

Daphne Programme – Year 2003**Final Report****Project Nr. :** JAI/DAP/03/215/C**Title: Childhood, Disability and Violence**

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Fenacerci Portugal

Disability Now Greece

Disminuidos Físicos de Aragón Spain

1. Aims of the project

The *Childhood, Disability and Violence* project ~~has~~ addressed the problem of violence against children with disabilities in a domestic context.

Domestic violence is a worldwide problem that involves every section of the population. It can be found in all socio-economic, religious, cultural, racial and ethnic groups. It is acknowledged as a significant social problem and fortunately in recent years greater attention has been devoted to the victims of domestic violence, in particular where it affects children. Nevertheless little is known about violence against children with disabilities. Maltreatment of children with disabilities can be considered as a taboo within a taboo, probably because the association between disability and violence is emotionally difficult to cope with.

Violence in families of children with disabilities is difficult to trace and to prevent. Too little accurate epidemiological data is available to have a clear idea of the incidence of domestic maltreatment involving these children, although what is available indicates a higher risk for certain groups.

In addition to the damage caused to the victims, the problem of child maltreatment has important social implications. Society as a whole must consider itself responsible for preventing it at all different levels, from an individual and family level to communities and institutions. If this is true for all children, it is especially true for children with disabilities, who generally speaking are even more vulnerable. To achieve this shared responsibility, the weight and the nature of the problem have to be acknowledged, recognised and understood.

Local associations representing families or people with disabilities, social co-operatives and other NGOs in the field of disability can claim to make a specific contribution in the fight against child maltreatment through the direct and daily contacts that they have with families and children, which allow them to closely observe the family structure, the internal and external network surrounding the child, the psychological and emotional background, the quality of care and assistance and the implementation of supportive and protective laws and regulations. Many of these organisations have first hand knowledge of examples of maltreatment, but few have developed a systematic approach to prevention and intervention. Their ability to "listen", to identify situations at risk and to

prevent maltreatment must expand, naturally in close collaboration with the institutional network supporting the families.

In the application the **aims** of the project have been identified as such:

- To raise awareness about the "violence" issue, to empower the leadership of disability related organisations and to provide them with corner stones to develop prevention policies
- To evaluate the appropriateness of existing indicators of risk
- To underpin multi agency prevention and support strategies

The **beneficiaries** of the project are children with complex/multiple disabilities (0-16) living in families, while the **target audience** is formed by associations of parents of children with complex/multiple disabilities, social cooperatives, professionals, carers, policy makers in governmental institutions.

The **deliverables expected (and realised)** are:

- the production and dissemination (via direct mail and through existing networks and training activities) of a "discussion paper"-tool (format full colour .pdf file with images, throughout the project also referred to as "booklet") and published in all languages involved in the partnership. The booklet should enable local leadership of parental and self help organisations to discuss the violence issue with their members and with local institutions and professional carers and their organisations and to develop prevention strategies.
- a web page for the dissemination of the deliverables
- national seminars focussing on the empowerment of local organisations of self help groups, disability associations and social cooperatives.
- a final public report in English.

With this project **the partnership expected**:

- to identify appropriate indicators of risk of violence to underpin prevention strategies.
- to provide a contribution to the development of good inter agency collaboration and intervention to tackle and prevent domestic violence involving children with disabilities.
- to empower local disability organisations to implement prevention strategies and to interact with institutions and professionals in education, health and social services.
- to increase knowledge and awareness of needs, forces and rights among parents

2. Implementation of the project

Planned activities and their realisation/Role of the partners

A.1.¹ Formation of a multidisciplinary international research team

The international research team was made up of: Melissa Filippini (AIAS), Ana Rodrigues (Fenacerci), Georgia Fyca (Disability Now), Carmen Sanz (DFA), the last one assisted by a team of other researchers. Further the project has seen the involvement of project referents: Rita Serra & Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf (AIAS), Cristina Diaz and Carmen Untoria (DFA), Susana Luciò (Fenacerci) and Cristina Beladi (Disability Now). Further staff members of the organisations have been involved for diffusion of the project deliverables and administrative and secretarial support. External support has been provided by experts of international reputation as Dr. Gonzalo Oliván and Dr. Maria Chiara Risoldi.

¹ *The various activities in the work plan has been numbered.*