

## **SASCA Symposium**

### **ISPCAN XXII International congress, Prague 2- 5 September 2018**

The international congress is organized by the [International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect](#). Founded in 1977, ISPCAN is the only multidisciplinary international organization that brings together a worldwide cross-section of committed professionals to work toward the prevention and treatment of child abuse, neglect and exploitation globally. SASCA Partners will present a symposium during the XXII congress in Prague. The symposium title is **Institutional ill-treatment: the path for healing. Case studies from "SASCA" an European project**. It includes five papers and gathers researchers participating in the EU-funded project "Support to Adult Survivors of Child Abuse in institutional settings -SASCA". The project addresses the problem of child abuse in institutional settings, particularly in residential care, from the perspective of adult survivors in order to understand its long terms effects, how and if the survivors may find protection and compensation in the existing legal framework, and how their experience may enlighten prevention strategies for the protection of children living today under care.

During the Symposium the researchers from Italy, Ireland, Romania and Greece, will focus specific issues related to developmental trauma in the framework of the healing work with adult survivors such as the recognition of institutional system's responsibilities e.g. in the case of Magdalenes; therapeutic challenges from SASCA experience: the social support, reintegration and therapeutic work with adult survivors and; currently prevailing attitudes of professionals involved in child protection.

The papers are based on project's results viz. (i) mapping of current situation in involved countries illustrated through questionnaires delivered to adult survivors, child protection and law enforcement professionals and (ii) therapeutic pilot intervention including standardized assessment of health, psychological and social condition of survivors.

All survivors were exposed to multiple traumatic, invasive and interpersonal events, with a wide-ranging, long-term impact on their life. Such traumatic experiences disrupt firstly children's, later on in life, adults' ability to form attachments with others and make regulation of emotions and behavior extremely difficult.

As for many of the survivors disclosure of such traumatic experiences was possible only when they have reached adulthood, such delay and its consequent implications in making justice represents an additional difficulty in their emotional and social life.

#### Co- Authors

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## SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

Abstract Number	ISP18-0242A
Topic	Complex Developmental Trauma
Abstract Title	Advocating for survivors rights in Greece
Co-Authors	G. Nikolaidis <sup>1</sup> , G. Panagopoulou <sup>1</sup> , M. Psarrakou <sup>1</sup> . <sup>1</sup> Institute of Child Health, Department of Mental Health and Social Welfare - Centre for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect-, Athens, Greece.
Abstract Text	<p>Child protection system in Greece by and large still remains mostly residential with little utilization of alternative child care models whenever a child need to be removed from its biological family. Within the context of implementing the SASCA EU-funded project on adult survivors of institutional child abuse in residential care in Greece a number of adult survivors as well as child protection, law enforcement and justice professionals were initially invited to be interviewed for mapping existing situation.</p> <p>20 adult survivors which were placed in children's institutions were interviewed. Results show that in most of them severe dysfunctions could be traced in the attached type. Moreover, regarding their emotional and behavioural difficulties, survivors could be divided in two subgroups, namely one of younger survivors which seem more insecure, vulnerable emotionally, socially deprived and more dependent on the institutional system of care in which they grew up and one of more senior in age which despite initial hardships managed to create relationships and a personal narrative allowing them to progress in life. In all occasions institutional abuse seemed to have occurred with very limited means for being disclosed.</p> <p>100 professionals were also interviewed. Results show an extended feeling of helplessness especially in social services professionals linked to burn-out syndrome; although acknowledging the fact of institutional child abuse, professionals reported their aporias for handing efficiently with such cases as deprived of resources and effective procedures. In most occasions although being aware of such cases they do not know if these cases were reported or addressed in any kind of residential child care setting.</p> <p>Such findings indicate the shortcomings of institutional child care in Greece. Moreover, they underline the necessity of taking action to make justice, providing compensation and aid to adult survivors but also apply preventive policies for stopping institutional abuse against children.</p>
Pres. Author Biography	Psychologist, expert in child trauma. She works at the Institute of Child Health in Athens.

Abstract Number	ISP18-0242B
Abstract Preference	Symposium Abstract
Topic	Complex Developmental Trauma
Abstract Title	The complex developmental trauma experienced by adult survivors of institutional abuse:the case of Ireland's Magdalene Laundries
Co-Authors	J. O'Mahoney <sup>1</sup> . <sup>1</sup> Waterford Institute of Technology, Department of Applied Arts School of Humanities, Waterford, Ireland.
Abstract Text	<p>Forming part of wider symposium, which focuses on the complex developmental trauma experienced by adult survivors of institutional abuse, this presentation will focus on the case of Ireland's Magdalene Laundries. The presentation will highlight the difficulties experienced by the survivors in establishing both redress and recognition of their traumas by the Irish Government and criminal justice system based on interviews with both survivors and criminal justice and social care professionals.</p> <p>Specifically, the presentation will consider the institutions' responsibilities in both failing to protect the survivors from trauma and to provide redress; the role of the criminal justice system in protecting survivors; and how these abuses can be prevented in the future. All of these issues will be considered from the viewpoint of both the survivors and criminal justice and social care professionals. Finally, the import of an apology to the survivors of the Irish Magdalene laundries will be considered.</p>
Pres. Author Biography	<p>Dr Jennifer O'Mahoney is a lecturer in social, abnormal, and forensic psychology at the Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT). Her research focuses on how victimology and trauma are remembered and narrated by survivors, and collectively by wider society. Jennifer is the Primary Investigator of the Waterford Memories Project (<a href="http://www.waterfordmemories.com">www.waterfordmemories.com</a>). The WMP is a digital humanities project, which aims to contribute towards a better understanding of the system of Magdalene Institutions that existed in Ireland through the gathering and study of testimonies and archival data</p>

Abstract Number	ISP18-0242C
Abstract Preference	Symposium Abstract
Topic	Complex Developmental Trauma
Abstract Title	Traumatic life trajectories and support needs of young adults out of care
Co-Authors	M. Roth <sup>1</sup> , I. Antal <sup>1</sup> , Á. Dávid-Kacsó <sup>1</sup> , R. Pócsai-Szász <sup>1</sup> , A. Muresan <sup>1</sup> , M. Bogdan Iovu <sup>1</sup> . <sup>1</sup> Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
Abstract Text	<p>Even if many aspects of child protection have changed due to the reforms in the Romanian legislation, safeguarding children in residential care and support to victims of childhood violence is still an exception.</p> <p>The presentation will draw the attention on the results of the SASCA project in Romania (SASCA.Ro). It is based on interviews with 45 young adults with residential child protection past, who disclosed traumatic violence experiences in their homes, in public or private residential child protection care units or foster homes, or eventually in all of these. Young respondents told their stories about their childhoods marked by traumatic violent experiences perpetrated by other children, by family members, foster care parents, educators and other professionals, and an overall lack of support. During their childhood and the transitioning period to adulthood victims did not get help to process abuses, neglect or bullying; on the contrary, they were often blamed for becoming victims. Our presentation will focus on the strategies of survival of the interviewee, and their outcomes. Based on the interviews we can illustrate the struggle of the young men and women to develop a congruent identity, and to fit in the society. They had to stand up for themselves not only to find housing and employment, but also to face the consequences of long term psychological, physical and eventual sexual abuse, which had undermined their self-esteem and left deep scars in their personalities. Based on the needs expressed, will describe a support scheme piloted in the SASCA project based on listening, but also on psychological and social support: empowering groups of young people to make their voices heard, to stand up for their rights, to obtain recognition and compensation for their childhood sufferings and help for the future.</p>
Pres. Author Biography	Dr. Maria Roth is a child psychologist and professor of Social Work in the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj, Romania. Before entering the academic field she has worked with children as a speech therapist, school psychologist and clinical psychologist in special schools, orphanages and hospitals. These experiences have marked her professional career and oriented her research interest towards children's rights, child protection and child welfare. Her recent research projects focused on the Social dimensions of school success; The service standards in protecting Romanian children from violence; Youth's transitions to young adulthood; Stimulating participation in disadvantaged (Roma minority) children.

Abstract Number	ISP18-0242D
Abstract Preference	Symposium Abstract
Topic	Complex Developmental Trauma
Abstract Title	The multidimensional model of intervention with adult survivors of institutional ill - treatment in childhood
Co-Authors	D. Bianchi <sup>1</sup> , P. Filistrucchi <sup>1</sup> , S. Simone <sup>1</sup> , <u>P. Buccarelli</u> <sup>1</sup> , B. Bessi <sup>1</sup> . <sup>1</sup> Associazione Artemisia, General Board, Florence, Italy.
Abstract Text	<p>The short and long term effects of child abuse in institutional settings are similar to those experienced by the victims of child abuse in family, but the stories of the victims of violence happened in institutional settings, in particular residential, indicate that there are also specific impacts which are thought to be related to the characteristics of the organization or institution in which the abuse occurred and to the response the victims received by the institutional environment after their disclosure.</p> <p>Survivors of abuse in childhood tend to have feelings of isolation and describe a number of common experiences, in particular, depression and anxiety, self-harming behavior, their sense of guilt, anger, shame and feeling disconnected. Stigma is another major issue, that serves as a barrier for accessing help and support.</p> <p>When the violence happened in an institution for a long period of time, among the effects there is also the need to be re-socialized to a normal life. The work with the survivors of childhood abuse suffered at the residential community of Il Forteto, indicates the necessity to adopt a multidisciplinary approach to the healing intervention with a continuous up and down between the response to the concrete needs of the daily life and the support for understanding the dynamics of what happened and doing a complex therapeutic process. The victims of institutional abuse tend to disclosure late in their life because they have fear to be blamed, have difficulties to recognize what happened to them, suffer the long term effects of the trauma. The paper will discuss the results of three years of work with the survivors of Forteto also in the framework of the European project SASCA, a particular attention will be given to the analysis of the male survivors, their peculiarities and what make them different in comparison with female victims.</p>
Pres. Author Biography	Psychotherapist, expert of the issue of child abuse and neglect, with a long experience of intervention in the field of the protection and therapy with children victims of violence, adult survivors and women victims of domestic violence. Trainer and Vice President of Associazione Artemisia.

Abstract Number	ISP18-0242E
Abstract Preference	Symposium Abstract
Topic	Complex Developmental Trauma
Abstract Title	Institutional abuse: personal responsibilities and the involvement of a system. Individual process of elaboration of trauma and community healing.
Co-Authors	D. Bianchi <sup>1</sup> , P. Filistrucchi <sup>1</sup> , P. Baldassarri <sup>2</sup> , S. Pietracito <sup>3</sup> , P. Bucarelli <sup>1</sup> . <sup>1</sup> Associazione Artemisia, General Board, Florence, Italy. <sup>2</sup> Società della Salute Mugello, Children Department, Firenzuola, Italy. <sup>3</sup> Associazione Vittime de Il Forteto, Associazione Vittime de Il Forteto, Borgo San Lorenzo, Italy.
Abstract Text	<p>It seems that an equal importance for the outcome of support program for survivors of institutional ill - treatment, have the political and institutional acknowledge of public responsibility of the abuse occurred in contexts where institutions should have guarantee the protection of victims.</p> <p>Revealing to be a survivor of child abuse happened in an institutional settings, in particular in health or social services, or in children homes or other kind of residential facilities for children, it is something that put in question the competence of the protection system to protect really the children. The reactions of professionals and, more in general, of the social community to disclosures of child abuse in institutional settings tend to be of skepticism or defensive because they feel themselves as accused. There is then an expulsive impact on the survivors, which, further reinforce survivors' sense of stigma.</p> <p>The system of services and Institution which failed to protect, after the disclosure, run the risk to fail again if there is not a process of awareness in relation to the fact and the individual and organizational responsibilities.</p> <p>Is it possible a synergy between the path to recovery of the victims and the process of recognition of the facts and the process of recognition of the responsibilities by the professionals that should have protect those survivors when they were children exposed to the institutional abuse?</p> <p>The disclosure of what happened, and also the activation of the subsequent procedures represent for survivors a fundamental opportunity for healing: the chance to be heard and believed; to see a correct allocation of responsibilities and to receive the multi-level support that they need. The paper will discuss an Italian experience, the case of Il Forteto in the framework of Sasca project, in order to identify some key points..</p>
Pres. Author Biography	Psychotherapist, expert of the issue of child abuse prevention and protection, and protection of women victims of domestic violence. She has a long experience of work with adult victims of violence in childhood and victims of institutional ill-treatment in childhood. . She is Vice President of Artemisia, she is a trainer and collaborates with regional and national Board and association involved in the protection of children victims of violence such as the CISMAI