

Building sustainable cities - and a sustainable future - will need open dialogue among all branches of national, regional and local government. And it will need the engagement of all stakeholders - including the private sector and civil society, and especially the marginalized.

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FamileU: Family Training to Support their Marginalized and Disadvantaged Members

FamileU – Transnational State of the Art and Gap Analysis Report

About the FamileU Project



Family Training to Support their Marginalized and Disadvantaged Members (FamileU) is an Erasmus+ project intended to equip adult trainers and professionals, who already work in the areas of family care, with a digital training toolkit. Aim of the project is to provide to Social Workers and other relevant practitioners in the areas of social welfare a tool for the training of family members, in order for them to provide a peer to peer support to other family members in need, facilitating their (re)integration both in the society and in the

market, where appropriate.

The escalating socio-economic transformations brought by the global economic crisis have deeply affected European society as they struck its molecule, the family, and the limited resources of both states and families themselves. Therefore, a new approach in the provision of social welfare is needed where peer to peer support, through the acquisition of relevant lifelong skills by EU citizens, is becoming always more important. This approach is still in the conception phase and member states are searching for successful models and tools to be integrated in their upcoming initiatives.

The FamileU project will provide the necessary practical, theoretical and pedagogical framework to train social work professionals, in order to educate European families to meet the social,

economic and professional challenges they face in an effective way.

The Famileu toolkit, built on an online e-learning platform, will host training modules, social network applications, databases, information material and manuals for social work professionals on how to train adult members of families, so that they can provide internal support to their family members in need. This toolkit will also be available as a mobile platforms application.

The fields in which Famileu intends to train social work professionals are:

- Digital Literacy;
- Communication and Collaboration Skills;
- Social Orientation Support;
- Motivational and Guidance Skills;
- Labor Market Access, Employability and Entrepreneurship;
- Basic Social Work Principles

Through Social Workers, the project is addressed to adult (18+) members of families with disadvantaged members (i.e. Unemployed, addicts, socio/psychological problems) and aims on diminishing social and economic exclusion, improving their quality of life by directly increasing their capacity to support other family members or themselves by building their skills in social work/support. In addition, the project might be attractive and applicable for other categories of EU citizens that need to improve their support and orientation skills.

The project stakeholders, potential multipliers, we pointed out are:

- Adult training institutions;
- Research and development centres;
- Public institutions and social services;
- Local community groups and authorities;
- Youth organizations;
- Civil society organizations;
- Professional networks;
- Higher education institutions;
- Policy makers (local, national and european level).

Target group and stakeholders will be involved throughout all the project, in the preparation, development, implementation and dissemination phases and their inputs will be valued accordingly by the experts.

The project envisions influencing and improving disadvantaged family members' welfare, by providing them the capacity to face the socio-economic challenges they deal with and manage them efficiently. In addition, it will improve the capacity of education and training providers by offering an innovative and effective tool to apply in their professional domain. At the same time it

will light the economic burden of the social welfare services of the EU member states, as adults are expected to increase their quality of life through the improvement of their self, family and peer support, minimizing the provision of public social support.

The project is expected to particularly focus on two important stakeholders in the public social services provision and training community:

- Policy makers at local, National and European level;
- Research community in Social Work, Pedagogy and Educational Technology.

The Transnational State of Art and Gap Analysis Report



The *Transnational State of the Art and Gap Analysis Report* is the Output 1 (O1) of the Famileu project, which reunites the 7 National Reports and the EU Report developed by the partners. The purpose of this document is to collectively present the current State of the Art in the provision of training to adults, in the areas of social work oriented literacies through ICT tools and to discuss the gaps in these fields and the needs of the

target groups both in the partner Countries and at the European level. It will include specific suggestions, recommendations and guidelines for the development of a user-friendly, adaptable and widely accessible training package on social work and support for disadvantaged families' adults.

This Report is the outcome of the 5 activities in which O1 was split up into:

- Transnational Report and Data Collection Guidelines, Templates and Tools Preparation;
- Famileu State of the Art and Gap Analysis Literature Review;
- Famileu Field Research/State of the Art and Gap Analysis (Focus Groups and Online Questionnaires Distribution);
- 7 National and 1 EU Famileu State of the Art and Gap Analysis Reports;
- Compilation of National and EU Reports/Development of the Transnational Famileu State of the Art and Gap Analysis Report

As a first step, Oxfam Italia with the support of the partners developed the State of the Art and Gap Analysis Guidelines and Report's template divided in chapters and sub-chapters that each partner Country used for developing its national report in order for the Transnational one to be coherent and effective. Oxfam Italia also developed the tools for the Focus Groups, to be conducted in each Country and in the wider European context, and the online questionnaires. Oxfam Italia is

responsible for the National Report on Italy and for the one concerning the European Union.

As a second activity, each partner conducted a literature desk review in its respective Country, based on the guidelines developed by Oxfam Italia, to identify existing examples of ICT adult training, other initiatives in providing training on social work, the gaps in those initiatives and the registered needs of families and their members in terms of social and psychological work and support.

The third phase of O1 was the Focus Groups implementations, two for each partner Country, held following the Guidelines and the tools developed under activity 1, with respectively at least 5 representatives of the stakeholders and 5 representatives of the target groups. In addition Oxfam Italia conducted an online focus group with 5 European stakeholders outside the project Countries. Moreover, each partner was collecting at least 50 online questionnaires, completed by social workers from their Countries while Oxfam Italia is in charge of collecting other 100 questionnaire from EU Countries not taking part to the Famileu project.

The partners developed their National Reports following the guidelines provided by Oxfam Italia, including suggestions, comments and guidelines for the development of Famileu alongside the State of the Art and Gap Analysis data.

The Famileu State of the Art and Gap Analysis Report is a document that brings together all the National Reports to depict the features of social work in Famileu partner Countries and to give a general idea of the socio-economic situation of each one, after the changes produced by the global economic crisis. It also provides specific suggestions, comments and feedbacks on the development of the Famileu training package. It has been reviewed by each partner and by at least one participant from each focus group, to make sure that it reflects at the maximum degree the opinions of target groups and stakeholders.

General analysis of the findings

To render the findings of the various national focus groups in a coherent and effective way was not an easy task. Some difficulties arise from the fact that the Famileu consortium reunites seven Countries from different regions of Europe (the Mediterranean, the Balkans, Middle and Eastern Europe), with a different history, background and welfare system.

Oxfam Italia Intercultura, with feedbacks by all other partners, created the common tools to be used for the field research but given the specificity of each Country with the relative population and the scope of each project partner, slight differences in the composition, transcription, and results of the focus groups were already expected. Hence, we decided to write a quite detailed section about focus groups held in each partner Country, followed by a summary of the recurring indications or results.

Technology is nowadays widespread and both experts and families agree that it could be a very important source of information and training and a meeting point for people living in a similar situation. The other side of the coin is that internet can be a dangerous instrument if it's usage by disadvantaged family members, or their relatives, is not guided and mediated by professionals. Social workers themselves, including social office workers, especially in Mediterranean Countries need some ICT training to give to their clients the right information. In addition to that, european Countries of the Mediterranean area have an increasingly old population (another disadvantaged group), less familiar with technology and probably ashamed to follow ICT classes. It was therefore suggested to organise ICT trainings for different age groups, in order for everybody to feel more comfortable, not hiding their inabilities and so profiting more of the trainings they attend.

Originally the project was intended for social workers, working with families since many years, but from some of the focus groups emerged that the scope of the project had to be widened to include social office workers and in the case of Czech Republic it has already been done. In fact, these professionals are those who need to acquire more skills in dealing with difficult clients, skills that an experienced social worker already has. In other words, social workers may need some ICT training, in order to pass their knowledge to families with disadvantaged members, while social office workers need to acquire soft skills (inspiration, motivation, detachment, calm...) in order to be more effective with difficult clients.

Many subjects are operating in the area of family care: public institutions, private organizations, NGOs, and associations. One of the main problems is the lack of knowledge and networking activities between all these entities, in the case of Italy even between public institutions of two different territories. With a better communication and understanding of the activities carried out by each other, services could be provided to the people in need in a more effective way and to this purpose the internet could be a very useful tool.

Another issue that emerged from various focus groups is that of the *social stigma*: disadvantaged people still have to overcome stereotypes and prejudices. Education is a fundamental factor in fighting the social stigma and FamileU outputs and products could be used to raise public awareness and combat this issue.

In general, it is necessary to rethink the whole family care sector trying to involve each family member with a specific role in the welfare of their disadvantaged relatives. This is how volunteer associations work. They get in contact with a family in need and help the relatives to deal with the sick or dying family member. Volunteers are trained by experts and by taking care of the person in need they care about the family as a whole. Most of the times, then, a family member becomes in his turn a volunteer and goes to assist other families. Anyway, for this purpose ICT tools are not enough, and good organisation and funding is required.

Finally, as emerges from the Czech focus group, the society as a whole is transforming and an increasing number of people is remaining behind, because the job market requires too much flexibility, adaptation, resistance to stressful and difficult situations. This is one of the common

features of all partner Countries and ICT tools could be used to keep such people updated and expendable on the labour market.

Next Steps – Development of online curriculum and modules

The next phase of Famileu project, the development of Famileu online curriculum and modules, has already been started. The e-learning modules, which will be hosted on the online platform of the Famileu project, will be developed based on target group needs and state of the art and gap analysis results. It is important to note that each module will be developed based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and it could be potentially adapted in relevant courses of Training Institutions in EU. Selected modules and parts of it will be translated in all partner countries languages, while all modules will be also available in English. The online modules as well as all the feature of the on-line platform will also be accessible through a mobile application compatible with all mobile web platforms.