

# PROJECT CULTURAL MEDIATION

## SECTION 1

### Aims of the project

#### 1. Describe the scope of the project.

- Outline the problems dealt with in the project

The increasing number of foreign youngsters coming into contact with the Juvenile Justice System has made it urgently necessary to promote cultural mediation regarding both the type of action to be taken and the definition of the cultural mediator's role in the field of criminal law for minors.

Therefore this project takes its inspiration from a relational approach towards other models based on acquiring knowledge through encounters. Cultural mediation seeks to facilitate communication and to ensure prevention of conflict.

List the data and/or statistics used to define the problem

From an analysis of the data regarding young people entering Criminal Institutes for Juveniles (CIJ) from 1991 to 2000, as shown in the table below (divided by nationality), it is clear that there has been an increase in the number of foreign minors and an opposite trend for Italian young people.

Table 2. Young people entering CIJs 1991/2000

YEAR	ITALIANS	FOREIGNERS	TOTAL
1991	1,228	726	1,954
1992	1,492	797	2,289
1993	1,465	849	2,314
1994	1,322	918	2,240
1995	1,110	903	2,013
1996	1,093	882	1,975
1997	934	954	1,888
1998	884	1,004	1,888
1999	871	1,005	1,876
2000	779	1,107	1,886

Explain the reasons why this field was chosen

The significant numbers of foreign minors made it necessary to set up procedures that enabled those operating in the Juvenile Justice System to:

- gather knowledge for creating a preliminary plan of action;
- employ cultural mediators as active participants in the various phases of institutional life, facilitating communication between the minors and the operators.

- promote an inter-cultural point of view within the Juvenile Justice Services.

It was also necessary to apply the government decree (D.P.R.) of June 20, 2000, No. 230 "Regulations concerning prison organization and measures relating to depriving and limiting individual freedom" and introduce tangible actions related to the *Approval of the National Plan of Action and Operations for safeguarding the rights and the development of young people as they grow up, for the two-year period 2000/2001.*

Describe the main results expected from the project

The project focuses on the need to create an organizational and operational theory of cultural mediation that is capable of orienting and disciplining collaboration by cultural mediators with the Juvenile Justice System.

The expected results of the project are:

- facilitating the encounter and relationship between foreign minors and the Juvenile Justice Services,
- supplying the Services with a professional contribution and the instruments to plan and carry out all its activities
- easing the task of those working with minors
- helping the social integration of young people belonging to ethnic minorities.

## **SECTION 2**

### **The objectives of the project**

#### **1. In view of the above aims, describe the chief objectives of the project**

The overall objective of the project is to conduct operations of an intercultural and educational type with minors who have committed crimes, while involving the various social workers and operators within the System. In view of this, the project encourages the achievement of the following objectives within the Service:

- Creating conditions that lead to knowledge of and respect for different cultures;
- Improving the dialogue between operators and foreign minors;
- Promoting types of communication that overcome cultural differences;
- Supporting the teachers in the schools and their professional training;
- Helping the Service to find ways of ensuring religious assistance;
- Assisting the Service in communication and collaboration with the Consular Authorities, the Foreign Minors Office, the local Social Services, the Health Services and the private agencies and associations who deal with minors in various ways;
- Providing instruments and materials for the reception of foreign minors;
  - • Promoting health education activities.

#### **1. Describe the various phases of the project and the objectives for each of them (short, medium and long-term)**

The project is divided into three phases:

The first phase is aimed at acquiring a quantitative and qualitative picture of the situation by collecting statistics regarding the number and type of youngsters involved;

The second phase is aimed at highlighting the requirements of the foreign youngsters and of the operators in the Juvenile Justice Services;

The third phase is directed at promoting and instigating initiatives, on the basis of the results of the first and second phases, to include the activity of cultural mediation in all the Juvenile Justice Services by drawing up appropriate guidelines.

#### **2. What indicators are there to show that the objectives have been achieved?**

- Ease of communication;

- Acquisition of knowledge about the young person, to be passed on to the team for the creation and realization of educational programmes;
- Helping relations with the family and other reference figures;
- Setting up contacts with territorial agencies, private social associations, consulates and any other specific resources that could help towards social integration of the young person.
- Effectiveness of actions taken, in cases where there are changes in the minor's legal position and/or the measures taken.

## **SECTION 3**

### **SUBJECTS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT**

#### **Beneficiaries of the project**

##### **1. Composition of population benefiting from the project.**

##### **Types of people benefiting from the project.**

The project is directed at:

- Foreign minors and/or young adults subject to the provisions of the Minors' Judicial Authority and held in the Criminal Institutes for Minors according to measures set out in government decree (DPR) 448/88, substituting (Art. 30, DPR 448/88) and as an alternative to the detention indicated in law 354/75, as well as minors passing through the Detention and Temporary Centres and Communities.

In addition, since cultural mediation activity is a part of every facet of institutional life, it is also directed at Italian minors and young adults as well as the staff operating in the Juvenile Justice System, as well those outside it, who deal with minors in various ways.

##### **2. Number of subjects involved.**

- All minors and/or young adults who become pass through the detention system.

##### **3. Social-demographic features of the people involved.**

Young people from ethnic minorities are the principal beneficiaries of the project, and are:

- Adolescents, prevalently male, between 14 and 17 years of age and between 18 and 21 years of age, who have committed a crime as a minor;
- Irregulars who arrived in Italy not accompanied by their families or accompanied by a non-identifiable adult;
- People coming mainly from the Maghreb (North Africa) and the Balkans;
- Authors of crimes with a high rate of recidivism;
- Those without the assistance of parents or other adults legally responsible for them according to law. They usually live in marginal situations and abandonment, sleeping in makeshift conditions.

##### **4. Indicate if there is a group that will benefit indirectly from the project.**

The following will benefit indirectly from the project:

- • school teachers and others with professional training; the territorial Social Services; the Health Services and other agencies and private associations that deal with minors in various ways.

## **5. Partners involved in the project**

### **List the subjects who collaborated in setting up the project:**

Various non-profit associations collaborated on the project:

- The CIES, a non-governmental organization of solidarity and cooperation in development that operates in the field of cultural linguistic mediation and in educational training.
- The Andolfi Association; a non-governmental organization that operates in the sector of services for immigrants.

The task of these Associations is to furnish:

- individual operators for cultural mediation activity;
- training and specialization activities for cultural mediators;
- coordination of network activities.

A protocol agreement has been set up with the above Associations for the training and employment of cultural mediators in the Juvenile Justice Services.

In addition, the people involved can be individual professionals (not linked, however, to a specific association) who have sufficient experience in the criminal field or in other government institutions (police headquarters, districts, schools, hospitals, etc.) and who are suitably qualified.

These individuals (mediators) will enter into agreements with the Administration and sign appropriate contracts.

## SECTION 4

### *Method of operation/activity*

#### **1. Regarding the project aims, describe the problems that will be worked on.**

The cultural mediation service will intervene regarding possible conflicts that may arise (in terms of our social organisation), facilitating communication and also contributing to the achievement of equal opportunities for immigrant minors.

#### **List the type of knowledge and/or data used to identify the causes described above, and the methods used to gather them.**

The causes indicated above were identified in the following manner:

- By means of data relating to conflicts within Criminal Institutes involving minors of different ethnic groups.
- By ascertaining the difficulties experienced by foreign minors in trying to gain access to the benefits of the law, and their inclusion in social, educational and work training activities.

Regarding this, the following items were examined:

1) disciplinary reports 2) reports by the teams 3) data concerning why foreign minors leave Criminal Institutes.

#### **2. Was an analysis made of the requirements of the beneficiaries, before the programme was drawn up? What instruments were used?**

A form was prepared, compiled by each Service, to acquire information concerning the requirements of immigrant users and those working in the Juvenile Justice Services.

#### **Regarding the declared objectives and the reasons for intervention, what actions were taken?**

#### **Was the project divided into macro-phases? What were they?**

The macro-phases of the project can be summarized as follows:

First macro-phase: An analysis of the requirements carried out by means of a form compiled by each individual Services aimed at acquiring an overall picture of the needs of both the immigrant minors and those operating in the Juvenile Justice Services.

Second macro-phase: drawing up and issuing a document containing guidelines for cultural mediators. This document provides for the creation of an operational model.

Third macro-phase: inclusion of the mediators in the Juvenile Justice Services, specifically within those structures where foreigners predominate.

**3. Indicate the constraints and resources in the choice of activities (costs, knowledge, skills, etc.):**

Constraints: lack of funds for investing in the sector.

Resources: 1) a European project presented by the CIES organisation summarising the project activities already begun by this Administration; 2) availability of trained mother-tongue professionals; 3) availability of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations).

## **SECTION 5**

### **Resources used in the project**

#### **What resources were used?**

- **Financial: cost of the project; supporting agencies**

The project was financed through:

- A contribution from the Juvenile Justice Department
- Local government financing
- European social fund

#### ***Skills: professional and institutional***

All those operating in the Juvenile Justice System and the cultural mediators, each within his professional sphere.

In particular, the following requirements have been indicated for the mediators:

- relational attitudes;
- ability to guarantee reliability and confidentiality in the exercise of their activities;
- experience and a knowledge of the culture and language of the minors;
- attendance certificate or report regarding a training course on cultural mediation;
- knowledge of Italian culture and language; familiarity with Italian laws regarding the principal institutions and the laws regarding immigration;
- residence permit in order, and without any pending judicial matters.

Regarding institutional operators: commitment and ability to understand the impact of the method adopted by the cultural mediators on the problems posed by the co-presence of various ethnic groups.

## **SECTION 6**

### **Evaluation and repeatability of the experience**

#### **3. Have methods for evaluating the actions been set up? If so:**

- **What type?**
- **In what phase of the operation?**
- **With what method?**

The project method includes the participation of all the subjects operating within the Juvenile Justice Service and is aimed at a process of self-learning through the evaluation of their own work and that of the Service to which they belong. For this reason, there are provisions for continual monitoring at the local centres to verify:

- effectiveness of activities in terms of actions carried out and objectives achieved;
- the degree of integration of the mediator's activity within the operational context.

Therefore, the evaluation operation is carried out in two phases:

First phase: the operators in the structure and the cultural mediators meet to discuss the particular case.

Second phase: periodic meetings are held to verify and devise programmes that ensure an adequate level of effectiveness of the cultural mediators' work within the Service organization.

The activities of the operators are recorded in the formal minutes of their meetings. This makes it possible to transform their intentions into tangible measures.

#### **2. Was there a final verification of the results produced by the project? If so, describe:**

- **what results were achieved**

At the end of the year, it is decided whether the presence of the mediator improved communication between the institutional staff and the young people held there. This is done by verifying that actions carried out directly achieved the following results:

- helped to adapt the minors to the organisation which they passed through;
- improved the integration of minors belonging to different ethnic minorities;
- gave the minors a knowledge of trial procedures;
- lessened the conflict between minors belonging to different ethnic groups;
- facilitated collaboration with the Consular Authorities, the territorial social services, the Health Services, government agencies and private associations;
- improved the operators' understanding regarding the behaviour of immigrant minors.

### **What methods were used?**

The method adopted provided for periodic meetings at the local centres both to discuss the particular case and to check the progress of the work carried out by the cultural mediators.

Those working for the service used the official minutes of the above-mentioned meetings to ascertain the results. This made it possible to transform their intentions into tangible measures.

Finally, there was a national meeting with the participation of various representatives of the Services and of the mediators.

### **3. Did the results and/or knowledge lead to “procedures” that can be repeated or used in other contexts? If so, describe:**

#### **▪ What actions can be transferred?**

The consolidation within the Services of the mediators' activities made it possible to create an operational model that explains the work method, the results achieved and especially:

- facilitated an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of foreign youngsters involved;
- gave more attention to the culture of foreign young people in terms of religion, eating habits and health;

This encouraged the transfer of the working model to other Juvenile Justice Services.

#### **▪ The methods involved**

#### **▪ The recipients**

A document was prepared and issued nationwide containing guidelines regarding the activity of cultural mediation for the purpose of implementing this activity throughout the Juvenile Justice Services, and also in order to direct and unify the various experiences.