HOW WE SUPPORT HIGH-RISK FAMILIES AND TEENAGERS TO PREVENT SEPARATION IN LATVIA

SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGES LATVIA
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RIGA, 30.09.2021
More than 20 years of experience in Latvia - since 1997

Children who are at risk of losing parental care:
- Prevention
- Social rehabilitation

Children who have lost parental care:
- Family like care
- Support to foster parents and guardians

SOS programs and services

- FSP 510 children
- FBC 770 children (130+640)
- Support to >50 kindergartens

In 2021...

- Family Support Centre Riga
- Family Strengthening service
- FSC 2
- FSC 3
- Out-of-family care support centre
- Children Village 1
- Children Village 2
- Youth House

- Complex social work with families and children
- Support for mothers with newborn children
- Social work with teenagers in conflict with law (and their families)
- Support for families of children for special needs
- Family Assistant services

- Crisis intervention program
- Complex prevention program in kindergartens
- Advocasy; Child rights protection
- Training for professionals
- Youth care for non-SOS youth

- Education and Competence Centre
- National Office

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2007

2018
Projects = opportunities for growth

“Project GEPAP”
EU action Transfer of Innovation, Leonardo da Vinci
Lifelong learning programme
46 000 EUR, 75% cofinancing, 10/2010-10/2012

Interreg V-A Latvia – Lithuania
Programme 2014-2020;
European Regional Development Fund
2018-2019

“Development and implementation of Family
Strengthening program in Cesis region”
142 000 EUR (100 000 LVL), 100% ESF financing
01/2012-06/2013, then till 01/2015 sustainability by our and
municipality financing, afterwards – by municipality

“Inclusive family, kindergarten, school and
community – FS in Bauska region”
Latvian-Swiss cooperation programme; 130 000
EUR, 90% cofinancing; 01/2011-06/2012

Partnership in Nordic Council of Ministers (NGO programme)

Several projects by LR Society Integration Fund (state
budget) "Strengthening of administrative capacity of
NGOs“ – usually 100% financing

Partnership in “Prepare for
Leaving Care – A Child Protection
System that works for
Professionals and Young People”
European Commision DGJustice,
2017-2018

EEA/NORWAY
grant

OAK
Foundation
**Main profile of high risk families:**

- Parents with addictions (especially if having small age children);
- Possible violence in families;
- Parents with low social and parenting skills;
- Parents with mental disorders;
- Parents with mental illnesses (sometimes not yet diagnosed);
- Poverty is not among the risks for separation in Latvia.

**Complex social work with families and children**

= Social case management;
max. capacity 140 families

**Main problems of teenagers:**

- Problematic relationships with parents;
- Depressive symptoms / depression / low energy;
- Behavioral difficulties, absenteeism;
- Wandering or spending time aimlessly, skipping school;
- Addictive substance use episodes / increased interest / selling?;
- Learning difficulties;
- Criminal offenses;
- etc.

**Social work with teenagers**

in conflict with law (and their families)

= Social case management;
30 families

To reduce risks of child abuse, neglect and social exclusion by providing specific services.

Programme for teenagers “MATE or FRIEND or BUDDY”
PRINCIPLES of work

AGE: 11-17 y.o.; Boys and girls
We are working with whole family – parents, siblings (Social Worker) and offering more individual help for the teenager (Support Person)

- Participation
- Establishing contact
- Flexibility
- Vitality
- Casual atmosphere
- Raising awareness of different life situations
- FUN

INDIVIDUAL WORK:
Conversations; Meetings combined with an activity, such as cooking, playing games, etc.; Meeting indoors and outdoors, incl. in schools, parks, cafes, going for walks.
Accompanying a teenager to specialists, to co-operation institutions.
Career education, incl. “shadow days”

OUTDOOR EDUCATION + TRADITIONS:
Trail race series "Deer buck"; Excursion for families; “Partner’s Academy”; Family activities; "Partner’s" birthday; Christmas event for families

GROUP ACTIVITIES:
Short hikes; Classes for teenagers on health, protection, relationships, etc.

Since 2008 – social work with families – FS projects
Since 2018 - teenager program; average length of participation - 2 years

Covid
Principles of work

Child’s Life Quality assessment

- child’s development needs;
- parenting capacity;
- family and environmental factors,

We terminate the cooperation if the obligations are fulfilled; the difficulties have been resolved; the situation is stable, safe for the young person.

Initial process
- triangle risks
- Evaluation of social functioning

Plan, then work /up to 6 months/

Evaluation of plan
- Triangle for family Covision
- Risk re-assessment

If it is necessary to continue cooperation, we create a new plan

Teenager is in the centre

We terminate the cooperation if the obligations are fulfilled; the difficulties have been resolved; the situation is stable, safe for the young person.
MEET the FAMILY

Daughter Anna (15 y.o.), mother (38 y.o.), father (41 y.o.)

How did we meet? Referral from Riga Social Service. 02/2019

Initial problems: parents came to ask for help as Anna together with friends had several cases of small thefts from shops, wandering around, skipping school. Several cases of alcohol abuse. Anna had to finish basic education next school year.

Problems and risks (after assessment): problems with parental roles – respect and authority; discipline problems and conflicts with parents, bad understanding of borders as well as causes and results of certain behaviour; gaps and bad marks at school due to skipped classes.

Strengths (after assessment): parents are ready to collaborate, there are inner resources; Anna also is not totally against.

Activities and specialists involved:

03 - 10/2019 social rehab.plan I.

Social worker (SW) + individual support person (ISP). Addiction specialist – several consultations about substance abuse. ISP – individual meetings to establish contact, together to specialists; group activities, summer camp. SW – with parents; legal agreements with victims regarding police cases.

11 - 02/2020 social rehab.plan II.

ISP – more attention to school and chose of professional career. Visits to technical schools. Support with learning. Psychiatrist – to be sure there is no serious mental health problems (depression). Activities, film festival, Christmas event. Parents attend group activities with other parents.

03 - 08/2020 social rehab.plan III.

Due to Covid – more individual consultations, distant. Summer camp in June. Contacts and praxis in film industry.
Results for ANNA:
- 08-09/2020 after evaluation it was decided to stop cooperation – goal reached.
- Anna (17 y.o.) started learning in secondary school grade 10 in September;
- Anna continues to be engaged in film industry projects, this is her interest;
- Anna does not skip school, results are better;
- There have been no more cases of wandering, thieving, good relationship with parents.
~ 3 months after closure case is monitored

Lessons learned: +  and -
Program success rate - ~50% of families exit as self-reliant, problems solved, no more issues with law.
Much higher risks when parents are not willing to cooperate.

Our TEAM of SWs and ISPs:

Inner problems - change of specialists (especially if it is ISP).

Really good opportunity for teenagers to change their lives in positive way.
**Ecogram or family tree** (resources)

**10 most important events in life** (relationships, self-esteem)

**Family plans developed by family themselves** (principles of Family Conference Method)

**Evaluation of Child Life Quality**

And lots of documents to be filled + state database
THANK YOU!!

https://www.sosbernuciemati.lv
https://www.facebook.com/sosbernuciemati
The association’s approach to solving the case by focusing on the child’s needs and interests can be developed and transferred to other municipalities.

Professionally trained staff, developed implementation system/training materials.

A system for team-work is in place.

Transparent reporting system for reporting to co-operation partners, financiers.

Together with the teenager, the work is being done to promote the personal growth of his/her personality by thinking and working on education, leisure, employment, social and self-care skills and health.

The service is implemented in accordance with the regulations set by the Riga Social Service, supplemented by a special approach, focusing on the needs of the child..

The demand for the program is growing, the program is gradually evolving, …, and it can be transferred.

The need and the demand for the service are higher than the Association can provide.

..new and innovative services..