

Keep Me Safe

Keep Me Safe

Newsletter

September 2019

Erasmus+ Keep Me Safe — Issue 1 — September 2019

CONTENTS

- Project update 1
- United Kingdom 2
- Bulgaria 3
- Cyprus 3
- Denmark 4
- France 4
- Slovenia 5
- Project Info 6

PROJECT UPDATE

The project Keep Me Safe is funded by European Union under Erasmus+ Programme. It aims to develop curriculum programme for youth workers; a new approach to developing 'youth peers' whereby young people are empowered together to tackle the issues addressed by the project, and a

digital learning app that will enhance these initiatives through a new interface. To reach that goal during the first phase of the project we established three goals:

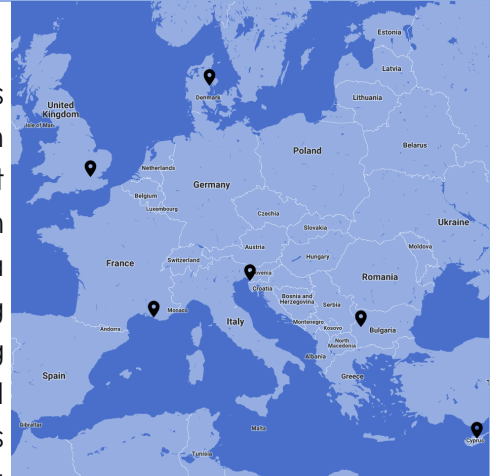
To define a **role specification** of youth workers in the field of preventing and raising awareness against sexual abuse.

To establish **competency framework** by identifying key competences for youth workers in the field of preventing and raising awareness against sexual abuse and pre-determined areas (understanding sexual abuse, cultural determinants on perceptions, attitudes and behaviours in relation to sexual abuse, safeguarding in the youth sector and proactive communication on the topic of sexual abuse) and breaking them down into Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes.

To develop a **curriculum** to answer the needs of youth workers.

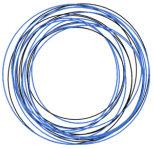
To reach these goals in each partner state were implemented focus groups or interviews with key stakeholders, youth workers and expert sources in the field of preventing and raising awareness against sexual abuse and to fill in the matrix for a competency framework.

What follows are short reports about implementation of field-work from each partner state.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Keep Me Safe

Rinova Limited & London Youth



Earlier this summer Rinova and London Youth held a focus group to discuss with professionals their experiences of approaching the subject of child sexual abuse, detection and prevention as well as considering how to explain to young people about positive, healthy relationships and behaviours that constitute positive and negative sexual relationships. Discussion was interesting and varied and provided insight into the experience professionals have with the young people. Particular issues raised were those around sexual violence and the use of sex as a weapon within gang cultures, also how

vulnerability can increase the risk of sexual abuse. Discussion around promoting healthy relationships considered the influence of media and how TV can provide young people with examples of both positive and negative sexual relationships – although there was concern that repeated exposure to sexual violence could normalise this behaviour and lessen the impact. The group noted that there needs to be discussion about sexual violence against boys and men and also address issues within the LGBT community.

London Youth contacted several our members who



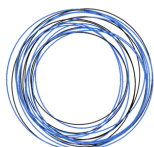
Keep Me Safe partners working together at the launch meeting held in London.

are specialists in the field of CSE (Child Sex Exploitation) or who work with very vulnerable young people that are most likely to experience grooming or sexual abuse. We decided to interview one organisation that works with young people who have ended up in hospital due to abuse / violence and one organisation who works with homeless young people in central London.

It was clear that both organisations interviewed had robust safeguarding processes and procedures in place due to the nature of the young people they supported. They had a deep understanding of the issues young people face with regards to abuse and worked with the young people to find their own solutions rather than 'fixing them' or pushing them through a process.



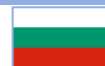
Delegates from the Keep Me Safe partnership have a group photograph after their successful project launch meeting.



Keep Me Safe

Know and Can Association

Field-work in Bulgaria



The interviews were with state and private sector, psychologists, teachers and youth workers. They all demonstrated good knowledge of the main procedures which need to be followed in cases of sexual abuse - the Criminal Proceedings Code of The Republic of Bulgaria and the Child Protection Act of Republic of Bulgaria.

Professionals lack adequate and regular training as well as sharing experience with

their colleagues. Four respondents shared that they have only theoretical basic information about the issues concerning the cases of sexual abuse. The respondents emphasize the need for training not only to people working with children-victims but also awareness raising at educational institutions and understanding of the problem of violence against

children by the whole society.

It was also mentioned that digital technology is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it facilitates communication and friendly relations between them, but on the other hand, increases the level of stress and trauma as a result of the so-called “cyber-bullying” and other abuse on the web.

“Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center

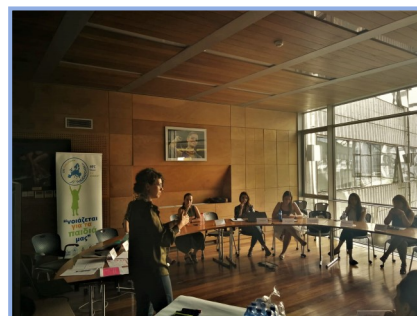


Enhancing sex education through trained Youth Workers

“Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center is engaging Cypriot stakeholders active in areas related to youth to discuss existing needs on the enhancement of professionals’ capacity to understand, communicate about and safeguard youth from sexual abuse. Cultural determinants; teachers’ lack of appropriate training to discuss sex education and overall inadequate approach to sex education in school curricula, and uncertainties about the process of reporting sexual violence emerged as prominent obstacles to follow good practices and to

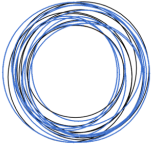
therefore effectively prevent and handle cases of sexual abuse of minors.

Civil society initiatives have been undertaking the task to raise awareness in schools to educate children and young people on boundaries when it comes to interpersonal contact and touching. However, more is needed and in a consistent, formalised manner to increase the education and knowledge around sexual health for adolescents including how to properly seek guidance and information on healthy sexual relationships – a role



“Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center hosts round table with Cypriot Stakeholders under the framework of Keep Me Safe (Nicosia, September 2019)

that youth workers can take if properly trained on how to communicate to young people, inform them about healthy relationships and supporting them in the process of reflecting on cultural biases on gender relationships.



Keep Me Safe

SOSU Østjylland

Field-work in Denmark



NGOs were identified to be interviewed about this topic, their activities and experiences with regard to sexual information to young people. During a conversation with the organization “Sex og Samfund” (Sex and society) (<https://sexogsamfund.dk>) there is a focus targeting the highest levels in primary school (15-16 years). All of them are taking place at a few upper secondary schools - and none at vocational schools, even though it could be considered that the need

might be even more urgent among youth in vocational education and training.

During the interviews, it became clear that we have the needed legislation and procedures to fight sexual abuse. It is also generally agreed that we have much knowledge about what works when it comes to preventive measures. However, many youth workers and teachers pointed out, that we need to bring the preventive measures, different initiatives, activities and offers of

counselling and advice into the daily life of youngsters after primary school and reach them in their youth education.

VET students feel insecure, vulnerable and lack knowledge – particularly when they talk about their peers. They think that sex and related aspects should be more highlighted during their youth education, that they should have more knowledge and an opportunity to look for advice and counselling at their youth educational institution.

ZRS-Koper

Field-work in Slovenia

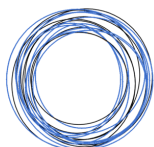


In Slovenia we've conducted interviews with representatives of policy makers (2x), youth workers (2x) and representatives of professional training and teachers (3X). The preliminary findings show that experts from the governmental organizations dealing with the violence have a good knowledge and understanding about the legislation regulating sexual abuse and violence and the procedures which need to

be followed in cases of sexual abuse, Meanwhile other youth workers have basic information about these issues. An interesting finding in all interviews was that a young person's perception of sexual abuse is determined by his/her culture and social environment in which he/she is raised and lives. In this context education, family experiences, messages from mass media, peers and raising

awareness as well are all very important.

Finally, it is important to highlight that except interviewees from governmental institutions no other had any experiences of detecting and reporting sexual abuse. In a case where they would detect sexual abuse, their response would be the same regardless of the victim's cultural background. They also believe that this would be the case with responsible entities as well.



Keep Me Safe

Eurocircle

In France, Eurocircle approached its local network from previous and current projects to find youth workers from associations (public and private) who work with young people at risk of violence or victims of violence and sexual abuse. One of our focus groups was developed with the Planning Familial (Planning Parenthood) which is the largest network of associations and activists to offer sexual health services (both safeguarding and preventing) in France.

The focus group was very productive in terms of the

identification of the competences for the role specification and the competency framework.

Furthermore, we contacted other local associations or institutes by email and phone to have the chance to meet a larger panel of people to complete our research.

From the interviews, we identified 5 main points:

- * Legal definitions are not always understood and used correctly. The procedures are hard and sometimes not applied by the administration.
- * Getting trained on this specific topic (to identify

some elements which can lead to an early detection) and have a specific framework to establish safe conditions for the victim are one of the keys to making the young people feel safe

- * Taking into account the cultural context without falling into stereotypes is very important
- * Establishing a safe place of work is essential
- * Pedagogy and education by using debates, modern tools and non-formal education methods are key to making young people feel it is safe to talk.

Project Coordinator

Laura Pescod

L.pescod@rinova.co.uk

RINOVA
innovate, create & regenerate

Project Partners



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

