



From classical myth
to cutting-edge action

More than a decade of Daphne



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Foreword

People often ask me how the European Commission's Daphne Programme got its name. We have to go back to the myths of Ancient Rome to find the answer: The god Apollo had upset the goddess of love, Venus, with his arrogance. Venus decided to get her own back by using her lead-tipped arrow that would send coldness into the heart of anyone it pierced, and a golden-tipped arrow that would inspire love and longing. With the leaden shaft, her son Cupid struck the nymph Daphne, and with the golden one he pierced the heart of Apollo. Apollo fell madly in love with Daphne but she, of course, did not welcome his attentions.

The Ancient Roman poet Ovid tells us that, *'The god grew impatient and gained upon her in the race. Now her strength begins to fail, and, ready to sink, she calls upon her father, the river god: Help me, Peneus! Open the earth to enclose me, or change my form, which has brought me into this danger!'* She had hardly finished calling for help when she felt her limbs going stiff. A layer of bark encircled her body, her arms became branches, and her hair began to turn into leaves. Her face turned into the crown of the laurel tree – *Daphne* in Greek.

This is how the Daphne Programme got its name: it reminds us that, where vulnerable children, young people and women are in need of help, like the young nymph, we will work to provide support and protection.

Leaving history behind

The Daphne Programme today, however, has little to do with myth and legend. It has grown to become a significant source of concrete actions, practical tools and cutting-edge solutions to the problem of violence against children, young people and women in Europe.

Since 1997, Daphne has supported 505 projects across the EU Member States representing a total EC funding of more than 65 million Euros. From research studies to the creation of networks, from major conferences to work with small communities at risk, each of the projects had at least two partners working together, from different countries in Europe. In many cases there were many more partners, sometimes more than there are Member States. In total, more than 2,600 organisations across Europe – non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutions, law enforcement agencies, healthcare services, local authorities and others – have joined the 'Daphne family' and have contributed to creating a wealth of knowledge and experience that is unparalleled in Europe and perhaps the world. It is worth noting, also, that the 505 projects were chosen through a competitive process that attracted 3,549 submissions over the decade. Daphne clearly fills a need and the European Parliament has recognised this by increasing its budget substantially through 2013.

More than just numbers

The success of the Daphne Programme, however, goes beyond statistics. To me this becomes evident in the range and quality of the projects' outputs and in their impact on the people they aim to help. I often refer to the programme when I am asked what Europe can do to support victims of violence. Why? Because the Daphne programme is accessible, non-bureaucratic concrete, and in my view has and can generate tangible results.

This publication presents a small number of projects that in different ways are success stories. They break new ground in terms of their subject matter, provide invaluable lessons about violence itself or effective responses, illustrate the enormous value of working at European, rather than just national level, and demonstrate how, since 1997, Daphne has had a tremendous impact on organisations working to combat violence against children, young people and women in Europe and, through them, on the people it was set up to protect and help.

Europe's efforts to combat violence against children, young people and women must not falter and, as policy is strengthened, laws are reinforced and government responses are accelerated, the Daphne Programme is a crucial avenue for grassroots action, sharing and learning.

Jacques Barrot
Vice-President of the European Commission,
in charge of Justice, Freedom and Security

Introduction

The creation of Daphne was one element of a broad-ranging response from the Commission to the events of 1996 that had shaken Europe and galvanized public and political opinion. The discovery of the bodies of a number of missing girls in premises in Belgium in late summer 1996 (the 'Dutroux affair') raised questions about what Europe could do to protect children from those who wished to abuse or exploit them for profit.

The first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), held in Stockholm in August that same year, provided more information on such issues and, in a Declaration and Agenda for Action, suggested some possible actions that could be taken. In an Aide-Mémoire to the Commission following the World Congress,¹ Mrs Anita Gradin, Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, with special responsibility for coordinating the Commission's activities against trafficking and sexual exploitation of children, emphasized the vital role to be played in combating sexual violence against children by NGOs and public authorities, and the urgent need for exchange of experience at European level.

Following a consultation in early 1997, with representatives of 30 NGOs, the European Parliament, the European Commission, law enforcement representatives and individuals with expertise in the area of child protection, on how European-level cooperation and exchange could function and where the focus of efforts should be placed, a new initiative was launched by the Commission specifically to promote NGO action, the Daphne Initiative.

This one-year funding line of 3 million ecus would be used to support modest projects that would bring together NGOs from at least two Member States to cooperate in research, data collection and analysis, good practice identification and sharing, training, exchange and networking, awareness raising and information campaigns, direct action to support victims of violence, and the production of tools for policy and practice, such as guidelines and protocols. The Daphne Initiative was open to all Member States, and NGOs submitting projects were encouraged to find partners among research institutes, law enforcement bodies, public authorities, schools and training establishments, the media and other sectors whose cooperation might be vital in combating violence.

Recognizing the links between violence against women and violence against children and young people, the Daphne Initiative aimed to promote actions to combat not only violence against children but also against young people and women.

The Daphne Initiative of 1997 struck a chord with NGOs and response to the two calls for proposals was high. As a result, funding for the Initiative was renewed in 1998 and increased to 5 million ecus. When the budget line was renewed for a third time in 1999, it was with a view to continuing action while a legal base was identified and processes were completed for a multi-annual programme to be launched in 2000.

The successor Daphne Programme

The Daphne Programme 2000-2003 continued the work with funding of 20 million Euros over four years. By 2000, an enormous amount of new work had emerged from the three-year

¹ Contribution of the European Union to intensifying the fight against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children (SG/T/TLM/md D(96)II), Aide-memoire presented by Commissioner Gradin, (Brussels, 25 September 1996).

experience, and the Commission's commitment to this work was regularly talked about in international circles.

NGO support was solid and lessons from Daphne projects found their way into conferences and workshops in other regions as lead and partner organizations 'spread the word'. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child received a briefing on Daphne; the follow-up report to the World Congress against CSEC listed Daphne as an example of good regional practice. The Commission's close engagement with the projects was hailed as a rare example of support that went beyond funding to real commitment.

Another decade of Daphne

In 2004, the Daphne II Programme was launched with an average annual budget of 10 million Euros and, on 20 June 2007, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Decision No 779/2007/EC establishing, for the period 2007-2013, Daphne III as part of the General Programme Fundamental Rights and Justice. The average annual budget of the Daphne III Programme is 16.7 million Euros.

The general objective of Daphne III is to contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence and to attain a high level of health protection, well-being and social cohesion. These general objectives contribute to the development of Community policies, in particular those related to public health, human rights and gender equality, as well as actions aimed at the protection of children's rights, and the fight against trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation.

The programme is open to participation by NGOs, local public authorities and institutions (mainly universities and research institutes) from the 27 EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), and the candidate countries and the Western Balkan states.

More information about the Daphne III Programme and its funding rules is available on the Daphne III website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne3/funding_daphne3_en.htm

Examples of success

Documenting the 505 projects supported by Daphne during its first 10 years from 1997 to 2006² would run to several volumes. All Daphne projects are documented on the Commission's website the Daphne Toolkit:

www.ec.europa.eu/justice.home/daphnetoolkit/html/welcome/dpt_welcome_en.html

The Daphne Toolkit is a rich repository not only of project descriptions but also of reports, studies, tools and training materials. These are supplemented with contact details of the project partners and links to their websites, so that those looking to develop submissions for support can find partners as well as valuable lessons to inform their project planning.

Daphne projects have covered most – if not all – forms of violence against children, young people and women, including sexual, psychological and physical violence in the home, at schools,

² Projects supported in 2007 and 2008 had not reported at the time of production of this publication in April 2009.

at work, in public, in institutions, online etc., and violence towards minority and particularly vulnerable groups, health impacts of violence and law enforcement.

All Member States of the EU, the EFTA/EEA, and some candidate and Western Balkan states have participated in these Daphne projects, either as coordinators or partners.

This publication introduces a selection of projects – covering some of these forms of violence and participating countries – that are illustrative of the impressive results of the Daphne Programme overall.

Playing safe on the Internet

The Internet has transformed our lives, both at work and at home. But for children, this fantastic resource is also a danger. Whether using it themselves, or being used by it, they confront the threat of child pornography and sexual aggression. Daphne helped build a Europe-wide response to that threat and to make the Web a safer place for our children.

Most Europeans now have access to the Internet, so it is crucial that parents, teachers, social workers and children themselves should be aware of the risks of entering the ‘Cyber community’ and know how to handle them. Much work, therefore, is being done with users of the Internet, to help them to be able to take advantage of the services the Internet offers without falling victim to unwanted approaches in the form of pornography or solicitation.

In a number of Member States, also, ‘hotline’ services have been set up to provide a link between Internet users who find child pornography or preying abusers and those who can remove such threats from the Internet (service providers) or track down offenders (police). Since the Internet knows no national boundaries, hotline services also work across borders, through cooperation and coordination networks.

NetSmart rules

Three early Daphne-funded projects set out to build a Europe-wide response to promote the safe use of the Internet for children.

The ‘Internet Action’ project (1997-038), led by an NGO in the UK and with partners in Belgium, Finland and Italy, used expertise and materials from different EU countries to develop a website with ‘NetSmart’ rules designed to help children to surf the Internet safely. The website also included materials to increase parents’ understanding of the dangers children might face and ways to minimise those dangers and maximise their own role in protecting their children online. Press and media activity around the project helped to raise public awareness of these issues also.

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More than a decade later, the NetSmart rules remain relevant to adults as well as children. They cover the importance of not divulging personal information, pictures or bank details on the Internet without checking with a parent or carer; not sharing passwords with anyone; never meeting an Internet contact without parents’ permission and presence; reporting anything offensive or inappropriate found online; never responding to unwanted e-mails or postings; never pretending to be someone or something else online; and remembering that, if someone makes an offer that seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Europe-wide response with a global long-lasting impact

Daphne also supported a project that got Internet hotlines around the world to work more closely together. The project (1997/291) established a forum for European hotlines to meet and discuss common issues of concern, the INHOPE Forum – INHOPE being an acronym for Internet Hotline Providers in Europe as well as a motivating concept that looked to a bright future. Despite differences in structure, funding and organisation, the different hotlines – from the UK, Belgium, Germany, Ireland and Spain – were able to agree on key issues to address.

A key to success for this vital work on the basic elements of hotlines and cooperation was finding a way to overcome differences so that hotlines across Europe and indeed the world would be able to work together in reducing child pornography and online violence against children. A follow-up project (1998/045) sought to build on this work and aimed, notably, to support new hotlines and recruit them to play an active role in the INHOPE Forum and to promote cooperation among NGOs, industry, law enforcement, policy makers and international agencies.

As a direct result of these two successive years of Daphne funding, the INHOPE Association was launched in November 1999, as part of the EU's Action Plan for Safe Use of the Internet. It has a comprehensive website (www.inhope.org) and, as a highly focused and concrete, yet low-cost initiative, INHOPE has had considerable impact. Given the nature of the problem, a global hotline partnership is gradually being built.

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A decade on, INHOPE has more than 30 member hotlines around the world and an agreement with Microsoft corporation to provide technical support and training. Work with Interpol has expanded and the association continues to be supported by the EU Safer Internet Programme.

These projects show that each country does not have to 'reinvent the wheel'. With the right framework, knowledge and skills can be shared among NGOs, Member States, international agencies and the European Commission itself, and help make the Internet a safer place for children.

Animated films to support young victims

Children who experience and witness domestic violence often feel they have no one to turn to who can understand the profound effect it has on them. Through the creative medium of animation, two Daphne projects sought to acknowledge these feelings of powerlessness, guilt and fear, and provide realistic solutions.

Children and young people who witness violence towards their mothers or other family members, or indeed are victims themselves, need to be able to share their experiences with others but find it difficult to seek help. They are often isolated and intimidated by the abusers and may feel frightened, humiliated and guilty.

The objective of the 'Home Truths' project (1998/035) was to find a way to present the issues clearly and honestly to children and young people and to begin to counteract the secrecy and shame surrounding the subject, in order to encourage them to share their fears and overcome them with the support of peers and adults.

The project, involving partners from the UK, Austria, Germany and Ireland, researched the topic and created and distributed a video pack consisting of a short animated film suitable for a wide audience but especially targeting the 8-13 age group. The pack also included a booklet that teachers could use to encourage discussion in the classroom or in clubs. The production also involved a group of young people who provided insights into the thoughts of young people as the script was drafted, and the storyboard and visual style developed.

Telling stories; finding solutions

The video tells the story of five children who have experienced domestic violence in different ways. Each story looks at violence in the home from a different angle and the characters explain how the violence affects them, their friends and their family. In each story, the children assert their right to live in a safe environment and take positive action, whether by telling friends or a trusted adult or contacting voluntary or statutory agencies.

Because the people in the video are animated cartoon characters, they could be fashioned to represent a wide range of different cultural backgrounds, different age groups and social groups.

The video was designed to avoid showing violence directly, by using the techniques of cartoon sound effects and recognised visual 'tricks'. Five young people recorded the voices of the characters in the film and voices and music were mixed to produce a final soundtrack. The booklet accompanying the video contains suggestions for developing work with the material and a list of useful resources.

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The video pack has been widely and successfully distributed in Europe and at international level. The project has also been translated into other languages, and a sub-titled version for use by deaf and hearing-impaired people has been produced.

Preventing and responding to sexual abuse

The successful implementation by the project team in addressing the delicate subject of family violence led to other productions, notably the Daphne-funded animated video cartoon 'Beyond Belief'. This project (2002/062) guides adults in supporting children who have been sexually abused with the aim to protect the child from further abuse, and help the child recover from and deal with the effects of the abuse.

The project produced a film and a resource booklet to guide parents and adults in general (professionals, teachers, volunteers and related services). The project involved an international network of professionals from different disciplines and a group of parents whose children had been sexually abused. The project partnership included organisations in Austria, Germany, Italy and the UK.

The video explores a difficult subject in a straightforward and non-sensational way. The story acknowledges that supporting a child who has been sexually abused can be stressful and isolating, but takes a positive view of the role of parents and carers. Parents' strengths and abilities are shown as they find creative ways to support their children. The film shows that children can deal with their experiences, provided they are cared for and supported so that they understand they are in no way to blame for the abuse.

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Widely disseminated and adapted

These simple, animated stories are a useful tool and the projects illustrate a number of important lessons: the first is that a project does not have to be complex in order to be effective. Here, the partners – both transnational and from different sectors in the lead country – came together as a working group at the beginning of the project when the contents of the film were being planned, met periodically to 'test' the product as it came together, and then came together again at the end of the activity for the launch of the video and dissemination and feedback stages. The actual production was done by the UK partner, which has long experience in video production (www.leedsanimation.org.uk).

The products themselves are good examples of how broad European coverage can be possible when thought is given to how different languages and cultures can be accommodated in a single product. By choosing to use animation rather than 'live' characters, the producers of the films were able to take into account different physical, ethnic and gender characteristics and create characters with which many different people can identify. Because they are animated and not real, there is no problem of 'lip synching' any particular language and so the script can be translated into any language and a sound track added. It is not surprising therefore that, since the completion of these projects, the videos have been translated into a number of languages.

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When harm is self-inflicted

Young people who are emotionally disturbed or suffer from specific behaviour disorders, as well as others without evident conditions, sometimes resort to deliberately wounding or injuring themselves. It is a sign of distress or illness that is particularly hard for those around them to accept or come to terms with.

Self-harm occurs when an individual acts deliberately to cause physical – but not fatal – damage to her/himself. It can take many forms, including overdosing on pills or chemicals, burning, jumping from high places, crashing vehicles or cutting parts of the body. Self-injurious behaviour may derive from specific conditions such as habitual behaviour disorders or Cornelia de Lange syndrome, a rare genetic illness that delays physical development and causes mild to severe learning difficulties. It can also arise as a ‘warning signal’ when young people are suffering severe stress or disturbance, for example when they are being bullied at school or abused.

Cross-cutting international research

Children and teenagers are a major risk group for self-harm. In 1997, Daphne funded the first stage of the CASE (Child and Adolescent Self-harm in Europe) study. This project (1997/174) investigated the extent of the problem across Europe among children and young people below the age of 20, working with an international network of experts from 10 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK, Hungary, Norway and Austria, plus participation from Australia).

Recognising the importance of building on this work and taking the initiative forward, Daphne awarded further funding in 1999 for a pilot study. This second phase of the project focused on further developing the research methodology, piloting schedules and questionnaires, and collecting and analysing data. Ongoing Daphne support for a further two years, until the end of 2002, consolidated all the earlier work by enabling the main survey to be conducted. Building on all previous work, a final project was launched in 2003 to inform national and international service strategies and to provide on-line information and support for beneficiaries and target groups (1999/112; 2000/126; 2002/089).

The CASE study is unique in collecting information on self-harm simultaneously in several countries. The study covers self-harm that leads to a hospital visit as well as self-harm that is reported anonymously by 15 and 16 year-olds in schools. Comparing findings in these two settings gives a picture of how much this problem goes undetected in the community. The ability to examine similarities and differences among countries gave added value to the international aspect of the study. The use by all international partners of an agreed research approach with the same research tools was the essential ingredient of the CASE study and allowed meaningful international comparisons to be drawn. In addition to standard questionnaires (translated where necessary), detailed protocols were developed to guide every aspect of the research. By examining preventive measures and support services already available to young people who self-harm in the participating countries, and asking young people themselves to describe their experiences, the study led to recommendations for policy and practice in this area.

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Protecting the interests of young people participating in the study was a major priority and led to discussion and the drafting of guidelines on how to present the school questionnaire and how to

follow it up. All pupils were given details of people and organisations they could, if they wished, get in touch with afterwards.

Breaking new ground

In most of the participating countries, this was groundbreaking research. Although schoolchildren in some countries, such as the Netherlands and Denmark, had already taken part in studies on self-harm and suicide, nowhere had such an extensive and far-reaching survey been carried out. This was recognised by project partners, who obtained the support of government authorities, ethical committees, health workers, teachers and students in their own countries in order to carry out the study.

This was groundbreaking research – almost nowhere had such an extensive and far-reaching survey been carried out.

The lead organisation set up a useful website that provides an authoritative ‘first stop’ for anyone concerned about self-harm among the young: www.selfharm.org.uk.

Domestic violence and health care: Making the link

Healthcare professionals are often a first point of contact for women suffering from the effects of domestic violence. These practitioners need guidance to develop a pragmatic and sensitive approach to recognising signs of domestic violence and caring for victims.

Conjugal violence is not a pathology but a social problem that is expressed in interpersonal dramas with many repercussions, in particular of a medical nature. When a healthcare professional is faced with this kind of situation, s/he must act as doctor, citizen and witness. The trust the patient puts in the professional presents a challenge, not only in terms of the professional's normal duties but also in terms of personal commitment and values and sometimes safety. The position of the healthcare professional is complicated by the multiplicity of roles involved in such a distressing situation.

Women who are victims of domestic violence are generally reluctant to seek help and speak about their situation. The rate of detection of domestic violence against women, including among patients who consult a doctor as a result of such violence but without stating this openly, is very low. Also, because of the wide range of pathologies linked to this type of violence, healthcare professionals must pay very close attention not only to evident signs of physical and psychological abuse but also to discreet, indirect or latent signs. Identifying when they signal a situation of conjugal violence is difficult and responding is even more difficult if the caregiver has not received specific information or training. If clinical signs and behaviour are interpreted in the wrong way, the women may receive unsuitable treatment and the violence remain undetected.

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To help healthcare professionals fulfil their role within an efficient and manageable framework, certain measures, provisions and aids and more comprehensive information must be made available. Daphne funded a series of successful projects (1999/163, 2000/190, 2001/076) on training and online working support for health professionals for dealing with domestic violence against women. The projects were implemented by a partnership from France, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and the UK consisting of health professionals and members of aid organisations for female victims of violence.

A useful and needed web-based tool

The projects chose the Internet as the most appropriate training tool, because of its potential for interactivity and for further specialised information to be added in the future. The first project developed a protocol of indicators, began mobilising the medical professions concerned, and initiated both a transnational project network and national multi-sector networks. Based on wide research and consultation with medical specialists, a follow-up project created a web-based 'sentinel' network to develop the protocol further, analyse and monitor reporting trends and issues, and feed these back to reporting professionals, thus putting in place an interactive, developing network of medical professionals fully alerted and mobilised in the area of domestic violence.

The project produced a sentinel surveillance tool on medical practice in the field of conjugal violence, based on a doctors' and a women's questionnaire. This functional Internet-based tool was translated into six languages and its questionnaires can be changed and/or updated at any time, and at little cost. The simplified information feedback system, which gives the statistical

results of each question for the entire network or for each participant, can be upgraded according to need.

The project also developed a public website (www.violences.fr) to provide general information on domestic violence, practical advice on detection and medical care of female victims and their children; action plans for each medical field of specialisation concerned; clinical analysis of the various effects of violence on women's and children's health; template medical documents; legal and ethical information; a bibliography and links on domestic violence and shelter addresses.

Fruitful co-operation using first hand knowledge

Cooperation among the project partners' wider circles of contacts in the health care, research and aid association fields proved to be a major factor in the project's success. General practitioners, gynaecologists, obstetricians, psychiatrists and surgeons formed a working group to draft the texts for inclusion on the website, based on their professional knowledge and experience. The aid association members used their first-hand contact with female victims of violence to help develop the more general sections of the site and practical information. Healthcare professionals were involved at every stage of the website's development, and the result was an instrument that met their needs and that they could develop further. This was important in creating a clear and practical tool for use at European level.

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A third project produced a report that discusses these issues and offers practical advice for healthcare professionals along with a series of recommendations for the bodies and institutions that define the guidelines in this area. The report is intended both for healthcare operators in their normal professional practice and public healthcare decision makers and administrators, and for women who are victims of conjugal violence. The report showed that these projects have the potential to be extended to all Member States of the EU. The mechanisms used (Intranet and Internet) are ideal vehicles for including more countries in the network. Indeed, the tools produced by these projects have been adapted to other countries' systems and are considered a reference in this particular field.

Offering a refuge and support to women who are victims of domestic violence

Women who are victims of domestic violence need both immediate protection and long-term protection and support. They need appropriate accommodation and care that takes their specific and individual needs into consideration. In recent years, initiatives creating refuges for women have multiplied. These aim not only to provide a stable environment for the women but to give them the support they need to put an end to violence.

Unfortunately the need for refuges in the majority of Member States far exceeds the number available. Additionally, there are often problems linked to the absence of quality standards. Women are frequently disappointed by the services or the operation of these refuges.

A European network of NGOs was established in 1997 with the support of Daphne, to bring together European NGOs working in the field of combating domestic violence against women and children. The network, from its base in Austria, has since become one of the most important European networks in this field, boasting a membership of more than 4,000 women's help organizations in 47 countries of Europe.

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Daphne has supported several of the network's initiatives, of which the project to produce guidelines for setting up and running a women's refuge (2003/136) and its follow-up (2006-1/279) were particularly successful. The project aimed to benefit from the shared experience and initiatives that had been launched in Europe, particularly by women who are experts in this field, in order to develop quality standards for all refuges for battered women. The project paid particular attention to the situations of women of migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as women with disabilities, since these women all have particular needs that must be taken into account.

A participatory and integrated methodology and approach

Based on the belief that coordinated action is necessary to combat violence and that no action can succeed in isolation, the project adopted a carefully planned, participatory and consultative approach. This involved discussions and analysis in meetings with partners and experts from the eight participating countries (Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Romania). The country consultations enabled the project to identify the strong points of the different methods for running women's refuges in the different countries. To supplement these results, the project included desk research and field studies that resulted in a collection of examples of good practice.

Outcomes of the project: publication of a handbook

The main outcome of the project was a handbook containing recommendations on how to establish and run a women's refuge. The handbook 'Distancing yourself from violence' has 12 chapters that present different theoretical and practical approaches relating to the creation, establishment and good management of women's refuges. The handbook contains a brief insight into the different statuses of women's refuges in Europe and a theoretical analysis of the causes

of the different forms of violence against women, and describes what these imply in relation to the organisation of refuges.

The recommendations for establishing a refuge include the main steps to be taken into consideration when setting up a first pilot refuge, a definition of the refuges' target groups as well as the main principles to allow refuges to operate optimally. The manual also contains a presentation of the services offered to women and children, indicating the importance of an 'advice' section, admission procedures, security planning, legal assistance, financial support for the accommodation, issues relating to health, education and employment, and the special needs of migrant women and women from ethnic minorities.

The children of battered women also have special needs. The handbook consequently includes recommendations relating to services for children, notably in relation to consultation, admission, therapy, support during legal proceedings, recreational and educational activities and the need for specially qualified staff and adequate infrastructure.

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Finally, the handbook contains advice concerning other requirements such as listening services, a special service for children, women from ethnic minorities and women with disabilities, a legal aid service, intervention programmes, programmes for monitoring the aggressors, the possibility of women obtaining qualifications and employment as well as future development prospects.

From project to European resource

The handbook was published in five languages: English, Finnish, German, Italian and Portuguese. In 2006, the handbook was translated into Czech, Estonian, Greek, Lithuanian, Polish and Slovak. It is available for downloading at: <http://www.wave-network.org>. The handbook is also used as a resource in a train-the-trainer programme on setting up and running a women's shelter and for improving services.

Recommendations concerning women's refuges had been defined in 1998 and 1999 during the Austrian, German and Finnish presidencies of the EU. The project translated these recommendations into very specific areas of intervention intended for actors and associations involved in this field. It is therefore also a good example of how a Daphne project can contribute to translating policy into action. One of the main objectives of the Daphne Programme is, on the one hand, to support projects that disseminate European policy and initiatives and, on the other, to support direct field actions to implement existing policies.

Responding to the health needs of trafficked women

The healthcare sector is one of the last to become involved in the fight against the trafficking of women. Female victims of trafficking face a wide range of abuse and risks that can have a profound impact on their health and well-being.

There is a need for improved understanding of these health problems and increased awareness among professionals involved in this issue. To help them to improve their understanding of the health impact of trafficking, they need ready reference materials. Policy makers also need to be targeted so that policies on human trafficking and the services that grow out of them take health issues into account.

In-depth research into the impact of trafficking on women's health

Five NGO partners from Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy and the UK joined forces to summarise and use the findings from two major studies: 'Health implications of trafficking in women and adolescents' and 'WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for interviewing trafficked women'. These had been developed as a result of earlier Daphne projects (2000/265, 2002/082, 2004-2/069), led by British researchers who work closely with the World Health Organisation (WHO) on this issue.

The project's main objective was to carry out in-depth research into the effect of trafficking on women's health, and to provide arguments and instruments for eliminating trafficking and mitigating its consequences.

Supplementing the work that had been done under the earlier Daphne projects on health-related issues in human trafficking, the partners updated the research with the situation in 14 European countries regarding physical, mental and sexual violence resulting from trafficking.

Victims played a pivotal role in the information gathering process. Interviews with 207 trafficked women provided insight into a variety of experiences related to health characteristics and care patterns. Their countries of origin and their destinations cover a wide geographical area, in Europe and elsewhere. Analysing the victims' needs gave valuable clues to the various forms of violence they suffered and how to cope with the health-related consequences. The project also gathered statistics on the needs of women who have escaped the trafficking situation.

The research represents a quality product and is the result of strong commitment from all those involved: beneficiaries, partners and target groups.

Analysing the victims' needs gave valuable clues to the various forms of violence they suffered and how to cope with the health-related consequences.

The publication 'Stolen smiles - The physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe' (available on <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/genderviolence/recent.htm>) presents the main results of the research and provides working methods on the patient's environment, communication skills, physical and psychological diagnosis and treatment and safe return.

Far-reaching results with policy impact

The project represented a significant contribution to policy development. It helps in conducting targeted advocacy at national, European and international levels. It also contributes to the development of good practice recommendations for service providers to respond to the health needs of trafficked women.

The project provided responses for mapping current health sectors and changes in law. It described the national policy in partner countries. It also increased understanding and promoted policy development among healthcare providers responding to cases of trafficking in women. The effect of the accompanying advocacy campaign at EU level, which included policy development, dissemination of study results, sector-appropriate materials and international health lobbying activities, was to improve funding and intervention practices.

Information and good practice recommendations were compiled based on women's needs and following measures proposed in international instruments like the trafficking protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (the 'Palermo Protocol'). Specific recommendations addressed to EU Member States called for better awareness and possible involvement in the issue. The recommendations also target NGOs, international organisations and donors.

Another significant effect of the project was the development and production of an EU and WHO document to be handed out to migrants and women travelling from known countries of origin. The WHO has distributed the document, translated into various languages, worldwide.

Research, networking and exchange among NGOs, researchers and international agencies can result in solid information that can then be used for advocacy and lead to legislation, funding and actions.

This project is a good example of how research, networking and exchange among NGOs, researchers and international agencies can result in solid information that can then be used for advocacy and lead to legislation, funding and actions.

When families break up: Mediation to support the children

When parents separate or divorce, and families break up, the children of the family need support to ensure that their education, physical and emotional health are not affected. Although teachers, schoolmates, family and other support people have an important role in helping the child through this challenging time, there is often a need for someone who is specially trained to work directly with the family to help smooth the transition.

In 2001, a project called 'Ancora Matilda' (2001/159) brought together partners from Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, and Greece to share and develop the results of a pilot project (2000/274) carried out with German and Spanish partners the year before. The pilot had explored the potential of Family Mediation to protect children in situations of family break-up. The family mediator is not a social worker nor a legal professional but plays a very specific role in supporting the family through separation.

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The Italian lead partner in both projects specialized in the mobilization and training of volunteers, and family mediators came from this pool of committed people, trained in the techniques of mediation. In addition, each partner undertook research in its own country, focusing on the nature and scope of violence in difficult family situations, community standards of mediation, types of family mediation and the role of the voluntary sector, and legal and operational methods of mediation.

In Italy, the partner focused also on the relationship between family mediators and schools, linking family mediation to another obvious source of support for the child.

In response to an identified need to help the young people concerned to be heard in the project and among the groups involved, the project also collected young people's histories and published them anonymously on a website and in publications.

Widening the partnership and testing the concept

One very interesting aspect of this project was the way new partners were introduced into the second stage of the work, while close links were kept with the first-stage partners, who became 'advisors' to the second project.

The project team found that they developed a 'new' language around the project, where national language differences were broken down by finding common ways of describing problems, methodologies and solutions. An important conclusion from this was that the family mediation model as it was developed in the project might be usable in other EU Member States also.

Language differences were broken down by finding common ways of describing problems, methodologies and solutions.

A follow-up from the two projects aimed to push the methodology further, to see how or if it could work in family situations where there are high levels of violence. In the first two projects, the training and methodology presumed that the family would be compliant. This is complex because it involves the family, particularly the women, in different ways and may suggest different roles for schools and support services and potentially a role for law enforcement. The partners were ready to explore this new challenge.

The creation of the European Network for the Prevention of FGM

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) affects millions of women and girls worldwide, including in the European Union, where it is practised not only by some migrant communities but also within ethnic groups that hold on to traditional practices that are both harmful and illegal. Laws, though, are not enough to end FGM in the face of strong adherence to tradition, and in some cases severe (mis)interpretation of religious duty. Long-term elimination of this terrible scourge on the health and dignity of women and girls has to be addressed also through education aimed at preserving the psychological and physical integrity of the women and girls while respecting their cultural roots and identity.

To respond to this need, and to harness the skills and experience of a number of NGOs that had been working to improve understanding of FGM with a view to eradicating it, this project (2003/028) set out to strengthen and promote a European Network against FGM (EuroNet FGM) that had been created under earlier Daphne projects (1997/096, 1999/036).

The project, coordinated by a specialized university centre in Belgium, with partners in France, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Norway, aimed to survey existing good practices and educational materials developed in the course of a number of Daphne-supported projects on FGM, and to encourage users across Europe to adopt and adapt these for their use. A variety of information, education and communication (IEC) tools were developed and tested for use with various target groups and Member States.

Enhanced partnerships for action

In addition to equipping individual organisations with well-developed tools for combating FGM, the project also looked to bring organisations together in an effective network that would reinforce the impact of individual actions.

There were two workshops at which experts working in the field of FGM were consulted on the IEC tools. The workshops also provided the opportunity for some capacity-building sessions, especially in the important area of behaviour change strategies. This recognised the fact that, to eradicate FGM, it is necessary not only to help people to understand that it is a practice that is dangerous to the health, welfare and indeed life of the woman or girl who suffers it, but also to get people to actually change their behaviour. This includes not only those who inflict FGM on women and girls but also many women and girls themselves who believe that they have a social and cultural duty to submit to the practice.

To eradicate FGM, it is necessary not only to help people to understand that it is a practice that is dangerous to the health, welfare and indeed life of the woman or girl who suffers it, but also to get people to actually change their behaviour.

The participants at the workshops were from 13 European countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Each network member was then responsible for dissemination in his or her local area.

The results: Improved methodology and standard setting

The project resulted in a number of concrete products: a description of FGM in Europe including a statistical review; a review of European law; an overview of priorities for prevention activities at community level by NGOs and community-based organisations; and a history of the struggle against FGM. The project also produced recommendations for a European strategy to prevent FGM in Europe (at medical, legislative and community levels) and an agenda for FGM research priorities in Europe.

Specific tools were developed to equip various groups of actors engaged in combating FGM in Europe. These include: frameworks for the health sector for care of women who have suffered FGM and for training health professionals; a general educational tool about FGM in Europe; a manual for health care providers; and a CD-Rom that includes primary prevention and practical information about specific EU laws on FGM.

Rather than 'reinventing the wheel', this project looked at what already existed, analysed and adapted it, and put it in the hands of a committed group of people who can use it in their work.

This project is a good example of how to add value to work that has already been done and to increase its usefulness. Rather than 'reinventing the wheel', this project looked at what already existed, analysed and adapted it, and put it in the hands of a committed group of people who can use it in their work.

Breaking through social and cultural taboos

Preventing domestic violence against women from minority groups, especially Black, Migrant and Ethnic minority ('BME') women, requires an approach that fully takes into account the social and cultural nature of these communities. Involving the women themselves is therefore of the utmost importance, not only during the course of the project but also in the planning stages. The next stage is equipping them with self-help mechanisms and strategies for violence-free homes to empower them to take charge of their own lives.

In 2000, a Daphne project (2000-330) sought to break through the cultural taboos around domestic violence in some migrant communities. It developed a training programme – 'Break Through' – that aimed to provide self-help mechanisms to BME women and which also included a manual for professionals with new methods for breaking through cultural taboos.

This first project was led by a Dutch organisation with partners in the Greece, Ireland and the UK. The partners found that the training and manual were well received. Importantly, they also found that the exchange of information among the partners was extremely rich and they established an informal network that continued after the end of the project. In 2004, the coordinator developed a project to further test the Break Through methodology and materials in other EU countries, to see how well it transferred. Replicating useful experiences into other Member States is a cornerstone of the Daphne Programme.

Transferring and replicating the Break Through experience

The follow-up project (2004-2/036) set out to test the method and materials in Catalonia, Spain, and then share it with other European countries.

As a part of testing, the project conducted research into the social and cultural aspects of domestic violence, with the involvement of women and families from different ethnic and migrant minority groups. The Break Through method was adapted based on the results of this research, and the manual was translated into Spanish.

In the Spanish tests, women from BME and other women's NGOs, and professional staff of judicial, medical, educational institutions and public authorities, attended training sessions to learn about the method. The sessions, like the method itself, emphasized the importance of empowerment and of creating a safe learning environment in which people are encouraged to talk about domestic violence.

As in the original partner countries, one of the lessons learned was that BME women face other challenges, as well as the taboo that leads to domestic violence being shrouded in silence. They often have difficulties accessing the services they need, not only because of language issues or difficulties in sourcing them, but because they may not be accustomed to seeking help from the authorities or from others outside the family circle. These issues have to be taken into account when programmes are designed.

One of the lessons learned was that BME women face other challenges, as well as the taboo that leads to domestic violence being shrouded in silence.

The support groups in Barcelona and neighbouring areas intensively trained other women and reached a total of 58

women in Catalonia. In the implementation phase it was decided to broaden the target area beyond Barcelona. This allowed the women to broaden the range of cultural groups they were able to reach.

The results of the training sessions were published in a methodology manual which was also translated into English to be used by trainers in other European countries.

This project illustrates how women who are the 'beneficiaries' of the action can also be an integral part of the action and how their understanding and insight makes a project more relevant and likely to succeed. It is also a good example of how experiences and products from one project can be transferred, tested and adapted in other EU Member States.

Complementary fields of intervention to combat and prevent child pornography

The Internet has become an important means for spreading child pornography. It has allowed like-minded people with a sexual interest in children to form 'virtual communities' who see sexual abuse of children as normal and acceptable. Very few offenders are treated for their behaviour and those who are treated are normally already in the judicial system.

To fight this trend, people have to understand that these 'pictures' are in fact images of children being abused. Interventions are needed at different levels that focus on the victim in the crime of child images on the Internet. The needs of the children who are victimised in this way, and support for them and their families, are too often forgotten in efforts to address the technology involved in this growing form of child abuse. All actors working in this area -- professionals and social service workers -- must be involved. Specific national and international law enforcement has to be promoted.

Pioneering work on on-line child abuse victim identification

The Victim Identification Project (VIP) (2002/079) examined the issues surrounding investigation and identification of victims pictured in child abuse images on the Internet. The project used the results of an earlier Daphne project relating to the identification of victims of child pornography on the Internet and investigated and assessed the process for identifying victims and the issues that arise during this process. It also surveyed the support and counselling the child receives. The goal was to find out why and how these cases were investigated and what led to the victims being identified.

The research was undertaken in Germany, Sweden and the UK. It involved 17 cases in which there were 105 child victims. The project partners analysed various identification techniques used in successful investigations, including image analysis, forensic investigation, agency-sharing information/cooperation, and media searches.

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The VIP project was a pioneering project and the results were not intended for broad public consumption but to be shared with key people in Europe working in relevant fields. This gave an opportunity to review the findings of the research and, at the same time, it allowed the project to work with sensitive materials and processes that might have been inaccessible if the results had been intended for wide dissemination.

The research allowed a better understanding of child abuse images on the Internet, improved awareness of successful identification techniques, and an understanding of the impact on the child who is abused through such images.

Important ethical guidance in the best interests of the child

The VIP project was a groundbreaking effort and has gained an international reputation not only for its results but for the methodology it used and the good practices it demonstrated. An important element of the way the project was managed was the setting up of an Ethics Advisory Committee. This kept an overview of all the ethical issues involved in identifying victims and perpetrators, gathering data and investigating cases, taking the best interests of the child into account at all times. The Ethics Advisory Committee was an innovative and essential element not only in ensuring that the rights of victims were at the forefront of all project activities but also in contributing to the credibility of the project among sectors that are understandably cautious about sharing information, such as the police and judiciary.

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Perhaps the project's key success was organising international and national agencies from different sectors (justice, social services, child protection, and people responsible for Internet hotline services) to work together to examine an area that has long been overlooked. This was a significant achievement that gave the research enormous value. Since the project began, the importance of 'victim focus' has been increasingly recognised in judicial and law enforcement sectors.

Self-help tool for pornography users

Another project to tackle online child abuse images took a unique approach to offenders and those who are at risk of offending. Whereas most offender programmes look to intervene once an offence has been committed, with a view to stopping the person re-offending, this project aimed to intervene at the moment when an interest may turn into an obsession and curiosity become a crime.

Research had demonstrated a clear link between those who seek out child pornography on the Internet and earlier compulsive use of online pornography in general. A 2002 Daphne project (2002/004) coordinated by a specialized university unit in Ireland, and with partners in Italy, Poland and Spain, developed and launched a web-based self-help resource, www.croga.org, designed for those who use the Internet to access pornography and to increase awareness in people of all ages who might feel they had a problem with illegal Internet images.

The information provided through the website was intended for information, self-exploration and self-help only. It was not intended as a substitute for professional advice or treatment, but offered people an opportunity to assess their behaviour themselves. Its aim was in many ways to provide a resource at the moment when pornography users start to question whether such use was becoming compulsive or going in sinister directions.

The project aimed to provide a resource at the moment when pornography users start to question whether pornography use was becoming compulsive or going in sinister directions.

The project had a very broad approach to the problem, researching areas like offering effective treatment for offenders, preventing offences, assessing risk and trying to learn more about how and why people collect abuse images. Specifically, it focused on developing means to help understand the problems within the more general context of Internet crime.

Extending the resource for EU-wide impact

In 2004, a follow-up project (2004-2/042) was developed to build on the earlier project and to extend its reach through dissemination and adaptation. This project designed, adapted and extended the online resource for people who felt they had a problem with the compulsion to download pornographic images of children. The website was updated and the resources were widely disseminated in the EU countries. A pilot replication of the project was carried out in Poland to test its validity for non-English-speaking users.

The project is a good example of rigorous scientific research (on the links between pornography use and subsequent abuse) leading to a practical 'tool' that can have a direct protection result by discouraging abusive use of pornography on the Internet.

A challenge to bullying

The bullying and violence that some aggressive youngsters inflict on their ‘weaker’ counterparts is a problem in many schools, colleges and youth centres. Young people with learning disabilities are especially vulnerable, and therefore more at risk of being picked on by their peers.

Bullying in schools disrupts children’s education and undermines their self-esteem. Wherever it takes place, it can lead to distress, depression and, in extreme cases, victims have taken their own lives. The problem of bullying, and its serious consequences, is increasingly getting attention in the media and by policy makers. Daphne has financed several interesting projects addressing bullying, but one of the earliest and most remarkable was the ‘Breaking the Bullying Barrier’ project (1999/169) that set out to tackle the problem in three EU Member States: Denmark, Portugal and the UK (Scotland).

Across Europe, organisations working for people with learning disabilities had become increasingly alarmed at the level of violence and bullying inflicted on this group of youngsters. Research confirmed their fears that people with learning disabilities are especially vulnerable.

What made this project different was that many of the people involved in developing and running it had learning disabilities themselves.

Yet these youngsters need not be victims. With support, and training to help them recognise what bullying is, they can learn to challenge it. What made this project different was that many of the people involved in developing and running it had learning disabilities themselves. The work centred on a major public information campaign targeting schoolchildren, and teachers and policy makers in schools, training centres and workplaces.

New skills

People with learning disabilities learned how to make presentations and talk to different groups about the impact of bullying and harassment. They also acquired new skills that enabled them to participate in advising policy makers, and developing anti-bullying strategies for schools and other organisations. This approach was aimed at ensuring that the views of vulnerable people who have suffered and often continue to suffer abuse were taken into consideration.

The awareness campaign focused on children in mainstream schools, teaching them about the damage bullying can cause, and showing them how to behave appropriately towards fellow pupils with learning disabilities.

The project’s ambitious objective was to reduce the level of bullying and violence in general, and in particular the abuse of children and young people with learning disabilities, in the three participating countries. It set out to highlight the issue through general and specialist media, and succeeded in publicising the campaign through local press coverage even if national headlines were harder to come by.

The project developed tools for raising awareness, including anti-bullying posters in English, Danish and Portuguese. These went out to all secondary schools, and formed the basis for class discussions. While some schools found them a bit too ‘hard-hitting’, others noted that pupils were eager to talk about the issues raised. In Scotland, the young man who featured in one of the posters became something of a media celebrity and his media appearances added impetus to the campaign. A leaflet by and for young people with learning disabilities, entitled ‘Are you being

bullied?’ helped children in Scotland to recognise the problem and be ready to deal with it. The Portuguese and Danish partners also produced leaflets and postcards.

Funding from Daphne enabled the three partners to link their activities and exchange information and experience. The lessons learned from visits and training seminars were disseminated throughout Europe and beyond by Inclusion Europe and its international counterpart, and to organisations of people with learning disabilities, carers, and institutions.

Through this work, the partners formulated recommendations for good practice in involving potential victims in the development of anti-bullying measures. In Scotland, for example, these were disseminated locally through a seminar for representatives from schools, health authorities and the police force. They could also be adapted for use in other EU Member States.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour

The project showed that, given appropriate support, people with learning disabilities can effectively take on the job of showing others that bullying and abuse are unacceptable. It also backed up the organisers’ long-term aim of promoting the fuller integration of people with different levels of ability into society. But the full impact is still hard to measure: the organisers believe it may take 10 or 15 years for children’s changing awareness to filter down through the community.

Follow-up was an important part of the project. The partners have maintained and expanded, with their own resources, the programme of talks and presentations by people with learning disabilities in schools, workplaces and training centres. While one project can start to make a difference, the ultimate aim is to see disability awareness training as an integral part of the school curriculum. In the meantime, the partners are continuing to develop and demonstrate the abilities of children and youngsters with learning disabilities, and work to ensure that they enjoy the same rights and respect as others in society.

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Cashing in: The financial abuse of people with learning disabilities

Few people – even the ‘victims’ themselves – realise that manipulating the finances of people with a learning disability is not only a denial of their rights but also an affront to their dignity and self-esteem.

This innovative project (2005-1/236) set out to research the ways in which people with a learning disability may be ‘financially abused’ and to promote understanding of the problem and what could be done about it. The partnership included NGOs in the UK, Portugal and Lithuania that work for and with people with a learning disability.

The project found that there are principally two types of financial abuse: abuse by people known to the person who has a learning disability; and abuse by companies or people not known to the ‘victim’.

Abuse comes in many forms

As well as the more obvious cases of theft or fraud, the project documented actions that might not at first be considered harmful to the person with a disability. For example, setting welfare benefits at too low a level to allow people to live independently; financial information not being available in accessible formats; financial advice not being tailored to the capacity of people with learning disabilities; advertising that is misleading and may prompt poor decision making; and insufficient focus on helping people with a learning disability to develop financial skills and awareness.

In many cases they found that service providers control the benefits payable to the person with a disability and that financial institutions encourage learning-disabled people to enter agreements that they may not fully understand. Often, though, many of the forms of abuse are not deliberately intended, but simply reflect a low level of awareness of the skills and capacity of learning-disabled customers. This was true also of well-meaning family members who ‘hold’ benefits and funds for the ‘victim’ and do not realise that taking away their control of their own finances can be embarrassing and demeaning.

Many of the forms of abuse are not deliberately intended, but simply reflect a low level of awareness of the skills and capacity of learning-disabled customers.

Although it is not just people with learning disabilities who can be victims of scams or targeted abuse, it is clear that this group can be more vulnerable. However the project partners stressed that people with learning disabilities should have the same chances as anyone else to take advantage of credit agreements, loans and other financial deals; there must be systems and safeguards to ensure that the learning-disabled customer has the capacity to understand what s/he is entering into.

Understanding is the key to prevention

It is crucial that people with learning disabilities themselves understand what constitutes financial abuse and what their financial responsibilities are. The project highlighted that one of the most important aspects of preventing financial abuse is being in control of money. People with learning disabilities in the UK had more experience of being ‘allowed’ to be in control of their finances and understood better the dangers of financial abuse. People with learning disabilities from Portugal and Lithuania sometimes had little or no control over their money so there was less understanding.

A user-friendly leaflet to help people with learning disabilities, and those who support them, to understand the risks of financial abuse was produced for each country and widely disseminated. The project also produced guidelines for professionals with examples of financial abuse and advice on how to identify it and support people with learning disabilities to avoid it.

Results relevant across the EU

The partnership demonstrated that there are common issues in each country and that the same issues are likely to be relevant to other countries. Vulnerabilities and the reality of exploitation and abuse, they concluded, are a constant, so the findings and products of the project are useful, with minor adaptation, across Europe. There is also considerable potential for learning from the project for individuals, agencies and governments in the EU, and follow-up work is planned to develop training for financial institutions.

An important lesson of the project was also that abuse comes in many forms and is often 'invisible'. Focusing on the rights and needs of the individual, regardless of sex, age, ethnicity or (dis)ability, and ensuring that rights are protected and needs met, is the best way to prevent abuse from happening.

Finding alternatives to institutions for children who need care

In many countries of the EU, young children find themselves in institutional care for a variety of reasons. Sadly, many face the risk of psychological harm: attachment disorder, developmental delay and neural atrophy. Improving the lives of children who need care is not a question of just upgrading the conditions in care institutions, but rather working with families and communities to find alternatives to institutionalisation for children, especially Roma children, who are found in disproportionate numbers in institutional care in Europe.

Many people consider the neglect and damage caused by depriving young children of parental care to be a form of violence. It is consequently of paramount importance to reduce the numbers of children in institutions and whenever possible to move them to more appropriate family placements.

There is a growing global consensus on the need to promote family-based alternatives to institutional care for children. But moving children in haste to unfamiliar carers without community health or social service support could just harm children further. It is necessary to improve gradual and sensitive approaches to de-institutionalisation, and to develop guidelines for protecting the rights of the child during the process.

European comparative research

Daphne funded an important project (2003/046) that identified good practices for the de-institutionalisation of children under five years of age placed in institutions for more than three months without a primary caregiver. The project studied the practice in eight EU countries: Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and the UK.

Each partner country collected data using a methodology that was appropriate to their national context. They each compared outcomes of a number of placements or ‘releases’ and considerable work was done to design the forms and survey materials. The research team organised training visits to study countries in-depth and conduct follow-up work.

Putting the child's interest at the centre of decision making

The research showed that most, if not all the countries in the study would benefit from a variety of strategies. The process of de-institutionalising children should be part of an integrated child protection system. The quality of community health and social service support for families (primary prevention) needs to be improved. Home-based interventions for ‘at risk’ families (secondary prevention) should be developed and implemented. There is a need for more foster care and national adoption options, with specialist training (tertiary prevention). Finally, international adoption should only be used as a last resort and only when proven to be in the best interests of the child.

The results also showed that countries with good community support services were more likely to base their decisions on the child’s needs and better prepare them for the move. Where these services are limited, placement decisions were more likely to be based on the expectations of the institutions or the parents.

The process of de-institutionalising children should be part of an integrated child protection system.

Most countries assessed children’s physical health and developmental needs and took these into account in selecting the carer and assessing the physical environment in which the child would live. However, decisions did not always take into account factors such as a child’s disability or whether the child had brothers or sisters.

One major recommendation to emerge from the research is that it is important to develop a foster care and adoption system before the child is removed from the institution and not to look at options after that decision has been taken. Foster families have to be carefully assessed and recruited in good time. If this does not happen, there is a risk that the child will be placed somewhere where his or her needs cannot be met. This would further damage the child or result in the placement breaking down. Out of the research findings, a 10-step model of good practice was developed.

The results of the study had significant potential to influence policy. The project has had a considerable impact on practitioners and on the practice of de-institutionalizing children across Europe. Moreover, the statistics that came out of the research shocked many sectors and prompted government action. Governments became aware of the seriousness of the situation in some countries and reacted quickly.

This project is a good example of rigorous, comparative research relating to a very important issue. Results were startling and provided important materials for advocacy. A follow-up project transferred the methodology to other EU Member States, developed training based on it and mainstreamed this through cooperation with a number of governments.

Special focus on Roma children: Challenging perceptions

An interesting project (2005-1/065) led by an NGO in the Czech Republic, with partners in Hungary and Austria, set out to finding alternatives to institutional care for Roma children. Working with volunteers from the Roma and non-Roma communities, the project partners documented their results so they could use them to lobby for alternative solutions and to change practices in the placement of children in institutional care in the Czech Republic and other European Member States.

One of the first challenges the project faced was persuading governments that the issue needed attention at all. Since people in general do not understand that alternative solutions to institutionalisation are better for the child and ultimately the community, the issue is not a 'vote getter' for politicians and so they pay little attention to it.

Alternative solutions to institutionalisation are better for the child and ultimately the community.

Facing up to this challenge was a key element to success, so was added to the work plan. As the project developed, there was significant progress: the project team brought about improved inter-department discussion and cooperation on the issue of institutionalisation among government ministries and, by July 2008, an inter-department task force had been set up. It included key ministries such as Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Youth and Sport, Health, Justice and the Ministry of the Interior. NGO representatives were invited to join, including the project leader.

The project's advocacy work resulted in their recommendations on changes in legislation being taken up by a Member of Parliament, with the recommendations also being taken to a seminar in the Czech Parliament organised by the Commission for Family Affairs. Now the question is on the political agenda.

Hand-in-hand with the community

Another major success of the project was the fieldwork that reached out directly to families whose children were at risk of being sent into care. Although the project had originally been designed to concentrate on the protection of Roma children, it was extended to cover all children at risk in the target communities, because the problem of institutionalisation was seen to be an all-community problem.

Among the field workers were five Roma women, trained as part of the project. They were an essential part of the team, providing not only a 'passport' into the Roma communities but also the credibility the project needed to be accepted by families. Also integral to the team, but in a more indirect way, were the experienced partners from Austria and Hungary who, through study visits, training and exchange over the two years of the project, shared their expertise and their insights with the Czech partners.

Measuring success

The project was evaluated in a number of different ways, but the project team themselves felt that the most important factor in their success was the way they worked closely with the families. They were happy to be seen as honest, good listeners who took the families' concerns seriously and were able to offer real alternatives.

The project team were happy to be seen as honest, good listeners who took the families' concerns seriously and were able to offer real alternatives.

It was through this close rapport with the families that the team learned that the one thing needed that they could not provide was sheltered housing for at-risk families. In what is perhaps the most tangible sign that the project had really made a difference in changing public attitudes, though, in the project's second year of implementation a large private realty company provided two rental flats for the use of families with children at risk of institutionalisation.

Over the two-year life of this project, the team reached out to 194 families with 545 children. Twenty-nine student social workers were trained to be part of the outreach team and a core team of seven volunteer outreach workers was formed. Output included several hundred hours of training, 500 leaflets, many hours of work with families and study visits and seminars. But the success of the project goes beyond numbers; it is measured in every child who can have a safe, healthy life with their own or a substitute family, rather than being placed in an institution.

Building bricks into a wall of knowledge

Since its inception, Daphne has emphasized the importance of breaking down the isolation that so often reduces the impact of actions to combat violence against children, young people and women.

Organisations that work alone and do not share their results; projects that are repeated because no-one knows they have been undertaken; wheels that are effectively reinvented because information on what has been attempted and learned is hidden away in someone's institutional memory or on dusty shelves in an office somewhere – all of these lead to wasted resources, misguided efforts and, most of all, actions that are not as effective as they might be.

Since 1997, therefore, Daphne has been developed to promote cooperation across European borders, networking and the creation of pan-European partnerships, and the learning of lessons so that new projects proposed for support take account of what has already been tried and tested.

The Daphne Toolkit

In 2003, the archives of Daphne were brought together in an online resource and made available to all those who want or need to learn the lessons of hundreds of projects, make contact with project partners, get ideas and suggestions for project activity, read reports and studies in many different EU languages, or research what has been done on a certain issue with a view to building on past experiences.

Over two projects (2003/023, 2004-2/046), a Belgian NGO coordinated the development of the Daphne Toolkit, a rich resource that, in 2008, was moved to the EC's Europa website (www.ec.europa.eu/justice.home/daphnetoolkit/html/welcome/dpt_welcome_en.html).

There is no long any excuse for working in isolation or reinventing the wheel.

The Toolkit is a good example of how value can be added to individual projects so that they become a major resource for individuals and organisations across the globe. And there is no long any excuse for working in isolation or reinventing the wheel.

Synthesis and analysis of work in a single area

In a similar vein, A French organization implemented a project (2006-1/134) to undertake a 'meta-analysis' of all the recommendations relating to domestic (conjugal) violence that had been formulated in Daphne projects since the programme began in 1997.

The organization and its partner in Denmark noted that Daphne had supported a great many projects and that most of them had led to recommendations of one kind or another. The project set out to systematically collect and analyse these recommendations for one sub-group of Daphne projects, those dealing with intimate partner violence.

Having identified the projects, the partners extracted the recommendations, classified and structured them in a database. The overall aim was to produce a tool capable of gathering the wealth of experience the Daphne-supported projects had garnered and to capitalise on the thoughts and suggestions of a large number of project teams. The tool was in fact a witness to the richness of knowledge gained over the years and allows users to link, or sometimes oppose, recommendations from projects that might otherwise remain in isolation from one another.

All together, the database is a repository of recommendations from 66 different project coordinators based in 19 Member States working with 388 different partners from 17 other countries.

This added up to 1,360 recommendations that were translated and commented. A new software 'Meta_soft' (available on www.psytel.eu) was developed to allow all this to happen.

The database is an excellent example of the Daphne 'spirit' of learning, sharing and building individual efforts into a truly European experience.

Each of the recommendations is tracked by a number of identifiers: year, project number and actions. The project partners noted that the database gathers the 'vitality of the Daphne programme on the topic of intimate partner violence'.

It is also an excellent example of the Daphne 'spirit' of learning, sharing and building individual efforts into a truly European experience.