



Project Report SPECIAL

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A word from the lead partner

When the SPECIAL project began it was on a somewhat uncertain foundation. This was the first time that a Swedish public authority had been appointed as a lead-partner in a Daphne project, and we had a lot of questions that needed answers. How was the lead partner to find productive forms of cooperation with partners that had not previously been worked with closely? How were financial and administration matters to be taken care of in the best possible way in accordance with the EU regulations? How was the project to develop the teaching aids so that they would be suitable for use in all three partner countries? And, first and foremost, - how were we to work to enable our target group obtained optimum benefit from the project?

Two years on we feel that we are far steadier; in fact we are standing really proudly. Together with our partners we have produced a teaching aid that we believe can be beneficial. We have also been part of a very instructive project relating to a subject that has generated considerable commitment on the part of many people in many different walks of life.

In the report the principal activities and experiences of the project and the results we have achieved are described. We hope that the report will give the reader a clear picture of SPECIAL and, now that we are bringing it to its conclusion, inspire others to continue with this crucial work.

We extend warm thanks to our partners and to all those around us who, in different ways, have involved themselves in SPECIAL and have made this project so very special!

Uppsala, March 2009

Ingrid Staflin
Project manager

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Project administrator

Project background

The idea behind the SPECIAL project – *Self-Protection, Education & Choice through InterActive Learning*, first emerged early in 2005 when some members of staff who work at the Fyrisskolan's special school took part in a course about working with EU programmes. One key result of this was the decision to make an actual application and this was subsequently developed on the basis of the need for interventions on behalf of our female students who are so easily vulnerable to difficulties of various kinds. With the aid of Uppsala City Council's EU coordinator, Eva Thorsén, we then developed the project concept. We also established contact with partners in Italy and Great Britain.

At the beginning of February 2006 an application was submitted to the European Union's Daphne II-programme. The official decision to approve and support the application was taken in January 2007 enabling the city of Uppsala to co-operate with Co&So Firenze in Italy and Surrey County Council in the United Kingdom in carrying out the project. The project was to run from 26 March 2007 to 25 March 2009.

The Daphne II programme aims at preventing and combating violence against children, young people and women in Europe. Project support is provided for, among other things, preventive measures, exchange of practices and experiences as well as the carrying out of training.

The SPECIAL project is aimed at young women aged 16 – 21 years who have a mild development disorder. Research and experience has shown that this group is particularly at risk of exposure to sexual violence and other forms of assault¹.

The aim of the project has been to find ways to prevent young women from being unequipped to deal with situations where they risk being exposed to violence and assault by their peers and others. Where risk is unavoidable the project sets out to support vulnerable people in managing these situations in a positive, and ultimately, safe, way.

¹ See among others Malmberg, Färm, *Dolda brottsoffer. Polismyndighetens och socialtjänstens hantering av brott och övergrepp mot personer med funktionshinder*, [The following English text is a translation of the above title] [*Hidden crime victims. The handling of crime and assault against persons with disabilities by the police authorities and social services*] Centre for Gender Studies, Uppsala University, 2008.

Project partners

Uppsala City Council/Fyrisskolan, Sweden

With its 187,000 inhabitants, Uppsala is Sweden's fourth largest city, and Fyrisskolan, with its 1,150 students, is Uppsala's second largest "upper-secondary" school. One hundred and twenty of these students follow a special educational programme for pupils with learning disabilities. This takes the form of a voluntary four-year course and is undertaken either as individual programmes of learning offering work or occupational training or in the form of national educational programmes in business and administration, hotel and catering, or media studies.

Co&So Firenze, Italy

The Co&So Firenze Consortium was founded in 1998 as a group of cooperatives at work in the Florence area. All members deliver social services on behalf of public authorities in the Province of Florence. Co & So Firenze operates as a support structure for these operators by offering its associated cooperatives several services such as: acting as a general contractor, by offering support via development, training and consultancy in several areas, by providing technical assistance, and by co-ordinating and delivering quality development projects.

Surrey County Council, United Kingdom

Surrey County Council is the public authority responsible for the management and direct delivery of services to 1.1 million UK residents. Education for young people with special educational needs does not stop at 16. Depending on a child's interests and abilities, he or she can stay on at an ordinary or special school, or can move on to a college for further education. Some colleges run special courses or have units for these students.

Project outputs

As a key part of the project, partners have developed a pack of teaching materials called “*Respect 4 Me*”. The objective of doing so has been to increase young people’s ability to realise and understand what exploitation and assault are as well as to develop and strengthen their ability to recognise different warning signals and to increase their awareness of different risk taking behaviours.

The teaching material is in three languages and contains an interactive web-based element that can be used independently by our target group of young women and/or in group learning sessions. We have also produced a handbook for professionals working with young people with disabilities containing background details of the project and subject matter and suggestions as to how group training and learning sessions might be carried out. Our aim has been to produce work that will reinforce young women’s self-esteem so that they have the courage to say both ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and only do what they really want to do. The material is intended to be of use both within and outside the school system. All the material has been produced and tested with the involvement of target group members and professional specialists in the three participating countries.

The project has also set out to improve the protective infrastructure for young women by increasing the awareness levels of the problem on the part of decision-makers and professional groups directly involved in safeguarding vulnerable people. This has, for example, been done by carrying out three conferences on the theme of the project in the participating countries. A knowledge and resource bank with references to research and other material on the subject has been published as part of the project’s three-language website, www.specialproject.se.

Project activities

Preparatory work

With regard to the preparation of the project application foundation-laying work commenced at Fyrisskolan special school. A study day within the school was organised with a presentation of the project’s objectives, presentations about sexuality and learning difficulties and a session seeking ideas about what could be done within the school in order to prevent students from being exposed to different forms of violence. We concluded that it was very important to build up the students’ self-esteem. Another important factor was the strengthening of their awareness of risk situations and how to deal with them if they are encountered. A working group was set up at the school, consisting of staff with a particular interest in these problems.

Organisation

The lead partner established a project management group comprising Ingrid Staflin, Project Manager, Pia Sörås Staflin, Project Coordinator and Kerstin Lönnström, Project Administrator.

Once the decision regarding top-level project resource had been made, a working group was set up in Fyrsskolan consisting of Torunn Kvellestad, special teacher, Johanna Mellberg, vocational teacher and Sara Andersson, student assistant. They were to lead a “girls’ group” as part of the teaching of the Communication and Teamwork learning programme. The girls’ group consisted of ten young women: Amanda, Elin, Fatma, Ida, Madeleine, Sanna, Sophie, Shama, Sweet and Therése.

The project’s management group in Sweden, which extended the direct management team described above consisted of Boris Enquist, director of the Children, Youth and Employment Office, UAK, Uppsala; Lena Hjalmarsson Berg, Commissioning Manager within UAK and Eva Thorsén, EU coordinator, Uppsala City Council.

A reference group for the project was also formed. It was made up of representatives from Uppsala City Council, The Children’s Ombudsman service, Uppsala University, Örebro University, The Police, The Prosecution Authority, Barnahus [Children’s House], Uppsala University Hospital, The Crime Victim Service, The Swedish Disability Federation – *HSO*, Attention – National Autism Association, Girls’ Rights in Society, and others. The reference group has been gradually extended to include other interested parties as the project has become better known.

Contact with our partners in Florence and Surrey was developed. Partner meetings have been held on four occasions in order to create a common reference framework and to plan the work jointly. Between meetings, communication has also been carried out by email or telephone.

As *lead partner* Uppsala has had the principal responsibility for coordinating project activities. A large part of the work undertaken has been done in close cooperation with our partners. Described below are both these activities as well as those of a more local character.

Information material

One of the first activities was that of producing an information brochure about SPECIAL. The brochure was produced in Swedish, English and Italian and subsequently distributed among possible interested parties by the respective partners. We also created a logo that was intended to symbolise our concept and the visibility of the target group. The logo has facilitated the dissemination of our work and has contributed towards the creation of a clear vehicle for information about the project.

We constructed a three-language website www.specialproject.se with the aim of:

- Providing information about SPECIAL and the activities that are carried out under the project
- Publishing training material and reports that have been produced
- Providing a resource and knowledge bank with references to relevant information and research in the three participating countries

Training material

The training material *Respect 4 Me* is tri-lingual and consists of an interactive web-based part as well as a guide for those supporting vulnerable young people. The material is published on www.respect4me.org

Interactive web tool

On the website, www.respect4me.org, you can meet three young women, Madeleine from Sweden, Maria from Italy and Jasmine from the United Kingdom. Users are able to follow some events in these characters' lives and then consider the best course of action that one might take on the basis of the situations that arise. Users can also see the consequences of their choice and can find out other young peoples' opinions on how one should behave in order to avoid problems in such situations.

The website, which is free to use, is intended to be suitable for use both by individuals and as a point of departure for group exercises.

The material is based on the risk situations that students and staff in Uppsala and Florence identified as part of their work within the project. The website www.respect4me.org has been developed and produced in England on the basis of an initial manuscript written in Uppsala.

The point of departure for the work has been questions such as:

- How do you look after yourself?
- When should you say 'no' and when should you say 'yes'?
- How can you protect yourself against undesirable/risky situations?
- If someone does something that is wrong, whom should you talk to?
- What are good/bad situations, dangerous/safe places, good/bad people?
- What constitutes sexual harassment, exploitation, assault?

Key points in the work have been:

- To focus on self-esteem through stressing the importance of asserting your personal integrity, accepting yourself, accepting responsibility for your actions and creating good relationships.
- The importance of establishing limits and understanding of what is regarded as normal behaviour.
- Different ways of reinforcing the girls' support networks.

The website is designed for the project's target group – girls with mild development disorders. However, we have chosen not to say this on the site itself since our experience is that those who have a development disorder will often not make use of material they perceive as being specially adapted for them or targeted at them alone. It is also an advantage if the material can be used by others as well and the broader potential use of the work we have produced is a point that has been made by several young people involved in its development.

We have chosen scenarios we regard as being those that many of the girls addressed by the project may encounter – or have encountered. There is a wide range within the target group with regard to socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Such factors can occasionally play a greater role than the actual development disorder. In certain combinations, this makes the girls additionally vulnerable.

It is important that the girls who do not recognise themselves in some of the situations shown on the website do not feel as though they are expected to do so from the context. The girls who end up in riskier situations than those illustrated should also be able to be given support in dealing with these.

This is where group discussions can be an important complement to the website. In-depth discussions in the group can be conducted with regard to the situations described by the website and the material contained can be built upon. As always, it is important that the level is adjusted to the group's maturity and the participants' experiences.

Guidance materials

The guidance pack is intended for use by staff both inside and outside the school system and has been developed in cooperation with Co&So in Florence in particular. Different aspects are dealt with in regard to setting up discussion groups aimed at matters of integrity, emotions and self-knowledge and awareness for young women with mild developmental problems. The experiences gained in the girls' group at Fyrisskolan are also included in the guidance. On the basis of these experiences we have set out to provide ideas relating to group discussions and provide tips about exercises aimed at enhancing self-esteem that are specially adapted to the target group. An introduction is also given to how the web-based teaching aid may be utilised, individually and in group instruction, as well as proposals for group exercises directly connected to the situations dealt with on the website.

Specific activities in Uppsala

Following the sessions for school staff and the preparatory planning, a discussion group involving female students was started in April 2007 made up of final year students. This group's task was to define risk situations and to ascertain what zero tolerance involves, what constitutes violence and how one might act in different risk situations.

The outcome was used in the planning of the work in the actual girls' group that was formed later in the spring of 2007 and which has continued to meet throughout the entire course of the project. The objective of the girls' group has been to reinforce the participants' self-esteem, to make them aware of various risk situations and how these may be dealt with. A parallel objective has been to test exercises, primarily evaluation exercises and forum games. These exercises have since been included in the manual. The students have also participated in the formulation of the material on www.respect4me.org. They have been involved in creating the Swedish character, shared views regarding the language used and have also been involved in the structuring of the website.

The development of delivery methods at the school continues. A talk was given about honour-related violence and the SUF group was presented – a group that deals, in particular, with young mothers with learning difficulties. We also had a visit from Denise Malmberg, PhD and university lecturer at Uppsala University, who has researched crime and assaults against persons with learning difficulties. A doctoral student also shadowed the project.

Staff in the working group took part in a training day relating to forum games with the drama teacher and author Katrin Byréus, who has developed the method in Sweden. The group was also given a presentation of how an earlier theatre project had been carried out within the County Council's therapy activity.

Co-operation with drama teachers from the teacher training institute at Uppsala University, and with the voluntary organisation Diakonistiftelsen Samariterhemmet Uppsala, was initiated. The drama teachers taught methods relating to forum games in the girls' group.

A group from TRIS, Tjejers Rätt I Samhället [Girls' Rights In Society], flagged up their interest in SPECIAL and took part on a number of occasions in both personnel and student groups.

After each occasion on which the girls' group has met, the mentors have made comments in a template format. We referred to these comments as a record – even though they do not have the nature of a record. There are details there regarding which exercises have been conducted and what worked well and what worked less well. These records have provided tips for other girls and boys groups that started up.

We received special funds from the International Programme Office to enable a study trip to Florence to be made with the girls group. The aim of the trip was for the students to meet up with other young people in the same situation by means of visits to schools and the cooperative training activity that is a particular feature of Italy.

Specific activities in Florence

The local project management group was made up of Patrizia Giorio, European Project Manager; Alessandro Piattoli, Researcher; Matteo Ignesti, Alessandro Sansavini and Francesco Lucà, Psychologists. Two tutors, Marzia Boncompagni and Marco Antonucci, who have been working with people with disabilities for several years have been especially active also. They played an important role in considering the sort of common situations that can arise in terms of abuse or the particular challenges faced by people with disabilities in terms of appropriate behaviour. They designed the details of many of the risk situations in which girls can find themselves.

The project reference group has met regularly to exchange ideas on how to make the project work and to discuss how to proceed in writing the guide and picture develop the character of Maria on the interactive website.

Patrizia Giorio has led on maintaining contact with the other project partners and especially with the coordinator, Pia Sörås Staflin.

One of the first activities that was carried out in Florence was to translate the brochure created by the Swedish partner, to inform about the project activities and to prepare the resources library that has been a good starting point to accomplish the following phase of the project.

The Italian partner has been actively involved and contributed to the partnership-wide activities and outputs described elsewhere in this report. Also described

elsewhere is the seminar which was hosted and organised in Florence and is the single largest discreet piece of work undertaken by this particular partner

Specific activities in Surrey

Surrey's particular role within the project was to take the lead in the technical production of the learning materials that have been developed to form the project's interactive web tool. In practice this has entailed the design and development of the website designed for use by young people. It has included development of both filmed and illustrated elements and the detailed storyboarding and scripting of the scenarios set out as learning exercises.

Work has been overseen by a representative of Surrey County Council and co-ordinated by Mike Leat who has been engaged to lead on the tasks entailed within developing the project's educational materials. This has involved close and detailed work in devising, testing and revising the risk scenarios, building and testing the website and incorporating input from project partners with regard to animated characters, scenario content and options and website interactivity. This has involved close co-operation with a specialist film-maker and web designer.

As the native English-speaking partner it was to be expected that Surrey would take on a particular role in producing/editing project materials in English. This has been done in respect of dissemination materials including website content, the guidance material pack and this report.

Conferences

Launch seminar

The first conference was constituted as a "launch seminar" and was arranged in Uppsala in April 2008 with the theme "Young women with mild learning difficulties and their particular vulnerability." The aim of the conference was to share our partner countries' experiences and also to gather conference delegates' thoughts concerning the fundamental aspects of the project.

Participating in the conference were representatives from Consorzio per la Cooperazione e la Solidarietà, Italy, Surrey County Council UK, The Children's Ombudsman, Örebro University, Uppsala University, The Prosecution Authority in Uppsala, Uppsala Crime Victims Watch, The Disabled Persons' Cooperation Body (HSO), The Attention Association, Fyrisgården, The Deaconry Foundation, The Children's House in Uppsala, Lundellska school, Jälla school and Fyrisskolan. From Uppsala Municipality there were delegates from the Office for Children, Young People and the Labour Market, Uppsala Municipality production Care and Training, Support for functionally disabled and Family Care as well as politicians from the Education and Labour Market Board. A total of 42 delegates took part.

The conference began with a presentation of SPECIAL. The psychologist Matteo Ignesti from Co&So in Florence and area manager Susanne Söderberg from Individual and Family Care in Uppsala talked about preventive measures for countering sexual assault against young women with mild learning difficulties.

Mike Leat, head of The Clear Communication People Ltd, from Surrey, described what an interactive teaching aid for the target group might look like. He outlined the key principle of genuine user involvement, making information accessible and attractive and how to use interactive technology. District prosecutor Ingrid Isgren from the Prosecution Authority in Uppsala shared and explained her views on the legal consequences of crime being committed.

Kamilla Peuravaara, doctoral student at the Gender Science Centre, Uppsala University, spoke about the target group's particular vulnerability and the risk situations they can encounter. The teacher Johanna Mellberg described how the "girls' group" at the Fyrisskolan special secondary school worked. Students from the girls' group were also present during the day and played an active role in the event management among other things.

During the afternoon three workshops were held where both speakers and conference delegates took part. Documentation from these is presented below:

Workshop 1: Network for young women with mild learning difficulties

Questions:

- Is there a need for a special network for the target group?
- What are the specific problem areas for the target group?

The delegates concluded that adequate knowledge of the functional disability is often absent – within the police, at child care centres and even, sometimes, within the social care sector. It is important that all who are aware of social ills through their work, report this. The question was raised regarding who benefits most from the network. The young women themselves or those around them who are affected – parents, schools, authorities? Not all girls want to have help – how is one able to build up a network around these? For many of the girls the most important thing is to be "normal" and they do not wish to be pointed out as being "particularly exposed". The problem of the difficulty in maintaining an overview of what happens to the girls once they have left the upper secondary school was also taken up. There is nobody who actually has any direct overall responsibility for a follow-up. There was also a lot of talk about young parents with learning difficulties and the fact that they need, for example, guidance in the home. A new EU project is planned with such an aim.

Workshop 2: The need for preventive measures for countering assault

Questions:

- What form does the need for preventive measures take?
- Which initiatives for the target groups in the respective countries can be held up as good examples?
- Which ideas exist for the development of preventive measures?

Everyone agreed that there is a great need for preventive measures. The view of sexuality with regard to those who have learning difficulties differs between the participating countries. It is the same with sex education. It is not only girls groups that need to be started up, but boys groups as well. It is also important to reach through to boys as well. A good example of measures for the target groups is the law in Italy that states that all companies that have more than 15 employees must have at least one employee who is disabled.

Workshop 3: Development of training and information material

- Questions:
- What does a good teaching aid for the target group look like?
- What needs are there for information material – about what and for whom?

It is important to have information for ALL girls. The learning difficulties must not be pointed out in the teaching material. The material should not focus on the actual functional disability. The text must be easy to read, illustrations and colours must be engaging and attractive to young people. There should be links to the web-based teaching material from, for example, other sites that are visited by young women, so that it is easy to find. There shall also be links from the material to other organisations such as, for example, the Children’s Ombudsman, The Girls Watch, Save The Children etc. Achieving a wide dissemination of the material is important.

Florence seminar

In addition to the EU project partners, the conference was attended by representatives from the University of Florence, by an important local association working in the field of violence and abuse against children, young people and women, as well as the only listening centre for people with disabilities.

Sessions delivered included:

”Training pathways for sexuality education for people with disabilities as a tool for the prevention of physical and psychological violence”

Speaker: Andrea Mannucci, coordinator of the listening centre

This presentation focussed on the main theme of the project and on the training needs that people working in this field have, as arguing how a better understanding and awareness on the part of these professionals is a powerful weapon to prevent violence.

“Relational aspects and the development of sexuality within families of people with disabilities”

Speaker: Margherita Riccio, Psychologist & Psychotherapist

Mrs Riccio closely works with families of people with disabilities. Her speech focussed on the need that families have for support, especially when tackling themes relating to sexuality.

Sexuality and disability: needs and practical actions

Speaker: Prof. Taddei, University of Florence

Professor Taddei focussed on the needs of local associations and families on the theme of the project, and on the possible actions that can be taken in order to prevent violence.

Local Networks: “Difficulties and Weak Points”

Speaker: Giuditta Saba, Artemisia association, Florence

Mrs Saba spoke about the local networks that are needed in order to support people with disabilities in possibly report abuse and violence.

The Swedish partner, represented by Lena Hjalmarsson-Berg, spoke about the school system and about how people with disabilities are integrated into the system.

The UK partner, represented by Mike Leat, spoke about how an effective communication can help prevent abuse and violence being perpetrated against people with disabilities.

The majority of the audience at the event was made up of educators and specialist support teachers.

Surrey seminar

This event took a different form from other seminar events undertaken as part of the project. Project partners and their external expert guests were given the opportunity to participate in an extended site visit to a special school in Surrey. The event was organised to run back to back with a partner meeting which had focussed on the development of the project's interactive web tool. As such there was the opportunity to explore the issues that had arisen in depth with a group of highly specialised professionals working with young people with more profound learning disabilities.

Dissemination seminar

The project's concluding conference, a so-called *Dissemination seminar*, was arranged in Uppsala in March 2009. Experiences and results from the project were presented there and the training material demonstrated.

Those invited to the conference were representatives of the Board of Education, the University and University Colleges, The Red Cross, Save The Children, FUB (Parents Association for Children with Learning Difficulties), HSO (The Disability Associations' Cooperation Body), the Police, The Women at Risk Centre, the Attention Association, Therapy in Uppsala County and Youth Health in Uppsala County. Politicians and other decision-makers in the Municipality of Uppsala, teachers and student care personnel from upper secondary special schools, aid officers, heads of the Municipality of Uppsala's daily administration for people with reduced functionality and housing for the mentally dysfunctional, were invited. Interested parties from other parts of Sweden were also invited to participate as they were in receipt of information about SPECIAL.

Finance and administration

As *lead partner* Uppsala has also had the principal administrative and financial responsibility for the project and for reporting to the EU Commission. This has been done using a mixture of documentation and systems provided by the EU and a number of additional materials produced and refined as part of the project.

Assessment

Marcus Dahlberg, of Metodix, was appointed as an evaluator after all partners had given their views about how the external assessment should be carried out.

He has had access to all the documents, has taken part in various conferences, and has conducted a number of interviews and surveys. On completion of the project he is to compile an assessment report.

Dissemination of information

During the entire project period we have been actively involved in producing and sharing information about the project and the problems that the project addresses. Described below are the principal dissemination activities that have taken place.

Reference group

At an early stage the lead partner set up a local reference group to which were invited representatives from various organisations and occupational groups who, through their work, encounter the problems relating to the project's target group. The reference group has convened meetings on a regular basis. These meetings have contributed towards concentrating the focus on the target group and towards further dissemination of information about the project. The interest in taking part in this group has been promoted in this way and the group has been continuously extended during the course of the project. Between meetings the group has also received information through a newsletter about the project.

EU-network

Regular information about the development of the project has been disseminated across the EU network consisting of project managers for trans-national EU projects within Uppsala City Council and which is headed up by the municipality's EU coordinator.

Press

The lead partner has provided the regional press with frequent updates on project activities. The newspaper Uppsala Nya Tidning with its county-wide coverage has carried articles on the project on a number of occasions. Local radio has also made a contribution. HSO (The Disability Associations' Cooperation Body) has carried a report in its journal. Both local daily newspapers and specialist press at the national level in Sweden are to be approached with further news on the project's conclusion and outputs.

Politicians/authorities

The Swedish Education Board's curriculum group, and those who are responsible for all the special schools in Sweden, visited Fyrisskolan at the start of the project and have subsequently followed the project with considerable interest.

Representatives of Uppsala City Council and politicians from its Education and Labour Market Board have also made frequent visits to the lead partner and have given valuable support.

The relevant local government officials in Uppsala have actively contributed towards the development of the project and have taken part both in conferences and, occasionally, in partner meetings.

Universities

The lead partner has made and maintained contacts with several universities during the project.

Professor Karin Sonnander of the Centre for Disability Research at Uppsala University has informed her board and her students about SPECIAL. Karin Götlind, who is also at the Centre and is the representative for the regional office in the County of Uppsala, expressed her interest in the project and made a visit.

PhD and university lecturer Denise Malmberg, at the Centre for Gender Science at Uppsala University, has carried out research into young women who have learning difficulties and their particular vulnerability to crime. On several occasions she has contributed to the project with her knowledge and experiences. She has also guided the doctoral student Kamilla Peuravaara, who wrote a dissertation based on the girls' group's work at Fyrisskolan.

The Institute for Teacher Training at Uppsala University has also taken part in the project. Methodology lecturer Charlotte Gottfries has been engaged in both the qualification development of teachers in regard to Forum Games and in carrying out assessment exercises and Forum Games with the girls' group.

Örebro University has also followed the project via researcher Kerstin Färm, who also represents the regional office in the County of Örebro.

Participation in external events

The lead partner has been invited to present SPECIAL at a large number of conferences.

At the Swedish national conference for school managers in the special upper secondary school system (SIGYS) in January 2007 the project was presented to a specialist professional audience. The same was done at a conference for Effect Net in February 2007 in Stockholm. Effect Net is a nationwide network for the development of innovative EU projects.

In October 2007 the project was showcased at the Uppsala County conference "Visions and reality in the year 2007". This event was organised by the County Council, the Centre for Disability Research at Uppsala University, the Disability Associations' Cooperation Body (HSO) and the Regional Association in the County of Uppsala.

At the national conference "Exploited and Abused – regarding girls of limited talent or learning difficulties", arranged by Uppsala University in October 2008, SPECIAL and the work with the girls group was presented.

The Special project has been presented by CO&SO's Patrizia Giorio during a number of European meetings that she has attended during over the last two years. Project results and details of seminars have also been publicised via the monthly newsletter that FormAzione Co&so Network sends out to around 150 subscribers. The newsletter is written in Italian and is sent out across the whole Tuscany Region.

Details of the project have also been presented as part of the following conferences:

30th October 2008 – final conference of the "Lancia" and "Simposio" projects, funded by the Province of Florence and targeting teenagers with disabilities.

30th January 2009 – kick-off conference of the "DOC" project, funded by the Province of Florence and targeting teenagers with disabilities.

The project outputs have been shared both formally and informally in Surrey as part of their development. Details are to be further shared through and with specialist professional networks and the vulnerable young people with whom they work.

International dissemination

At "The Third Daphne Conference – 2006 Projects" in Brussels in April 2007, aimed at project managers for the Daphne II projects, the planning of SPECIAL was presented.

The project was also presented at the "Daphne III Conference and Market Place" in Brussels in November 2008.

In Valencia in February 2009 SPECIAL was presented at a seminar on the ENSA and Daphne programme.

Following an invitation from the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Alpha Iota State, Michigan, SPECIAL was presented at their annual convention in May 2008 in Kalamazoo, USA.

Experiences and results

We hope that the training material we have produced will serve as a basis for further work in reinforcing self-esteem in the young women and increasing awareness of risk situations and how these can be dealt with.

SPECIAL has contributed towards focusing attention on the vulnerability of the project's target group. As part of our work, decision-makers and professional groups that address these matters have had the opportunity to meet through the project. We expect that this might indirectly lead to the situation for vulnerable young women being improved in the longer term.

We hope that mentors can receive support in their role and be able to use the project training material in a practical manner in their work with groups of different types. In the Knowledge Bank on www.specialproject.se we signpost further materials on the subject offering greater detail and more practical exercises.

The project has indirectly provided staff at Fyrisskolan's special upper secondary school with the opportunity for both personal and curriculum development and inspiration for starting further girls' groups as well as discussion groups for boys.

For those who took part in the project it has meant an increased understanding of cultural differences between the countries directly involved in the project. But we have also seen that the young peoples' daily lives and problems have greater similarity in the three partner countries than we had anticipated. This primarily emerged upon identifying the risk situations that form the basis for the training material.

The project has given us an opportunity, primarily through conferences but also through references groups, to gather the views of many different occupational groups with regard to this matter. These meetings have contributed towards both follow-up projects and the strengthening of networks.

SPECIAL has provided further results. TRIS (Tjejers Rätt i Samhället [Girls' Rights in Society]) has started up girls' groups for the target group as a leisure-time activity in Uppsala and Uppsala City Mission plans to start girls groups for those who have left school. Other public authorities have also started similar activities on the basis of our model.

Using the material post-project

Our strategy of publishing the training material on the Internet and thereby making it freely available to all who are interested in using it, guarantees wide dissemination and usability long after the project has ended. Information about the material, and links to it, will be published on the Särnet website, for example. Särnet is the nationwide network for special schools in Sweden.

We formed the basis for dissemination of the training material as far back as the actual composition of the reference group. At the final conference moreover we had the opportunity to present the finished training material to key operators at the Swedish national level. This should facilitate efficient further dissemination beyond the conclusion of the project.

During 2010 the municipality of Uppsala will host the Special Schools' National Conference which usually brings together around 1 000 delegates from the whole of Sweden. The SPECIAL Project and the teaching aid, Respect 4 Me, will be presented in detail as part of this event.

As previously explained we have chosen not to state anything explicitly about learning difficulties in the material at www.respect4me.org. In this way the scope for future use is widened immensely and the material can in its existing form, be suited for groups without learning difficulties.

The training material on www.respect4me.org is also produced with the aim of it being suited for further development. For example one can add further language versions to the existing material. It is also hoped that the project management model might serve as a point of use and inspiration for similar transnational co-production projects focussing upon another topic or target group.

It is clear to all partners that the project can be easily replicated in other European countries should there be appropriate funds and a need; it could indeed be the basis upon which new projects are developed.

The products of the project can be further developed. New scenarios could be added and the teacher guide could be further developed to reflect these additions. As well as exploiting the potential for the website to be used by young people in general as already described, partners might explore developing new male characters in order to make the product applicable to young men with learning disorders who are also considered to be at risk of being abused.

Project partners have also identified more specific and short-term potential for the project work. There are clearly ways in which specific professional training pathways for workers and teachers on the themes that have been developed within the Special project can be further developed.

This has already happened in one tangible instance with the development of a training course – funded by the Province of Florence – that will draw upon the products of the Special project.

Partners have also been considering details of other potential users of the products, these include:

- Support teachers
- Local organisations working in the field of disability
- Supported employer workers in both the public and third sectors
- Workers in day care centres for people with disabilities
- Teachers and trainers working with young people (with or without disabilities) in the target group age range
- Association of families and young people with disabilities
- Social workers
- Independent organisations providing information to parents of children with special needs
- Advocacy organisations
- “Transition Teams” within public authorities
- Youth involvement and user representative groups
- Youth services
- Child and young people protection agencies

Further information

See:

www.specialproject.se

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