



OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

GREECE

THE MAPPING CARRIED OUT BY ROOTS RESEARCH CENTER IN 2014, IDENTIFIED 71 CHILD PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS AND 14 INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN GREECE. THESE INSTITUTIONS HOUSED APPROXIMATELY 2825 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, 883 OF WHICH WERE LIVING WITH A DISABILITY. 182 YOUNG CHILDREN WERE BETWEEN 0 AND 3 YEARS OLD, WHEREAS APPROXIMATELY 760 YOUNG PEOPLE STAYING IN CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS WERE 18 OR OLDER.

Despite extensive evidence that institutional care is not only harmful to children, particularly those under three, but also a clear violation of their rights, privately-run institutions are funded largely through charity donations from the Greek people. Through national ministries, both public and private institutions are still financed with EU funds.

The main reasons for children being placed in institutional care are reported to be disability, neglect and abuse. There is a lack of family support services, and services to prevent family breakdown and there are no real alternatives to institutions available for children or for their families. Foster care placement is almost non-existent in the Greek alternative care system with only 32 children being placed in foster care in 2014. A new law on foster care was drafted in 2014 but is still awaiting approval.

The main reason for leaving institutional care is reunification with the biological family, but there were only 124 such cases in 2014. Adoption is an option for some - from the eleven public and private run institutions that run adoption programs, 84 children were adopted in 2014 - but this means permanently severing the relationship with the biological family, which might be inappropriate

or unnecessary in some cases. Some institutions run foster care programs but these lead to few placements.

As a result, there are more children entering than leaving institutional care and in Greece there is no integrated strategy for deinstitutionalisation (DI). The targets that have been set in the recent Plan of Action for the rights of the child risk to remain empty promises without integrated policy reforms, consulted with civil society, to support them.

Only 69 children left institutions after "ageing out" of care in 2014. After the age of 18 there are few provisions for them: no additional services to support care leavers, no financial aid, nor employment or accommodation. This is one of the reasons why more than a quarter of young people in children's institutions is older than 18.

The demand for alternative care services is increasing due to the financial crisis; young adults with disabilities who grew up in foster families are even being transferred back to institutions due to the lack of funding for foster families. Neither the Government nor the few NGOs working on the issue are in a position to meet these demands.



Hope & Homes
for Children



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR



ROOTS RESEARCH CENTER IS WORKING WITH ADULT ADOPTEES WHO AIM TO FIND THEIR BIOLOGICAL PARENTS, ALSO THEY ARE SUPPORTING/CONSULTING ADOPTED FAMILIES TO WORK WITH THEIR ADOPTED CHILDREN.

SINCE 2004 THEY PROMOTE FOSTER CARE, GIVE SPEECHES AROUND THE COUNTRY, RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS ON THE BENEFITS OF FOSTER CARE AND WHY COMMUNITY BASED CARE IS BETTER FOR CHILDREN. THEY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN PRIVATE FOSTER CARE CASES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, SUPPORTING AND CONSULTING THE FOSTER PARENTS. THEY RUN TRAINING SEMINARS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PROMOTING FOSTER CARE AND COMMUNITY BASED CARE.

JUSTICE EXPERTS ARE THEIR SUPPORTERS ON CHILD PROTECTION AFFAIRS, WALKING WITH THEM SLOWLY ON THE WAY TO CHANGE THE RESIDENTIAL CULTURE IN GREECE.

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NATIONAL PARTNERS

Federation of Women's Associations of Heraklion Crete, Iliachtida, Family support center of the Holy Archdiocese of Athens Foundation, Family and Children Support Center, NGO Association of adoptive families Amfidoron, Therapeutic riding Association, Association of Juvenile Court Curators, NGO Federation of Greece, Children's Rights Network

FACTS & FIGURES

- APPROXIMATELY 2825 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE IN 85 PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND CHURCH-RUN INSTITUTIONS, AS COMPARED TO 309 CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE AROUND GREECE
- THE NUMBER ONE REASON INDICATED FOR CHILDREN'S PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE IS DISABILITY AND 883 OF INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN (MORE THAN 31%) HAVE A DISABILITY
- THERE ARE 182 CHILDREN AGED 0-3 (ALMOST 6.5%) AS WELL AS APPROXIMATELY 760 YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18 OR OLDER (ALMOST 27%) STAYING IN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- IN 2014, OPENING DOORS COORDINATOR ROOTS RESEARCH CENTER CARRIED OUT A MAPPING OF INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN GREECE. IT'S THE FIRST OF ITS KIND AND TO DATE, THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL DATA AVAILABLE ON THE EXACT NUMBER OF CHILDREN LIVING IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE NOR ON THE EXACT NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS OPERATING IN THE COUNTRY. COMPARISON TO PREVIOUS YEARS IS THEREFORE IMPOSSIBLE
- PROFESSIONALS REPORT AN INCREASED DEMAND FOR ALTERNATIVE CARE SERVICES DUE TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The Opening Doors campaign operates at EU level and in 12 countries across Europe.

Working with a network of national partners in each participating country, we are building civil society capacity to advocate at national level.

We are calling on the EU and national governments to prioritise the transition from institutional to family-based care and deliver quality care for children across Member States, pre-accession countries and within the EU neighbourhood.

We believe that the end of institutional care for children in Europe is possible and within our reach – putting the best interests of children back at the heart of Europe's child protection systems.

