



MIHYO

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR **YOUNG OFFENDERS**

EUROPEAN COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE



www.ijjo.org

The Project

MHYO is an innovative project that has been developed in collaboration with eight European countries and two intercontinental ones. The Project aimed to share knowledge and expertise concerning young offenders with mental health issues, meaning children and youngsters, who are at the same time offenders and victims of their own mental health. It studied the various national health and judicial systems for young offenders (10-21 years old) with mental health disorders, in order to promote the necessary changes both in policy and practice, as well as to agree on minimum standards concerning the functioning of the involved institutions across the EU.

Results

Volume I MHYO Publication

Mental Health Resources and Young Offenders: State of art, challenges and good practices

Volume II MHYO Publication

MHYO Manual for improving professional knowledge and skills, and developing advocacy program

Section 1. MHYO Training Tools for improving professional knowledge and skills

Section 2. MHYO Advocacy program

Volume I

'Mental Health Resources and Young Offenders: State of art, challenges and good practices' is a unique document containing an analysis of the current status of mental health of young offenders, conducted in eight different European countries including: Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Each national report gives an insight into the difficult situation faced by young offenders with serious mental health issues. In addition, Volume I includes the contributions of Brazil and the continent of Africa which allows for a comparative insight into the situation.

In all nations evidence is found that juvenile offending and mental health difficulties go hand in hand. Young offenders exhibit higher rates of mental health problems than non-offending youth in the general community. The nations concerned universally recognise that these young people require a response from the criminal justice system that is not simply punitive but which also strives to restore well-being in society by redirecting their development.

In most nations, the availability of good quality mental health services for young people in conflict with the law is limited. The reason for this is partly due to the lack of integration between juvenile justice, health and educational services. It is indicated that training of staff is a

key ingredient in the successful integration of these arms of government; particularly training that supports legal professionals in understanding mental health issues, and mental health professionals in understanding the legal system of their respective nation.

Volume I also reminds us that international law and standards require nations to deal appropriately and effectively with young people in the criminal justice system to ensure their mental health status is identified and where indicated that they receive appropriate care.

Volume II

'MHYO Manual for improving professional knowledge and skills, and developing advocacy programme' is a global manual for all the stakeholders in contact with young offenders with mental health problems.

The first section '**MHYO Training Tools for improving professional knowledge and skills**' has been designed to guide the reader through the pathway of young offenders with mental health issues through the criminal justice system. From the moment of arrest to the moment of release, each point of contact between young people and health/justice agencies is described to expose the different challenges. For each contact point, a list of professionals involved is provided as well as specific training exercises for them. Crucial intervention points are also identified. In addition, Section 1 dedicates a considerable amount of attention to the topic of early prevention and prevention of recidivism upon release.

The second section '**MHYO Advocacy Tools**' is a toolkit for advocacy. It aims to help national stakeholders and experts to develop an advocacy and evaluation programme to improve the provision for young offenders with mental health problems. To this end, three tools have been developed to allow the development of national advocacy programmes:

1. Developing Law reform
2. Charter for the rights of children deprived of liberty with mental health issues
3. Evaluation and assessment

The three tools can be used to develop a country specific programme of action or as tools in themselves depending on each national context.

Finally, Section 2 includes the IJJO Recommendations to provide further assistance to nations to identify and resolve existing problems with regards to the situation of mentally ill young offenders. These consist of recommendations for the international level concerning the specific UN agencies; for the European level concerning European agencies and specific European legislations; and for the National level identifying crucial points for improvement regarding the assessment and treatment of mental health problems among juveniles in conflict with the law, the adequate training of professionals involved and the effective integration of judicial, health and educational services.

The MHYO project has received several official support

"The MHYO is an important project which aims to share knowledge and expertise on young people in conflict with the law who have mental health needs. Such information is essential in enabling us to identify the most effective interventions and make positive changes for these young people.

The project also provides youth justice workers with practical guidance on identifying and responding to young people's mental health needs. This might mean planning an intervention that promotes positive mental health or identifying if more specialist assessment and intervention is required."

Ms Frances Fitzgerald T.D.
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland

Partners



Associate Partners



With the support of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme European Commission-Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security



For any inquiries about the MHYO Project and the resulting publications, please contact the International Juvenile Justice Observatory: oiij@oiij.org