgaria* has been undergoing reform for more than two decades. The existing legal and administrative framework encompasses several systems – judicial system, administrative system, and child protection system – which sometimes functions in parallel to one another without guaranteeing the best interest of the child in accordance with the international standards. The legislative framework needs to be changed to reflect the principles of European and international instruments, and to guarantee the protection of the rights of the child in legal procedures in which the children participate as suspects,

defendants, or perpetrators. Now Bulgaria is reforming one of the most sensitive and most important public systems in Bulgaria – the juvenile justice system. Now on national political and expert levels there is support and cooperation between representatives of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government in favour of the implementation and acceleration of the reform of the juvenile justice system in accordance with Bulgaria's commitments as a member of the EU and a signatory of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. All institutions, ombudsman, NGOs support the reform. Bulgaria ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on April 11, 1991, but according to UNICEF legislation is not consistent with its principles and provisions in the following areas: fair trial; limits of the discretion in diversions should be introduced; educators' involvement as members of the court panels; parents' involvement in investigative activities; etc. Standards are still not applied to interrogation of children, which subsequently leads to stress and trauma. There are no specialised courts for children in conflict or in contact with the law. For cases in which children are involved they are heard by any randomly assigned judge; some courts have adopted practice to allocate cases involving minors to specialised judges; But it's not always possible, particularly in courts where there is a little number of judges. The judges are not required to have any special training. Specific institutions for juvenile delinquents are the correctional boarding schools (hereinafter "CBS") and the social educational boarding schools (hereinafter "SBS"). Although many do not consider the children there as detainees because these institutions are called schools, the analysis of the peculiarities of CBS and SBS leads to the conclusion that the juveniles confined there are de facto deprived of liberty, from the point of view of the European Court of Human Rights. Both CBS and SBS are designed as correctional institutions where juveniles can be placed following a compulsory order. While SBS are de jure institutions of open character, law and practice define CBS as closed ones. ù

Mediation is provided for in the Mediation Act (art. 3) but is not foreseen in the CC, as a specific answer to a conflict between a minor offender and a victim. This a material gap in the law.

Skills-Based Training as Benchmark for Alternative Justice (UK, Italy, Romania and Portugal)

In the *UK*, Skills-Based Training is identified as part of alternative justice for juvenile crime. This was originally developed by Ross (Ross & Ross, 1995), which includes a wide range of social, life and emotional skills training, as well as lateral and critical thinking, value education, assertiveness training, negotiation skills training, inter-personal cognitive problem-solving training, social perspective training, role-playing and modelling is increasingly becoming a steady part of the school curriculum throughout Europe (e.g. European Forum for Urban Safety, 2004), such as in the Hungarian Beccaria Model Project for Crime Prevention. It is also often used as part of multiple component programmes such as MST, with those integrated programmes being more effective than single component ones (Baas, 2005; Welsh & Farrington, 2004). Skill-Based Training is also widely used – for juveniles and adults - in correctional settings, such as the Pathfinder projects; mostly cognitive behavioural programmes and basic skill-based training used by the UK Prison and Probation Services (McGuire, 2001), or a programme called "Straight Thinking on Probation" which was implemented in Glamorgan (Wales) (Raynor, 2004; Raynor & Vanstone, 2001). Offenders who received skills training were compared with similar

offenders who received custodial sentences. After one year, offenders who completed the programme had a lower reconviction rate than control offenders (35%, opposed to 49%).

A further project that focuses on Skills-Based Training in *Italy* is a project that was conducted at the "Experimental socio-educational diurnal centre for minors in the penal area and with a high risk of deviance, project "Chiccolino" - Bitonto (Ba), the experience of the Social Cooperative "Eughenia" - Ministry of Grace and Justice-Juvenile Justice Centre and Social Services Office of Bari". Although the project had multidimensional aspects to it, parts of the results of this project successfully tested pathways of support and involvement of parents and children. The results had concrete actions of social and labour integration in productive activities. Pivotal to another review of interventions which focuses on Skills-Based Training in *Italy* was the project - "Prevention system for the minors at risk of deviance within the Social policies and territorial Welfare; granted jobs, training internships, social inclusion, educative tutorship and diurnal custody". The area of strategic investments of this project is related to vocational training and education, linked to concrete paths of social-working integration and/or to study continuation to ensure a return to society of such minors. Additionally some of the activities carried out, were job orientation, training and internships in companies of the territories of Bari, BAT, Lecce and Brindisi in favour of a significant number of children in custody to the Juvenile Justice Services. The outcome of this training ensured the right to education, professional training and any other service useful to help rehabilitation, social integration and inclusion in the work environment.

Another comparative good practice from *Italy* that facilitates *Skills-Based Training* is the project - "*Experience of juvenile probation as an educational, preventive and social inclusion method (research and practice)*". This was an important legislative tool to rehabilitate the minor in relation to social inclusive pathways. Among the major prescriptions assigned in the project of juvenile probation were the voluntary activities and community services, study activities, orientation and training, conversations and educational support and work activities, sports activities, socialisation, reconciliation with the offended party, symbolic compensation of the harm, conversations and educational support. The results of the juvenile probation measures have an important impact for the evaluation and its effectiveness in terms of prevention and empowerment of the child.

In *Italy*, *Skills-Based Training* as a means of alternative justice for juvenile rehabilitation was demonstrated through a project which looked at the "Residential reception community for minors in the penal area, "Chiccolino" Bari, the experience of the Social Cooperative Occupation and Solidarity (now committed in a temporary association with Eughenia) - Ministry of Grace and Justice-Juvenile Justice Centre and Social Services Office of Bari, Municipality of Bari". This was a community-based programme that offered support, guidance, and sustainability to families and worked closely with social services of municipalities and schools, as well as with communities who provided educational services and with communities who dealt with minor offenders from the penal area as part of a residential approach (as provided by art. 10 28/07/1989 of Legislative Decree no. 272). This programme looked at the overall condition of children at risk in the regional towns of Bari, Modugno and Bitonto, with the involvement of the Juvenile Penal Institutes. The residential activities were combined with training and professional activities. In addition, it

provided working experiences with local companies and the provision of a new type of educational role of connection and accompaniment, defined as "Homecoming". This ensured a gradual return to the environment of the child in discharge from a facility - in collaboration with the Juvenile Social Services. Moreover, it assured an ongoing relationship with the centre for continuity of the meaningful educational relationships that the child established in the community.

Another important project from **Italy** that focused on *Skills-Based Training* was "*Good practices and experiences of the Juvenile Justice Centre of Apulia*". According to the Juvenile Justice Centre of Apulia, there were activities such as awareness raising of the problems experienced by children from the penal circuit, as well as the actions taken by the juvenile services. The focus of the centre is also oriented towards actions to support parents and to the experimentation of project courses that provides a stronger connection with the territories where minors belong and pedagogic support. These practices have showed, in time, to be sustainable and strengthen minors who started the penal circuit and their families.

The final project from **Italy** that focused on *Skills-Based Training* was the project - "*Supervisor of people under restrictive measures of personal freedom*". Among the different functions, of this act of law, the Supervisor ensures that the measures of restriction of personal freedom are implemented in accordance with the principles and rules established by Constitution and by international agreements on human rights, by the Laws of the State and by the regulations. In particular, the Supervisor ensures that the subjects concerned are provided with the right to health, education, professional training and any other service useful to help rehabilitation, social reintegration and inclusion in the work environment.

The following projects from **Romania** also highlight some illustrations of good practices in comparative patterns of *Skills-Based Training* in youth justice approaches. For example, the project "*Specialised day centre for re-socialisation of child pre-delinquent and delinquents came from broken families*" provided counselling, therapy and education in the context of the rights of juveniles. The centre acted as a catalyst between juvenile diversion and society aimed at professionals involved in re-socialisation by generally accepted standards. Another project that highlighted *Skills-Based Training* was the project "*E-Learning Education for Prisoners and Prisoner's Professionals*". This project established and developed a dialogue between prison staff and teachers in educational organisations, through the labour of inmates, based on dynamics and experience of using distance learning, to reduce the risk of exclusion for inmates and prison staff continuing education. The project also formed a community of trainers to address issues and provide new learning opportunities and reintegration into society of persons at risk of social exclusion.

The Buzias Rehabilitation Centre in **Romania** conducted another project that involved multifaceted activities with multiagency involvement. The first activity was Educational intervention aimed schooling, qualifications, acquisition of knowledge about juveniles in developing social skills, experiences of non-confrontational ways of solving problems in life. Many School activities for minors were conducted in accordance with the Education Act and the ranking of special education integrated in the National education system. The second activity was "The Qualification Activity"- which dealt with minors admitted to Buzias Rehabilitation Centre, over the age of 16 years through the school of arts and crafts courses and courses for qualification based on the protocol between the National Penitentiary Administration and National Employment Agency.

The Educational programme at the centre had the following objectives:

- Understanding the seriousness of the offence committed by minors;
- Internalisation of these values, principles and skills that will enable them to make right choices in life and honest;
- Acquiring a sense of personal worth;
- Learning new ways of expression and peaceful conflict resolution.

The third activities were programmes carried out in stages throughout the duration of minors in the juvenile centre, with each activity having specific objectives.

The fourth educational programme for minors conveyed knowledge and skills to develop their inner world and relations with others: friends, colleagues, parents and relatives. Other forms of skills also included self-knowledge, self-image and self-esteem, accepting responsibilities, developing and strengthening social networking and interpersonal skills, acquiring knowledge and developing skills necessary for practical implementation of the process of conflict resolution through negotiation skills. The programme also supported juveniles admitted to the centre in training and development of skills and competencies that facilitate the integration of social functioning, health education, substance abuse, sexual education, hygiene, proper nutrition, diseases and drugs including psychotherapeutic intervention aimed at individual psychological counselling and group psychological intervention programme.

In *Portugal*, the development and implementation of programmes and activities similarly emphasised *Skills-Based Training* in some of their projects. The Educational centre "União Meridiana" – (Private initiative) was one of the first centers that implemented educational intervention project with the aims of rehabilitation of young offenders, through pioneering and innovative programmes, enhancing a positive change in behaviour and life courses of these young people. The Education Centre developed training programmes in the areas of Kitchen and Garden /Turf, as well as professional internships and volunteer with a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary team that developed and applied the programmes.

Another project from *Portugal* that emphasised *Skills-Based Training* is the "Project "Este Espaço que habito" (artistic expression)". This was a project that developed Art based therapy "Este Espaço que habito" (this is the space where I live in), with minor offenders institutionalised in educational centers and in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Services. A similar project that supports *Skills-Based Training* is the "Project "Hortas Biológicas" (sustainable kitchen gardens)" at a centre. The centre implemented a training course in gardening where the turn out were used for the benefit of the whole community. A major goal was to provide a basis for academic courses globally for young trainees. The training course in gardening focused on both team and individual working skills, which in turn develops personal and social skills.

Analysis of Skills-Based Training

The conclusion drawn from the comparative projects that focused on *Skills-Based Training* provides comprehensive understanding of the key characteristics of 'what works' in terms of early interventions to prevent or reduce youth crime or anti-social behaviour. The key *skills-based training* from the **UK, Italy, Romania and Portugal**, included a wider range of: social, life and emotional skills training, as well as lateral and critical thinking, value education, assertiveness training, negotiation skills training, inter-personal cognitive problem-solving training, social perspective training, role-playing and modelling, which all amounts to cognitive behavioural programmes. Other key *Skills-Based Training* also included a wide range of educational, training and professional activities and further provision of work-based opportunities with local companies for minor offenders. The key findings of the *skills-Based Training* interventions as alternative punishment embodies 'therapeutic' philosophies as demonstrated in all the projects from **the UK, Italy, Romania and Portugal**, and are far more effective than those based on strategies of control or coercion, i.e. surveillance (**UK**), deterrence, and discipline. In fact other research evidence suggests that programmes that mainly focus on deterrence or discipline can actually have opposite effect and lead to decrease in offending behaviour. *Skills -Based Training* aimed at nurturing a positive change in a young person's life, is associated with reduced levels of offending. Skills-based training programmes must be those that provide instruction, practice, incentives, and other activities aimed at developing skills to help control behaviour and enhance young people's ability to participate in everyday pro-social activities. Among these programmes, must be behavioral and cognitive behavioural techniques.

Mentoring as Benchmark for Alternative Justices (UK, Romania)

Mentoring was typically identified as part of alternative justice in the projects from the **UK and Romania** as interventions with emphasis on emotional support.

In the **UK**, evidence from the Youth Justice Annual Statistics 2002-03, indicates that the Youth Justice Board is a keen supporter of mentoring for both young offenders and those at risk of offending. Approximately £10 million has been invested by the Board in mentoring schemes throughout England and Wales. Mentoring has been used to support young people involved in community sentencing and prevention schemes, e.g. ISSP, YIP and education programmes. In the latest tranche of funding, 50 mentoring projects were supported for three years to give one-to-one support to young people with developmental needs in literacy and numeracy support. Additionally, 30 projects targeting young offenders from minority ethnic and other hard to reach groups supported over 1,500 young people.

In **Romania**, Mentoring Training was prevalent as part of Alternative Justice for minors. A project was organised on August the 1st, 2013, with the policemen from Alba County Police Inspectorate organized at Albac preventive educational activities within the "Expedition into the Carpathians", which aimed to re-socialise and reintegrate young offenders and actual involvement in community life. The Alba County Police Inspectorate, organised "the development of a bicycle contest involving 5 teams of 4 students from Buzias Rehabilitation Centre, Rehabilitation Centre Tg. Ocna, the "Yoyo" Bucharest, Bucharest National Palace of Children and Children's Club Cugir. The initiators of the project were the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education and partners Alba County Council, National Children's Palace

Bucharest and the "Yoyo" Bucharest. The project beneficiaries were 100 students - 50 juvenile admitted Rehabilitation Centres from Buziaş and Tg. Ocna and 50 are students with very good results in school and demeanor, the National Children's Palace Bucharest, the "Yoyo" Bucharest and Children's Club Cugir. The most important objective of this project was to establish and strengthen a relationship between the two groups of children. Minors from rehabilitation centres can realize the chance to have another way of life and not only the crime pathway.

A similar project in *Romania* utilised Mentoring as part of alternative justice in (2014) with the programme - "*Peer Learning*" funded by the European Union. This programme was for young people and run for three months in collaboration with teachers and students from High School "Nikolaus Lenau" of Timisoara. The project involved organising several joint meetings that was attended by students from both institutions in which they learn: a foreign language, how to start a business and more information about what citizenship is. A second objective, although not directly concerned, was to reduce the perceived distance between young people who break the law and those in the community as a positive perception to facilitate social reintegration and social inclusion, of juvenile delinquents.

The key aspects about **mentoring** as part of alternative justice is that the mentoring programmes from the *UK* and *Romania* is to provide minor offenders with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behaviour) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., social reinforcement for appropriate behaviour). It is concluded that all the mentors provided the youths with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future. The approach reflects that youth mentoring can have a significant impact on a young person's life. The findings from both the *UK and Romania* overwhelmingly suggest that a good quality, meaningful relationship is vital in ensuring a positive outcome. There are a number of implications for practice. Firstly, it is recommended that youth mentoring programmes for minor offenders ensure that it incorporate rapport building exercises into their foundation training for mentors. This would arguably help new mentors to break through any initial communication barriers they may face with young juvenile mentees, as well as provide a good starting point for building a positive and meaningful relationship together.

Secondly, it is suggested that mentoring programmes for young offenders should ensure that they incorporate a stringent criterion for matching a mentor with a young person, if they do not have one in place already. It is evident from the projects from *UK and Romania* that getting on well is an important factor in ensuring successful outcomes, so mentoring programmes for juveniles could attempt to match mentors with mentees based on their interests and backgrounds. Further to this, the matching process should also take the skills of the mentor and the needs of the mentee into consideration, to ensure that their specific needs can be met during the course of their mentoring relationship.

Family and Environment Based Interventions as Benchmark for alternative Justice (*UK, Italy, Romania*)

Family functioning and problems in the family environment can have a significant impact on whether a young minor will become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. Effective family focused interventions therefore tend to be those aimed at providing appropriate support to families in order that they can address these issues. In general, these interventions target problems that include family management as well as high levels of family conflict.

In the *UK*, families chosen for community-based interventions are targeted as being "at risk" or in need of social support. A multi-agency and multiple intervention *UK* approach – Promoting, Prevention (K. Haines & S. Case, 2005)- was aimed at fostering robust , protective family relationships between young people and their parents. It involved parents at every stage of dealing with an "at-risk" young person by relying on individual and family-based community intervention. It uses mentoring, parenting support and family therapy, with a participatory youth consultation approach, combined with restorative justice. Functional Family Therapy (FFT) (Sexton & Alexander, 2000), conducted another family-based prevention and intervention programme that has been applied successfully in a variety of contexts to treat a range of high-risk youths and their families. This approach draws on a multi-systemic perspective in its family-based intervention efforts. Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a good example of the current generation of family-based treatments for adolescent behaviour problems. It combines and integrates established theory, empirically supported principles, and extensive clinical experience into a clear and comprehensive clinical model.

The Functional Family Therapy (FFT) model allows for intervention in complex and multidimensional problems through clinical practice that is flexibly structured and culturally sensitive and accountable to youth, their families, and the community. Although often used as a tertiary intervention programme, such as for adolescents on probation. FFT is also a prevention programme for at-risk adolescents and their families. FFT targets youth between the ages of 11 and 18 from a variety of ethnic and cultural groups, but also provides treatment to younger siblings of referred adolescents. FFT is a short-term intervention – including, on average, 8 to 12 sessions for mild cases and up to 30 hours of direct service (e.g., clinical sessions, telephone calls, and meetings involving community resources) for more difficult cases. In most cases, sessions are spread over a 3-month period. Regardless of the target population, FFT emphasizes the importance of respecting all family members on their own terms.

A similar *UK*-project used a multi-systemic approach in targeting offending children (starting at the age of 7, who therefore have often not been involved yet with the Criminal Justice System). It concentrates on prolific (potential) offenders, offenders with special needs and those who were referred as a preventive or protective measure by school, authorities or parents (Nee & Ellis, 2005). This approach has got a strong theoretical basis, and applies sound assessment and allocation to the service on the basis of need. It relies on a strong commitment to the responsivity principle (taken from effective interventions with older offenders) and its multi-modal approach is based on existing evidence of effective interventions, e.g., interpersonal skills training, individual counselling, multi-modal and cognitive-behavioural programmes, parental and family (siblings etc.) involvement.

The first evaluation of this particular approach by the University of Portsmouth (UK) positively concludes about the effectiveness of the intervention, yet, the evaluation had some methodological weaknesses, such as a small sample size. Another *UK*-example of *Family and Environment Based Interventions* is provided by the Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs), established in 2000, which consist of tailor-made programmes for a selection of the 13 to 16-year-olds most at risk of offending, truancy, or social exclusion. The multi-modal and multi-agency programme operates in 72 of the most deprived/high crime estates in England and Wales and is based on the provision of accessible leisure space, mentoring, drug and health education, family work and personal assessment. However, its effectiveness has not been proven.

In *Italy*, an example of *Family and Environment Based Interventions* as part of Alternative Justice was demonstrated in the project - "The Experimental socio-educational diurnal centre for minors in the penal area and with a high risk of deviance, project "Chiccolino" - Bitonto (Ba), which is managed by the Social Cooperative Eughenia with the Project "Chiccolino". The innovation of this Family and Environment Based Interventions lies in the integration of new methods and modality with those used in residential penal communities and those adopted within daytime socio-educational centres for minors. Of particular relevance of this project is that minors return home from a centre at the end of the daily structured programme to their families. This is one of the most interesting aspects of the programme, as the programme actually measured the ability of the child and the family to be cooperative in the educational continuity of the Centre and being aware of a process of empowerment. Among the educational strategies of the Centre, the territorial network and families have a very important role in the rehabilitation of minors and in the evaluation of the actions outside of the Centre. The Juvenile Justice Centre in Apulia, among Regional Strategies of Juvenile Justice have successfully tested pathways of support and involvement of parents of children. Furthermore, the centre has experienced concrete actions of social and labour integration of the boys at the centre in productive activities.

Another good practice of *Family and Environment Based Interventions* as part of alternative justice in *Italy* is about a project that was carried out at -"The Residential Reception Community for minors in the penal area, "Chiccolino" Bari". Minors from the penal area in the community were welcome in residential form (as provided by art. 10 28/07/1989 of Legislative Decree no. 272); and looked at the overall condition of children at risk in the region. They offered residential activities that were combined with training and professional activities inside and outside of their structured environment. In addition, there were working experiences at local companies and the provision of a new type of educational role of connection and accompaniment, defined as "Homecoming". This new role ensures a gradual return to the environment of the child in collaboration with the Juvenile Social Services. Moreover, the child assures, a meaningful educational relationship and the centre additionally offered support and guidance to families and worker in close liaison with the social services of municipalities, school, as well as with the services of the educational communities and with communities for minors of prompt reception.

A further project from *Italy* was carried out at "The Residential Reception Community for minors in the penal area, "Chiccolino" Bari", offered support and guidance to families and worked in close liaison with social services from municipalities, schools, as well as with the services of the educational communities and with communities for minors . Similarly, The Mediation Office, Civil and Penal judicial mediation Office of Bari, deals with interventions to support families in crisis and children in personal, family and social

distress, as well as with the means of protection in favour of children involved in court proceedings both as perpetrators of unlawful attitude and as injured parties. The Service at the Mediation Office, Civil and Penal judicial mediation Office of Bari, carries out planned activities including family and penal mediation, as well as information activities, training and awareness. Among the planned innovative activities is "The word groups", intended for children belonging to families in disintegration as a result of separation. Additionally, the Prevention system for the minors at risk of deviance within the Social policies and territorial Welfare takes on the strategic purpose of removing the causes of poverty and the risk of exclusion and marginalisation for those families and individuals who, because of lack of services in specific stages of their life or in the presence of particular situations of need, are overexposed compared to the risk of new poverty: young couples with children; families with dependent elderly or with people with disability; frailty in the development of the parental role; immigrant families; single women with children; people at risk of deviance.

Another aspect of Family and Environment Based Interventions as part of alternative justice in *Italy* is found in the document "City to the good practices: examples of intervention and operative strategies in the Italian juvenile penal system" - Ministry of Grace and Justice - Juvenile Justice Department. The document is a first analysis of the phenomenon of foreign minors who entered the Italian penal system. Particular attention is given to the project "Civico Zero", intended to provide support, orientation and protection to minors. Good practices and experiences of the Juvenile Justice Centre of Apulia bring together the resources, capitalising activities and outcomes of completed projects in a perspective of future projection that offers the minors in custody real paths of re-integration in continuity with previous experiences. The focus of the Centre, in this sense, is oriented towards actions to support parents and the experimentation of project courses which provide a stronger connection with the territories where minors belong and are all characterised by the provision of pedagogic support.

A Guide for foreign minors who started the penal circuit – "Oltre la discriminazione" in *Italy* is an information product created by the project "Oltre la discriminazione", promoting social communication on the theme of immigrant children and juvenile justice. The guide is aimed specifically at foreign children, including unaccompanied, their families and / or reference adults. In recognising the similarities of other projects - "*Justly*" - *investigation of the good practices in the Juvenile Justice - Ministry of Grace and Justice - Juvenile Justice Department - General supervision for the intervention of juvenile justice and the implementation of judiciary actions - Office II*" includes a collection of projects and practices, experienced in juvenile justice services, characterised by elements of innovations and effectiveness.

In *Romania*, the "Specialised day centre for re-socialisation of child predelinquent and delinquents came from broken families", which is a centre that acted as a catalyst between juvenile diversion and society aimed at professionals involved in re-socialisation by generally accepted standards. Juveniles were provided counseling, therapy and education in the context of all their rights, between, families, the local community and society.

The key aspects about Family and environment based interventions as part of alternative justice in the *UK, Italy and Romania* showed that in general, interventions target problems for juveniles that include family management as well as high levels of family conflict are more likely to keep young people out of trouble. In the *UK*, a well known programme was found to be very effective - Functional Family Therapy (FFT) which supports broad-ranging

review of family focused interventions. The approach is aimed at changing patterns of parental behaviour so that pro-social behaviours receive positive reinforcement and negative behaviours are punished or ignored. It is also common in the good practices from the **UK, Italy and Romania** that they all had universal services for the whole community that was targeted at deprived communities, known to both have a number of risk factors themselves (e.g. high crime rates, high drug use, etc.,) but also had a high proportion of families with risk factors (e.g. low income, unemployment, large families). An increasing trend is to combine such early intervention with early years screening for behavioural risk factors in young children. Additionally Family skills training must involve structured family activities, therapeutic child play, family meetings, communication skills, effective discipline, reinforcing positive behaviours and jointly planning family activities.

Community-Based Intervention as Benchmark for Alternative Justice (UK & Italy)

Successful interventions in the community setting are mostly ones that aim to help the development of juveniles by tackling risk factors or reinforcing protective factors. It is important to shape the situations that young people encounter so as to divert them from criminal opportunities. The **UK and Italy** had two community-based intervention programmes as part of Alternative Justice which is considered promising for preventing or reducing youth crime or anti-social behaviour.

In the **UK**, there are secondary approaches taken to tackle youth crime which include community-based, multi-agency programmes with leisure activities, mentoring or vocational/educational training for "youth at risk", e.g. those excluded from school in the UK (Gray & Seddon, 2005). Multi-faceted interventions of an adequate length, underpinned by clear "theories of change", were implemented as well as good relationships with schools and other agencies. Other programmes also focused largely on juveniles excluded from school and not participating in vocational training which was implemented in 2001 to respond to a complex and multidimensional nest of risk factors: unoccupied youngsters (15 – 18 years), school failure, school truancy and early school leaving and problematic families. The programmes also trains young unemployed people to become "tutors" with positive leadership skills for other deprived children and young people.

Where as in **Italy**, the project "*Isola che non c'è*", "*Operative vademecum for private social communities. Wendy returns home.*" realised by the Ministry of Justice - Juvenile Justice Department - Juvenile Justice centre - Apulia, in cooperation with the International Centre of High University Studies of Bari, was a tangible sign of the high and significant "sensitivity" of all those who have joined its elaboration in relations with the juvenile penal. The organisational system and the technical and operational mode of Juvenile Justice relied on a strong and well-established integration of government services, those of the territory and the civil community. The pedagogical and social values were also set to achieve social inclusion policies, in order to ensure the exercise of the rights of children to education and its legality to reduce recidivism. Additionally, it is also to ensure the participation and synergies between multiagencies involved in the lives of all juveniles to facilitate theoretical, operational rationalisation and harmonisation of management procedures of all residential structures.

The key aspects about community-based intervention as part of Alternative Justice in the **UK & Italy** are intervention strategies and programme models that reduce delinquency and

promote pro-social development with the involvement of multiagency approach. Preventing delinquency, prevents the onset of youth criminal and thus reduces the burden of crime on its victims and on society. Investing in successful delinquency-prevention programs in different community settings can save lives. The most successful programmes must include those that prevent youth from engaging in delinquent behaviours in the first place and additionally prevent drug use, delinquency, anti-social behaviour, and early school drop-out, to name but a few. Additionally, community-based programmes must also divert further encounters with the justice system with a multiagency community-based involvement in the prevention of youth crime.

Restorative Justice as Benchmark for Alternative Justice (UK, Italy & Romania)

The rise in restorative justice is one of the strongest trends in youth justice over the past 30 years, to the point where it is now a global phenomenon (Justice, 2000). Indeed, the European Forum for Victim-Offender Mediation and Restorative Justice was established in 2000 (Muncie, 2006:60). Its international popularity is arguably because different parts of its philosophy can be embraced to some extent by policymakers influenced by both the welfarist model and the justice model. Welfarists are attracted by the 'restorative' side, which focuses on the inclusion and reintegration of the offender, and is about diversion from formal justice (including custody). Neo-correctionists are attracted by the 'justice' side, which focuses on making sure that the offender takes responsibility for their crime and pay their dues to the victim or society.

In the **UK**, Restorative justice approaches are identified as good practice and are often regarded as particularly suitable for juveniles in many approaches (Blatier, 1999; Maxwell & Morris, 2002). Restorative justice gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime - it empowers victims by giving them a voice. It also holds offenders to account for what they have done and helps them to take responsibility and make amends. Government research demonstrates that restorative justice provides an 85% victim satisfaction rate, and a 14% reduction in the frequency of reoffending (Blatier, 1999; Maxwell & Morris, 2002).

Restorative justice in the **UK** is typically about victims and offenders communicating within a controlled environment to talk about the harm that has been caused and finding a way to repair that harm. For offenders, the experience can be incredibly challenging as it confronts them with the personal impact of their crime. For victims, meeting the person who has harmed them is always a huge step in moving forward and recovering from the crime.

How it works in the UK - Restorative justice conferences, where a victim meets their offender, are led by a facilitator who supports and prepares the people taking part and makes sure that the process is safe. Sometimes, when a face to face meeting is not the best way forward, the facilitator will arrange for the victim and offender to communicate via letters, recorded interviews or video. For any kind of communication to take place, the offender must have admitted to the crime, and both victim and offender must be willing to participate. Restorative justice can be used for any type of crime and at any stage of the criminal justice system, including alongside a prison sentence. The Restorative Justice Council advocates the use of safe, high quality restorative justice wherever and whenever it is needed (Gelsthorpe et al 2002).

In Italy, Restorative Justice was prevalent in a project at the "*Mediation Office, Civil and Penal judicial mediation Office of Bari: the experience of the Social Cooperative "CRISI"*"

Province of Bari". The office deals with interventions to support families in crisis and children in personal, family and social distress, as well as with the means of protection in favour of children involved in court proceedings both as perpetrators of unlawful attitude and as injured parties. The Mediation Centre is one of the most important in Italy.

The targets of the interventions are minors, parents and adults involved in conflicting situations related to the Judicial system. The purpose is the proposal of a procedure that:

- helps the positive management of conflicting relations;
- prevents the dangers of juvenile distress and limits psychological and social damages caused by the interpersonal relationships disruption;
- promotes a process of self accountability in minor offenders;
- sustains, emotionally, the victim of an offence in the processing of the experienced insecurity and menace.

The Service carries out family and penal mediation, as well as information activities, training and awareness. The planned innovative activities are: "The word groups", intended to children belonging to families in disintegration as a result of separation, and the workshop "Between Theatre and Mediation", aimed at minors of the penal area undergoing to juvenile probation and to alternative measures to detention, guests of the existing communities in the Province of Bari.

Another example of Restorative Justice in *Italy* is articulated in the project- "*Experience of the juvenile probation as an educational, preventive and social inclusion method (research and practice)*". In this project Juvenile probation acts as an important legislative tool in order to rehabilitate the minor through social inclusive pathways. "Juvenile probation" determined for offences committed by minors - allow adequate fulfillment of the educative process even after the age of 18. Statistical analysis on juvenile probation for the year 2012 conducted by the Department of Juvenile Justice in Italy, showed an increased historical trend of measures to suspension of a trial for offenders to be put on juvenile probation. The major of prescriptions assigned in juvenile probation, among many are reconciliation with the offended party, symbolic compensation of the harm, conversations and educational support. The results of the juvenile probation showed that the recidivism rate for minors put on juvenile probation had a 10% reduction rate of reoffending than those who were not. In addition, it showed that a minor convicted re-offends more than a minor with a suspension of the process and put on probation. These evidences stress how this innovative measure of Presidential Decree 448/88, art.28, is one that best meets the educational needs of the child, to the restoration of a life outside the penal system. Nevertheless, it should be used when needed, if needed, and cannot be generalised in its use.

At the Buzias Rehabilitation Centre in *Romania*, there are a series of intervention activities implemented for minor offenders. Part of the intervention among many is as follows: developing social skills, non-confrontational ways of solving problems of life. Of particular relevance to restorative justice is Psychotherapeutic intervention aimed at individual psychological counseling and group psychological intervention programmes.

The Objectives of this particular programmes are:

- Suspension inhibitions in development (trust and security, separation and individuation);

- Aspects of self-image (self-responsibility, identity and sense of self worth);
- Relationships with others (relationships with parents and relations with peers);
- To improve the perception of reality (development of critical sense and realistic benchmarks, control impulses and frustration tolerance);
- Coping mechanisms (defense mechanisms, adaptation and socio-cultural change).
- Development of appropriate coping mechanisms.

The key aspects of Restorative Justice as part of Alternative Justice in the **UK, Italy & Romania** drives toward a more community- and victim-based system of justice as a prevalent approach to crime and conflict. It also governes the understanding of crime and justice as a non-judicial and non-legal community-based approach. Restorative justice benefited community members whatever particular focus the programmes were in **the UK, Italy & Romania**. The practice of such justice gave victims the opportunity for direct involvement in the process of dealing with the incident that had affected them. They have the opportunity to express their feelings about the offence and its impact to the person who has offended them, and they also contributed their views about what was required to put things right. Restorative processes may thus offer the prospect of better meeting victims' needs and increasing victim satisfaction with the criminal justice system.

Therapeutic Foster Care as Benchmark for Alternative Justice (UK)

Actions for juveniles that are placed in Foster Care and in an attempt to deal with the juveniles, the **UK**, for example, the Kent County Council has established a therapeutic Foster Care Project for children between 4 and 13. The children are placed temporarily (short term, up to 2 years) in a therapeutic Foster care home. The foster carers are trained by and are part of a care planning team and undertake some tasks normally done by social workers, such as recording the child's progress and advocating for the child. They also regularly meet with a psychologist and with other members of the care team for the child (*Youth Justice Annual Statistics 2002-03, Youth Justice Board*). Actions for such Children have a number of services that incorporate innovative therapeutic interventions and work with children who need additional support while in care. Some of these services have been developed internally and others in support of government pilots; all aim to improve outcomes and support the emotional wellbeing of children. Further actions for such Children is using therapeutic treatment to help children and young people in care who have complex needs and challenging behaviour, including offending behaviour. Therapeutic interventions are being successfully used to maintain stability and security for children and young people and to prevent foster care placement breakdowns. Therapeutic intervention is also being used to support carers to ensure that every child or young person's experience of living in care is positive. This project in the UK explains how actions for Children uses therapeutic treatment to support children and young people throughout their time in care and demonstrates the positive effect this has on their lives.

Conclusion

Benchmarks of Comparative Patterns of our European partnership project as Good Practices for Alternative Justices in the: *UK, Italy, Romania, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal* were identified as :

- The *Role of the Family* as a Socialisation Agent;
- Re-Socialisation and Re-Integration of Juveniles;
- Best Interests of the Child;
- Skills-Based Training;
- Mentoring;
- Family and Environment Based Interventions;
- Community-Based Intervention;
- Restorative Justice;
- Therapeutic Foster Care.

Although, it is evident from all the partnership projects presented that each had crime- as the primary aim, which were focused within the 'at risk' paradigm, designed to address risk factors and bolster protective factors for youth crime. The underpinning of the alternative framework is ***social inclusion and engagement***, and particularly ***children's rights***. Of all the project presented, a variety of approaches were designed and developed that intervened with at risk children directly, for example, mentoring involving young people, organising positive leisure activities which was often a primary focus, occupying time usefully, developing positive peer relations and fostering preventative social skills. The evidence presented here also suggests that problems can occur when the intensive phase of supervision ends and young people have less frequent contact with the respective project staff. Therefore particular care is required in managing these transitions to ensure that young people do not fall in between gaps in provision and so lose any progress made. This further illustrates the key role designated project managers have in managing cases of youth crime and the delicate paths they tread in coordinating an ongoing package of tailored support in a way that empowers the young person and their family rather than creates dependency on the worker or the system (Chapman and Hough, 1998). This view also parallels Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour which emphasises an intervention approach that encourages young offenders to face up to the consequences of their actions and take responsibility for them, as well as one that responds in a way that helps young people to grow out of crime rather than draw them deeper into it.

In terms of early intervention, the report noted that many of the initiatives on the crime reduction agenda must be considered in conjunction with social support with a focus on prevention. The report considered a variety of innovative early-intervention initiatives focusing on families, schools and individuals. Many of these focused on developing social skills, conflict resolution, positive relationships and access to intensive support – often through providing adequate leisure facilities and activities for young people. Fundamentally, however, it can be seen that each of these solutions, can still be considered in the framework of welfarism and justice. In relation to youth justice, this is arguably a question to the extent to which 'young offenders' are treated as 'young' and needing special protection or interventions, 'offenders' who need to be held accountable, or the mixture that results from the competing pressures on policymakers.

Based on the above presentation, there is the need for a new management philosophy, strategies and programmes that are required to create an appropriate learning environment for young offenders and their families as "Alternative justice" that addresses the specific needs of young offenders in an **integrated way**. The focus of the new management philosophy, strategies and programmes must be on: the provision of voluntary work, vocational training, education, life skills training, recreational programmes, including restorative justice. Additional consideration must also be taken into account for the difficulties that young offenders might face, for example, to examine gaining employment, forming relationships, handling peer pressure, personal esteem and self-confidence and obtaining accommodation in their later life. Any rehabilitation programme as "Alternative justice" must target areas that give young offenders the opportunity to overcome these difficulties. The entire programme must be built on the personal accountability of each young offender, and on the dedication, competence and commitment of the management team.

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