



## International Journal of Social Pedagogy

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*Special issue: Social Pedagogy in Times of Crisis in Greece*

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### Multiple Practices of Social Pedagogy: The Case of *The Smile of the Child*, a Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Children's Protection and Well-Being

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**How to cite:** Yannopoulos, C., Alevizos, S., Kavallieraki, M. 'Multiple Practices of Social Pedagogy: The Case of *The Smile of the Child*, a Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Children's Protection and Well-Being.' *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*, 2015, 4(1): 17, pp. 227–240. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2015.v4.1.017>.

Published: 01 January 2015

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#### Peer Review:

This article has been peer reviewed through the journal's standard double blind peer review.

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#### Open Access:

*International Journal of Social Pedagogy* is a peer-reviewed open access journal.

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## Multiple Practices of Social Pedagogy: The Case of *The Smile of the Child*, a Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Children's Protection and Well-Being

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THEORY

PRACTICE

RESEARCH

*The Smile of the Child is a Greek non-profit, voluntary organization in the field of social pedagogy. It has been an NGO active in the field of child protection and children's rights since 1996. It began as the dream of 10-year old Andreas Yannopoulos, who, shortly before losing his own battle for life, documented his vision in his journal. The Smile of the Child, empowered by committed employees and the support of hundreds of volunteers, provides services 24 hours a day throughout the year, including programmes for children's welfare and protection of their physical and psychological health, as well as for the safety of thousands of children in danger in Greece.*

**Key words:** child abuse, prevention, helpline, protection, well-being.

### Introduction

#### **Foundation of the Organization: The inspiring words of a ten-year-old boy**

As published on the website of *The Smile of the Child*, Andreas wrote in his diary:

*'We all know and talk about children on the streets who can't smile. They can't smile, because they don't have money, toys or food, and some of them don't even have parents. Just think and leave all the talking behind: let's unite and give whatever we can to poor children, Albanians, white and black. They are all children and deserve a smile. This association will be called: "The Smile of the Child". Let's all come together to help, together we can accomplish it.'* (From Andreas' diary, November 1995, *Hamogelo*, 2011)



ΤΟ ΧΑΜΟΓΕΛΟ  
ΤΟΥ ΠΑΙΔΙΟΥ

Όλοι ξέρουμε, συζητάμε για κάτι παιδιά στους δρόμους που τους λείπει το χαμόγελο. Τους λείπει το χαμόγελο γιατί δεν έχουν λεφτά, δεν έχουν παιχνίδια, δεν έχουν φράι και μπιρκά, δεν έχουν καν γονείς. Σκέφτησα λοιπόν κι αφήσα τα λόγια ας εννοούμε κι ας δώσουμε ότι μπορούμε στα φτωχά: αλβανάκια, ασπρά και μαύρα όλα παιδιά είναι και αξίζουν ένα χαμόγελο. Αυτός ο συλλογος θα λέγεται: ΤΟ ΧΑΜΟΓΕΛΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΙΔΙΟΥ. Ελάτε λοιπόν να βοηθήσουμε αν εννοούμε, όλοι θα τα καταφέρουμε. Ανδρέας Γιαννόπουλος

**1. Our young founder, Andreas Yannopoulos**

To cite this article: Yannopoulos, C., Alevizos, S., & Kavallieraki, M. (2015). Multiple Practices of Social Pedagogy: The Case of "The Smile of the Child", a Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Children's Protection and Well-Being. *International Journal of Social Pedagogy – Special Issue 'Social Pedagogy in Times of Crisis in Greece'* 4(1), 227-240, DOI: 10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2015.v4.1.017. Available online at <http://www.internationaljournalofsocialpedagogy.com>

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Written by ten-year-old Andreas Yannopoulos while suffering from terminal cancer, these words expressed his wish to establish an organization that would protect children irrespective of their color, race, religion, nationality, or socio-economic status. Andreas is no longer with us, but his words continue to inspire us to help children and ensure that each child has a reason to smile.

*The Smile of the Child* was registered as a non-profit, non-governmental organization with a social pedagogy orientation in January 1996. Since then, the organization has expanded to meet the serious problems of children in need living in Greece. Through its various services, *The Smile of the Child* protects children's rights and provides them with emotional and psychological support. Children who suffer from health problems or any type of abuse, neglect or abandonment, are within the organization's mandate.

Amongst other things, in this article we will attempt to connect each one of the organization's services to the specific Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which they address.<sup>1</sup>

In the last 19 years of its operation, *The Smile of the Child* has managed to build activities with reference to children's rights, and primarily their right to the opportunity for a decent life. Driven by this vision, *The Smile of the Child* is active on a 24-hour basis in the following fields:

- Psychological support to children and support to children in danger through the National SOS Helpline 1056, the AMBER ALERT HELLAS activation procedure, the 116000 European Hotline for Missing Children and the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children;
- Child protection through the provision of 11 community homes;
- Child protection and family empowerment through the provision of 3 daily care centres;
- Child and family support through the operation of 12 support centres distributing primary necessities and providing social and emotional support to children and their families;
- Support for children with serious health difficulties.

The necessity for these activities has been dictated by the lack of relevant effective public structures, combined with the economic crisis of recent years, which has created a dramatic increase in the number of pleas for support from all fields of activity within the wider organization. This article aims to describe the range of activities and services provided by *The Smile of the Child* in order to give the reader an impression of the scope of the organization. We will also look at 'You Smile', an interactive platform of communication for children and teenagers, which illustrates our commitment to children's rights in one innovative educational programme. Information about our European Projects & Global Partnerships (appendix 1) along with some key facts from our 2013 Annual Report (appendix 2) demonstrate the ways in which our organization goes beyond the borders of Greece in its contribution to wider issues of child welfare and protection. Most of the material is also available on our website [www.hamogelo.gr](http://www.hamogelo.gr).

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<sup>1</sup> In relation to that, in the inspiring words of Andreas Yannopoulos, one of the most fundamental children's rights which has been one of the 'pillars' of this organization is clearly illustrated:

**Article 2**

States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

### ***National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children***

*The National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (Greece)* is one of the Departments within the registered non-governmental organization *The Smile of the Child*. The organization is a member of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), as well as Missing Children Europe (MCE). *The Smile of the Child* is also a member of the Global Missing Children’s Network (GMCN), and is also associated with the UN Department of Public Information (UN DPI NGO), while it has a special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The National Centre is staffed primarily by social workers and psychologists, and works very closely with the Greek National Police, the Public Prosecutor for Minors and the mass media. In fact, once the Greek Police determine that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a missing child is in immediate danger and they issue an alert, it is the Centre that is responsible for the activation of *AMBER Alert Hellas* in Greece. *AMBER Alert Hellas* is an emergency public broadcast system which enables law enforcement to seek the public’s assistance to locate a child. The National Centre also works closely with law enforcement from all over the world, including Interpol, Europol, the IOM and other national and international bodies that work in the field of child protection and children’s rights.

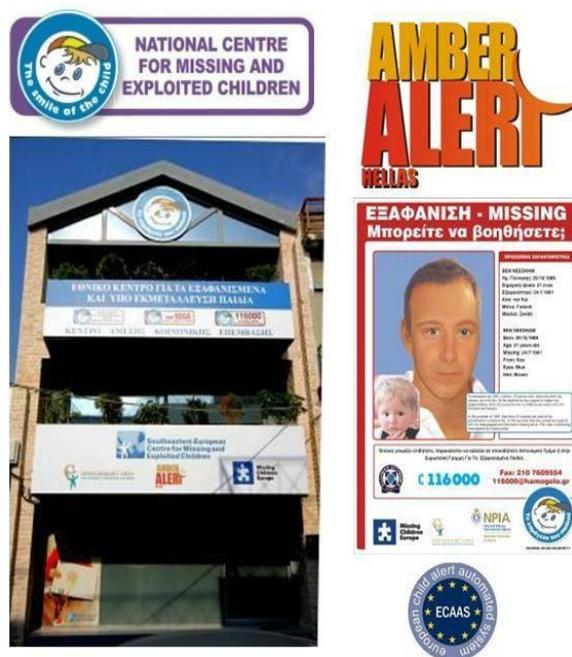
The National Centre also runs the *European Hotline for Missing Children ‘116000’* in Greece and provides the following additional services to the public:

- Psychological Support to Parents
- Publication of photographs and information on our site ([www.hamogelo.gr](http://www.hamogelo.gr)) and on the GMCN site ([www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com))
- Creation and distribution of posters in all publicly accessible areas
- Creation of photographic leaflets distributed through the Greek Ministry of Citizen’s Protection to all patrol cars in Greece
- Coordination of public and private agencies and businesses
- Psychological support and counselling of children and families once the child has been found
- National and international advocacy in the field of child protection and children’s rights.

### ***Southeastern European Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (SEEC)***

In October 2010, the *Southeastern European Centre for Missing and Exploited Children* was inaugurated as a joint initiative of the *International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC)* and *The Smile of the Child*. The Centre serves as a regional coordinating body aimed at comprehensively addressing and combating child victimization in all its forms in the Southeastern European region.

Having a leading role in the region, SEEC fosters public-partner partnerships at all levels, in terms of actions in tracing and recovering missing children, actions aimed to reduce any kind of child exploitation, as well as actions aimed at the continuous protection of the rights of the child.



2. National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children

### ***National Helpline for Children SOS 1056***

The 1056 Helpline first began its operation in 1997. Its primary purpose is to protect and defend children's rights. In May 2007 it was recognized by the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity as the *National Helpline for Children*. It is a member of *Child Helpline International* (CHI).

Children, parents/adults, educators and other services and agencies can call the National Helpline for Children SOS 1056. It operates throughout Greece on a 24-hour basis, 7 days a week, and calls made to it from payphones and mobiles are free. It is staffed by social workers and psychologists, and all telephone conversations are confidential and are not recorded.

#### *Services/Activities*

- Registering anonymous and named complaints regarding children who are victims of abuse.
- Immediate intervention for children who are in danger.
- Psychological support for children and teenagers, as well as counseling for parents and educators.
- Processing requests for shelter for children who are victims of abuse or neglect, whose removal from their family environment was deemed necessary by the competent prosecuting authorities.
- Raising awareness and mobilization of blood, blood platelet, and bone marrow donors.
- Information and direction in matters concerning children's rights and protection.

### ***On-site Intervention for children in immediate danger***

The on-site intervention is carried out by social workers and psychologists. It is intended for children in immediate danger, for abused or neglected children, and/or children who are victims of illegal trafficking and financial exploitation, and its goal is to protect them and their rights, always in cooperation with Greece's competent Public Prosecution and police authorities.

When a child is in immediate danger, our primary goal is to transport the child safely to a protected environment, and subsequently find the best solution possible for the child, in cooperation with all the relevant bodies. Our organization is usually informed about children in danger through phone calls from socially aware children themselves.



4. Pan-Hellenic Center of Immediate Social Intervention

The 1056 Helpline and the on-site intervention address various articles of the CRC, such as article 19 covering the right of children against all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child, and article 11 since the Helpline seeks to prevent the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

### ***Homes for Children in Danger***

In 1997 *The Smile of the Child* set up the first home for children in danger. Our organization now operates 11 community homes all over Greece and currently looks after 268 children from 0-18 years of age. From the beginning, our main concern has been to avoid institutionalizing children, and our main goal is to re-integrate them into society as smoothly and with as much dignity as

possible. With respect and discretion, but primarily with a lot of love and affection, *The Smile of the Child* has opened its arms to hundreds of children in danger.

Our homes welcome any child who cannot and should not stay at home, following a social investigation to determine its unsuitability. Therefore, our homes raise children of different ages, irrespective of their nationality and origin, who the Public Prosecution & Judicial Authorities have deemed necessary to separate from their family environment.

*The Smile of the Child* homes provide the opportunity for children to acquire all those assets that in the future will allow them to become independent. Moreover, the homes resemble the model of a typical Greek family and offer children the necessary material, emotional, psychological, social, medical and educational support.



5. Our Homes

According to this model, children attend everyday school classes in the neighbourhood school, participate in after-school activities and engage with people of their own age, whilst professional experts stand by their side and support them in every aspect of their life, from babyhood to the end of their studies or to starting their own family. Thus, we continue to support and care for our children until they become independent, productive members of our community.

### ***Daily Care Centres: a new way of family empowerment***

*The Smile of the Child* operates 3 daily care centres all over Greece and works with 34 children from 0-18 years of age. Children attending the daily care programmes come from families facing a crisis due to the absence of one parent, entrusting the child to the grandparents, social problems such as addiction, low standards of living, mental health problems or a lack of social education. These families, who may not currently be capable of giving their children proper nurturing and upbringing, are not described as maltreating or dangerous; thus it is not necessary to legally remove parental responsibility. On the contrary, it is our organization's belief that children should be encouraged and supported to remain within their original family.

Our vision is to offer these children equal opportunities by providing them with proper care, education and hygiene in order for them to face adult life as equal members of society. At the same time, the other members of their family receive tangible support from the organization's social workers, who work closely with the parents to help them overcome their issues and become healthy role models for their children. Furthermore, in order to keep the family bonds intact, the children return to their family home on an everyday basis.



6. Our Daily Care Centres

Both our *Homes for Children in Danger* and the *Daily Care Centres* address specific articles of CRC such as Article 9 covering the right of the child to maintain regular family contact if appropriate and Article 10 granting children the right to regular direct contact with their parents if these live in a different country as well as Article 20 entitling children who cannot live with their parents to special state protection<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Psychological support and guidance for children and parents***

By using our extensive experience on a broad range of problems, as well as general issues concerning children and families, our organization provides counselling support through all of our departments and services. Psychologists experienced in child-related issues offer their services to children, parents and teachers with discretion, confidentiality and a friendly, but responsible approach. The purpose of the counselling process is to support children during the critical phases of their life. The child's history is recorded to clarify basic matters and evaluate needs. Counselling may be offered on an individual personal basis, as well as to a family, and may include referrals for evaluations and treatment, as deemed necessary.



7. Social & Psychological support

### ***Supporting children and families facing welfare problems***



8. Welfare support to families and children in need

Family is the most important building block of society. Any issue may affect functionality and relations between its members. Critical or traumatic situations, such as unemployment or divorce, can lead to family breakdown and the manifestation of severe difficulties.

Since 1997, *The Smile of the Child* has been using its services at our Community Homes that are located throughout Greece to offer support to a large number of families affected by social and financial problems.

#### **<sup>2</sup> Article 9**

3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.

#### **Article 10**

2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (order public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.

#### **Article 20**

1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.

2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child.

3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

The organization's social workers and psychologists aim to:

- cover the primary needs of families facing severe welfare difficulties improving the quality of life of family members;
- provide counselling support that aims to mobilize family members in facing their problems and improving their functionality;
- raise public awareness of the public and mobilize society in support of families in need.

### *Providing medical aid & support to children facing serious medical and health conditions*



The inspiration for our support to children with health problems since our organization was first established in 1996 has been its founder, Andreas Yannopoulos, who himself suffered from a serious health problem.

The services are free of charge, supporting children with any kind of disease as well as their parents and their siblings. Our goal is to cover children's needs in every possible way and to mediate in all aspects that concern health. Our valuable supporters are our sponsors and our volunteers. Without their daily and active participation, we wouldn't be able to continue our efforts.

#### **9. Medical and social support is provided on a 24hour basis free of charge**

The services provided are:

- Psychological and social support for children/teenagers with health problems, as well as for their families.
- Visits to children's hospitals, in cooperation with clinical directors, medical staff and social services, updates on the organization's activities, assessment of hospitalized children's family needs.
- Support to children that are hospitalized for social reasons following a Public Prosecutor's Order while encouraging our volunteers for their valuable contribution.
- Escort of children/parents to medical appointments, communication with their attending doctors and mobilization of our volunteer-doctors of all specialties.
- Assistance to parents with procedural matters (issuing health books, grants, benefits from insurance funds, etc.)
- Coverage of medical supplies thanks to the generous sponsorship of companies/stores.
- Management of applications to cover hospitalization costs and medical care for uninsured children, as well as for specialized therapy sessions that are partially covered by insurance funds.
- Support of children who are referred by Greek physicians to specialized centres abroad (in cooperation with insurance funds, Consulates, the Greek community, locating volunteer interpreters, translation of medical documents, airline companies).
- Location and mobilization for blood and blood platelet donors and raising awareness for blood marrow donors, in cooperation with the SOS 1056 Helpline on a 24-hour basis.
- Management of applications for the safe and pleasant transport of children/guardians with our ambulances and neonatal units.

- ✦ Participation in Preventive Medicine.
- ✦ Giving holiday gifts to hospitalized children in Athens, Thessalonica and Patras and organizing parties for our little friends (birthday surprises, etc.)

Our organization's *National Helpline for Children SOS 1056*, which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, gives us the opportunity to be always on the side of children with health problems and their families. Services similar to our department's are being provided by the support centres of *The Smile of the Child* all over Greece.

### ***Preventive medical and dental programmes with the Organization's medical vehicles and equipment in schools throughout Greece***

The Smile of the Child has been providing preventive medicine to children all over Greece since 2002. From 2002 until 2010, thousands of children of various ages were examined.

Today we have three Preventive Medicine for Children Units.

- ✦ Preventive Pediatric and Dental Mobile Unit
- ✦ «IPPOKRATIS» Mobile Multi-clinic for Children, which has the following independent sections: audiology, cardiology, ophthalmology, dentistry and will soon have an independent power source. At the same time, it is important to mention that through telemedicine there will be connection with doctors provided.
- ✦ Diagnostic Ophthalmological and Audiological Preventive Medicine Unit for Children.



**10. Medical and social support is provided on a 24hour basis free of charge**

These activities are implemented under the auspices of the competent Greek Ministries: Education, Life Long Learning & Religion, and Health & Social Solidarity.

Our goal is to provide preventative medical services, and treatment in certain cases, to children of all ages both in urban centres as well as remote villages in our country. The mobile Preventive Medicine Units are staffed with volunteer doctors, as well as a social worker and a nurse from the organization.

Preventive medical check-ups are a very important part in guaranteeing the good health of children, and protecting them from more serious problems. Basic requirement for the participation of each child is the signed consent of its parents. All the findings are notified to the parents – when necessary – so that treatment can be provided. Our experience has shown us the great importance of preventive medicine for children throughout Greece, particularly children living in remote regions without access to medical centres, children with financial problems and children experiencing social exclusion.

### ***Creative Occupation in Children's Hospitals***

With tools of simple material, such as laughter, play, songs, discussions and humanity, we support, strengthen and empower children themselves as well as their parents. Through these activities we try to give children the message that the hospital could be a place of play, joy and creativity. The pleasant environment that dominates the hours of creative activities drives out the tension and has a redemptive impact on the souls of the children, parents, nurses and doctors.

By combining creativity, learning and entertainment, alternative manners of self-expression and psychological support are provided, resulting in the strengthening of the effort of the children and their parents in facing the difficulties that illness has brought to their life.

So we keep the children occupied on a daily basis with:

- Individual and team games in the special playrooms and the children's inpatient wards;
- Creativity through painting, arts and crafts;
- Opportunities of improvisation, expression, relief and relaxation through playing (theatrical, kinetic);
- Organization of daily field trips;
- Organization of birthday parties with clowns;
- Watching theatrical performances and motion pictures;
- Organizing seasonal celebrations (Ash Thursday, Christmas, Easter, etc.) with participation of favourite artists;
- Cooperation with the medical staff.



11. Our team provides a variety of activities to help children cope with any pain, anxiety or fear they might experience during their time in hospital.

All three of the aforementioned services, that is *Providing medical aid & support to children facing serious medical and health conditions*, *Preventive medical and dental programmes with the Organization's medical vehicles and equipment in schools throughout Greece* and *Creative Occupation in Children's Hospitals*, address specific articles of the CRC<sup>3</sup> regarding the concept of health as far as children are concerned.

### ***Preventive & Interactive sessions for Children, Parents and Teachers***

In 2009, we established the Children, Parent and Teacher Information Department, which aims to inform the public on serious matters concerning children, and on which *The Smile of the Child* has significant experience. Psychologists, social workers, as well as teachers from our organization visit schools throughout Greece and perform interactive sessions with students, teachers and parents.

#### **<sup>3</sup> Article 24**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures: (a) To diminish infant and child mortality; (b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care; (c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through, inter alia, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution; (d) To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers; (e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents; (f) To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.

3. States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

4. States Parties undertake to promote and encourage international co-operation with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right recognized in the present article. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

The sessions are provided in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Education, following an invitation either by the school advisor, the health education supervisor, the headmaster, the Teacher Association, or the Parents and Legal Guardian Association. The subjects of the sessions include *The Smile of the Child* and its actions, domestic violence/abuse, school violence/bullying, internet abuse and good and bad uses of technology. This service addresses at least two of the Articles of CRC<sup>4</sup>.



12. Interactive sessions

### *You Smile: An innovative platform of communication between teens, as well as the entire school community*



13. [www.yousmile.gr](http://www.yousmile.gr), an interactive platform of communication and information between teenagers

### *The Challenge*

*The Smile of the Child's* main goal is to protect and promote children's rights. At the same time, developments in information & technology have an increasing impact on education in a way that new approaches in the classroom and for personal self-development are possible. Therefore, the implementation of an interactive platform that empowers students' expression and participation is a necessity.

#### <sup>4</sup> Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

#### Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Teenagers need to master new technologies and develop their competencies in order to achieve creative, innovative, efficient and critical use of modern IT tools. At the same time, *The Smile of the Child* strongly believes in giving young people a voice and listening to them. YOU SMILE satisfies all the above needs by offering an interactive environment that promotes learning and skill development with the use of new technologies.

#### 'You Smile' tools

- Teen's website: a site designed for teenagers, which will allow them not only to find information, support and advice but also give them the opportunity to participate by sending articles, videos, etc.
- Web Radio/Web TV: this initiative will enable teenagers to create their own shows and discuss everyday topics
- E-learning: through this platform we will be able to reach out to more students all over the country

'You Smile' offers a safe place for teenagers to express themselves and show their work, an environment enabling the development of their creative, social and literacy skills and a creative use of new technologies that will make learning easier and more interactive.

Last but not least, 'You Smile' addresses one very important right of every child, to freely express themselves as is so clearly stated in the CRC<sup>5</sup>.



14. E-learning sessions

## The social pedagogical character of the Organization

*The Smile of the Child* is a voluntary organization dedicated to every aspect of children's protection and well-being, without however being limited to this. With all its services, it seeks systematically to equip children cognitively, emotionally and socially so that they are able to live a happy and fulfilled life in the future.

The operation not only of the *Homes for Children in Danger* and the *Daily Care Centres* but also of every service this organization operates, is inspired by a value system that promotes self-autonomy in a context of healthy and emotionally nourishing relationships. Thus, we believe that a strong social pedagogical character is revealed.

This character underlying the philosophy and operation of each and every service of *The Smile of the Child* is based on certain social pedagogical pillars (Mylonakou-Keke, 2013; Petrie et al., 2006), such as the overall protection and development, both personal-ethical, intellectual, as well as psychological and social of children in need or in danger, by creating conditions that fulfill and

#### <sup>5</sup> Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

integrate its founder's vision, a vision that, first of all, emphasizes the respect for diversity and total acceptance of every child.

This vision is more substantially supported by a certain *modus operandi* that is based on the following principles:

- the adoption of holistic approaches;
- external and self-evaluation procedures which ensure the continuous enhancement of services provided;
- the encouragement for constant self-improvement of both the employees and the volunteers;
- the encouragement and utilization of interdisciplinary collaborations of the scientific staff;
- the development of children's collective and collaborative spirit among them.

Thus, by enabling the personal involvement of a large number of volunteers and stakeholders/members of the local community in the field of social action, as well as building strong cooperation between them, it highlights each child's uniqueness and innate abilities and fosters his/her responsibility, so s/he becomes an autonomous, active citizen.

## Conclusion

After 19 years of activity, *The Smile of the Child* has become a reference point for children, parents and governmental departments because of our success in providing solutions to the hundreds of problems that children face. We maintain our direct contact with children and work with all appropriate agencies in order to ensure that we never have to say 'no' to a child that needs us.

Funding of the organization is provided through donations and contributions of private individuals and private enterprises and through our fundraising events. *The Smile of the Child* has won the public's trust and respect because of the many services the organization provides to an ever-increasing number of children, its international collaborations and its consistently low administrative expenses. In surveys conducted by independent marketing companies and published in the Greek press, *The Smile of the Child* is consistently ranked amongst one of the top positions for public trust and recognition within its sector of operations<sup>6</sup>. The way that people have embraced our work with love and trust is shown once again in the results of the Social Barometer (Awareness & Social Behavior Index) A.S.B.I. 2012, according to which *The Smile of the Child* retains its 1<sup>st</sup> position in regards to the indicators of Social Influence, Popularity and Recognition.

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<sup>6</sup> Available online: <http://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/428121/vraveuetai-apo-tin-eurovouli-to-hamogelo-tou-paidiou/>

<sup>7</sup>Available

<http://csrnews.gr/1852/%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%B9%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%8D-%CE%B2%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%AD%CF%84%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85-a-s-b-i>

online:

## Appendix 1: European Projects & Global Partnerships

Since its foundation, *The Smile of the Child* has undertaken important pioneering initiatives, presented significant know-how & working operating models to other international network members, resulting to extensive recognition & appreciation abroad.

	<b>Member of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC)</b>
	<b>Member of Child Helpline International (CHI)</b>
	<b>Member of the International Webpage for Missing Children - <a href="http://www.missingkids.com">www.missingkids.com</a></b>
	<b>Member of Missing Children Europe (MCE)</b>
	<b>NGO with a Special Consultative Status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)</b>
	<b>NGO associated with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI NGO)</b>
	<b>Member of the European Federation of Street Children (EFSC)</b>
	<b>Member of Eurochild</b>
	<b>European Antibullying Network</b>
	<i>European Antibullying Network EENA- European Emergency Number Association</i>
	<i>EuU Civil Society Platform Against Trafficking in Human Beings</i>
	<i>Fundamental Rights Platform</i>

Our organization plays a vital role within the European and wider international scene, in the field of child protection and the actions required for it. Within this context, it tries to make the best of every available opportunity to broaden its cooperations and enhance its national and international activities. In order to fund its activities but also in order to gain the necessary knowledge, *The Smile of the Child* participates in several European programmes in dealing with child abuse, bullying, child trafficking, unaccompanied minors and other programmes dealing with child protection.

## Appendix 2: Some key facts from our 2013 Annual Report

- the National Helpline for Children - SOS 1056 received **272.605** calls (731 calls/day)
- on-site intervention for **264** children in danger
- we received serious allegations of abuse for **1296** children
- the 116000 European Hotline for Missing Children received **7138** calls
- **124** cases of missing children handled
- **356** children found safety and care in our Community homes and Daily Child Care
- we supported **10.547** children and their families facing serious welfare problems
- we responded to **1.852** requests concerning serious health problems of children
- we supported **9.816** children in the Greek Hospitals
- we undertook **2.459** transfers of infants and children (patients) all over Greece
- we provided preventive medical examinations to **17.955** children all over Greece
- we offered counseling support to **3.503** children and adults
- we undertook lectures to inform **10.720** students all over Greece
- we offered Creative occupation to **5.542** children in the Children's Play Area that we operate in Athens International Airport 'Eleftherios Venizelos'

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**\*Costas Yannopoulos** completed his post-secondary education at the University of London, where he obtained a degree in Marketing. Upon completing his studies, he returned to Athens and entered the business world. He was the owner of two companies, one in the field of informatics and the other in office technology. His professional life brought him in contact with multinational corporations such as IBM and Hewlett Packard, to name a few. In November 1995, his youngest son Andreas, then age 10, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour. Andreas expressed a wish to create an organization that assisted children in Greece and Cyprus who were in danger and/or who needed assistance. Andreas believed that every child deserved to smile. Unfortunately, in December 1995, Andreas lost his battle with cancer. In January 1996, Costas Yannopoulos registered the non-government organization *The Smile of the Child*. Since then, Costas Yannopoulos has dedicated all his efforts to keeping his son's dream alive. He currently holds the position of the President of the Board of Directors of the organization.

**Stefanos Alevizos** has worked as a psychologist at *The Smile of the Child* since 2006, and he is the coordinator of the Interactive & Preventive Sessions department, as well as the Children's Counselling department. He has graduated from the Department of Psychology of the Aristoteleion University of Thessaloniki. He has also attended an educational seminar about Mental Health of Infants and Children. He is very experienced in issues of abuse and school bullying, and he has published several articles in collective publications about child abuse. Moreover, he has participated on several occasions as an invited speaker in conferences and other scientific events in Greece dealing with bullying and child abuse. He has been a member of the Hellenic Forensic Psychiatric Association since 2013.

**Marina Kavallieraki** has graduated from the University of Bourgogne and has been working at *The Smile of the Child* for the last 13 years at the Interactive and Preventive sessions department dealing with e-learning sessions, implementation of innovative technology in learning, production of educational material and organization of workshops and training seminars addressing the needs of the school community.

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