

ECPA/BPC 2009

1. What is the title of the project?



“CHILD UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF LAW”

2. Please give a short general description of the project.

Main concept: The “Child under the Umbrella of Law” project entails a system of “friendly patrols” comprised of an employee of the Municipal Centre of Assistance to Families (MOPR) and a plainclothes police officer from the Minors’ Unit of the City of Poznan’s Police Stations. The patrols will appear wherever a child’s well-being is threatened. Such situations include:

- A child left alone at home or elsewhere (left behind or lost),
- A child as a witness to/victim of violence, including domestic violence,
- A child involved in a traffic accident and left unsupervised as a result,
- A child involved in other hazardous situations (alcoholic binges, parental fights, etc).

Actions:

- A survey of the child’s situation,
- Ensuring a sense of safety,
- Ensuring that the child can find the appropriate care within the family, and if this proves impossible, in an emergency shelter or a foster home,
- Making this difficult, often traumatic, experience as bearable possible, taking into account children’s emotional needs and ensuring safe and friendly conditions,
- Notifying the appropriate MOPR branch office in order to provide the child’s family with welfare services.

3. Please describe the objective(s) of the project?

The rationale behind the project was to solve the following problems:

- 1) Social workers performing their tasks in the standard way (within their parent institution’s working hours – from morning to afternoon on business days) did not possess full and reliable knowledge as to the functioning of the families under their scrutiny during the evening and night-time hours, especially with regard to the situation of children (which is particularly important in communities where violence or alcohol-related problems are suspected to occur alongside other social issues).
- 2) Members of the police force who took part in at-home interventions were not prepared to lend the appropriate form of support required to children who were victims or witnesses of both traumatic family experience and interventions by the Police in their home. On top of that, in the case of a child’s safety being compromised, the solution that was implemented (for lack of time or the appropriate preparation of the officers) was the one easiest for the

police, but the worst for the child, i.e. emergency shelter care.

Therefore, the following goals were set out for the project:

Strategic objective: Increasing the feeling of safety of minors by means of “friendly patrols” dispatched in cases of danger to children revealed during a police intervention.

Operational goals:

1. Enhancing the cooperation between the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families (“MOPR”) and the Municipal Police Department (“MPD”) in Poznan.
2. Providing professional, interdisciplinary assistance to families where a police intervention has been necessary due to negligent child care or domestic violence.
3. Ensuring a feeling of safety for children left without parental care through recognising their needs and putting them in an environment adjusted to them, under the appropriate care (with family members, in emergency foster care or emergency shelters, in that order).
4. Expanding MOPR’s knowledge of the functioning of families, and especially of minors during afternoon and evening hours, and broadening the scope of its activities on the basis of the diagnosed needs.

4. How was the project implemented?

Description of project implementation

1. The idea was a joint initiative of the employees of Poznan’s Municipal Police Department and the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families, which had previously worked together on other projects. This is important, as the project, due to its specific nature and sensitivity, requires mutual trust between the partners and their conviction as to the necessity of the actions undertaken within the project. In this case, the kindling spark was the discovery of the partners’ joint potential to solve problems and meet children’s needs, which would be impossible for them if working separately.
2. The programming stage. Following a diagnosis of the needs and problems, the main goal of the cooperation was set out and actions leading up to it were described. A project able to diagnose the problem, as well as to define the objectives, the actions and the expected results was created.
3. Exploring possible financial sources. Since the tasks envisaged within the project were beyond the employees’ range of duties, also as regards their working hours, it was necessary to find a source of financing for the salaries of project workers. Moreover, it was ascertained that in order to provide children with the best possible conditions and avoid transporting them in police cars and thus stigmatising them, it was necessary to make taxi transport available for the project. Furthermore, intervention agents had to be able to communicate using mobile phones and professional equipment needed to be purchased to streamline organisational work – i.e. a computer and a printer, as well as a breathalyser.
In 2008, funding for the project was secured through an application to the Employee Initiative Support Programme of Poznan City Hall. The Application Assessment Committee accepted the application and therefore, all activities were fully financed by the City of Poznan. Stuffed animals, improving adult-child contacts, as well as the printing of brochures for families, were all funded by additional sponsors who endorsed the initiative.
In 2009, the project was included in the list of tasks of the Programme of Assistance to Families of the Addicted (it was also a permanent programme of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families), which was tantamount to receiving co-financing under the Municipal Programme for Solving Alcohol-related Problems.

4. Project implementation.

- a. **Recruitment.** In order to secure the most qualified human resources, a recruitment procedure was initiated to investigate the applicants' motivation, educational background and experience in working with families and children. As a result, a team was set up, comprising 12 employees of the Municipal Police Department and 10 employees of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families.
 - b. **Training.** Prior to the implementation of the project, a training session on intervention in cases of child abuse was run in cooperation with the "Dzieci Niczyje" (Nobody's Children) Foundation. The training session for MPD and MOPR employees took two days and besides extending their knowledge, it also served to enable their initial integration as a group. In addition, a training session with the President of the Family Court in Poznan was organised, in order to clarify some pertinent formal and legal issues.
 - c. **Organisation.** Coordinators in charge of substantive and formal work management were appointed. Before on-call hours were introduced, it was necessary to conclude a partnership agreement to determine the duties of both parties, the extent of their responsibility and working procedures. Moreover, the necessary equipment was purchased and a contracting party – a taxi corporation – was selected to give priority to calls made by the patrols. The coordinators are also responsible for managing the work of particular teams, being in charge of scheduling and ensuring the punctuality of formal arrangements (signing agreements, substitutions, etc). They also organise working meetings for project workers.
 - d. **Communications.** Before the initiation of the project, due to its specific character, it was necessary to make its launch known to all the institutions and organisations which could in future come into contact with its intervention agents. As such, a meeting was organised at Poznan City Hall for representatives of the Health and Social Issues Department, as well as for emergency child shelters, intervention and support centres, etc. A separate written notification on the project was also sent to these organisations.
5. **Execution.** In line with its principles, the project is executed in the headquarters of the Municipal Police Department in Poznan, where project employees are on-call. Before their first on-call time, each employee was instructed by project coordinators as to various practical organisational matters (the office, responsibility, documentation, contact with the taxi company, phone handling, etc).

In line with the contract, after each intervention specific documentation is drafted. The next day in the morning, it is passed on to district police departments (and to the Family Court, if necessary), as well as to the MOPR coordinator, who subsequently relays it to the appropriate MOPR branch offices in order to conduct long-term actions. MOPR branch office workers provide the coordinator with feedback on social work initiatives undertaken by them.

6. **Monitoring and evaluation.** Thanks to feedback from the Crime Prevention Unit and the Minors' and Pathologies Unit of Poznan's Police Departments and branch offices of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families – constant monitoring is possible. As a consequence, the project team can be sure that none of the families which require support are left alone after the intervention. Moreover, due to the fact that the families are covered by social work, including specialised social work, consultancy and other forms of aid, further degradation of the families has already been averted many times. The first complete evaluation of the project was performed after three months, in order to check the viability of the system's future operation, while the next one, covering the entirety of 2008, was conducted in January. The reporting and assessment showed a need for the work to continue, which made it possible to apply for further financing, this time within the framework of the Alcohol-problem Families Assistance Programme.

The programme is an innovative and unique solution

For the first time, a solution involving such close cooperation between the police and social workers was implemented, not in order to make social work and control more restrictive (such an attitude is not compatible with our philosophy), but on the contrary, to “attenuate” and reduce the trauma experienced by police intervention subjects.

As such, during “friendly patrol” interventions, no police uniforms or cars are used, and the agents have been trained to diagnose difficult situations and take the appropriate decisions to enhance the sense of safety in their participants, especially children. The innovativeness of the project can be seen in the following contexts:

- “What needs to be done” – undertaking social work during police interventions;
- “Who does what and when” – performing tasks in close cooperation between the social workers and specialists from the Municipal Police Department in Poznan (specialising in issues related to minors) in families requiring police interventions at weekends, as well as during the afternoon, evening and night hours (that is, outside the working hours of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families).
- “How is it done” – the project does more than simply combine two different working methods of social workers and police officers, but instead, replaces them with a new quality reliant on close cooperation, the exchange of roles (children choose who they wanted to talk to, who they play with, the roles resulting from the situation and needs), trust and responsibility. In addition, as mentioned at the beginning, our actions were not meant as a control tool (although they let us achieve the goal of enhancing MOPR’s knowledge about its clients) but rather as a form of assistance.

e. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

The roles and tasks of the strategic partners, i.e. the Police and the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families:

1. Diagnosis of the situation of the child and its family
2. Ensuring a sense of safety for the child at home or, if impossible, elsewhere, staying with family members in emergency foster homes or emergency child shelters. This task includes transporting the child (with a guardian, if applicable) to their destination.
3. Collecting material evidence.
4. Completing the legal proceedings necessary to regulate the child’s status and further actions of law enforcement officials (if necessary).
5. Drafting documentation on completed actions.
6. Passing the documentation on to the branch office of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families appropriate for the child’s place of residence in order to continue working with the family.

Division of tasks among patrol members:

Due to a legal obligation resulting from valid regulations, the Police are responsible for the entire intervention. MOPR employees are supposed to oversee the process, so that children’s needs are taken into consideration (as far as possible) through personally accompanying the child and resorting to all the possible methods of meeting their needs, mostly enabling them to stay with family members, in foster homes or emergency shelters.

Police officers:

- Safeguarding the child’s life and health,
- Putting the child with family members/in a foster home or a shelter, depending on the binding

legal procedures,

- Administering first aid to the child, if necessary,
- Notifying the appropriate local Police Station (Crime Prevention, Minors and Pathologies Unit).

Employees of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families:

- Participation in the process of safeguarding the child's life and health through establishing a direct contact with them and responding to their emotional needs,
- Participation in the procedure of putting the child in the care of a family member/in a shelter,
- Notification of the appropriate MOPR branch office of the child's family status by the project coordinator.

Police Coordinator:

- Recruitment and appointment of a team of police employees participating in the project, together with the Head of the Prevention Unit of the Municipal Police Department in Poznan.
- Organisation and running of training programmes on project implementation for on-call officers and intervention patrol members;
- Acquiring data on the office hours of the judges of the Family Court and passing the information on to the on-duty officer of the Poznan Municipal Police Department on particular days of project implementation,
- Co-organising meetings and a support group for project employees, as well as co-organising training sessions for project employees,
- Arranging the on-call schedule of particular members of the police project team,
- Supervision,
- Briefings and consultancy for project employees,
- Cooperation with the project coordinator of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families.

Coordinator of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families

- Recruitment and appointment (in cooperation with the Head of the Methodical Department of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families) of a team of social workers to participate in the project,
- Cooperation with units of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families in the organisational aspects of the project (employment contracts, preparing equipment orders, etc),
- Organising on-call time of particular members of the MOPR team and delivering the schedule to the police,
- Acquiring data on places available in family-run foster homes and emergency shelters (for the MOPR Foster Care Unit) and delivering it to the Police coordinator.
- Organising meetings and a support group for project employees, co-organising training sessions for project employees,
- Consultancy for project employees,
- Supervision,
- Acquiring reports on past interventions and delivering them to the appropriate MOPR units with a request to take further action,
- Cooperation with the project coordinator for the police,
- Project execution monitoring,
- Project assessment,
- Project reporting.

Poznan City Hall Departments

Cooperation in the sphere of consultancy, project financing and evaluation.

“Dzieci Niczyje” Foundation

Consultancy and training sessions for project employees.

The Media

Participation in press conferences, project promulgation, making the society more sensitive to the problems of abused and neglected children.

f. How did you build-in plans to measure the performance of the project?

It has been planned that the following indicators will be used to measure the performance of the project, i.e. the conclusion of its particular stages:

Indicators measuring the performance of the planning stage:

- Drafting of a co-financing application to Poznan City Hall within the framework of the Employee Initiative Support Programme,
- Decision on project co-financing.

Indicators measuring the effectiveness of establishing inter-sectoral cooperation:

- Signing of agreements and a description of the procedure and division of responsibilities among the partners.

Indicators measuring the effectiveness of the project activity stages/patrol efficacy:

- Quantitative alignment of the actions undertaken with needs (i.e. the number of interventions vs. the plan),
- Qualitative alignment of the actions undertaken with needs (i.e. assessing what actions were taken during an intervention and later, in the long-term perspective),
- Effectiveness, i.e. the relationship between the achievement of goals and the costs incurred in the process.

The following have been accepted as proof of the execution of particular project actions:

- Participation lists from training sessions and meetings,
- Information materials, multimedia presentations,
- Information fliers,
- Press articles and other publications,
- Official memos and child abuse surveys after every intervention,
- Intervention register,
- Monthly project execution reports.

g. Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

A comprehensive evaluation of the project will be performed by the partners, i.e. the Municipal Police Department in Poznan and the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families, as well as by the Committee for the Evaluation of Poznan City Hall Employee Initiatives Support and the Emergency Management and Safety Department of Poznan City Hall. The results of the project will also be submitted to the Safety Committee of Poznan City Hall. Information on project results and execution will be regularly posted on the partners' websites and disclosed to the media.

In order to provide the necessary insight and enable project evaluation, the coordinators representing the Police and the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families will draft detailed substantive and financial reports on the actions undertaken so far.

h. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

Project results:

Measurable results:

1. Between June and December 2008, **66** interventions were undertaken during **87** on-call shifts. Interventions were launched whenever necessary – there were no cases of an intervention being denied.
2. During the intervention, assistance was provided to **93** children aged 1 month to 17 years. Three children were transported to a Small Children's Home, 1 was taken to hospital, 1 to a Youth Care Facility, 2 children with their mother to the Monar-Markot Centre, 14 children were put in the care of family members living separately, and in other cases children were left with their parents/guardians after making sure that their safety would not be compromised.
3. For every case, an intervention report was transferred to the appropriate Police Department and the MOPR branch office, whose employees undertook long-term diagnostic and assistance actions.

Non-measurable results:

1. Thanks to the execution of the project, the knowledge of the Employees of the Centre for Assistance to Families on the situation of children in Poznan's families in the afternoon and evening, as well as at night and during the weekends, was broadened. The employees also gained the skill of talking to children, diagnosing their needs (as they were trained to before the launch of the project), and they also acquired the information necessary to take legal action and perform social work for the benefit of the family. The project repetitively confirmed the suspicions of the employees of the Centre for Assistance to Families as to inadequate parental care, especially in connection with alcohol abuse. What is also very important is the growing awareness on the part of city inhabitants, that a police intervention is not a one-off action, but that it entails far-reaching consequences, such as a detailed diagnosis of the situation of the family and actions meant to safeguard the child's needs, even including legal proceedings.
2. Enhancing the children's sense of safety during police interventions. In the families, apart from emergency actions related to ensuring a sense of safety, other tasks included informing the families about their rights, entitlements, possibilities, and support options available, and especially talking to children in order to calm them down and improve their feeling of safety;

project workers talked to children, drew with them and spent time with them, until their legal guardians were able to resume their duties or a shelter for them was found. The children also received stuffed animals purchased for the project by a sponsor. Families were also given fliers on possible support methods in Poznan.

3. Building greater awareness of the actions undertaken by the Municipal Police Department and the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families among Poznan inhabitants. On the 12th of June 2008, a joint press conference was organised to open the project. It was received with great interest on the part of the media and resulted in many press releases (in the press and also on TV) encouraging Poznan residents to notify the police of any situations in which a child's well-being is in danger. On the 21st of June 2008, the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily awarded two "Białe Pyry" (White 'Tater) prizes to the coordinators of the project for its concept and execution. Information on the project was provided to all aid organisations, shelters, emergency facilities and published on the partners' websites and on the website of the "Dzieci Niczyje" Foundation. At every opportunity, Poznan inhabitants were not only informed about the project, but also encouraged to notify the police of every situation involving child abuse. Moreover, in February 2009, the project entered the "2009 SELF-GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT LEADER" competition, where it was highly appreciated, receiving one honourable mention and a prize – a study tour to Norway.
4. Enhanced cooperation between the Municipal Police Department and the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families in Poznan in the field of solving social problems. In the initial stages of the project, the roles within particular teams were clearly separated and distributed. However, it was later observed that members of the "friendly patrols" complemented one another's actions and often their roles started to overlap, thanks to which the interventions were carried out very naturally and in a child-friendly way. Personal contact, activities and spending time together made it possible to break many stereotypes about the work of social workers and police officers. As a consequence, trust and confidence were increased and a feeling of beneficial cooperation was achieved and then transposed to actions beyond the project itself – to the current activities of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families and the Municipal Police Department. Drawing on the bonds created as part of the project, employees of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families and the Municipal Police Department cooperate in solving various problems affecting Poznan residents. This constitutes added value of the project.

As mentioned before, the project was subject to continuous monitoring. Documentation drafted during the interventions was transferred to district police stations and branch offices of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families through the coordinators. Long-term actions were subsequently undertaken. Moreover, coordinators from the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families and the Municipal Police Department received feedback from the branch offices and the police departments as to the actions undertaken for the benefit of the families. Twice last year (in October and following the completion of the action), a comprehensive evaluation was carried out, comparing the goals achieved in the project with the initial plans.

i. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web? Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

- Information on the project can be found on the website of the Poznan Municipal Police Department: www.poznan.policja.gov.pl and of the Municipal Centre for Assistance to Families in Poznan: www.mopr.poznan.pl , including:

- Final project report,
- Selected media coverage,
- Project presentation and photo documentation,
- Information and educational materials on the project,
- Printable documentation prepared for the project.

- Other materials and documents about the project are available from the Social Prevention Unit of the Municipal Police Department in Poznan, ul. Taborowa 22, 60 – 790 Poznan.

j. Please, write here a one page description of the project:

The main aim of the “Child under the Umbrella of Law” project is to bring into existence and train 2-person “friendly patrols” composed of a MOPR worker and a member of the Crime Prevention Unit of the Police. Patrols will work in the afternoon and in the evening (5 pm – 1 am, at the time of intensified home-visit interventions.

It is assumed that the main principle of the interventions, in which children are participants, is to guarantee them a feeling of safety.

It is assumed that the family is the best environment to look after and raise a child. This is why, in the case of deprivation of parental rights, it is the patrol’s job to analyse every possibility to guarantee to the child some care, treating the family environment as priority (grandparents, further family – if they are capable of assuring care)

The following activities scheme is planned:

A “Friendly patrol“ is notified in case of discovering during an intervention that a child’s safety was endangered (by being left without proper care or through acts of violence). The “Friendly patrol” consists of a MOPR worker and a police officer, both dressed in civilian clothes, and they arrive by taxi – the use of marked police cars is forbidden to avoid a re-victimisation of the victim. They also have toys and equipment needed for carrying out essential activities (such as a breathalyser).

The MOPR worker conducts activities ensuring the right care for the child and the police officer secures evidence and takes care of legal matters. Both cooperate with each other ,keeping in mind the child’s well being and their feeling of safety.

After ensuring the help needed and carrying out all the necessary legal actions, the patrol writes a report which on the next day is sent to the appropriate MOPR branch and police station, local to the place where the child lives. This ensures further actions and work with the family will be undertaken.

“Friendly Patrols” react when a child is in danger. But what are those situations?

- Child left alone without a guardian (left, lost),
- Child witnessed acts of violence, incl. domestic violence,
- Child was a participant in a dangerous situation (e.g. drinking bouts, arguments between parents).
- Child was left without protection as a result of a transport accident,

Actions taken by the patrol:

- Identifying the child’s situation,
- Assuring a feeling of safety,
- Taking care of finding the right care in the family, or if it’s not possible, in the Child Care Establishment,
- Ensuring that the child will pass through this difficult and traumatic situation in a possibly friendly and safe atmosphere,
- Informing MOPR branch office about the situation, so they can start social work with the child’s family.

The “Friendly Patrol” can be contacted by:

- Calling 997 and contacting the officer on duty in the Municipal Police Department in Poznan
- Sending an email to niebieskaskrzyinka@poznan.policja.gov.pl
- Mailing the Municipal Police Department in Poznan
- Contacting Health Services, social workers, or youth specialists `

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