

Nordic committee
and The Estonians Organisation for
Child and Youth Institutions

Invites to
Nord - Baltic Conference
18. - 22. September

Institutional care for
children and young people
a challenge for the future



Place: Hotel Strand - Pärnu, Estonia

The first official meeting between the Nordic- and the Baltic Countries

Since 1988 there has been a co-operation between the Nordic Countries. It has been arranged Nordic Conferences every second year for persons working in child- and adolescent institutions. During the preparations for the Nordic Conference 2001 the Nordic Committee decided to send an invitation to the Baltic Countries. They participated with two persons from each country. The participants from these countries represented organisations in their countries. It was made a statement that declared that it should be a goal to try to include the Baltic countries in a future co- operation. This conference in Pärnu, Estonia is the first conference for personnel working in institutions for children and adolescents in both the Baltic- and Nordic countries. There has been a working group including Nordic Committee and the Estonian organisations. The Estonians has been in close contact with both Lithuania and Latvia during this process. We hope that this conference will be the start of a co- operation between these countries, and we also hope that it will lead to closer connection between institutions and professionals. We think that it will be of mutual benefit for children and young people in need. We certainly have something to learn from each other!

The arrangement committee wishes you welcome to the conference

The program will be:

Wednesday:

1200 - 1600 Registration
Possibilities for those who arrive early to visit some institutions.

1600 - 1700 Opening session
Welcome
Pille Vaiksaar, Estonian committee
Lars R. Lund, Nordic committee

Thomas Kivimägi, Governor of Pärnu County

Cultural event

1700 - 1900 Opening lecture
1. Family in the changing society, how changes in the society affect childcare including institutional care.
Marju Lauristin, prof.
2. What is an institution!
Lars R. Lund, leader of Fjellbrott treatment center.

2000 - Dinner and cultural program
"Get to know each other" arrangement.

Thursday:

0900 - 1230 Sessions A - B - C – D

A

THE CHALLENGE OF VIOLENCE

- children and adolescents as victims of, witness to or perpetrators of violence

It is important to consider numerous factors in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of children and youth violence. It is necessary to understand the risk factors as well as those factors that build resiliency and potentially “protect” children and youth from engaging in violence.

Our lecture will consist of three parts:

1. UNDERSTANDING - Our theoretical perspective on violence and development
2. PREVENTION - Principles of prevention of violence in an institutional setting
3. TREATMENT - working with kids who have developed violent or aggressive behavior

Lecturer: **Per Isdal** (45) and **Mette Bengtson** (45) are psychologists and experienced psychotherapists. They work at “Alternative to Violence”, a treatment- and research center in Oslo, Norway. They are both specialists in treatment of children and adolescents with violence and aggression problems.

B

FOSTER CARE OR INSTITUTION?

Is foster care an alternative to institutional care for children separated from their families? The question cannot be answered in a simple way. There are several things to consider. What is the aim of the placement, and in what way can it be obtained? What is our view of the biological family - are the parents important and a resource for their child, or do we consider them as obstacles? How can we cooperate with the parents and engage them in our common work, regardless if the child is within the institution or with a foster family?

We want to share our experience from many years of work in Swedish residential care, and we hope that this will be a starting point for discussions on this topic.

Lecturer: **Margareta Johansson Winberg** is a social worker and **Birgitta Ärlund** a psychologist. They have long experience of working with children and families in residential care. They are employed at AB Vårlljus in Stockholm, a limited company charged with arranging qualified care and

treatment of children and families. After serving as directors of institutions, they are now occupied with strategic tasks and development work within the company.

C

HOW TO DEAL WITH SEXUALITY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE? VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR

Development of sexuality in child and in adolescent. Possible deviations. Sexual problems of children and youngsters in Estonia. Sexual abuse of children in Estonia. Frequency. Risk factors. Physical and behavioral signs. Immediate and long-term consequences. Who are the abusers of children in Estonia? What steps should be taken in case one suspects or recognizes victim of sexual abuse? The role of a teacher in helping child who had faced sexual abuse. Network in Estonia.

Lecturer: **Ruth Soonets**, headmaster of Tartu Support Center for Center for Abused Children.

D

MILIEU THERAPY

To eat, sing, argue, learn, work, listen, talk and other every-day events as therapeutic instruments.

Our workshop will focus on four major tasks for the client:

- Find out
- Take part
- Learn and practice
- Relate and change

The professionals offer a "milieu" which combines personal relations, professional acting and structure. The milieu offers an arena for the client's tasks and thereby for their personal development.

Personal changes never take place without resistance. In milieu therapy the efforts to influence mostly are made openly, but there are also hidden ways. We use manipulating as an instrument.

We will focus on the task for the professionals to be leaders of a developing process based on respect and professional efficiency.

A third focus will be the different instruments used in milieu therapy - such as working together, cooking, money, culture events, sports etc. How is the everyday method formed for each instrument?

Lecturer: **Anders Hagqvist**, your workshop leader has a master degree in social work and has been teaching at university level for ten years. His main subjects are methods and organisation of different kinds of care and influence work for young people. For the moment he works with developing social work and social care in Trollhättan, Sweden.

- 1230 - 1530 Lunch break
Town excursion - Alternative visit to local institutions
- 1530 - 1800 Session A - B - C - D continuous
- 1930 - Social arrangement at Kuursaal

Friday:

- 0900 - 1000 Joint lecture

THE ETHICAL PROBLEMS IN PROTECTION OF CHILDREN RIGHTS

The credo of activities of Lithuanian Children Fund - CHILD MUST GROW IN FAMILY! First of all, the possibility to live in biological family must be given to every child, in other way child has to be either taken under the state warship or put in ward in another form. It's very important for children to take part in family or community life. We have to evaluate every child and understand him as minority, paying special attention to his place in growing older community. In view of a high level of unemployment and difficulties of a transition period many children grow in families where adults have no work and appropriate to social protection and guarantees. Lack of workplaces has an effect and for youth, that in turn raises social intensity and a crime rate. Special danger to children is represented by the growing organized crime, dealing of drugs, sexual harassment and violence of children. Owing to unemployment, difficult social and economic conditions even more often children become victims of aggression of adults, parents of children are also involved in criminal and illegal activity because frequently illegal activity / actions are a unique source of livelihood for family and children.

Speaking about well being of children and the institutes providing supervision behind them, it is necessary to note, that the given institutes are really necessary. It is important to provide protection of rights of children living in houses of trusteeship. The giving of the child in institute of trusteeship is exception which the basic purpose is to provide well being and to keep relations with family and also to create new attitudes (relations) with adults, living thus in family. The state programs on maintenance of social and economic well being should be carried out in a complex. Children who have got under the state trusteeship, their families and relatives are obliged to receive services in maintenance of the well-being, given by the state.

Lecturer: **Romualda Navikaite**, Director of the Lithuanian children's fund.

HOW CAN WE DEFEND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN INSTITUTIONS

Latvia is the only country among the Baltic States in which the orphan's court (in cities) and parish court (in rural areas) function institutionally for the protection of children's rights. Both orphan's court and parish/municipality court are the guardianship and trusteeship institutions established by local authorities the competence of which includes protecting the personal and property interests of minors' and those lacking legal capacity. Besides, it is the orphan's court and parish court that are entitled to appoint institutional care to a child who is deprived of parental attendance. Hence, it is also upon the orphan's court and parish court to further maintain interinstitutional cooperation at an attempt to return a child to his family, or provide him with an alternative childcare that would match the standards of family environment. This report will specifically view the ways and functions of institutional childcare, and will give an insight into the responsibilities and the role of orphan's court and parish/municipality court in Latvia. Finally, the report will bring up the subject of the interinstitutional cooperation that targets the protection of children's rights.

Lecturer: **Ilse Freimante**, Director at Riga Orphan's Court

1130 - 1230 Session with language groups. (Each group has a leader.)

1230 - 1330 Lunch

1330 - 1500 End session and closing event.

1530 - Departure busses for Tallinn