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THE
FAIRSTART
PROJECT

*- developing competence tools
and digital material for staff training
in basic human care for
orphaned children living in
European orphanages*

EU LEONARDO CALL 2008

SUMMARY

A large number of European citizens will not be able to benefit from lifelong learning, the knowledge society or the training of the eight key competences for all European citizens.

Nor will they be able to live fulfilling lives.

The citizens we are talking about are the orphaned children placed in various kinds of orphanages in most European countries.

A few figures regarding the number of orphaned children living at orphanages in the EU may serve to underline the fact that we are talking about a large group of children. Of a population of 20.6 million children under the age of three, 23,000 of them are placed in care at orphanages housing more than 10 children, i.e. 11 out of every 10,000 children. But this is just an average number. For instance, seven countries have between 31 and 60 children living at orphanages out of every 10,000 children. These countries include Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Latvia. Other countries, such as Spain, Holland and France, have more than 10 children out of every 10,000 placed at orphanages.

These children do not receive the proper human, psychological or social care needed to develop basic human resources. The lack of the most basic care and contact prevents them from being able to take part in social life, educational activities and any kind of normal citizenship.

A large number of these children will suffer from severe personality disorders throughout their entire life.

Most of these children are kept in hospitalised low-cost orphanage institutions, and in general the staff is not qualified in offering the most basic care. Especially small children (0-3 years old) are suffering from the lack of even the most basic human contact and care. And it is almost impossible to heal these basic damages later on as the children grow up to become adults.

Thus, the FairStart project will develop basic training and visual training material for orphanage staff, regardless of their qualification level. The basic training and the visual training material aim to develop the most basic human care competences among the orphanage staff and to raise awareness of the consequences of these early damages to the children among orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages.

The training concepts and the visual material will be developed in close cooperation with the selected pilot partners in 3 or 4 cities in different European countries.

The final aim is to be able to offer a high-quality, but extremely simple, model for basic human care as regards orphaned children living at orphanages. It should be possible to implement the model in those European countries most urgently in need hereof.

The project will also take the first step towards the development of a European Qualification Framework for orphan caretakers based on a set of indicators developed through the project research and practice.

BACKGROUND

Orphanage children are a large, marginalised group exposed to devastating risks. The loss of biological parents and exposure to deprivation in understaffed orphanages increase the risk of arrested development: physically, emotionally and intellectually.

In Europe, the former communist countries (as well as some of the more developed countries) have massive problems in caring for and educating this group. In a study of Romanian orphanage children adopted to Great Britain compared with in-country adoptees, Rutter (1998) found that each year of stay in a Romanian orphanage after age one meant a decrease in IQ of 10% per year, that neurological development was delayed and insufficient, and severe social behaviour problems were frequent and for many continued into adulthood. It has been demonstrated by other studies for many years, that a high risk of exclusion from society (and criminal and generally antisocial behaviour) can be linked with early exposure to deprivation in orphanages. Former orphanage children are a large part of the prison population.

In short, the most devastating effects of orphanages are produced early in life after birth and up to age 3. *These effects are not produced by poverty in itself, but by irrelevant organisation and lack of education for orphanage staff.* Thus, the "Hospital model" is most commonly used. In this model, the staff member is not a caretaker, but rather an industrial worker looking after the children by a number of fixed routines. The children are separated in beds and have almost no social contact. Being an orphanage staff member is a low status job, and often the level of education prior to working in an orphanage is extremely low. *Healthy development is possible when growing up in an orphanage, if the culture in the organisation emphasises physical stimulation, relevant caretaking and methods that support emotional attachment to caretaker figures.*

The project is partly based on the decades of research and practical worldwide practice undertaken by the recognised Danish psychologist N.P. Rygaard. (Please refer to Mr. Rygaard's CV elsewhere in the application).

[Ten lines summarising the basic outcomes of Rygaard's research and practice, including clearly identified and documented needs].

The FairStart project will be cooperating in all phases with Mr. Rygaard and his research colleagues from....

[Ten lines referring to the EU child rights policies]

AIMS

A premise for developing workable methods is that *solutions must not lead to increased orphanage budget expenses*. This may sound harsh but is due to the fact that in reality many orphanages cannot possibly expand their budget. Another premise is that *high-quality educational programmes must be distributed at the lowest possible costs* in order to reach as many relevant users as possible. Here, *electronic media come in handy as a way of disseminating education, via the web media and via producing multilingual DVDs* that can be used directly by orphanage staff and managers.

The long-term goal of the project is to trigger a wave of orphanage staff education in Europe and possibly to inspire an educational network between orphanages and educational institutions. Another goal is to educate national instructors for orphanage organisational development.

The FairStart project will develop, produce and test a model for basic training of orphanage staff, based on simple and efficient digital visual material. The project will also produce a strategy for further implementation of the model in the partner countries and beyond.

At the same time and through the establishment of local and transnational focus groups, the FairStart project will ensure the awareness raising among orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages. This awareness raising will support the basic training of the orphanage staff and provide the needed sustainability of the improved care practice in the orphanages.

Last, but not least, the project will establish study visits for the Northern European partners, experts and trainers to the involved environments in the Eastern

European and Southern European partner countries. On the other hand, role models from these countries will be offered basic preparatory and further training in Denmark and are supposed to act as peer trainers and role models in their own institutions and within the exploitation strategies of FairStart as a result of the proposed training.

The project will also encourage the involved partner organisations to apply for a number of Leonardo grants to be able to visit and learn from practice in other partner countries.

The project will produce an exploitation strategy and European qualification framework strategy on which subsequent Leonardo applications will be based.

It is the hope of the FairStart project that the project will be able to establish a Leonardo Network on basic care for orphans in European orphanages in the last phase of the 2007-2013 Lifelong Learning Programme.

WHO WILL BENEFIT

A large number of Europeans on different levels will benefit from this pioneer work:

- in the long run, millions of orphans who have been raised at an orphanage will be able to enjoy normal lives as European citizens
- the orphanage institutions will be able to provide more human care for the children and thus be able to enjoy the resulting acknowledgment and respect from the local community
- the improved status of being an orphanage caretaker will in turn improve the dignity and self-respect of the various categories of orphanage staff and lead to a more interesting working life with lifelong learning opportunities
- the European countries will reduce the enormous financial and ethical burden of a great number of young people and adults suffering from severe and incurable personality disorders, very often leading to criminal and generally anti-social behaviour as well as psychiatric hospitalisation
- the European Community will be able to play a key role in the global efforts to radically improve orphaned children's conditions.

TARGET GROUPS

The direct and primary target group is orphanage staff, regardless of their level of education or professional status.

The direct and secondary target group will be orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages.

Another direct and secondary target group is the vocational or adult educational partners in the pilot cities.

But the ultimate beneficiaries are the deprived orphans hospitalised in low-cost orphanages.

Ultimate beneficiaries are also the parents and families adopting children from orphanages.

METHODS

The basic training and visual digital training material address orphanage staff members and managers. Of these, many have a low educational level (and some are even illiterate), which is why the project methods will involve simple, visualised instructions concerning healthy care practices and daily organisation of caretaking. The soundtrack to the digital production will provide instructions and teaching in the relevant language.

The FairStart project's training concept is a combination of three elements:

- basic training on location of orphanage staff, including training in further self-directed training and peer training based on the developed digital material

- the easy-to-use and very basic digital training material (web-based as well as DVD based) focusing on visual presentations of good practice and produced in all pilot country languages
- transnational study visits to train role models and peer trainers and mentors, as well as mobility for orphanage staff and caretaker students.

Working throughout the entire project with orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages in the established focus groups will support the training processes and the sustainability of the implemented practice. As the tasks in this project should be considered quite complex and with very little prior work to build on, the project will develop the basic care skills and attitudes and the supporting material in two phases, including two practical test phases, and thus expand the traditional model (i.e. developing – testing – implementing), to one of developing – testing – further developing – further testing – implementing.

This model will secure the quality, relevance and usability of the products in relation to the very complex and diverse target group of this project, viz. the orphanage staff.

The didactic and pedagogical approach can be outlined as follows:

The final aim of the training processes is to have a clear impact on the individual staff member's care activities within the orphanages. The individual staff member must be aware of the importance of basic human relations in early childhood, must learn about how simple actions and a change in attitude can have the most important impact on small children's lives, and must learn to be responsible for the care of the children and take pride in the carrying out of these tasks.

The training processes must be based on existing resources within the orphanage and in the local authorities' administration.

Therefore, the basic training approach is a combination of self-directed learning from digital material combined with counselling and guidance on how to approach and use this material.

The content of the training is a combination of learning very simple social interaction patterns in relation to the orphaned children and the change in attitude towards her or his role at the orphanage and in the lives of the orphaned children.

The training processes will not in any way address complex psychological or social issues, but will be focused on simple and realistic changes in the behaviour of the individual staff member and the team of staff members.

Research and experience has documented that such simple changes in staff behaviour will have a significant impact on the development of basic human structures in the orphans.

Therefore, the basic didactic approach of the FairStart project will be as follows:

→ the training process and the digital material must be organised in such a way that the individual staff member will be able to learn independently from the process with only a minimum of guidance

→ to some extent a peer-based or group-based learning process can be expected and will certainly be encouraged (by the focus groups and the supporting educational institutions); therefore the training process must be organised in such a way that peer-based or group-based learning will improve the results of the processes

→ in a few cases, the orphanage or the local administration could decide to organise a small and simple in-service training based on the FairStart project; this would of course improve the learning results and the learning would then become part of the orphanage instead of being an isolated and individual learning experience; however, we do expect that this way of organising in-service training will be the exception to the rule of making more individualised use of the products, but it will be important to encourage orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages to organise such more collective processes

→ whatever the set-up might be, the training process and the digital material must be able to support each of these ways of using the products

→ and whatever the set-up, the local and cooperating educational institution has a very important role to play: in the *most simple* scenario the educational institution will provide basic guidance for the individual staff member and thus make sure that all staff members are able to access and use the training

products; in this scenario, the individual staff member will be provided with a contact person working in the educational institution and will thus be able to seek further guidance; in a *medium* scenario, the educational institution can provide the orphanage or the local authorities' administration with an offer of organising and supporting peer-based or group-based use of the training products; in the *most advanced* scenario the educational partner can offer to organise the in-service or vocational training either at the workplace or at the educational institution itself; additional local funding might be needed for these activities;

→ the educational institution will also be responsible for providing access to a reasonable quality of media equipment and/or Internet connection, including the necessary technical tools; the orphanages cannot be expected to provide this access, at least not in all cases; the educational partners in the target country communities are selected on the basis of their documented ability to provide this guidance and to provide access to the needed equipment; the educational institutions are also expected to take an interest in developing vocational training or nonformal adult training for orphanage staff and managers.

The pedagogical approach to the design of the training process and material is based on the following elements:

→ the users cannot be expected to possess any kind of academic skills as regards reading and writing; and they cannot be expected to be used to working with digital media

→ therefore the products must be easy to access and use, and the interaction with the products must be almost self-evident

→ the communication of the content must not in any way be based on abstract elements such as long texts or complicated reasoning, as the communication of the content must be in line with the aims of the training process: to change behaviour and attitudes, and to be aware of the importance of staff members in the orphans lives, especially children aged 0-3 years

→ the content must not be based on logical reasoning, but should be communicated as live and visual scenarios, demonstrating clearly the different effects of best practice and the consequences of non-performance; therefore the narrative and visual form should be preferred to the logical explanation, i.e. *don't tell them, show them*

→ the training process must be based on the products ability to motivate orphanage staff members; they must not be motivated by abstract demands: you must pass these tests, if...; thus the learning approach must be based on the Nordic empowerment experience with non-academic adults

→ high-quality and realistic visual and narrative scenarios with clear sound elements will support the motivation and interest of the user; video, cartoons and photos should be the primary communication elements

→ wherever possible it is important that the orphanage staff members, regardless of the user situation and training set-up, are offered the opportunity to talk to colleagues or mentors or other people about their impressions from working with the training products; this informal dialogue will more than double the outcome of the training process; the local educational partner will contribute to such a dialoguing environment to the best of their ability

→ a very important pedagogical element in the process is the local educational partner's evaluation of the staff members' training process: this evaluation is not only crucial to the project, but the personal evaluation, based on interviews, will also significantly improve the results and sustainability of the staff members' training.

[A precise and detailed list of expected learning results should be inserted in the application]

The digital training material is expected to contain the following elements, "chapters" or scenarios – the list also identifies the key themes of the training process as well as the training material:

Part 1 is to change the role of the orphanage staff member from "someone who is practicing industrial routines" to propagating the idea that orphanage staff

members are "the most important persons and caretakers in the children's early life", thereby adding job value and social status to the orphanage staff members.

Part 2 is to demonstrate how early attachment is part of a healthy childhood in all mammals and human beings. That the parents keep close contact with the baby for the first years, and that crying, clinging and longing is a natural and positive reaction to physical separation.

Part 3 is to put focus on daily organisation in the Hospital Model and the results of deprivation. It will show how the Hospital Model is easy to handle, that apparently it calms down the children, that hygiene and feeding routines can be done quickly using only a small number of staff. This will be followed by demonstrations of how babies and infants brought up under the Hospital Model become apathetic, rock constantly or bang their heads into the bedpost, have poor health and lack of development. It will be emphasised that few people know the disadvantages of this organisational structure, and that adverse effects are not the result of the orphanage staff meaning any harm, but is instead due to general ignorance as regards the effects.

Part 4 is to demonstrate the advantages and methods of the Secure Base Model. Including how the normal family caretaking traditions (such as rocking the baby and touching it) trigger brain development. Demonstrations of relevant feeding procedures and general early stimulation, and demonstrating that being isolated in a bed most of the day is counterproductive to development. Demonstrate how physical contact with other small children is a natural part of child development.

Part 5 illustrates orphanage staff discussions about how the individual staff members care for their own children, and how this is generally done in the local culture. How these practices support healthy development (such as breastfeeding, using a cradle or a hammock, carrying the baby close to your body, having frequent eye contact and vocalisation, interaction with peers). Discuss why staff members think and act differently at work in relation to the orphaned children.

Part 6 is the efforts of orphanage staff discussing and implementing healthy caretaker procedures by reorganising their daily routines and attitudes towards work. Including statements of heightened self-esteem, importance and meaning for the individual staff member. How certain groups of orphanage staff members should take responsibility for a group of children, forming a "family" group where social relations between "family" group and child will be developed. How new routines are implemented such as playing "hide and seek", "hugging each other", singing, sleeping in a hammock, etc.

Part 7 is orphanage staff discussing the problems regarding and the solutions to the changes in behaviour that will occur in the children as a consequence of these new caretaking methods. They are now much more active, but also disorganised in their behaviour as they "wake up" from deprivation. The individual iron beds have been put away, and instead milieus where children can interact, play and contact the "family" group have been installed. This is of course initially interpreted as "disturbance" and "chaos" by the orphanage staff, and some will want to go back to the Hospital Model.

Part 8 is interview with the orphanage manager about the organisational changes and how they were coped with.

Part 9 is demonstrations of social life some time after reorganisation, demonstrations of increased growth and social competences in the orphaned children, interviews with orphanage staff members with a higher self-esteem.

Part 10 demonstrates how the isolation between orphanage and environment is broken down, by taking the orphaned children for walks in the community, playing with local children or visiting kindergartens, etc. in order to promote integration and normalisation of the children within the local community.

Part 11 encourages the forming of development networks with other local orphanages and provides an international homepage address, where orphanages internationally, experts, NGO's and various authorities and charity groups are available.

QUALITY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

It is crucial to the FairStart project to construct a strong partnership, as it is obvious that the orphanages themselves have very little experience in training or European cooperation.

Therefore the project will establish a double-partnership in 3 or 4 target countries with a strong and highly qualified Danish coordinating partner.

The double-partnership in the target countries will consist of close cooperation between a local orphanage and an experienced local or regional vocational centre or adult education organisation. The educational partner will be expected to provide the needed sustainability of the training processes after the termination of the project and will also be expected to provide the needed support for the involvement of the local orphanage.

The educational partner will also be responsible for the local cooperation of orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages and for the establishing of the local focus group.

The Danish coordinating partner will provide the project with all the needed resources for implementing the project:
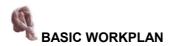
- highly qualified expertice and experience in the psycological field of orphan care and basic human needs
- a highly respected research resource, providing reliable evidence from the project activities
- an organisation within the healthcare sector with a lot of experience in European cooperation and Leonardo projects and with a very strong European network
- an *in-house* media department producing the digital material in the project and with many years of experience in transnational cooperation and European projects; the media designers have specialised in producing digital material for non-academic adults
- an experienced consultancy company known for its high-quality contributions to European projects and its professional evaluation and monitoring qualifications.

The project is expected to have 2 partners from Denmark, and 3 or 4 double-partnerships from for example Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria or Greece. The project will involve the Danish psychologist and expert on orphaned children and orphanages worldwide, N.P. Rygaard, and his research colleague, XXX, from Holland or England, as key players in the project.

The project will be supported by a number of strong national and global organisations.

[Detailed description and documentation of the different partners' competences and resources, including experts, project managers, media resources and researchers].

[List of cooperating organisations, for example the Danish Psychologists Association, Associations of adoption parents, global health and human rights organisations, etc. Letters of Intent must be provided].

BASIC WORKPLAN

Time - months	Key actions	Key results	Type of costs involved
Ongoing tasks months 0-24	Project management		Working hours (C+TRP)
	Financial management		Working hours (C)
	Website updating		Working hours (C)
	Dissemination, web and print		Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Printing and web costs
	Networking		Working hours (C+TRP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Translation of all project outcomes into the three target country languages		Working hours (C+TRP)
PHASE 1 **0 - 3**	Summary of the most up-to-date research on orphanages in Europe and breaking down into operational recommendations	- A set of qualified basic principles for the products to be developed - Indicators for quality assurance	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Further organisation of project network of orphanages, educational institutions and local authorities' administrations	- Solid group of partners prepared for the project	Working hours (C+TRP)
	Developing a detailed and operational action plan for the entire project	- Detailed action plan	Working hours (C)
	Establishment of the local and transnational focus groups of orphanage managers and local authorities administrating the orphanages	- Focus groups established and briefed	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	First transnational meeting in Denmark, including transnational focus group meeting, discussing phase 1 tasks and outcomes	- First transnational meeting - First transnational focus group meeting	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Basic project website developed and produced and prepared for the digital material		Working hours (C)
	Producing a small visual folder for large-scale dissemination	- Project folder produced and disseminated in printed and electronic versions	Working hours (C+EXP) Printing costs
PHASE 2 **3 - 9**	Further development and operationalisation of the didactic and pedagogical principles for the basic care training and the digital material	- Project paper: the FairStart pedagogics	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Producing the first version of the basic care training model and the first version of the training material in close cooperation with the local partners (orphanages and educational institutions)	- FairStart Model produced, first version	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Preparatory study visits for key practice players in the partner countries, including preparatory training of role models in Denmark	- Preparatory study visits and preparatory training of role models from the partner countries	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Supporting staff mobility applications in the partner countries	- Staff mobility plan and support	-
	Refinement of the quality indicators and further operationalisation		Working hours (C+EXP)

	Monitoring and evaluating the development and production processes, the management of the project and especially the inclusion and direct involvement of key players from local partners	- Monitoring and evaluation report	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Second transnational meeting in Target Country 1, including local focus group meeting, discussing phase 2 tasks and outcomes Special focus on the planning of test activities in the target countries Special focus on the planning of the European FairStart conference	- Second transnational meeting - Local focus group meeting Target Country 1	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
PHASE 3 **9 - 12**	Testing the first version of the products in all partner countries (orphanages and educational institutions) Evaluation and implementation of the set of quality indicators	- Test phase 1 - Report test phase 1 - Report on quality indicators	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Producing further digital material during the test activities in the local orphanages (i.e. the material will be produced as the testing process is in full swing, thus involving the participants and their experiences)	- On location material produced for test phase 2	Working hours (C) Travel and accomodation costs
	Third transnational meeting in Target Country 2, including local focus group meeting and the second transnational focus group meeting, discussing the results of test phase 1 Special focus on further development of the training concepts and digital material Special focus on the planning of the European FairStart conference Special focus on the planning of the first draft of the European Qualification Framework for orphanage staff	- Third transnational meeting - Second transnational focus group meeting - Local focus group meeting Target Country 2 - Recommendations for further development of the training concepts and digital material - Recommendations on further development of the quality indicators	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
PHASE 4 **12 - 15**	Further development and production of the training concepts and the digital material	- FairStart Model produced, second version	Working hours (C)
	Second round study visits for key practice players in the partner countries, including preparatory training of role models in Denmark	- Second round study visits and preparatory training of role models from the partner countries	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Supporting staff mobility applications in the partner countries	- Staff mobility plan and support	-
	Detailed planning of the European FairStart conference		Working hours (C+EXP)
	Local educational institutions carry out evaluations of the first test phase in close cooperation with the orphanage partners	- Local evaluation reports	Own Financing
	Further operationalisation of the quality indicators and the evaluation tools	- Improved set of quality indicators	Working hours (C+EXP)
PHASE 5 **15 - 20**	Testing the second version of the products in all partner countries (orphanages and educational institutions) Evaluation and implementation of the set of quality indicators	- Test phase 2 - Report test phase 2 - Report on quality indicators	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs

	Producing further digital material during the test activities in the local orphanages (i.e. the material will be produced as the testing process is in full swing, thus involving the participants and their experiences)	- On location material produced for the final version of the FairStart model	Working hours (C) Travel and accomodation costs
	Special focus on evaluating the results of all test activities and producing the final set of recommendations for the final version of the FairStart model	- Final evalution of test activities report - Final set of recommendations for the final model	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Special focus on evaluating the quality indicators and producing the final set of recommendations for the final version of the FairStart quality indicators	- Final evaluation report on the FairStart quality indicators	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Further planning of the first draft of the European Qualification Framework for orphanage staff	- Plan for the production of a Leonardo application on European Qualification standards for orphanage staff in Europe	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Supporting staff mobility applications in the partner countries	- Staff mobility plan and support	-
PHASE 6 **20 - 22**	Fourth transnational meeting in Target Country 3, including local focus group meeting, discussing the outcomes of phase 5 Special focus on the final development of the training concepts and digital material Special focus on the planning of the Leonardo application on the European Qualification Framework for orphanage staff	- Fourth transnational meeting - Local focus group meeting Target Country 3 - Recommendations for the final development of the training concepts and digital material - Recommendations on the final development of the quality indicators	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	European FairStart conference in XX, including networking for the development of the two new Leonardo applications on Exploitation and Qualification standards, also including final and third transnational focus group meeting	- European FairStart conference - Networks for new Leonardo applications established - Final and third transnational focus group meeting	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs Conference costs
	Final production and publication of the FairStart model	- FairStart Handbook, print, web and DVD - FairStart website - FairStart training material, web and DVD	Working hours (C+EXP) Publication costs, print, web, DVD
	Supporting staff mobility applications in the partner countries	- Staff mobility plan and support	
PHASE 7 **22 - 24**	Final and fifth partner meeting in Denmark, evaluating the key outcomes of the project Special focus on exploitation and dissemination strategies and local sustainability Planning the Leonardo applications on Exploitation and Qualification Standards Planning the final dissemination activities Planning the beyond Europe dissemination activities	- Final and fifth partner meeting in Denmark - Exploitation and dissemination strategies, including beyond Europe - Basic elements in the new Leonardo applications	Working hours (C+TRP+EXP) Travel and accomodation costs
	Implementation of the dissemination, exploitation, beyond Europe and project development strategies	- Strategies implemented	Working hours (C+EXP)
	Final report and recommendations	- Final report and	Working hours (C+EXP)

for further actions	recommendations	

NB!
Focus group members are expected to finance own working hours, but their travel and accomodation costs attending transnational meetings will be financed by the project

KEY PRODUCTS AND RESULTS
[To be detailed and further elaborated on in the application]
- Project paper: FairStart pedagogics
- Project folder: the FairStart project
- Project multimedia website in English + 3 TC languages
- Training study visits and training mobility
- European FairStart conference, including network workshops
- FairStart Handbook, print, web and DVD in English + 3 TC languages
- FairStart training material, web and DVD in English + 3 TC languages
- FairStart dissemination and exploitation strategy, including beyond Europe
- Tested set of FairStart quality indicators
- Strategy for the production of a Leonardo application on FairStart Exploitation
- Strategy for the production of a Leonardo application on FairStart European Qualification Framework for orphanage staff in Europe
- Final report and political recommendations for the Commission.

EU RELEVANCE, EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE
Providing basic human care for children in orphanages around Europe is a matter of European Community responsibility. The national authorities do not seem to be capable of radically improving the care conditions for orphaned children at orphanages.
A few countries in the European Union have done research in this field and have experiences in a more qualified, although not satisfactory, basic care for children in orphanages. It is very important that these few resources are being used to promote more qualified orphanage staff training and to take the first steps towards setting up European qualification standards for orphanage caretakers.
These enormous challenges, addressing a field without any regulations, networks or any kind of training traditions, can only be met on a European and – in a wider perspective – global level.
The field of orphanages is in itself transnational, as many of the children will be adopted by citizens from other countries.
Last, but nor least, it is the clear policy of the European Union to provide safe and healthy lives for ALL European citizens. To reach these aims, the EU is expected to take actions in this field and ensure that the millions of orphans in Europe will be able to enjoy the benefits of social, educational and family life.
[Refer to European policies for children's rights]

DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION
The FairStart project addresses a field in Europe with very poor traditions as regards training, quality assurance, political awareness and networking.
This means that the project's dissemination and exploitation activities will have to be very innovative and creative and have a long-term impact.
Thus it would be naive and unrealistic to develop a plan for efficient dissemination and exploitation of the FairStart project within the project's two year lifetime.
The aim of these first systematic steps on the road to providing human and qualified care for orphaned children placed in orphanage care will be to focus on the development and production of solid and efficient training tools and material for a limited number of pilot orphanages and associated educational institutions in 3 or 4 target countries with great needs in this field.

The project will focus on the solid testing and implementation of the FairStart resources in these environments and thus ensure a high quality in these first systematic attempts to improve the quality of the basic human care for orphans, with a strong focus on the early life (0-3 years old) of these orphaned children. Based on these realistic approaches, the project will carry out the following dissemination and exploitation activities:

→ A strong dissemination in relevant European networks through the project website and the project folder (large-scale awareness raising)
→ A solid dissemination of the project in the target countries, and especially in the regional and local environments of the partner organisations (local resources and local focus groups)
→ A focused dissemination of the FairStart products in relevant European networks with a special interest in this field
→ A large European FairStart conference bringing stakeholders and practicioners in the orphanage field together to present the FairStart model and to form networks for future cooperation, project development and exploitation
→ The production of a solid exploitation strategy aiming to develop an Exploitation project application for the Leonardo programme
→ The production of a European Qualification Framework application for the Leonardo programme, thus taking the first step towards awareness raising on a European level concerning the millions of orphaned children living at orphanages throughout Europe.

The FairStart project will also be contributing to the establishment of two wide-scale dissemination and exploitation strategies:

→ taking the FairStart model beyond Europe through the dissemination activities of recognised worldwide health and human rights organisations and the activities of the project's experts
[Refer to organisations and Letters of Intent and to the activities of the project experts]
→ developing a Leonardo Network on a European level (step 3) on the basis of the FairStart (step 1) and the subsequent Leonardo Exploitation project (step 2) and Leonardo European Qualification Framework project (step 2), acting as a European resource center for improving the basic human care for orphans.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Besides carrying out the traditional evaluation and monitoring activities in a European cooperation project, which will be done in a high-quality fashion by the project's consultancy partner and professional expert team, the FairStart project will be facing some very specific evaluation and monitoring challenges. The pedagogical and didactic training processes are expected to be very complex in this project, as the target field has no established traditions as regards training, competence development or European cooperation. Each element of the training model and the digital training material must therefore be closely monitored, analysed and evaluated when it comes to its relevance and usability. The training concepts and material must be produced with a specific focus on the target group profile and the need for improving the most basic human care for the youngest groups of orphans living at orphanages.

Therefore, the most important monitoring and evaluation activities in the FairStart project will not be related to management processes, but will instead be highly focused on the quality and usability of the produced training tools.

This also explains why the project needs to develop a very special, original and sensitive set of quality assurance indicators related both to the products and to the way the users interact with the products and their ability to turn the training into action.

The monitoring, analysing and evaluation of these processes is also expected to contribute to the first outline of a European Qualification Framework for orphanage staff.

The process-related monitoring and evaluation tasks will be carried out by a close cooperation between the consultancy partner and the expert team.

Each phase of monitoring and evaluation will be operationalised into a set of recommendations. The subsequent recommendations will provide the project with a solid basis for developing the following steps.

As a rather innovative element, the project will introduce a local evaluation activity in the target countries following each of the two pilot training phases. The educational partner in the city or region will carry out a more personal and interview-based evaluation with key players in the pilot training activities and thus produce another form of knowledge with regard to the usability of the products and the reactions of the involved orphanage staff.

These local evaluations might in fact prove to be of great value to the project, as they offer a new and different dimension compared to the traditional and often very centralised and quantitative evaluation methods. As an interesting side-effect, these evaluation responsibilites will significantly improve the competences of the local educational partners to train orphanage staff and deal with the training of the most basic human needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

Given the fact that the field of training orphanage staff has no tradition for development work at all, how can the project then expect to be able to provide any kind of sustainability? Or: how can the project contribute to the continuation of the new training processes after the termination of the project?

The sustainability issue will, no doubt, be a huge challenge. The project will have to create the basis for sustainability as it goes along, as a result of the project itself. We cannot expect to find an existing sustainability framework in or around the orphanage environments. And a limited interest from local politicians must be anticipated.

Given these facts, the FairStart project has constructed the following sustainability strategy, based on the non-existence of such resources in the target communities:

→ the project will focus on only 3 or 4 target countries and allocate all the resources to the training activities in a limited number of orphanages; this will make it possible for the project to work in-depth with these particular orphanages and the local authorities' administration and thus increase the sustainability

→ the local double-partnerships also involve a strong and experienced educational institution participating already in European cooperation; this institution will support and cooperate with the local orphanage and thus produce more sustainability on community level

→ the project will establish two kinds of focus groups, a transnational focus group, following the agenda of the partner meetings, and a local focus group in each of the target communities; in both cases the focus groups will consist of orphanage managers, educational institution managers, local politicians and local authorities administrators responsible for social affairs and for the operation of the orphanage; the project will also try to involve children's health or human rights NGO's operating in the communities; these focus groups are considered the most important element in the project's sustainability strategy

→ the project will produce an exploitation strategy for a subsequent Leonardo project and will offer key players from the local orphanages in the FairStart project the role as mentors or role models for other orphanages in the exploitation project; this activity will clearly support the sustainability of the training processes in the original target institutions and local communities; some of these institutions might also take pride in being role models for other European orphanages

→ finally the development of the Exploitation and the European Qualification Framework projects for the Leonardo programme as well as taking the models beyond Europe will provide the basic ideas of the FairStart project with a lot of sustainability.