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Towards increased awareness, responsibility and shared quality in social work

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WP 4.5

Albanian Social Services Involvement

**REPORT ON EXCHANGE AND DISSEMINATION OF
BEST PRACTICES**

Post WP 2.2 Consolidation Trainings



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1. Introduction

The T@sk project consists not only of in-depth upgrading teaching activities and testing of professionalized internship procedures specifically addressed to academic staff in the Albanian universities, but also of best practice exchanges in order to replicate the impact on areas of intervention of Social Services, with particular sensitivity and attention paid to deprived children and vulnerable women.

Sharing a critical vision, convinced of the value of multidisciplinary and aware of the complexity of the issues addressed, the T@sk consortium accepted what in the literature is defined as a *critical best practice perspective* (Ferguson 2003): it seeks to move the literature beyond a “deficit approach” where the focus is on what does not get done (well), in order to create a perspective where learning occurs in terms of best practice which is set out as a model for developing systems and practice competencies.

Broadening the concept of evidence-based practice, including qualitative research methods and the experience of professionals, service users and the gathering of practice-based evidence (especially as regards opportunities for direct contact offered by consolidation training), the researchers of the T@sk Project have tried to arrive at an operational definition of "excellence" and of what is "best", by taking into account the precise perspectives of the stakeholders who construct practice and recognising that they must continue to build them, possibly in an increasingly effective way.

Beyond theoretical debates and discussion, the diverse range of methods and field experience from different countries and diverse contexts offer a valuable wealth of knowledge; and a wide and varied range from which to draw and identify some perspective or method of engagement of social workers in social policy and intervention tools. All this – according to the convictions and ambitions of the T@sk consortium – could effectively strengthen social policy education and practice in social work.

In particular, in recognizing Social Justice as the aim of the SW profession (Figueira-McDonough 1993), the European partners have tried to promote the awareness of those trained in already identified main intervention themes and related target groups for the intervention of social services. This is why in each consolidation training session, lessons and visits dedicated to women and minors in vulnerable situations have found space.

Furthermore, the selection and presentation of these and others social services' best practices to Albanian colleagues in Italy, Spain and Portugal also represented a reinforcement of transdisciplinary cooperation at the level of European partners' countries (Bulli, Mascagni 2020).

For all these reasons, work on BP was a central part of the activities of the T@sk project. And for these reasons, the consortium has decided to dedicate a report to this line of action.

2. Kick-off Meeting as a first look at BP reflection

The T@sk Project kick-off meeting¹ (KoM) was a date dedicated to the comparison and definition in detail – among others – of area priorities in identifying Best Practices (BPs) and sharing the circulation and dissemination strategies of those.

Since the connection between profession and social welfare has been known for decades (Jansson 1988), and today more than ever this is solid and full of meaning and a bearer of secondary effects, great attention was devoted to activities implying the highest level of reciprocal knowledge of the Social Services in all the countries involved, so as to facilitate the individuation of best practices.

The KoM was also a first opportunity for: i) concrete contact with stakeholders; ii) the presentation of models and work experience and intervention in the social services; iii) close observation of the field of Best Practices; iv) identification of the elements of replicability of Best Practices and planning subsequent dissemination activities.

The T@sk project's public presentation – whose programme has been circulated among the institutional project's partners, associated partners at the University of Florence and possible stakeholders in the territory of the Municipality of Florence and the Tuscany Region – saw the direct and active participation of a large number of important representatives at both institutional and administrative levels:

From Sara Funaro, Municipal Assessor for Health Services, to Susanna Rollino of the Department in the Italian Probation System (UEPE), from the Director of the Istituto degli Innocenti Giovanni Palumbo to Carlotta Bardi representing the municipality of Florence, to Andrea Francalani of the Health Societies of Florence, to name but a few.

The Rector of the University of Elbasan, Prof. Skender Topi, the Rector of the University of Shkodra, Prof. Adem Bekteshi, and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Tirana, Prof. Edmond Rapti, invited speaker and present at the event, underline the relevance of the cooperation tradition between Italy and Albania and welcome the opening up of new relations with the Universities of Madrid and Lisbon and the Professional Order of Social Workers of the Tuscany Region. The cooperation occasion represented by T@sk shall be the

¹ The Kick-off Meeting of the T@sk Project took place on the 7th, 8th and 9th of February 2018 in Florence. Delegations from each of the partners were present at the meeting and actively participated in three days of activities.

starting point for a common path in the direction of mutual extended knowledge, the implementation of skills and – last but not least – reciprocal exchanges of best practice.

In the sessions and round tables, also open to non-experts, several members of invited stakeholders could remain in order to understand in more detail the expected outcomes of the project and make contact with the participants.

3. Best Practice for the social services: steps to introduce and disseminate

In this section we present a selection of Best Practices visited during the Consolidation Training foreseen by the Project timetable.

In line with T@sk Project's original proposal, after the first joint training and updating session² (WP 2.1), the partners started a phase of consolidation training.

The responsible Universities were in charge of training and updating on their specific areas of interest and expertise. The sessions, directed at all participants of the Albanian Universities, profited from mobility funds in order to actively participate in three training sessions (please see Table 1.1 for attendee numbers).

Table 1.1. Summary table of participants of each training session

	Number of participants	Academic staff (%)	SW/NGOS (%)
Florence Jun. 2019	14	100	0
Lisbon Dec. 2019	12	100	0
Madrid Oct. 2020	41	68	32

There were three planned working sessions.³ Each consolidation training session ran for five working days. The methodology adopted is frontal didactics and a little group work has been specifically designed to enhance both the theoretical content and practical and empirical experience. Therefore, the presentation of theoretical analysis was followed by methodological reflection and practical exercises.

The three training sessions presented an articulate but virtuous and functional mix between:

A) Theoretical and methodological training as frontal didactics, cooperative learning, a little group work.

² This activity was completed with the delivery of rough material by all partners to the UCM for its transformation into E-learning activities, as a follow-up.

³ Due to internal organizational issues regarding the timing and themes of training, which saw the original order of training sessions 2 and 3 reversed and then, due to the impact of the pandemic, the organization of the Madrid training saw a large shift forward in the calendar and a need to organize it as lectures and workshops in webinar mode. It should be noted that it favoured a higher in number but less select attendance than that session was supposed to have.

B) Guided appointments with the Social Services in the respective areas of Florence, Lisbon and Madrid (virtual visits). Please see Table 1.2.

Particularly regarding point B, the aim of this part of the training consists of confronting Social Services' best practices in dialogues with Social Workers and their Administrative staff, and whenever possible in direct contact with the entire partnership of the Associated partners of the T@sk Project, who guided the participants in visits to Social Services and shared their experiences (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.2 Summary table of services (BP) presented in the consolidation training, with particular attention paid to women and children

EVENT	FIELD VISIT: SERVICE NAME	Associated Partner YES/NO	MAIN AREA OF INTERVENTION/MAIN TOPIC PRESENTED
Florence June 25–29, 2019	“Centro sociale Via Bini 5”, Firenze	YES	Social Services Access point of the Municipality of Florence, District 5
	“Casa Madre Bambino Figlie del Crocifisso”, via Puccinotti 64 Firenze	NO	Residential structure for women in need and their children
	“Casa della Solidarietà di San Paolino”, Via del Porcellana 30, Firenze	NO	Residential structure for persons in need
	“Nosotras Onlus”, Via Faenza 103, Firenze	NO	Women’s Intercultural Association
	“Casa Famiglia Io Sono Mio” Sesto Fiorentino (FI)	NO	Residential structure for children in need
Lisbon December 2–6, 2019	Centro Social e Paroquial São Jorge de Arroios, Lisbon	NO	Psychological help and spiritual support for the elderly population
	Espaço Júlia, Lisbon	NO	Social intervention with women
	Casa Pia Lisboa, Lisbon	YES	National Institution of Child Protection
	Casa Do Parque, Lisbon	NO	Residential childcare
Madrid, September 28 – October 2, 2020 [online training]	Social intervention with women	NO	Gender stereotypes and gender perspective
	Minors protection system in Spain, laws, sources, professionals and handicaps	YES	Focus on support for parents, child protection, alternative care arrangements, and supporting vulnerable young people in education, employment or housing
	Forensic Social Work in family courts	NO	The importance of the forensic social worker

	“The role of the Council of Social Work: the Spanish case”	YES	How to advance the exchange of knowledge in public social services in partnership with health, education, housing, employment and social inclusion to benefit people and communities through improved policy and practice
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Even in the phase of identifying BPs and illustrating them, the direct involvement of local Social Services, experts in the social services science sector and stakeholders was crucial. Their constant involvement in the project and the active participation of political and social Associated partners during the entire lifespan of the project (see Tab 1.3) was therefore confirmed to be one of the added values of the T@sk Project.

Table 1.3 Associated Partners: involved during Consolidation Training sessions

Associated Partner	Florence June 25–29, 2019	Lisbon December 2–6, 2019	Madrid September 28 – October 2, 2020
Municipality of Shkodra - Shkoder (AL)	X by P5 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P5 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P5 [in BP dissemination activities]
The Door - Shkoder (AL)	X by P5 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P5 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P5 [in BP dissemination activities]
Casa Pia De Lisboa - Lisbon (PT)	/	X by P3	/
Santa Casa Da Misericordia De Lisboa - Lisbon (PT)	/	/	/
National Association of Education for Life (Shoqata Kombetare Edukim Per Jeten) - Tirane (AL)	/	/	/
Refraction Association (Shoqata Perthyerje) - Tirane (AL)	/	/	/
Mary Ward Loreto Foundation – Tirana (AL)	X by P4 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P4 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P4 [in BP dissemination activities]
Vircamp - Madrid (ES)	/	/	/
Colegio Oficial De Trabajo Social De Madrid - Madrid (ES)	/	/	/
Ministry of Justice. Department of Juvenile Justice and Community. Interdistrict Department External Criminal Execution - Italy (IT)	X by P1	/	/
Comune Di Firenze (Florence Municipality – Social Service Direction) - Florence (IT)	X by P1	/	/
Foro Tecnico De Formacion (Technical Forum of Education) - Madrid (ES)	/	/	/

Municipality Of Elbasan - Elbasan (AL)	X by P6 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P6 [in BP dissemination activities]	X by P6 [in BP dissemination activities]
Conferencia De Decanos, Decanas, Directores Y Directoras De Trabajo Social De La Universidad Española - Madrid (ES)	/	/	/
Consejo General Trabajo Social - Madrid (ES)	/	/	X by P2
European Association School of Social Work - Maastricht (NL)	/	/	/

As clearly highlighted by the summary sheets of each sessions presented below (see Box 1.1), particular attention was dedicated to the upcoming step of confrontation with Social Services (shared goal also in WP 4.5), in order to also create the basis for a successful write-up of the guidelines and procedures for the professional Order of Social Workers and the implementation of in loco internships.

Box 1.1 – Consolidation Training Summary Sheets

1st CONSOLIDATION TRAINING in Florence

Date: June 25th–29th, 2019

Trainees: all participants of the Albanian partners (Lecturers)

Main topics: Social Service Governance; Perspectives on Access to the Social Service Ethics of Social Work; Gender Violence; Strategies and tools to respond to Emergency and Social Urgency.

Trainers: P1 and P7

2nd CONSOLIDATION TRAINING in Lisbon

Date: December 2nd–6th, 2019

Trainees: all participants of the Albanian partners (Lecturers)

Main topics: Social Services Organization in Portugal; Social Worker Professional Organization: a comparative analysis; Foundations of Social Work in Contemporaneity; Human Rights and Social Work; Violence against women and girls

Trainers: P3

3rd CONSOLIDATION TRAINING in Madrid (online)

Date: September 28th – October 2nd, 2020

Trainees: all participants of the Albanian partners (Lecturers and stakeholders)

Main topics: History and functioning of Social Services in Spain; ICT and Social Services; Family Law and children Law; Gender stereotypes and gender perspectives.

Trainers: P2

In order to permit successful exploitation of the visit to Social Services, P1, P2, P3 and P7 provided an Observation form for Social Services to help and guide P4, P5 and P6 to better

analyze the best practices observed. This Observation Form, discussed and modified during the FCT, provided the basis for drafting the reports presented in the annex of this document.

This chapter concludes by recalling the main expectations and efforts of the Partners of the T@sk Project regarding reciprocal knowledge development, the rise in awareness in the development of Social Services, the creation of intellectual, professional and cultural bridges between different countries that prevail. At the level of capacity-building activities, to compare in a horizontal and open way different systems for intervention by social services is key for the effective identification of best practices and to develop elements of replicability at both theoretical and professional action levels.

5. References

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6. Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA: Bachelor’s degree

BP: Best practice

FCT: First Consolidation Training (Florence)

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

KoM: Kick-off Meeting

LMS: Learning Management System

MA: Master’s Degree

OAS: Ordine Assistenti Sociali of Tuscany Region

P1: University of Florence - Italy

P2: Universidad Complutense de Madrid - Spain

P3: Instituto Universitario De Lisboa - Portugal

P4: Universiteti i Tiranës - Albania

P5: Universiteti Shkodrës Luigj Gurakuqi - Albania

P6: Universiteti i Elbasanit “Aleksandër Xhuvani - Albania

P7: Ordine Assistenti Sociali della Regione Toscana - Italy

SCT: Second Consolidation Training (Lisbon)

SW: Social Work

TCT: Third Consolidation training (Madrid)

WP: Work Package