



## COPE Network Activity Log 2016

### **Bambinisenzasbarre, Italy**

During the June European campaign run by COPE, Bambinisenzasbarre organized the first national meeting for prison officers focused on their awareness raising about the MoU and its application in their daily job in prison on 27 June. The meeting also aimed to strengthen the connection among "sensitive" prisons, preparing them to apply those procedures respectful of children's rights. This meeting represented the first interaction between prison officers already collaborating with Bambinisenzasbarre, who have experienced firsthand improvements to the prison system, and those officers working in prisons where there is only now an awareness of the need for improvement to child rights. 30 officers from eight different prisons throughout Italy (North, Center and South) took part at the meeting held in Milan at the Opera prison.

In July 2016 Bambinisenzasbarre had a meeting in Milan with a representative of the Argentinian Ombudsman for the rights of detained people (Procuratiòn Penitenciaria de la Natiòn) to discuss the Italian MoU (premises and outcomes) and the most recent outcomes of the NNAPES network, which is working with national institutions to achieve a similar goal in Argentina as well as in other South American countries.

Also in July, two representatives of the Youth Re-autonomy Foundation of Turkey, a Turkish civil society working in the field of juvenile justice system defending children's rights, came to Milan to meet with Bambinisenzasbarre. The Turkish organization was interested in observing and studying those practices related to the Yellow Space and the MoU application in the prisons where Bambinisenzasbarre is working directly, in order to promote human rights and raise awareness among Turkish penitentiary institutions.

On the suggestion of Bambinisenzasbarre the City of Naples, in Italy, was chosen to host the next COPE Annual Conference in May 2017.

### **Bedford Row, Ireland**

Bedford Row has three exciting ventures to report on in 2016:

- ➔ Bedford Row was asked by Limerick City and County Council to be involved...

- In a family support initiative in Limerick City Centre with families affected by imprisonment. This initiative involves a partnership with Limerick Social Services Centre and Development Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
  - In an initiative to support families and children affected by imprisonment in the Travelling Community in Limerick
- ➔ Bedford Row was also asked by a Group in Ennis, a large town near Limerick to assist with setting up a Project for families affected by imprisonment there. This is known as Bedford Row (Clare). Ennis is the County Town of County Clare.

#### Family Support and Crisis Intervention Course:

The third two-year Family Support and Crisis Intervention Course began in Feb 2016. It is now well into its 2nd Year and going very well.

#### Hospitality Centre:

The work in the Hospitality Centre continued and over 3,000 children visited in 2016. The Hospitality Centre is where Bedford Row began in 1999.

#### Therapeutic Work with Children:

This went very well all through the year and is consistently improving. The Children's Groups are very important for families as they give children much needed respite from the stresses of imprisonment. A Play Therapist from Bedford Row started a small group with four children and this is going very well also. One of the strengths of this program is that parents are involved.

#### Lifeskills Groups for Women:

A tradition in Bedford Row since the beginning, these groups involve people telling their stories. Bedford Row is launching a new fully-funded group to be launched in 2017.

#### Family Support Work in General:

The number of Families, Ex-Prisoners, and Prisoners supported by Bedford Row in all categories, over 2016, totalled approximately 315 people. As in previous years, the work covers a wide range of advocacy, counselling, housing/accommodation, etc. but most of all the therapeutic power of listening. An important activity that continues to increase is the prisoner visits to Bedford Row to meet their families. The Prison trusts the Project to host these visits.

#### In-reach to Women's Prison:

Work within the Women's Prison is now very well established. This was reported on in previous reports and it is paralleled by a programme on the outside for women when released.

### **Buff, Sweden**

In an aim to offer support to all children within the target group, Buff started a online chat for children and youth as a complement to the existing national support line. Both the helpline and the chat forum are staffed by professionals, who have received special training in giving support from a distance via chat and phone. In 2016, 3360 children/youth were supported individually. Buff was asked to give feedback on Prison and Probation Service (PPS) guidelines regarding the "child perspective within the correctional system". The guidelines are now implemented and aim to provide better treatment for children.

Buff was able to visit all units within the correctional system, from north to south and was regularly hired to educate new staff within the correctional system. Buff and PPS representatives worked together on a new parental program; Buff was invited to Lausanne to speak about it.

Buff collaborated with COPE on several campaigns; contacted all Swedish EU representatives to sign Maria Corazza Bildts written declaration; participated in Europris' meeting in Zagreb; Not my Crime still my sentence"; interviews by the International Red Cross (IRC) that wanted input from children of prisoners concerning new guidelines for building new prisons.

#### Awareness raising, political/public

- meetings with our Elder, Child and Equality minister Åsa Regnér
- meeting with the Social Department concerning Children of Prisoners' rights
- meeting with Socialboard (a regulatory authority)
- a number of lectures, for and with the PPS
- networking and participating in 3 large fairs, Socialworker, Schools and students health, and 2 days for children's rights arranged by Child Ombudsman
- participating in tv program "the prisoners' children"
- participating in several radio features
- participating in several newspapers

Buff's exhibition is still on tour, and is regularly visited by school children around the country. The exhibition is nominated for an international architectural award.

#### **Exodus, The Netherlands**

In cooperation with child and prison organisations in Hollands Midden, Exodus was able to reach more families through a new folder providing more information to families as early as the moment of arrest. Exodus volunteers help families when they need social, emotional or practical support.

The City of Venlo and the Exodus halfway house organised a meeting with all organisations who come in contact with children of prisoners to find a way to develop better cooperation for the benefit of these children.

In the region around The Hague Exodus has implemented a training program that can provide contextual therapy to family members, children of prisoners and ex-prisoners (DOEL-training).

Exodus cooperates with Augeo, a foundation that works towards the realisation of a safe environment, care and support for children (especially in cases of abuse). They also develop materials and courses for teachers, as well as a trauma-sensitive course for teachers. A TNO-research study developed with Augeo on the multiple traumatic experiences of children shows that many children age 10-12 with a parent or family member in prison have experienced two or more traumas (imprisonment, divorce and emotional neglect were mentioned the most). One of the young adults at Exodus (former child of prisoner) is also part of the Youth taskforce from this organisation.

In September 2016 the new Ombudswoman for children Margrite Kalverboer, also Professor of Child, Pedagogy and Migration Law, had a meeting with Exodus and the children of prisoners

about their rights, their feelings and their dreams and wishes. She started her work with a tour visiting children who experience problems in the Netherlands. Exodus is in contact with the Ombudswoman for children to provide children of prisoners with better information and support when they experience difficulties as a result of their parents' actions.

The pilot initiative for a family approach to imprisonment began at the Prison of Leeuwarden in January 2016, and continues to expand. There is a second prison in the north of Holland working on this.

Exodus started a project called 'partners who are left behind'. The goal is to realise a buddy project for women who have a partner or ex-partner in prison. Many prisons in the Netherlands are giving more attention and support to family members who are the caregivers of the children. Exodus volunteers support mothers who wait in prison during their child's visit with their father. Exodus is in contact with the Custodial Institutions Agency.

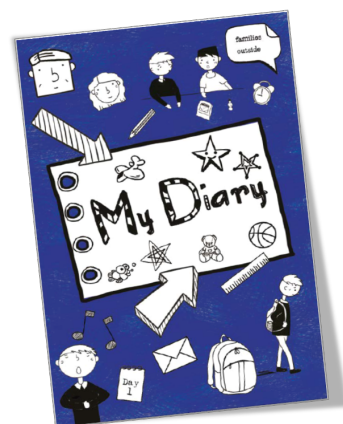
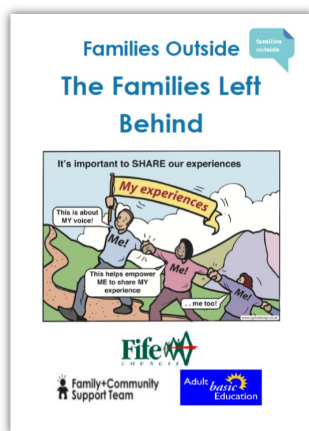
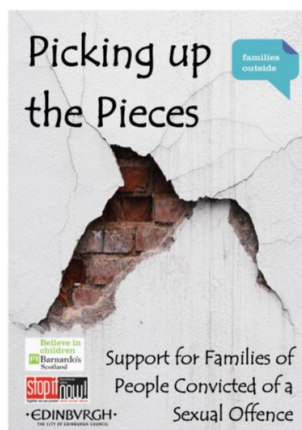
Exodus realised a new website and a digital forum for children and family members in June 2016.

### **Families Outside, Scotland**

Families Outside published a number of new resources for families in 2016. *Picking Up the Pieces* (<http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/picking-pieces-2/>) is a handbook for families of people convicted of a sexual offence, written with input from families themselves. This has since been translated for use in Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

*The Families Left Behind* (<http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/5586-2/>) is a handbook for families, written by three women with a family member in the justice system and one who had been involved in the justice system herself. This was an adult literacy and peer support project.

*My Diary* (<http://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/my-diary-2/>) is an important new resource for primary school children, with an audio version also available. Further resources for children (workbooks, children's section of the website) are currently being developed to go along with *My Diary*.



The training for teachers program in which teachers are brought into prison to experience a visit remains the most popular training at Families Outside. In 2016 this initiative was extended to include Early Years practitioners, while the 'Out of the Shadows' training on the impact of imprisonment is delivered in the community. Additional funding was received in 2016 to adapt this training specifically for health professionals, youth workers, and social work teams. 3,000 - 5,000 participants are reached through training each year.

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde has funded Families Outside to work alongside the Universities of Salford and Huddersfield to conduct research into the experiences of children and young people in Glasgow City with a parent in the justice system. This work started in 2016 and is ongoing, with completion expected at the end of 2017.

Families Outside's Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Children & Families Affected by Imprisonment was reinstated following the 2016 national elections.

2016 marked the 25th anniversary of Families Outside, and there was a celebration event for this in May 2016.

2016 was the Scottish Government's 'Year of the Dad', in which they were trying to promote fathers' engagement in their children's lives. Families Outside ran an art competition to commemorate this in which the child or the dad in prison started a drawing, and the other finished it. This was very popular, and prizes were given to the winning entries.

### **Fédération des relais enfants parents, France**

In 2016 FREP had 31 member associations: 26 in France metropolitan, one in French Overseas Territories, and four internationally. Two new members joined the FREP in 2016.

Two projects to create new Relais Enfants Parents were supported: REP Albi, REP Benin.

Consultation with members to assess the number of accompanied prison visits:  
14 services replied in early 2017, with a total of 2972 accompaniments organised by these 14 services in 2016.

### **For Fangers Pårørende – Organisation for Families and Friends of Prisoners (FFP), Norway**

#### Children's voice

FFP arranged a hearing with children and young people to get their input on the shadow report to the UN committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the CRC in Norway. A representative from Save The Children Norway talked about children's rights and listened to the children's views and experiences. Some quotations: "They shouldn't lock the door to the visiting room". "I think it's unfair that we have so little time with our parents compared to what other children have". "I wish I could show my father my Ipad and some games."

#### Awareness raising

The photo project "Behind the Wall – through the Eyes of Children with imprisoned parents" was carried out in 2015, when a small group of teenagers from FFP were allowed to come inside a high security prison to take photos. The exhibitions of their photos drew a lot of positive attention. In 2016 the exhibition was shown in other cities in Norway. In connection to the exhibition, Trondheim FFP arranged a panel discussion on children with imprisoned parents and their thoughts on visiting their parents in prison. One of the girls from the project participated in the debate. She said it had been an extraordinary experience for her to see the areas in the prison where her father had served his sentence, and that she felt more at ease after this experience.

#### New brochure: "Q&A's for children and young people with an imprisoned family member"

FFPs launched a new brochure addressing ten questions that children and young people often ask when a parent is imprisoned. The brochure is given out to FFP's members, handed out at conferences and meetings and will be sent to all the prisons in Norway.

#### Feast at the Royal Family's Residence

The correctional services and connected NGOs were invited to the Crown Prince and Crown Princess' residence for their annual feast in support of civil society. Prison governors, (ex)prisoners, and representatives from NGOs met to share experiences and enjoy a meal in the company of the royal highnesses. FFP's Head of office, Hanne Hamsund, and a former board member, who has grown up with a father in prison, represented FFP at the event.

#### Project: Families of sexual offenders

FFP received funding for a new project to support families of sexual offenders. The project aims to increase capacity building and strengthen the competencies of FFP's team, mapping various services for sexual offenders and their families and translating and adapting a booklet which was launched in 2016 to support families of people convicted of a sexual offence.

#### Project: Family therapy in prisons

In 2014 FFP and Trondheim prison started a pilot project on family therapy in prison, using the method of "reflecting team"(dialogue and meta-dialogue). The pilot was successful, and FFP is considering implementing the model in other prisons and involving Family Counselling Services in the local municipalities. The Correctional Service has reacted positively to this initiative. In the autumn of 2016 FFP arranged a training for Family Counselling Services and Prison staff/ Social workers in prisons – to introduce them to this model of family therapy in prisons.

#### Co-operation with NGOs in other countries

##### Conference in Poland

FFP was invited by the Empowering Children Foundation (formerly Nobody's Children Foundation) to contribute as a keynote speaker at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Conference on prevention of Young Child Abuse in Warsaw in April. FFP presented the experience of working with children with imprisoned parents and spoke about the consequences of parental incarceration and how to support the children. The conference was attended by 400 Polish professionals: social workers, psychologists, doctors, nurses, day care workers, probation officers, police. It was organised by the NGO Dajemy dzieciom Sily (Empowering Children Foundation) in cooperation with the City Hall of Warsaw, Department of Public Health of Warsaw Medical University, under the auspices of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Minister of Health and Ombudsman on Children's Rights.

### Visit from Alternative Sociale (Romania)

In April FFP hosted COPE's new applicant member from Romania, Alternative Sociale, during a three-day visit to Oslo. Alternative Sociale is an NGO working with and for children of prisoners and their families in Romania. During the visit, FFP and Alternative Sociale shared experiences and discussed good practice. The two organisations visited Bredtveit prison (female prison) and Drammen Probation service. Meetings were also arranged with two other NGOs; the Red Cross and Oslo City Mission, who presented their work for children with imprisoned parents. As a follow-up to this visit, Alternative Sociale intend to follow the example of FFP by starting to work more closely with governmental institutions, notably the Romanian Prison Administration, in promoting the contact between a child and their imprisoned parent as the child's right, as enshrined in Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### Workshop at Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services

FFP and COPE partner Relais Enfant Parents (Switzerland) were invited to participate in a workshop during the 21<sup>st</sup> Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services in Zaandam in June. The focus of the conference was community involvement and probation work. FFP focused on examples of good practise in Norway for maintaining family ties during sentencing and the work that is done to make children voices be heard.

FFP also had a poster presentation at the conference organised by The Ombudsman for Children in Croatia and COPE in Zagreb, raising awareness on children's right to participate and children speaking out.

### **Hoppenbank e.V., Germany**

In 2016 Hoppenbank e.V. entered into several new co-operative partnerships in Bremen. A quantitative study was carried out by the University of Applied Sciences Bremen in cooperation with other actors in the field which examined the desire of fathers in prison to have a training program put into place.

A concept for a training program for imprisoned fathers has been developed in cooperation with Verein Bremische Straffälligenbetreuung and other partners in Bremen, this training program should implemented in 2017.

In 2017 Hoppenbank e.V. will begin the project "I read for you" involving imprisoned parents and children.

### **NIACRO, Northern Ireland**

The Children and Young People Strategic Partnership is a Northern Ireland multiagency strategic partnership, consisting of the leadership of all key agencies across statutory, voluntary and community sectors who have responsibility for improving outcomes for all children and young people in NI. The Partnership has for the first time recognised children of prisoners as a distinctive 'in need' group of children after lobbying by many organisations such as NIACRO.

In 2016 NIACRO began a new project, after securing 3 years of funding from Children in Need for a service to support children and siblings of prisoners. SCOPE (Supporting Children of Prisoners) is a needs-led, child-centred project that provides support to children (aged 0-18)

living in the Belfast area, who have a parent or sibling currently in custody. NIACRO's support worker will provide one-on-one emotional and practical support to young people to help them with specific difficulties such as; adjusting to the imprisonment, struggling to maintain contact with a family member in prison or feeling socially isolated from the community. Family sessions may also be appropriate to help the family strengthen communication and relationships. In addition, onward referrals will be made to other, appropriate support services and consultation sessions will be given to professionals to increase awareness of the needs of children and siblings of prisoners and advice on how best to support this often forgotten group.

### **Ombudsman for Children, Croatia**

The Ombudsman for Children in Croatia lobbied stakeholders to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) inspired by the Italian model. In 2016 the Italian MoU was translated and harmonised with Croatian legislation and updated with recent European and global documents and guidelines. The process took some time due to temporary instability regarding the establishment of the new government and a lack of interlocutors.

The Ombudsman for Children in Croatia joined the initiative for signing a Written Declaration on the protection of children with imprisoned parents. The Declaration was signed by five Croatian MEPs, and it was supported by the Prime Minister and the Vice President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Unfortunately the Written Declaration lapsed with 276 signatures (366 were required in order for it be adopted as the official position of the European Parliament). Hopefully the content of the Written Declaration will continue to be advanced.

The Ombudsman for Children in Croatia established a partnership with the Ombudswoman (Pučki pravobranitelj) regarding the tasks of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The two parties participated in several prison visits together. This cooperation ensures a stronger joint focus on the rights of children whose parents are in prison.

In 2016 9 penal institutions were visited by the Ombudsman for Children, Croatia.

10 recommendations were made to the Department for Prison System of the Ministry of Justice regarding children of imprisoned parents. The recommendations concern the need to improve spatial conditions, create child-friendly areas for children's prison visits, raise the prison staff's awareness of children visiting their imprisoned parents and improving their treatment of such children. It is also important to keep better records of children whose parents are incarcerated in order to develop interventions in line with their needs. Some recommendations have been accepted and a response is still being awaited regarding others.

A recommendation was made to the Department for Prison Systems in the Ministry of Justice to highlight the annual pan-European campaign entitled "Not my crime, still my sentence" during the month of June. Throughout this campaign period all penal institutions organised different activities. These activities included extended visits with children (more visits and longer visits), as well as the distribution of leaflets created by the prison system (Ten frequent questions posed by children whose parents are imprisoned). During this period several of the institutions showed two videos (Invisible walls and Change your opinion), which had been presented at the COPE conference in Zagreb.



To raise the prison staff's awareness of the importance of imprisoned parents having a strong parental role, one penal institution presented the videos to their staff. Prison institutions organized other joint activities that had an impact on the child-parent relationship, such as the creation of art work, photography, creative and educational workshops for children and/or parents, creation of boards for visitors presenting activities of prisoners during the imprisonment, puppet shows, reading stories and recording of the stories on CDs, later giving CDs to children, and writing articles on parenting to be published in prison publications. Prisoners and members of their families were very pleased with all the activities.

Regarding the monitoring of individual violation of children's rights, the Ombudsman for Children Croatia dealt with individual complaints, mostly concerning the reduced contacts with the parent in prison.

COPE members were provided with information on the position of children of the Roma national minority whose parents are imprisoned, in terms of the Croatian penal system.

The Ombudsman for Children Croatia ran a presentation and conducted a workshop for psychology students on the needs and rights of children whose parents are imprisoned.

The Ombudsman for Children Croatia responded to media requests (posed by web portals and when participating in radio shows) on the issue of children of imprisoned parents, in connection with the COPE conference in Zagreb, the COPE pan-European campaign in June, and after the visit to Zadar Prison.

The Ombudsman for Children Croatia continued their cooperation with Roda and Status M associations:

RODA (an acronym for Roditelji u akciji, or Parents in Action):

Participation in the Final Conference of the MaMe Project, where the results of a two-year project were presented, focused on strengthening female prisoners in their parental role and participating in labour market. The Ombudsman for Children and their Deputy animated presentations entitled: "Ombudsman for Children as a moving force for protection of children whose parents are imprisoned" and "Are we aware of the child's need when his parents is in prison?"

An expert analysis was made for the project entitled "An overview of the best European practices and motivation programs aimed to establish and maintain relation prisoner/parent-child and support to children whose parents are in prisons in prison systems of European countries, applicable in Croatia".

With RODA the Ombudsman for Children Croatia also planned to participate in publishing the book "What's Behind the Wall" (illustrated book), published by the Polish Prison Service, which shows difficulties that children face while visiting prison and explains to children what they can expect when visiting prison.

Status M association:

Animation of a presentation: "What does the Ombudsman for Children do? – a case of children whose fathers are in prison", at the public SUPERDAD discussion, where the results of the

project "MenCare - engaging men in achieving gender equality in Međimurje County" were presented. MenCare is a global fatherhood campaign active in more than 40 countries on five continents.

In Croatia and its surrounding countries the MenCare campaign is carried out as the SUPERDAD campaign (SUPERTATA). Topics of the regional SUPERDAD campaign are: Just play; Be brave: show affection; Raise without violence, and Teach equality and respect. It included more than 160 participants (among whom were more than 60 members of Roma national minority), promoting men's involvement as equitable, nonviolent fathers and caregivers in order to achieve family well-being, gender equality, and better health for mothers, fathers, and children. This presentation represented the end of the pan-European campaign in June.

Support was provided for the following projects and activities focused on the rights of children of incarcerated parents (some for the EU funds tenders, some for national tenders):

RODA - application for the project with the aim to strengthen parental skills, improve the relationships between female prisoners and their children through specific activities, provide psychosocial support to mothers in prison and raise public awareness on the importance of preserving bonds of parent serving the prison sentence and his/her children.

Croatian Reading Association and RODA - support to their reading program for children whose parents are in prisons and penitentiaries, translation of the illustrated book "What's Behind the Wall" from Polish and the development of instruments to strengthen communication and bonding between parents and children. Invitation to tender was published by the Ministry of Justice, who accepted the project, except the financing for the translation of the book.

Center for Psychosocial Well-Being of Children and Youth "Kids Business" (Centar za psihosocijalnu dobrobit djece i mladih "Dječja posla") – support to their application for a project of psychosocial support for children and families of prisoners "From stigma to isolation and paradigm of rehabilitation", which would provide psychosocial support to children of prisoners and advisory support to other members of the family or other persons who take care of them.

Perspekta Association – support to their initiative and project "Look at me – project aimed to provide support and promotion of the rights of children whose parents serve the prison sentence", to provide innovative services of psychosocial help and support to children in vulnerable situations (call for submission announced by Reach for Change and Tele2 – not accepted).

## **Pact, UK**

Pact has been working to raise awareness amongst professionals and improve practice for children affected by the imprisonment of any family member.

### Pact's work in schools

As part of Pact's new "Hear Our Voice" project, a day-long course has been designed aimed at school counsellors with the objective of discussing the emotional and practical difficulties which children of prisoners may face and how best to identify and support them. This training has

been delivered to 106 schools across England, with 100% of attendees reporting that they are now either confident or very confident in supporting a child affected by imprisonment, and 100% of attendees reporting that the training will have either some or a big impact on the children affected by imprisonment at the schools that they work in.

As part of this training a “framework” or “policy” has been created for schools to implement, which enshrines promises to the child and the wider family that they will support them in a non-judgmental way emotionally, educationally and practically. In addition, lesson plans have been created for PSHE and Citizenship classes, so that the issue of familial imprisonment can be raised with pupils, thereby promoting a positive school environment.

This training has also been delivered as a lecture to approx. 80 trainee teachers at London South Bank University as well as to social workers.

#### Pact’s work with the police

Pact hosted a roundtable event to launch “Collateral Damage”, an inquiry into the impact of police home raids on the children and siblings of offenders in England. This research demonstrates that the impact of the criminal justice system upon innocent children begins much earlier than the imprisonment stage: experiencing a home raid is a distressing, traumatic and disempowering experience for children, which can significantly increase the risk of mental health problems and result in feelings of distrust and even hatred towards the police. Home raids are an essential part of policing practice, but it is crucial to find a way of conducting home raids in a way that is less traumatic for children. Following this roundtable event, Pact is now working with the Metropolitan Police to deliver trauma-informed training that will prepare officers to carry out home raids with minimal distress to children in the home. The training has already been rolled out across 2 London boroughs, reaching over 200 police officers, with over 80% of attendees reporting that it effectively raised their awareness of the traumatic impact a home raid can have on children. Plans have been put in place to deliver this to a further 5 boroughs over the course of 2017, and there has also been national interest in the training.

#### Pact’s work with Magistrates

Linked to the work which Pact is doing with the police, Pact has also been working with magistrates to raise the awareness of the impact police actions within the family home can have on children, to encourage them to ask certain questions relating to the safeguarding of children before granting a warrant for the police to enter a family home.

#### Pact’s work with prisoners and their families

As well as working to raise awareness amongst professionals, Pact has also been working directly with families affected.

Within the custody setting, Pact has continued to develop work within prisons, supporting prisoners and their children. In September 2016, Cambridge University released their research into Pact’s Family Engagement Service - which involves specialist family workers operating inside prisons, improves the emotional well-being of prisoners and motivates improved compliance with the prison regime. The research found an important link between this service and reducing emotional distress, self-harm, violence and disruptive behaviour.

Pact has also successfully developed a “Visiting Mum” program, a special project at HMP Eastwood Park in which volunteers drive the children of prisoners and their carers to the prison

on a regular basis and offer the wrap around emotional support they need. In addition, as part of this project, information and resources have been created for the child to help explain what prison is like.

Furthermore, across London Pact has been providing one-to-one mentoring for young people affected by imprisonment. With some of these children, we are working with them to help them become their own advocates, creating materials about their experiences which then can be fed back into the training we deliver to professionals.

Pact has also continued to improve facilities for children and young people within prisons – for example at HMP Coldingley we made changes to the Visits Hall to make it more child-friendly, engaging the prisoners to paint a mural of popular children's characters and creating an improved play area.

### **POPS, UK**

In 2016 POPS introduced a range of activities and interventions to support offenders' children and their families.

POPS designed a range of child friendly signage which is now installed in all of the 11 prisons in which POPS operates child and family services. The aim of the signage featuring POPSICLE the Penguin is to soften the environments in those areas in which children will pass through in the course of the visit, i.e, visit centre, corridors, search area, prison visit hall. The signage can act as a distraction for children to divert their attention from the austere environment and the distress of the process, i.e. the search area or the sniffer dog. This includes 'POPSICLE reward stickers' for children, these are made available by POPS to encourage prison staff to recognise the emotional impact on children going through the visit process and to 'reward' and encourage the child with a sticker therefore instigating more positive interaction between prison security staff and the young children.

POPS has introduced the role of a family link worker to 5 prison visit centres to interact with children and families and to encourage stronger links between the imprisoned parent and the child/children. This is facilitated by structured parental contact visits with specific activities which the child can participate in along side their imprisoned parent.

POPS' 'In Your Words' project is a series of workshops focusing on communication through the use of poetry. The workshops encourage the imprisoned parent and child/children to express their feelings and to communicate by writing poetry which they exchange and discuss as part of a specially supported visit.

Homework Clubs – special visits which enables children to bring school work or a reading book etc to a visit so they can work through it with their parent.

### **Probacja, Poland**

Storybook Dads - 84 prisoners recorded a bedtime story for their children, in prison such as: AS Montelupich Kraków, ZK Nowa Huta Kraków, ZK Tarnów Mościce, ZK Wadowice, ZK Tarnów.

Parenting programme "Kontakt" was a success - 36 imprisoned fathers and mothers, took part in this program, together with their children and families, in 2 prisons separate prisons: AS Montelupich Kraków, and ZK Nowa Huta Kraków.

The Kontakt project aims to raise the parental competence of imprisoned parents. As part of this project a series of lectures and workshops are conducted, during which different issues are addressed such as responsible parenting, developmental psychology, building a positive relationship with a child, communication and creativity in play. At the end of each topic a special children's visit is organized to enable fathers to put the theory gained into practice.

A pilot programme "From education to relation" - 15 imprisoned fathers and 12 imprisoned mothers took part in a parenting programme facilitated by Youth Astronomical Observatory, where parents learned science experiments and then practiced them with their children.

Special children's visits - Probacja organized Children's Day visits and Christmas visits in 2 prisons, where imprisoned parents prepared and performed a play for their children.

Conferences - We organized or took part in 6 conferences concerning the situation of children of imprisoned parents. This included a conference with Claudia Vogg at the Regional Prison Service, as well as at all Universities in Kraków.

#### Media involvement:

Two radio programmes, one TV programme, four articles in national newspapers.

Probation - Since changes in the law in 2012, third sector community rehabilitation organizations are allowed to provide such a service. Probation officers working for Statutory Criminal Justice have to manage approximately 150 cases. Probacja's role is slightly different as only a small number of cases are supervised which allows for an opportunity to make a real difference in prisoners' lives, using various tools, such as therapy treatment, employment and family support. Statutory probation officers in Poland do not have such opportunities. We can also carry out probation supervisions with Polish citizens convicted abroad if after returning to Poland they will reside in the province of Małopolska. In 2016 Probacja provided a probation service to 46 cases, including 36 of them as high risk offenders.

### **QUNO, Switzerland**

QUNO prepared a poster on international standards for the COPE conference in Zagreb, as well as developed a database of all of the concluding observations relevant to children of incarcerated parents from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (<http://www.crccip.com/>).

### **Rélais Enfants Parents, Belgium**

Belgium's Relais Enfants-Parents has been active for more than 20 years. REP operates across the French-speaking part of Belgium in 11 prisons for men and women and organises visits for children to their parents in detention. REP Belgium focuses on quality interaction child-parent by

providing educational and psychological support. REP also tries to ensure that the children can interact with their detained parent independently from their living conditions or family relationships "outside".

On a yearly basis REP looks after about 1,400 children in Brussels and in the region of Wallonia, and tries to alleviate the trauma they often experience.

REP has a superb team of psychologists who are totally focused on nurturing the precious child-parent relationship. Not only is the child looked after, the parent is also taken care of so he or she can support his or her child even in absentia.

REP Belgium is particularly aware of the need to address the issue at the structural level to make better progress in ensuring broad and sustainable social inclusion.

### **Rélais Enfants Parents, Ile-de-France**

In total, REP supported 454 children and 352 parents throughout 2016.

#### Accompanied prison visits in Ile de France and outside Ile de France:

- 531 prison visits took place, accompanying 127 children and benefiting 82 parents.
- In 2016 there was a clear increase of requests to accompany children from Children's Aid and Social Services.

#### Parenting support groups in prison:

- Benefitted 90 parents in 7 prisons throughout the year, more than 200 support drop-ins throughout the year.

#### Cultural events:

- 23 events organised in 2016 for over 400 children and 230 parents.
- 2 child-parent joint projects in partnership with the Integration and Probation Correctional Service:
  - Alors ?..Raconte ! (So? Share!) MAH Fresnes
  - Danse avec moi ... ! (Dance with me...!) MAH Fleury-Mérogis
- 6 lunches with Dad organised at Melun detention center for 19 children and 12 fathers.

### **Rélais Enfants Parents Romands, Switzerland**

81 Creative workshops were organised, that is to say 81 afternoon prison visits where children were accompanied to see their parent.

More than 5,500 conversations took place with families of prisoners in REPR's 8 drop-ins centres, as well as through REPR's phone line.

There were more than 700 interviews of children and families about their experience of having a loved one in prison.

The child-directed page of REPR's website was put into place.

A symposium « Parentalité et Détention », was successfully organised, bringing together more than 120 professionals, among them Madelein Kattel from Bufff, and Laurel Townhead from QUNO.

A training program was organised for 60 REPR volunteers.

Development of the artwork contest "Draw me a prison", in partnership with COPE.

585 people accessed the REPR's shuttle in order to visit the Vaud district prison.

### **Solrosen, Sweden**

Solrosen has developed a deeper cooperation with probation authorities in Sweden in order to reach out to families that have a family member not necessarily in custody, but currently on probation. A workstation has been prepared for Solrosen to use every week in order to meet with clients. Regular meetings with probation officials have also taken place in order to raise awareness of these families.

Solrosen has continued weekly work at the women's prison and in 2016 introduced baby-massage to the inmates living with their children in prison in order to develop the attachment and relationship between the child and the mother. This has been very rewarding. This is also something provided for the mothers with babies that are outside of prison, who have a family member in custody or in prison.

During 2016 Solrosen established a new location in the close city of Borås. Solrosen has been active in the custody and the prison in Borås over the years and in autumn of 2015 a study was completed that demonstrated that there was a need for support for prisoners and prisoners' families in the city. The support for this second Solrosen from different authorities in the city, NGOs and churches has been overwhelming.

In Autumn 2016 Solrosen was also part of another study in a city called Jönköping. The results from this study showed that there are families that need support and that there are already NGOs giving support to these families.

In the second part of 2016 Solrosen was involved in a study done by a masters student from Child Culture Design. Her focus was on children's perceptions of the visiting rooms in prisons. Children at Solrosen took part in the study and created their own models of how they would like the visiting-room to feel and look. The custody in Gothenburg and one of the prisons in the area were involved in this project. Solrosen is now working in partnership with Correctional Services in the process of realising the creation more child-friendly visiting rooms in the custody here in Gothenburg and in one of the prisons in the area. Hopefully this will be accomplished in 2017/2018.

### **St Nicholas Trust, Ireland**

In 2016 St Nicholas Trust was instrumental in setting up the new waiting room in Cork prison and equipping it with toys, books and colouring materials. St Nicholas Trust continues to work

with the Irish Prison Service to ensure that there is acknowledgement of the fact that visiting a member in prison is daunting and families need to be considered with respect. Additionally, a secure outdoor play area was set up so that children can play safely while their parents are talking.

A support group has been established in a small room off the waiting room where support sessions are organised for those in need of information and support.

### **Treffpunkt e.V., Germany**

Children of prisoners remains a key focus of Treffpunkt e.V.

The project TAKT, which aimed to raise awareness by targeting teachers, students, social workers, youth welfare office staff members and prison volunteers, concluded with a German-wide conference in April 2016. A guide for the correct professional approach towards children of prisoners was also published (in German).

Treffpunkt created a children's book called "Wie Schokopudding und Spaghetti" (Like chocolate pudding and spaghetti), in which the zebra Juki learns to deal with his feelings after his father was imprisoned.

The above-mentioned guide and the children's book can be ordered directly from Treffpunkt via email: [takt@treffpunkt-nbg.de](mailto:takt@treffpunkt-nbg.de). In 2017 Treffpunkt plans a nationwide awareness campaign with the help of the promotion of the book.

### **COPE developments in 2016**

In 2016, COPE participated in the launch of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2016-2021 in Sofia; joined forces with the Council of Europe's Council for Penological Cooperation (PC-CP) to draft a Recommendation on Children of Imprisoned Parents for the Council of Ministers; consolidated its strong working relationship with the European Union, through closer work with MEPs on [Written Declaration \(WD\) P8\\_DCL\(2016\)0084](#),<sup>1</sup> participating in an Expert Group on Family Ties with EU Member State prison services, and securing an EU-funded operating grant that strengthens EU policies on child rights and child protection; and co-organised an international briefing session for Member States at the UN in Geneva (1 February 2017) during the 74th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), with CRC Chair Benyam Mezmur. It also co-hosted an international conference on prisoners' children with the Children's Ombudsman's Office Croatia, with participation by the European Commission, the European Parliament, UNICEF and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the involvement of young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Submitted by 10 MEPs in September 2016. The Written Declaration was not adopted, as not enough MEPs signed it for it to be adopted as the official position of the Parliament (276 out of 376, still a significant development).