



Good Practices: Services that benefit families affected by imprisonment

From Spain, Germany, Greece, Portugal and Romania

UpFamilies - online resources to support prisoners' families

Partners

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1. Introduction and context

This document has been produced in the framework of Project Result 3 (PR3) of the “UpFamilies - online resources to support prisoners’ families” project (2021-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000025967). The practices published have been collected by the UpFamilies project partners during the project’s length to inform the project and its outputs, and especially the development of its Training Course “Helping organisations build a better future for families affected by imprisonment” and the course’s Training Manual.

Both the Training course and Manual are designed to enhance community capabilities in providing support and assistance to families impacted by incarceration. This initiative leverages national, European, and international research conducted by partners regarding the needs of these families, as well as the resources and professionals available in their respective countries to address these needs.

In order to meet the needs of families affected by imprisonment comprehensively, it is required that the different stakeholders work together to maximise their resources and direct the intervention to where it can have the most impact. The criminal justice system has implemented different programmes running in penitentiary centres in order to meet the needs of people in prison, but their families are often the hidden victims of the situation of imprisonment and need help from community resources. Therefore, the new needed step is to foster strong community ownership surrounding this target group, their needs and how to best address them. In the absence of effective strategies to develop, implement and support such community services, the latter will remain inadequate to assist both these families and the person who was in prison after their release. Community service providers need to be empowered in order to improve outcomes for people and work in partnership with the rest of the system’s agents in order to maximise the effectiveness of the results achieved by the criminal justice system.

With the aim of improving the provision of these community services, UpFamilies partners have undertaken a brief action research in order to inform the project’s course and manual with findings from existing initiatives which have been considered as good examples for the support of vulnerable populations, especially for the families affected by incarceration. For this purpose, project partners have gathered and analysed promising lessons that they have

found to be key in developing successful programmes that address families with incarcerated members' needs in their countries.

Therefore, this document includes the practices at local/regional/national level in the participating countries –Spain, Germany, Greece, Portugal and Romania– identified as “good” and “promising” for the scope and objectives of the UpFamilies project.

These practices informed the training interventions of the ‘UpFamilies’ Training Course and Manual. Some were used as case studies in the training, so that participants in the training could analyse them, contemplate on them and use them as examples for the development and implementation of their services. After the identification of what can be considered as “good practice” (Annex A), project partners identified and collected these practices.

2. Good Practices

2.1 Good Practices from Spain

Good practice 1:

Organisation: Faculty of Psychology, University of Salamanca.

1. What is the title of the practice?

Psychological Assistance Unit for Children of People in Prison and their Families – HIPRIFAM (Unidad de Atención Psicológica a Hijos e Hijas de Personas en Prisión y sus Familias)

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

Children with a father or mother in prison, the parent in prison, the main caregivers, the immediate or extended family members, the professionals in educational centres or mental health professionals.

3. What service does this practice offer?

This service offers free psychological assistance to children of people in prison and their families. Equally, it offers advice to professionals that work with children of people in prison and their families.

Objectives:

- Be a quality support for children of people in prison.
- Offer advice to families with respect to the treatment of the situation with their children.
- Advise professionals that work with children of people in prison.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe.

The users of this service get in contact with our Unit through social media (WhatsApp (+34677522599), Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn), email (hiprifam@usal.es) or by telephone (+34677522599). Once the request has been received, we reply to the person's message or call within 24 hours to understand the request and make an appointment. The

intervention can be face-to-face, as we are part of the Psychological Support Service of the Faculty of Psychology (address: Faculty of Psychology of the University of Salamanca, Avda. de la Merced 109-131, 37005, Salamanca) and also by video call or telephone. The latter two methods are the most popular as most of our users are from outside the province of Salamanca.

The sessions usually last approximately one hour, but we take all the time necessary until we are sure that the session has been productive and effective, with some sessions lasting an hour and a half or sometimes even more. The sessions have an interview section, a break and a final intervention with a task to complete. The sessions are usually carried out by a therapist and a co-therapist. In the cases that we have handled so far we have conducted between 3 and 6 sessions, with 4 or 5 sessions being the most common.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

In the six months that the Unit has been active, we have received a multitude of calls with different requests (some unrelated to psychological attention) which have resulted in ten cases with a deeper intervention. Five of these cases knew of the Unit through their participation in a research project on the same topic, where the existence of this free service was signalled. Four of them knew of the Unit through social media or our website, and one through a social worker in a penitentiary centre who, in turn, knew of the service from an email that was sent to the Social Work teams of all penitentiary centres from the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions. The service users have consisted of nine families. Within these cases, there have been interviews with the principal caregivers of the children (e.g. mothers, fathers, grandparents, etc.) and the children themselves, as well as with a group of educational professionals who consulted us on the management of a child whose father had just entered prison and was in a crisis situation.

Bearing in mind that the publicity of the Unit has been limited in its first phase, as we wanted to test its effectiveness with a reduced number of cases, we have found that, taking into account the high level of specificity of the service, the reception has been excellent, and we are now at the beginning of a second phase of mass dissemination.

Concerning the effectiveness of the intervention of the Unit, the ten cases handled have met their demands and the changes have been maintained in the follow-ups that we have carried out. In addition, the therapeutic process has been evaluated using the Steve de Shazer scale

(1998) for pre-post evaluation, developed for therapeutic work and the attainment of the therapeutic objectives. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that all of the problems that have been brought to the Unit have not been solved at all, and 10 means that all of them have been resolved, all the cases handled were between 2 and 4 in the first session, and between 8 and 9 as the handling drew to a close. This simple indicator and the revision of the therapeutic objectives employed allows us to confirm that the intervention has been effective in all of the cases handled so far. In addition, follow-up evaluations have been carried out in two of these cases, where it has been confirmed that the changes have been upheld.

Currently, we are designing an evaluation with three analysis points (before, just after the intervention and 6 months following its completion) through a short set of standardised tests to measure the effect of our intervention in the wellbeing and mental health of our users and the maintenance of the changes as time goes by. Nevertheless, our Unit is not centred exclusively on intervention, but also the subsequent accompaniment during the time where the father or mother is in prison and during their release to a life of freedom with their family, if the relatives wish so.

Our intervention is based on scientific evidence produced by research, a field in which we also work. On the one hand, the coordinator of the Unit led the first project developed in Spain on the effects that having a parent in prison has on a child, titled “Menores Amenazados: necesidades y efectos de la prisión en los hijos de encarcelados en España” (“Threatened Minors: needs and effects of prison on children of prisoners in Spain”), financed by the State Research Agency of the Ministry of Innovation and Science in its 2019 Challenges Call (Reference: PID2019-110006RB-I00/AEI/10.13039/501100011033-), and one of the collaborators of the Unit also formed a part of the research team of this project. In addition, our scientific work has also been further developed with a publication in an impactful scientific journal (quartile 1) reviewing the effects of parental imprisonment on children at each developmental stage. The reference is:

Herreros-Fraile, A., Carcedo, R. J., Viedma, A., Ramos-Barbero, V., Fernández-Rouco, N., Gomiz-Pascual, P., & Del Val, C. (2023). Parental Incarceration, Development, and Well-Being: A Developmental Systematic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(4), 3143. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043143>

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

Three principal methods of intervention have been established: video calls, telephone calls, or in person. If the case is a matter of only solving one concrete concern, a response on social media could be used as an intervention method. The purpose of using a method of contact that is as private as possible is to make it easier for the people affected to come to the service, especially when the families concerned are often made invisible and, in turn, suffer from significant social stigma.

In the interventions, we work with a brief systemic family therapy model. Within this approach, we work with the solution-focused therapy model, narrative therapy, the problem-focused model of the Mental Research Institute, the structural model and the psycho-educational model. All of these models have proven to be effective in therapeutic interventions with families. Equally, our working model has an especially profound focus in the resources and qualities that the family already presents. In situations of social vulnerability, working with the family's pre-existing resources and reactivating them is essential to help the family to get out of the situation in which they find themselves, and, in addition, away from the labelling and the stigma that these families so often suffer from.

Nevertheless, although the approach is systemic and family-centred, the principal focus is always the wellbeing and the development of the children and adolescents, which could be put at risk by being in this situation. In addition, there are concrete issues where it is always necessary to make an intervention, even if it is psycho-educational, and which correlate to the processes and situations that the majority of these children and adolescents go through. Aspects such as whether or not the child or adolescent was present during the arrest and how it happened, the explanation for the parent being in prison, what happened, preparation for penitentiary communication (in visiting spaces, face to face, by telephone and by letters), social stigma and social relations, school, coping with this situation and the expectations of the parent's return home from prison are some of the central elements that always have to be considered during the therapeutic process.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Spanish, but patients can also be treated in English.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

Since September 2022

9. Year of development of the practice:

2022

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

It is a free Psychological Support Unit affiliated with the Psychological Support Service of the Psychology Faculty of the University of Salamanca, so it would fall into the service category.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate.

The service is completely free for its users.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

This question was not asked.

13. Link to the practice:

hiprifam.usal.es (which will automatically redirect to <https://sites.google.com/usal.es/hiprifam/>).

Currently, we are updating our website through the Innovation and Digital Production Service of the University of Salamanca.

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Unit Coordinator:

Rodrigo J. Carcedo González. Head Professor of the University Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology (Faculty of Psychology, University of Salamanca).

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Good practice 2:

Organisation: *Fundación Diagrama Intervención Psicosocial*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Programa de Apoyo psicoterapéutico para familiares de personas con problemas de adicción y/o patología dual (Support programme for family members of people with drug addictions and/or dual pathology).

This programme is part of the Helianthus project, a comprehensive system managed by Fundación Diagrama that facilitates the care of users with addiction problems throughout their rehabilitation and reintegration process, in line with the principles contained in the National Plan on Drugs and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):

(<https://www.fundaciondiagrama.es/comunicacion-y-sensibilizacion/noticias/el-proyecto-helianthus-de-fundacion-diagrama-atiende-mas-de>).

The Helianthus project is implemented in the provinces of Murcia, Ciudad Real and Alicante.

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

Family members of people with an addiction or a dual pathology (an addiction and a mental health disorder), that typically live with this person. Some of the people that have addiction issues have been in prison.

Users of this programme are often older people that have expressed their desire to join following difficulties of living with the family member that suffers from addiction.

These families, in addition to being in a situation of risk and/or social exclusion, usually have a series of risk factors associated with alcohol and drug use, such as:

- Difficulties in establishing appropriate family guidelines and roles.
- Little satisfactory family communication.
- On many occasions, some substance addiction disorder in one of the parents.
- Difficulty resolving family conflicts.
- Self-esteem problems in many of the family members.
- Sometimes a criminal family history.

The selection criteria is:

- Men and women of legal age, relatives of people with addiction problems.
- Family members who express their consent to participate due to inadequate functioning of their environment and the person with addiction problems.

- Relatives referred from community resources for people with addiction problems.

The exclusion criteria is:

- Having an active drug use or other addiction.
- Having a recognised diagnosis of addiction.
- Being in treatment for some addiction.

3. What service does this practice offer?

Following the objectives of the National Strategy on Addictions (2017-2024), which highlights the need to include the family of the affected person in the support process to aid their rehabilitation and reintegration, the programme offers support to family members. This is not limited to family members of people with addictions, but also extends to family members of people with a dual pathology. These family members are offered both a group space and individual intervention, which aim to develop skills and therapeutic skills to help them have the appropriate responses to substance abuse.

The service aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Specific Objective 1 (SO1): Promote the involvement of the family and raise awareness of its importance in the rehabilitation process of the person with addiction problems.
- Specific Objective 2 (SO2): Report on addictions with and without substance, their consequences and the different variables of the addiction process.
- Specific Objective 3 (SO3): Provide information on how gender influences health and addiction problems.
- Specific Objective 4 (SO4): Provide tools to reduce the stress generated in the family environment.
- Specific Objective 5 (SO5): Promote the acquisition of skills to improve family interactions.
- Specific Objective 6 (SO6): Promote the establishment of positive family dynamics that favour a positive and reinforcing climate of coexistence.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

This service offers support and training to the relatives of people with addiction problems, in order to help them manage concepts such as recovery and relapse, identify danger signs in order to prevent them and facilitate appropriate and conscious action in the event that new episodes of consumption were presented. In addition, it is considered relevant to provide care guidelines and healthy habits so that families do not suffer the aforementioned negative

effects and can preserve and/or improve their physical and psychological well-being. It is based on these needs that the Psychotherapeutic Support Programme for relatives of people with addiction problems is offered.

There is a plan for 17 group sessions (each lasting 2 hours) for the family members that have signed up to the programme. These sessions break down into separate focuses, looking to gender, health and addiction, addiction, process and rehabilitation, addiction and family and finally the interaction and functioning of the family system.

There are also 2-hour individual sessions that are adapted to each participant's needs.

In addition, there are online meetings for people who cannot attend. There is at least one online meeting per month open to everyone who participates in the programme, and there is a virtual area where resources are provided and where users can also send their questions to be answered.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

Families are increasingly recognised as one of the most important variables in the origin, evolution and, above all, in the treatment of substance abuse, to the point that most of the studies highlight the need to involve families both in the prevention and treatment of addictions (Secades et al., 2011), as an important protection factor.

Through a constant evaluation process, the programme is able to adopt a system of continuous improvement to ensure that the needs of the programme users are being met, and the main goal is being achieved.

The average level of satisfaction expressed in evaluation questionnaire for participants has been, out of 4:

2020: 3.76

2021: 3.75

2022: 3.67

2023: The average is 3.73 for the 1st semester, being 3.68 for men and 3.76 for women.

These scores are collected by management in a report that is carried out every year.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice?

The methodological approach used in the programme seeks to meet and cover the specific needs of the relatives of people with addiction problems, based on their own knowledge and experiences. To this end, participation is encouraged through dynamic activities and interaction between the participants is favoured as a means of achieving joint learning. The 17 different group sessions involve a range of activities but in general, the participants are

urged to learn and inform themselves on the situation of their family members and reflect upon this new knowledge to come to a conclusion on how they can best support this family member. This ranges from listening to testimonies of past addicts to learning different rehabilitation methods. Discussions and other group dynamics such as role-playing are key practices in the programme.

Concretely, the models of intervention implemented by the programme include Biopsychosocial, Social development and Cognitive behavioural.

As an example, the development of the sessions follows this scheme:

- At the beginning of the session, a dynamic will be proposed that allows knowing the previous knowledge of each one of the participants on the topic/concept to be discussed.
- Subsequently, a dynamic with a critical-communicative orientation will be proposed where, through the joint debate of said prior knowledge and with the help and guidance of the professional, the joint construction of the concept/topic to be discussed will be worked on.
- Once the thematic contents of the session have been addressed, practical activities will be proposed so that the group can apply the knowledge acquired during the session to daily or close situations. For this, participatory modelling activities can be carried out where family members learn to develop the different abilities and skills that are intended to be taught.
- During these activities, the responsible professional will carry out positive and negative reinforcements that encourage the repetition of the adaptive response and, transversally, the self-esteem of the family members.
- At the end of the session, the contents worked on during it will be reviewed, doubts will be resolved, and the theme of the next session will be brought forward. In addition, whenever possible, tasks to be carried out at home will be indicated in order to promote the generalisation and consolidation of the contents and skills learned.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

The activities are held in Spanish.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

It began in 1997, and almost from the very beginning it has been carried out as part of a day centre activities. For about the last three years, Fundación Diagrama has had the financing of

the national addictions plan and currently it is carried out in three provinces: Murcia, Alicante and Ciudad Real.

9. Year of development of the practice:

1997.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Support programme

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

It is totally free for families. In addition, the people with addiction problems do not need to be in the Helianthus project for their relatives to be able to come to the group of relatives. It is open to any relative of a person who has addiction problems and/or dual pathology.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

The programme directly answers Spain's National Strategy on Addictions, which draws on the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) Strategy of 2025.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://www.fundaciondiagrama.es/sociosanitario/adicciones>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Fundación Diagrama Intervención Psicosocial.

15. Contact details:

Fundación Diagrama Intervención Psicosocial.

2.2 Good practices from Germany

Good practice 1

Organisation: *Bremische Straffälligenbetreuung*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Counselling for relatives of prisoners - Verein Bremer Straffälligenbetreuung (VBS), Bremen, Germany.

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

Relatives, parents, (adult) children of prisoners.

3. What service does this practice offer?

The family counselling service of the VBS offers a wide range of support. Relatives of offenders and detainees can turn to the in-person social counselling and debt counselling services of the *Bremische Straffälligenbetreuung*. Counselling and support is mainly offered for questions and problems regarding imprisonment and visiting opportunities, livelihood and official matters, problems and questions regarding children. Another aspect is debt and debt settlement.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

There is a regular consultation hour within the framework of the association's social counselling service. One staff member specialises in the needs of the relatives of prisoners. The association also has staff members who go to Bremen Prison, a debt counselling service and emergency housing assistance. This means that there is already a wide range of specialist staff available within the association. The office hours take place in a centrally located building at the Bremen main station, so that it is easily accessible by public transport.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

The staff member responsible for this counselling has experience with the work within the prison and knows the structures there, which are often opaque for outsiders, as well as the problems the prisoners are confronted with. Thus, she can build a bridge between the relatives and the inmates. The counselling of relatives is embedded in a broader spectrum of services. The diverse problems that the relatives of detainees may be confronted with cannot

be solved in a single counselling context. Thus, cooperation and knowledge transfer between the individual projects of the association (e.g. debt counselling) and other providers (e.g. addiction counselling) is of immense importance. The association Bremische Straffälligenbetreuung has existed since 1837 and has a large network and numerous cooperation partners in Bremen.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice?

Counselling.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

The staff member speaks and counsels in German and Turkish.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

The family counselling project has been in existence for over 10 years.

9. Year of development of the practice:

Unknown.

10. Category of the practice: programme, service, training, etc.

Service, social counselling.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

The counselling is free of charge, at point of delivery for the relative of the prisoner. VBS finds funding for the salary of the staff and for the room where consulting is delivered.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://www.straffaelligenhilfe-bremen.de/angehoerige.html>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Sultan Alkilic- alkilic@vbs-bremen.de

Good practice 2

Organisation: Hoppenbank v.E.

1. What is the title of the practice?

Ich lese für dich. Gute-Nacht-Geschichten aus dem Gefängnis (I'll read you a story: Bedtime stories from prison.)

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

The practice is aimed at children of prisoners, via their parent in prison.

3. What service does this practice offer?

In Bremen Prison, Germany, a professional voice coach supports mothers in fathers to select a book, read and record it onto CD, so that it can be played by their children outside.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe.

Mothers and fathers in prison choose a story for their child from a stock of books provided by the Bremen Public Library. If necessary, they are supported and advised by the project leader, herself a professional voice coach. Then, depending on the length of the book, the story is read aloud by the mother/father in one - three individual sessions and recorded by the sound technician. A personal greeting to the child can be recorded, too, or a little message given or a song sung. The CD is completed with the selection of suitable children's songs and pieces of music - partly from CD's/cassettes from the stock of the public library.

The digital recordings are edited on the computer by the project leader and the sound technician. Anything which stops the story from being understood, e.g. reading errors, throat clearing, background noises etc. is deleted, and the music and greetings selected by the prisoners are recorded in the order they've agreed with the prisoner. Finally, the CD is burned and returned to the father/mother.

An empty cell is available in the women's prison and a room in the prison library in the men's prison. The 2 ½ - 3-hour intake sessions take place once a week on a fixed date.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

First and foremost, this small initiative is a support for children: to regain trust in the absent parent, to hear his/her voice, i.e. to feel closeness. This meaningful connection between parent and child goes both ways, and evaluations of this type of programme in other countries

shows that the men involved think more positively about themselves and their roles as fathers. At the same time, *Ich lese für dich*. is built on values of responsibility and learning, developing skills and confidence in imprisoned people. The Project also shows how different agencies can successfully work together, in this case the prison, Hoppenbank as implementor, Bremen Library and the local radio station Radio Weser TV.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

- ‘I’ll read you a story’ was established by Hoppenbank e.V. as part of the work they do to promote outside family cohesion from Bremen Prison.
- Supporting the children's language skills and awakening a love of reading.
- To initiate educational and qualification processes among the detainees.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Around 40% of people in Bremen Prison are not native Germans, so all initiatives must adapt to language competencies. Due to the technical possibility of editing the recording afterwards, prisoners with poor reading skills, not so good knowledge of German and even illiterates can also participate in the project: During the recording, the story is read sentence by sentence to the mother/father, who then repeats it, and the pre-recorded text is subsequently deleted.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

Since 2009.

9. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Programme.

10. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate.

‘I’ll read you a story’ was originally set up using regional European Social Fund money. The technical equipment was made available to the project by Radio Weser.TV. In July 2010, it was improved and expanded by a loan from the prison's support association.

11. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights, guaranteeing “everyone”, the right to respect for their private and family lives filters into the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Article 3. This states that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. Similarly, from European prison practitioners,

the same recommendation is made: the 2019 COPING study¹ recommendation EU3.1 states that visits and contact with the parent should be seen as the right of the child rather than as a privilege for good behaviour on the part of the offender.

The project also aligns with various recommendations in the European Prison Rules, concerning multi agency working, explicitly recommendation 28.6 recommending co-operation with community library services.

12. Link to the practice:

<https://www.hoppenbank.info/projekte/eu-projekt-ich-lese-fuer-dich>

13. Practice author/person of contact:

Svenja Böning, Managing Director of Hoppenbank

boening@hoppenbank-ev.de

¹ www.coping-project.eu

2.3. Good Practices from Greece

Good practice 1:

Organisation: *Freedom Gate*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Psychosocial support of the prisoners' family (Freedom Gate).

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

Familiar environment (husbands and wives, companions, children, parents). The main target group, however, is the underage children of people serving sentences in prisons.

3. What service does this practice offer?

Psychosocial support.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe.

The practice is performed through children's support groups and parents' support groups.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

The practice takes into account the psychological disruption brought about by the incarceration of a family member and provides holistic support to the family in order to maintain strong ties and avoid traumatising.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

The support group methodology is used in this practice. Especially for the group of adult family members, the peer support methodology is used.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Greek.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

Over one decade.

9. Year of development of the practice:

N/A.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Service.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate.

No.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

Human rights, children's rights, empowerment, reintegration.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://www.freedomgate.gr/index.php/en/interventions-programs/1>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Freedom Gate Greece.

Good practice 2:

Organisation: Epanodos

1. What is the title of the practice?

Supporting the families of juvenile offenders (Epanodos).

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

The families of juvenile offenders.

3. What service does this practice offer?

The aim of the practice is to address re-entry through psychosocial support for the family.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe.

Parents or guardians of minors are given the opportunity to have meetings with the mental health specialist of the institution, who can provide them with counselling or refer them to public institutions, NGOs or other organisations as requested.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

The practice focuses on juvenile offenders and ex-offenders and the bonds between them and their families. It is among the very few practices which have been running for a number of years, connecting different service providers who implement initiatives to benefit vulnerable social groups, especially inmates' families.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

Psychosocial support and counselling.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Greek.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

N/A.

9. Year of development of the practice:

N/A.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Service.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate.

No.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

Human rights, children's rights, empowerment, reintegration.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://www.epanodos.org.gr/english/#>

14. Practice author/person of contact

Epanodos

2.4. Good Practices from Portugal

Good practice 1

Organisation: *Fundação Champagnat*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Mothers' Workshop Programme (*Programa "Oficina das Mães"*).

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g., child/spouse/extended family)

Children of imprisoned parents.

3. What service does this practice offer?

Psychosocial Services (Children and Family): Parenting Programmes.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

N/A.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

It is a collaborative intervention with mothers who are incarcerated and serving time in Tires Prison (female prison), that seeks to enhance the emotional ties between mothers and their children whilst promoting effective parenting and reducing recidivism.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, and methods are used in the practice?

N/A.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Portuguese.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

N/A.

9. Year of development of the practice:

N/A.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Programme.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

N/A.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

This practice aims to address the European Priority (2019 – 2024) of Promoting our European way of life while promoting the importance of family ties and how they can cause an impact in parenting skills and also, in the personal and interpersonal development of their children (European Commission, 2023).

13. Link to the practice:

<https://casadacriancatires.wordpress.com/programa-oficina-de-maes/>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Fundação Champagnat.

Good practice 2

Organisation: *Fundação Champagnat*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Residential Home (*Casa de Acolhimento Residencial*).

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g., child/spouse/extended family)

Children of imprisoned parents.

3. What service does this practice offer?

Housing, Psychosocial Services (Children and Family): Parenting Programmes.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

Every child will discover a physically and emotionally inviting environment that is aesthetically pleasing and filled with joy. This environment aims to mitigate the negative effects caused by their separation from their natural living environment and/or biological family, as well as address any setbacks resulting from exposure to dysfunctional family dynamics. The main goal is to support their rehabilitation, and personal growth through an integrated and comprehensive approach that encompasses various dimensions of their well-being.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

Institutional foster care serves as a protective measure, encompassing intervention within the Tires Children's Home (*Casa da Criança – Tires*), specifically aimed at providing foster care for children whose mothers are incarcerated at Tires Prison (female prison). The main aim of this programme is to ensure the prompt and temporary placement of children who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, and methods are used in the practice?

N/A.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Portuguese.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

N/A.

9. Year of development of the practice:

N/A.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.:

Programme.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

N/A.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

This practice aims to address the European Priority (2019 – 2024) of Promoting our European way of life while promoting the importance of family ties and how they can cause an impact in parenting skills and also, in the personal and interpersonal development of their children (European Commission, 2023).

13. Link to the practice:

<https://casadacriancatires.wordpress.com/casa-de-acolhimento-residencial/>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Fundação Champagnat.

Good practice 3

Organisation: *Confiar – Associação de Reinserção Social Portugal*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Family Support Center (*Centro de Apoio Familiar - CAF*).

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g., child/spouse/extended family)

Children of imprisoned parents, Partner/Spouse of imprisoned individuals, Extended Family (Kin).

3. What service does this practice offer?

Housing, Psychosocial Services, Education/Training.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

CAF places emphasis on providing support not only to the primary beneficiaries of Confiar, but also to their families, including children, young people, and other individuals close to the beneficiaries. In order to accomplish this, a comprehensive assessment is conducted to identify the risk and protective factors relevant to the beneficiaries. Subsequently, a Social Reintegration Support Plan is developed, which centres around three key aspects: addressing basic needs, offering psychosocial support, and providing vocational training.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

Encourages an intervention that might begin during incarceration or whilst serving community measures, accompanying at the same time, the resocialisation process. To improve family relationships and reduce the likelihood of crime among children and young people, as well as the extended family, CAF assists the direct beneficiaries and their families, being able to try to guarantee that social reintegration is carried out successfully.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, and methods are used in the practice?

Social Reintegration Support Plan.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Portuguese.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

N/A.

9. Year of development of the practice:

N/A.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.:

Service.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

N/A.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

This practice aims to address the European Priority (2019 – 2024) of Promoting our European way of life while promoting the reduction of social stigma that this target group, as well as the respective family members, are subject to. Its implementation is by fundamental rights serving as a foundation for equity, tolerance, and social justice (European Commission, 2023).

13. Link to the practice:

<https://confiarportugal.pt/pt/o-que/centro-de-apoio-familiar-dez/>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Confiar – Associação de Reinserção Social Portugal.

2.5. Good practices from Romania

Good practice 1:

Organisation: SVASTA Foundation

1. What is the title of the practice?

SVASTA Foundation –Alone To School (In Romanian: *Singur spre școală*).

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

The SVASTA Foundation offers support to children of imprisoned individuals and to children in situations of risk (poverty, marginalisation).

3. What service does this practice offer?

The SVASTA Foundation is an ONG which offers merit-based stipends to children with incarcerated parents. Among their beneficiaries are also children in situations of risk. Through this practice, the Foundation offers stipends to children of incarcerated parents on the condition that they attend school and have an adequate school performance.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

In the implementation of the project, all the prisons in Romania were visited, discussions were held with a large number of prisoners, from whom the contact details of their families were obtained. These families were visited in practically all Romanian counties, in order to know the situation of the families as well as the urgent needs of the children. The visits also provided an element of moral support for these families, giving them the feeling that they are not abandoned by society and that there is a future for their children.

In the implementation of the project, SVASTA Foundation has collaborated and is currently collaborating with various public authorities at national and local level: the National Administration of Penitentiaries, dozens of Penitentiaries where the social reintegration services have been contacted, the County Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection, the social assistance services of the municipalities and last but not least the schools where these children go to school, the parishes in the respective areas, other NGOs.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

It involves many stakeholders (public authorities, prisoners and prison administration, school, and religious institutions), making them aware of the difficulties children of

imprisoned parents face. Furthermore, it involves the whole family, emphasising the importance of education for children. The practice reduces the level of stigmatisation that children of imprisoned parents face.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

In-person meetings with the family of the child; referrals from imprisoned parents, meetings with a wide range of stakeholders such as prisons and prison administration, schools, public authorities, social assistance services, religious institutions etc.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Romanian.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

The programme Alone To School (Singur spre școală) started in 2014 on the backdrop of 10 years of experience in supporting children at risk of poverty and school abandonment. Since 2014, the Foundation has assisted over 300 children of imprisoned individuals with scholarships and has a presence in 38 prisons in Romania. The Foundation prides itself on the results of the programme, as many children have successfully graduated from high school or university and are today teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, economists, and are also involved in Foundation projects.

9. Year of development of the practice:

2014.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Programme.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

Beneficiaries do not incur any costs. Once accepted to the programme, children must attend school and have a general point average over 8 (10 is the maximum in the Romanian school system). Children receive a monthly stipend that allows them to buy school supplies and clothing to ensure they have all material support in order to prevent early school leaving.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

The SVASTA Foundation aims to minimise the number of children of imprisoned parents who abandon school. Since early leavers from education and training represent around 10% of young people in the EU (according to PISA 2018 results), and children of imprisoned

individuals are more likely to face the risk of school abandonment, the practice answers to the 2022 Council Recommendation of Pathways to School Success² which aims to reduce early leaving from education and training. Furthermore, the practice responds to article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which urges for measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://svasta.org/proiectele-noastre/singur-spre-scoala/>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Dr Iulian Svasta – iulian.svasta@svasta.org

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/TodayOJ/>

Good practice 2:

Organisation: Jilava Penitentiary Romania

1. What is the title of the practice?

Family workshops – Jilava Penitentiary Romania.

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

Fathers (in prison), mothers and their children.

3. What service does this practice offer?

The “family workshops” programme run by Jilava Penitentiary in Romania is part of a larger eco-system of practices of involving families in the lives of incarcerated individuals. This initiative is designed to be held during important holidays, such as Christmas, Dragobete (the Romanian equivalent of Valentine’s Day), and Children’s Day (June 1st), among others. Its aim is to facilitate emotional support and strengthen family connections during periods of separation due to imprisonment. Through this initiative, the prison aims to foster stronger family bonds and help prisoners maintain positive relationships with their families, contributing to their overall well-being during their incarceration.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

The initiative of celebrating holidays with prisoners and their families in Romania is performed in a warm, family-oriented setting that allows the participants to share memorable moments together. Two recent gatherings will be mentioned below, the Dragobete holiday (February 24th) and Children’s Festival (June 1st).

For **Dragobete** (February 24th, 2024), 24 inmates and 74 family members, including spouses and children, participated. The event began with creative and artistic activities, where children recited poems, sang songs, and engaged in various craft projects with their parents. Inmates had the opportunity to express their love for their family members through symbolic gestures, such as offering flowers and handmade greeting cards. During the celebration, families gathered for a shared lunch, further fostering a sense of togetherness. They enjoyed traditional treats like gogoși (Romanian donuts) and roasted marshmallows around a campfire. The event provided a space for emotional connection, allowing families to cherish a few hours of joy and unity in an otherwise challenging context.

Children’s Festival is held every year on June 1st, on the international day of celebrating children. This particular initiative started in 2019. In 2024, 80 children attended the festival. The “Family workshops” initiative strengthens the bond between inmates and their loved ones and offers them a sense of normalcy and emotional healing through these celebratory gatherings.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

The practice of organising holiday celebrations for prisoners and their families is highly promising due to its capacity to **strengthen family bonds**. These gatherings provide inmates with a rare opportunity to engage with their families, particularly during significant holidays. By allowing prisoners to actively participate in family life, even from behind bars, this practice helps maintain and reinforce relationships that are critical to both the inmates’ emotional well-being and their loved ones. For children, especially, this experience helps preserve a sense of connection to a parent, contributing to their overall development and reducing the emotional strain of parental absence.

Additionally, these celebrations serve as a form of emotional support. The atmosphere, filled with creative activities, music, and shared meals, allows prisoners and their families to escape the reality of incarceration for a few hours. Emotional support during these events boosts the inmates’ morale and provides relief to their families, particularly the children. Inmates benefit from feeling involved in their family life, which in turn fosters a sense of responsibility and motivation to continue improving their behavior and outlook.

The practice is also beneficial for the **rehabilitation and reintegration** process. Research shows that family support plays a crucial role in reducing recidivism. By maintaining a positive connection with their families, prisoners are better equipped to reintegrate into society upon release. The sense of belonging and responsibility fostered by these events can inspire inmates to work towards building a better future for themselves and their families, further supporting their rehabilitation journey.

Overall, this initiative offers a **humanising approach to incarceration**, reminding both prisoners and their loved ones of the importance of connection, love, and family support. It represents a vital step towards more effective rehabilitation by promoting emotional healing and helping to maintain the social ties necessary for successful reintegration.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

Each social worker in the prison is responsible for forming a group of justice-involved individuals with whom they work throughout the year. This consistent engagement allows the social workers to build rapport and understand the specific needs of each prisoner and their family. The primary methods used in the programme are: family-centred gatherings and group sessions.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Romanian.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

The programme has been running at Jilava Prison for approximately 13 years. There are five meetings organised each year, with the possibility of organising more, depending on needs and requests.

9. Year of development of the practice:

2011.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

Programme.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

Yes, there are costs associated with organising and implementing this holiday practice for prisoners and their families. These costs generally cover various logistical needs, including the arrangement of the venue within the prison, provision of food and beverages, activities for children, and supplies for creative projects. Jilava Penitentiary either covers the costs or collaborate with community-based organisations to assist with funding. Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can provide assistance in covering these expenses. For the recent event held on Dragobete, the Stâncă Veacurilor NGO and the Humanitarian Service for Penitentiaries took responsibility for funding the celebration. Their support ensured that prisoners and their families could enjoy a day filled with meaningful interactions and shared activities without the financial burden falling entirely on the prison system.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

This practice aligns with several key European priorities, particularly in the areas of social inclusion, human rights, and rehabilitation.

13. Link to the practice:

The practice is not listed on the National Penitentiary Administration website, but a link to the Facebook post is here:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0QyfmieZ1T3ATVb9hqVKknDF5aWkoHJCUh9aUkti3Hmh7EZVognqXXcp8BS9K4SMLI&id=100089223460252

14. Practice author/person of contact:

Mrs. Cristina Teoroc - cristina.teoroc@anp.gov.ro

Mr. Ion Daniel Zaharia - ion.zaharia@anp.gov.ro

Good practice 3:

Organisation: Asociația HoltIS

1. What is the title of the practice?

Asociația HoltIS

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (eg: child/ spouse/ extended family)

Parents, caregivers, specialists, schools, youth.

3. What service does this practice offer?

HoltIS Association is one of the leading providers of **Parenting Education in Romania**, having been established in 2014, **HoltIS Association** has provided parenting education services in over **1.022 distinct locations** (mainly schools), having a network of over **1.670 accredited parent educators**, who have conducted parenting education activities **with a number of over 27.300 parents**, thus impacting **over 44.900 children** across Romania.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

The practice is carried out through several key activities aimed at supporting parents, caregivers, and communities in child protection and development. First, it involves promoting high standards of competence and professional ethics in parenting, ensuring that parents and caregivers are well-equipped with the skills necessary to fulfill their roles effectively.

Appreciative Parenting Education is emphasised as a core method for offering support to parents and caregivers, encouraging a positive approach to parenting. Additionally, the organisation develops and implements training programs, technical assistance, seminars, and conferences designed to build and strengthen the capacity of local authorities, NGOs, and local communities to provide professional social services in child protection

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

The HoltIS Association's approach shows promise as it addresses key areas that directly enhance the well-being of children and families. Its commitment to promoting high standards of competence and ethics in parenting ensures that parents and caregivers gain essential skills to effectively nurture children. Focusing on Appreciative Parenting Education,

the organisation provides families with positive, supportive resources, creating a healthy environment for child development.

Moreover, HoltIS strengthens the infrastructure for child protection services through its capacity-building initiatives, which include training and technical assistance for local authorities and NGOs. The organisation also promotes voluntary and community involvement, fostering greater local engagement and ownership in supporting families. Collaborative efforts with national and international organizations enable the exchange of best practices and the establishment of impactful partnerships. This approach proves to be both sustainable and adaptable, yielding widespread benefits for child protection and family support.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

The practice incorporates several key programs, initiatives, and methods, including:

- Promoting high standards of competence and professional ethics in parenting, ensuring parents and caregivers are well-equipped for their roles.
- Appreciative Parenting Education serves as a method of support, providing valuable resources to parents and caregivers in their parenting efforts.
- Training programs, technical assistance, seminars, and conferences are designed to enhance the capacity of local authorities, NGOs, and communities to deliver professional social services in child protection.
- Volunteering and community mobilisation activities encourage greater community participation and involvement in local development.
- Establishing and expanding HoltIS Clubs, which engage young people in active community participation through activities aimed at developing social skills, civic spirit, teamwork, and a sense of belonging to a group.
- Collaboration with national and international social service organisations is fostered, along with the development of effective partnerships to support children and families

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Romanian.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

10 years.

9. Year of development of the practice:

2014.

10. Category of the practice: education, parenting program, service, training, etc.:

N/A.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate:

The training sessions, seminars, and parenting education programs have been carried out with support from various national and European funding sources, in collaboration with UNICEF, local and national NGOs, as well as state authorities.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

The HoltIS Association's practice effectively addresses several key European priorities, including:

- **Youth Engagement:** The establishment and expansion of HoltIS Clubs actively involve young people in community participation, aligning with European goals that promote civic engagement and youth empowerment.
- **Social Inclusion:** Activities designed to develop social skills, promote teamwork, and encourage a sense of belonging support social cohesion and inclusivity within communities.
- **Community Development:** The organisation fosters local engagement and ownership, contributing to sustainable community development through volunteering and mobilisation efforts.
- **Child Protection:** HoltIS enhances child protection services through capacity-building initiatives, equipping local authorities and NGOs to provide essential support to families.
- **Parental Support:** Emphasising high standards of competence and ethics in parenting, along with Appreciative Parenting Education, ensures that parents and caregivers possess the skills necessary to nurture children effectively.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Cooperation with national and international organisations facilitates the exchange of best practices, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of social services for children and families.

Overall, HoltIS's comprehensive approach aligns with European objectives aimed at strengthening democratic participation, enhancing youth opportunities, and fostering a more inclusive society.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://holtis.ro/>

<https://www.educatieparentala.ro/>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

You can find information on how to contact the organisation delivering the practice through the links provided above.

Good practice 4:

Organisation: *Terre des hommes Romania*

1. What is the title of the practice?

Terre des hommes Romania.

2. What type of person receives help from this practice? (e.g.: child/spouse/extended family)

Parents, caregivers, specialists, schools, youth, children, refugees.

3. What service does this practice offer?

Founded in 1992, the Terre des hommes Foundation has been instrumental in improving child protection systems and social assistance reforms in Romania. As a delegation of the Swiss organisation Terre des hommes, established in 1960, it aims to enhance the well-being of children and families. In 2023, the foundation supported a total of 15,324 beneficiaries, including 12,000 refugees from Ukraine, and published 30 useful digital resources.

Terre des hommes operates in two priority areas:

- Support for Migrant Children: The organisation works to prevent unsafe migration and ensure that children affected by migration have access to their fundamental rights.
- Justice for Minors: Advocating for a justice system that does not deprive youth of their freedom, Terre des hommes develops methodologies for professionals dealing with children in conflict with the law, emphasising mental health and resilience.

Additionally, the foundation strengthens child protection infrastructure through training and technical assistance for local authorities and NGOs, mobilises communities to prevent risky situations, and invests in education and social services to improve the lives of disadvantaged children.

Throughout its history, Terre des hommes has launched numerous projects, including initiatives for child protection, juvenile justice, and support for migrant children. The organisation values courage, ambition, respect, and dedication in its mission to create lasting positive changes in the lives of at-risk children and young people in Romania.

4. How is the practice performed? Please, describe:

A long history of research highlights that aggressive behavior and criminality often cluster within certain families. For instance, the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development indicated that a small percentage of families accounted for a significant portion of juvenile

criminal convictions, illustrating the intergenerational nature of antisocial behavior (West & Farrington, 1977; Farrington, et al., 2023).³ Antisocial adults frequently choose similar partners, leading to environments characterised by conflict, poor supervision, and hostility, which in turn increases the likelihood of antisocial behavior in their children, particularly when siblings are involved (Farrington, et al., 2023).⁴

In response to these issues, we have selected two projects run by the Terre des hommes Foundation. Discussions with incarcerated minors revealed their lack of access to adequate information, poor living conditions, and insufficient engagement with the outside world. Through the PRECISION project, the foundation promotes education tailored to the needs of these young people, focusing on physical activity and emotional well-being. This initiative aims to reduce recidivism risks and enhance rehabilitation prospects.

Currently, minors and young adults in detention face significant barriers to rehabilitation and social reintegration. The PRECISION project addresses these challenges by improving detention conditions and providing professional development training for staff in child-friendly practices. The project has successfully enhanced resilience and self-esteem among participating youth through sports and facilitated their participation in decision-making processes.

Beneficiaries of this project include educational centers in Buziaș and Târgu Ocna, as well as detention centers in Craiova and Tichilești. Additionally, the I-RESTORE project has aimed to promote restorative justice practices for child victims, emphasising healing and community involvement. By the end of this two-year project, professionals are better informed and prepared to advocate for restorative justice across Romania, Greece, and Albania, while children and young people have gained valuable knowledge about their rights.

Collaborating with the Orange Foundation, the goal is to rehabilitate young individuals in conflict with the law through education. This initiative aims to provide vocational and non-formal education to 130 youth across four centers, enhancing their skills and connection to the community, which is crucial for successful reintegration. The project recognises that

³ Farrington, D. P., Piquero, A. R., Jennings, W. G., & Jolliffe, D. (2023). Offending from childhood to late middle age: Recent results from the Cambridge study in delinquent development. Springer Nature.

⁴ West, D. J., & Farrington, D. P. (1977). The delinquent way of life: Third report of the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development. Heinemann Educational Books.

beyond vocational training, social and life skills development is essential for building self-esteem and motivation, ultimately improving the prospects for these vulnerable youth.

5. Why is the practice promising? Why is it good?

The practice initiated by the Terre des hommes Foundation is promising for several reasons:

- **Targeted support:** The PRECISION project specifically addresses the unique challenges faced by youth in the juvenile justice system, such as inadequate access to information and poor living conditions. Focusing on these critical areas allows the programme to effectively meet the needs of its beneficiaries, enhancing rehabilitation efforts.
- **Holistic approach:** This initiative emphasises both physical activity and emotional well-being, understanding that fostering resilience and self-esteem is crucial for young individuals in detention. Such a holistic approach creates a supportive environment that encourages positive development and reduces the likelihood of recidivism.
- **Improved conditions and training:** Enhancements to detention conditions and training for staff in child-friendly practices contribute to a better immediate environment for youth. This development equips staff with the necessary skills to effectively support young people, fostering a more rehabilitative atmosphere.
- **Empowerment through participation:** Facilitating the involvement of incarcerated youth in decision-making processes empowers them, providing a sense of agency and responsibility. This participation is essential for developing important life skills and nurturing a greater sense of belonging and community.
- **Integration of restorative justice:** The I-RESTORE project promotes restorative justice practices, focusing on healing and community involvement. This approach addresses the needs of child victims and teaches young offenders about accountability and the consequences of their actions, paving the way for healthier community relationships.
- **Collaboration and community engagement:** Working alongside organisations such as the Orange Foundation expands the program's reach and effectiveness. Providing vocational and non-formal education fosters community connections and skill development, which are essential for successful reintegration into society.
- **Focus on lifelong skills:** Emphasising social and life skills development, alongside vocational training, equips young individuals for successful futures. Building self-

esteem and motivation proves vital for long-term success, aiding in breaking the cycle of offending behavior.

- Overall, the promise of this practice lies in its comprehensive strategy aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable youth, promoting their rehabilitation, and facilitating their successful reintegration into society.

6. Which programmes, initiatives, methods are used in the practice:

The Terre des hommes Foundation employs several programs and initiatives to support youth in the juvenile justice system, focusing on rehabilitation and social reintegration. Here are the key components of their approach:

PRECISION Project:

- Tailored Education: This programme emphasises educational initiatives customised to meet the specific needs of incarcerated youth, incorporating physical activity and emotional well-being.
- Improved Detention Conditions: The project works on enhancing living conditions within detention centers, ensuring that minors have a more supportive environment.
- Professional Development: Staff members receive training in child-friendly practices, helping them engage effectively with the youth and create a more nurturing atmosphere.
- Building Resilience and Self-Esteem: Through sports and other activities, the project aims to boost the self-esteem and resilience of participating youth, facilitating their involvement in decision-making processes.

I-RESTORE Project:

- Restorative Justice Practices: This initiative focuses on implementing restorative justice methods for child victims, prioritising healing and community involvement.
- Training for Professionals: The project equips professionals with knowledge about restorative justice, enabling them to advocate effectively for these practices in Romania, Greece, and Albania.
- Empowerment of Youth: Children and young people are engaged throughout the project, gaining insights into their rights and how to express their needs.

Collaboration with the Orange Foundation:

- Vocational and Non-Formal Education: This partnership aims to provide vocational training and educational opportunities to 130 youth across four centers, which are essential for their future employability. Focus on Social and Life Skills: The initiative

recognises the importance of developing social skills, self-esteem, and motivation, in addition to vocational training, to ensure comprehensive rehabilitation and successful community reintegration.

7. Language(s) in which the practice is available:

Romanian.

8. How long has the practice been performed for?

10 years.

9. Year of development of the practice:

2020- ongoing.

10. Category of the practice: Programme, service, training, etc.

- Education: The initiatives emphasise the development of emotional regulation and life skills for incarcerated youth, equipping them with knowledge and resources that facilitate their rehabilitation.
- Training: The projects seek to improve the skills of professionals within the justice system through training on child-centered justice and the application of child-friendly practices.
- Counseling and Psychosocial Support: This aspect encompasses mental health and psychosocial support interventions designed to enhance the psychological resilience of children and young people in detention.
- Community Engagement: The project highlights the significance of social integration and support systems, fostering connections with families, communities and strengthening support networks for the youth involved.

11. Are there any costs related to the implementation of the practice? If so, please elaborate.

The services have been carried out with support from various national and European funding sources.

12. What European priorities does this practice answer to?

Rehabilitation and reintegration

- The projects aim to reduce recidivism rates among incarcerated minors and facilitate successful social reintegration. This approach aligns with the European Union's emphasis on rehabilitation as a fundamental aspect of the justice system for young offenders, as outlined in various EU documents and policies.

Protection of children's rights

- The initiatives foster emotional self-regulation and community connections, supporting the rights and well-being of children in detention. This aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which stresses the importance of special protection for children in conflict with the law.

Mental health and psychosocial support

- Incorporating mental health and psychosocial support, the project addresses the EU's priority for mental health initiatives, especially for vulnerable populations. Enhancing psychosocial resilience among detained youth aligns with broader European health strategies focused on mental well-being.

Child-centered justice

- Training for justice professionals in child-centered practices demonstrates the EU's commitment to creating justice systems sensitive to children's needs, fostering a more humane and understanding approach for young offenders.

Holistic and inclusive approaches

- Employing a holistic model that addresses various aspects of a young person's life—such as social skills, emotional regulation, and community engagement—reflects the EU's priority for inclusive social integration and rehabilitation methods.

Collaboration and partnership

- Collaboration with national penitentiary administrations and educational centers underscores the EU's encouragement of joint efforts among stakeholders to enhance justice and rehabilitation systems.

Targeting vulnerable populations

- The projects specifically target youth in detention, one of society's most vulnerable groups. This focus aligns with the EU's commitment to addressing social inequalities and providing support to marginalised communities.

13. Link to the practice:

<https://www.tdh.ro/en/i-restore-20-accessible-quality-restorative-justice-processes-children-contact-law-europe>

<https://www.tdh.ro/en/precision-2-promoting-wellbeing-and-reducing-recidivism-juvenile-offenders-romania>

14. Practice author/person of contact:

You can find information on how to contact the organisation delivering the practice through the links provided above.

3. Conclusions

These good practices collected and presented by project partners, in the framework of the UpFamilies project, have provided project partners with valuable information on the different ways organisations design, develop, implement and evaluate the services they provide, in particular for members of families affected by imprisonment.

Each practice can demonstrate different elements and characteristics which can be considered as “good” or “promising”, indicating what has worked in different cases and has proved to be successful for the specific population. It is clear that developing and running a supporting service does not need to start from scratch. Examples of relevant services can lead the way, so that other organisations can replicate elements which are relevant to their services and their beneficiaries. Overall, these practices underline the findings from the UpFamilies’ research that such services are rare in the participating countries and that more initiatives need to be undertaken to address the needs of these families.

Moreover, these practices indicate that even though the target group of families affected by imprisonment is not among the most common benefitting by supporting services, such services exist and have achieved significant results through the years. Especially for children of people in prison, in almost all participating countries, services that promote the incarcerated parent-child connection and relationship have proved to be valuable for the promotion of family ties and overall wellbeing of both parents and children. The experiences collected in this document can serve as examples for further analysis and efforts.

4. Annex A

Best Practice Research

Athens Lifelong Learning Institute

1. Some Necessary Definitions

What is a *Best Practice*?

Any discussion around **best practices** has the potential to arise heated discussions. The United Nations definition describes best practice as follows:

*a good practice is not only a practice that is good, but one that has been **proven** to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a **model**. It is a successful experience that has been **tested and validated**, in the broader sense, has been **repeated** and **deserves to be shared**, so that a greater number of people can adopt it.*

Two notions generate importance in this definition:

[a]. the first notion relates to the need of the practice to be “*proven, [...] tested and validated*”.

Any practice proposed as a good or best practice has to be backed up with data, has to demonstrate its efficiency and effectiveness, has to be able to scientifically prove that it is, indeed, a good practice.

[b]. the second notion relates to the need of the practice to be able to be “*recommended as a model, [...] to be repeated and to be shared*”.

The same focus and emphasis will be also placed in our approach in defining best practices. In other words, our framework methodology will rely on practices that are well-documented, either with quantitative or with qualitative data, and have the potential to be replicated in other local and/ or national contexts and/or adapted to the needs of other beneficiary groups.

2. Documentation of Practices with a Potential

It goes without saying that in order for a practice to be considered as a best practice some level of documentation is required, so as to be able to draw conclusions and evaluate results.

Best practices may come from a variety of sources including state programmes, civil society organisations, community groups and individuals' initiatives. Some best practices might be subjected to formal documentation and systematic evaluation procedures. However, this is

not required in most cases because formal evaluations are slow, complicated, expensive and time-consuming, and can sometimes cost more than the actual training process⁵.

In any case, however, in order to be considered in the context of this research, the best practice shall have some level of systematic and objective data collection procedure so as to be able to analyse its effectiveness⁶.

A helpful definition of evaluation is provided by Papaconstantinou and Polt⁷ in their review of policy evaluation in innovation and technology refers to evaluation as “a process that seeks to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of an activity in terms of its objectives, including the analysis of the implementation and administrative management of such activity”⁸.

A number of words and phrases merit strong emphasis in this definition. The first is the focus on the need for a “*process*”. Evaluation and documentation are not a “once-off” activity undertaken at some particular point in the lifetime of the practice. Evaluation should be an integral part of the process, it should be engrained or embedded, in the practice itself.

The second is the focus on the need for a systematic and objective procedure. The third is the focus on “the relevance, efficiency and effect of an activity in terms of its objective”. Policies and practices must be first and foremost evaluated in terms of their ability to bring about the desired results. Best practices should be able to demonstrate that they have been successful in contributing to correcting or ameliorating the problem they were set out to resolve.

3. Criteria

⁵ World Health Organisation (2017). A Guide to Identifying and Documenting Best Practices in Family Planning Programmes.

⁶ OECD (2017). OECD Framework for the Evaluation of SME and Entrepreneurship Policies and Programmes.

⁷ Papakonstantinou, G. and Polt, W. (1997), “Policy Evaluation in Innovation and Technology: An Overview”, OECD *Proceedings, Policy Evaluation in Innovation and Technology – Towards Best Practices*, OECD, Paris.

⁸ Cited from OECD (2007). OECD Framework for the Evaluation of SME and Entrepreneurship Policies and Programmes.

In order to present a wide range of good practices from the partner countries [and even from other EU countries] there is initially a need to identify a set of general/transversal minimum and additional criteria.

Below follows a list of general and specific criteria:

<i>Minimum criteria</i>	<i>Additional Criteria</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Documentation</i> ▪ <i>Effectiveness</i> ▪ <i>Efficiency</i> ▪ <i>Relevance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Replicability / adaptability</i> ▪ <i>Networking</i> ▪ <i>Sustainability</i> ▪ <i>Promotion/visibility</i> ▪ <i>Quality of Service Provision [Legal and regulatory advice, Individual business support, Group Business Training, Mentoring, Access to Finance]</i>



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