Regional Consultation
Child Helplines in Europe 2019
Child Helpline International hosts biennial Regional and International Consultations. Regional Consultations allow Child Helpline International members to address strategic matters of interest to child helplines in the region. The Child Helpline International network in Europe has benefitted from seven previous Regional Consultations and three previous Policy Dialogues.

The Eighth Regional Consultation of Child Helplines in Europe, was held on November 27, 2019 on the online platform Zoom. This was the first time that a consultative meeting was conducted online, and was done so, partly to reduce any barriers to our members attending.

We valued the participation of 27 child helpline members, both full and associate, from across this region. The agenda was made up of several different sessions, including an open session, in which a representative from Pro Juventute, the child helpline based in Switzerland, updated the network about their new app, and a presentation was given about the recent cooperation of The Smile of the Child in Greece and Telefono Azzurro from Italy, to support children in migration. This theme of cooperation continued into the strategic sessions later in the day, where members highlighted the importance of Child Helpline International in strengthening partnerships and stimulating knowledge exchange between helplines, and agreed this role should continue and be further strengthened in the 2021-2023 strategy.

Magnus Jägerskog, Deputy Regional Representative for Europe, also led a session which summarised the outcomes of the 2019 Membership Survey and which stimulated discussions about the membership fee structure and the process of selecting Supervisory Board Members.
Agenda

10:00 - 11:15
**Introduction**
Opening remarks by Magnus Jägerskog (Deputy Regional Representative for Europe) and Patrick Krens (Executive Director of Child Helpline International)

10:15 - 11:00
**Child Helpline International Updates**
Including WeListen programme, the new data strategy, the 2019 Global Voices Report and UNCRC 30 Campaign, as well as a TorontoLine update and introduction to the new eLearning module on inclusive practice

11:00 - 11:15
**Question and answers**

11:15 - 12:00
**Open session**
Session for members to share updates of their own and to exchange knowledge and best practices. Presentations include an introduction to the 'Digital Buddy App' from Thomas Brunner, Director of Pro Juventute, Switzerland and an update on the cooperation betweenTelefono Azzurro and Smile of the Child.

14:00 - 14:30
**2019 Membership Survey**
Presentation of the outcomes of the 2019 Membership Survey, presented by Magnus Jägerskog

14:10 - 15:45
**Multi-annual planning 2021-2023**
Presentation led by Patrick Krens on the draft plan for the strategic period of 2021-2023. This session also aimed at gathering input, feedback and suggestions from the members

15:45 - 16:00
**Closing remarks**
Closing remarks from Patrick Krens and Magnus Jägerskog
Summary of Sessions

Child Helpline International Updates

During this session, the team at Child Helpline International provided a short overview of the work that has taken place in the organisation over the past year. Senior Programme Manager Richard Ombono began by sharing updates on the current programmes Child Helpline International is working on. Highlights include the establishing of child helplines in El Salvador, Panama and Benin, the strengthening of child helplines in the East and South Africa (ESA) region and continuation of programmes such as ACT to EVAC. Members were also updated on the launch of the new eLearning module on Inclusive Practice, part of the WeListen project.

Another highlight of this update session, was the presentation of the new data strategy by Director of Operations, Helen Mason. This strategy aims to improve the reliability of data submitted by child helplines through the collaborative development of a new data framework. As a result of this, Child Helpline International will be able to more readily identify trends at the global, regional and national levels and be better informed on which topics, issues and regions to focus programmes on. The strategy also seeks to improve the comparability of data through standardisation and training and, lastly it hopes to strengthen the network's contribution to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, and other normative and practical goals, by incorporating such objectives within our data mapping.

During this session members provided input and feedback on this strategy, highlighting that a top advocacy issue should be online safety and issues faced by children and young people online. Some also suggested the increasing threat posed by climate should be a focused area of advocacy and be represented in the data submission. It was also suggested that helpline volunteers and counsellors who work closely with the data should also review the new data strategy. The next steps include a review by a number of sub-committees, and a final review from the whole network mid-2020, before launching to the network by the end of 2020.

Lastly, also part of this update from Child Helpline International, was a formal presentation of to the Global Voices Report, which presents 2017 and 2018 data from across the network, and a summary of the UNCRC 30th Anniversary campaign, with a presentation of the animation that was launched on November 20 2019 to commemorate this anniversary and to call for the international community to renew commitments to protect and promote children's rights.
Open Session

This session was set aside for members to facilitate discussions of their own, on a topic or issue of their choice. This was a particularly good opportunity for members to share updates and experiences and to get a better picture of some of the main issues that face children across Europe.

The session began with a presentation from Thomas Brunner, Director of Pro Juventute, Switzerland, about the helpline's new 'Digital Buddy App'. Focused on fostering a healthy relationship with digital media, this app aims to accompany children and teenagers and to empower them in terms of online competence and security. Thomas also explained how it aims to enable children and adolescents to regain control of their contributions to digital media by pointing out possible dangers. The Digital Buddy App uses artificial intelligence to detect and notify a user, of online threats and risks such as inappropriate content, or when their data has been breached. In addition, it also provides screen time information and links to the additional resource such as advice and content of the 147 helpline (www.147.ch).

More information about this app can be found here.

Also sharing an update of their own, was the team at the Smile of the Child helpline in Greece. The update was regarding the recent cooperation between The Smile of the Child and Telefono Azzurro, our child helpline member in Italy. They highlighted urgent need for strong cooperation, with the goal to ensure immediate mobilization within the first 24 hours in the cases of children at immediate risk. In addition, emphasis is also placed on the vulnerability of children in migration, an issue of particular concern for countries and societies like Greece and Italy, both being a first point of entry in the EU.

More information on this cooperation can be found here:
Membership Survey 2019

This half-hour session was led by Deputy Regional Representative, Magnus Jägerskog, who presented the findings of the 2018 membership survey. Participants were also encouraged to share their thoughts and feedback to supplement and expand on a number of different questions that arose from this survey. A summary of these discussions can be seen in the diagram below:

- **The Role of Child Helpline International**: Members agreed the role of Child Helpline International should be to enable knowledge sharing between members, connecting members and assuring quality within the network. Many restated that the most valuable aspect of the network is the knowledge exchange and the strength each helpline gets from this as a result. It was suggested that the focus, should be reinforcing that strength. It was also agreed that the main/primary role of Child Helpline International should not include the raising of funds for members.

- **Selection of the Supervisory Board**: This refers to revision of the election process so that all Supervisory Board Members are elected directly at the General Assembly. Many agreed that this would be a means to ensure a more open and participatory process.

- **Membership Fee Structure**: The question was posed as to whether the fee should be tiered or in fact based on different income levels of the helplines. Members in turn raised a number of questions. One concern is that this will put more pressure on helplines to raise funds. Following this, it was clear that developing a service-based membership and fee model is the obvious next step. Patrick Krens indicated that further review from the Supervisory Board would take place, before a final vote by the membership at the General Assembly in September 2020.

- **Would different tiers of membership mean different levels of access to Child Helpline International’s platforms?**

- **What about helplines where donors will not allow funding to go towards Child Helpline International?**

- **How would this change the membership?**

- **What would the differentiated fees be?**
Multi-Annual Planning Session 2021-2023

The final session of this year’s European Regional Consultation was a 2021-2023 strategic envisioning meeting. Input from the membership is vital for this multi-annual planning, and this session sought to gather feedback, thoughts and opinions of our members in Europe so that the next strategic phase can begin to take shape. Below is a summary, which has been broken down into thematic areas of discussion.

**Advocacy**

It was widely agreed that Child Helpline International plays a key role in terms of advocacy on a regional and international level. Participants agreed that it would be preferred that the individual helpline member plays its own role in national-level advocacy. It was emphasised, however, that making members aware of global and regional trends and themes is helpful for member-led advocacy. Regarding advocacy themes, members agreed that Child Helpline International should focus on; Violence/abuse, Mental Health, Migration and Gender, Inequality and Inclusion, with particular emphasis on digital wellbeing and online safety and it’s links with all four of these themes.

**Fundraising**

Participants agreed that the role of Child Helpline International should not be to raise funds for members. Instead, Child Helpline International could play a role in identifying funding opportunities, recommending members for potential funds and connecting members, which also helps to create funding partnerships. It was also suggested that in the future, there could be the possibility of member-led programmes, whereby Child Helpline International plays an advisory role only.

**Youth Participation**

Members felt that the Youth Advisory Council must be a key part of Child Helpline International at governance level, and should continue to play a role in forming and shaping the vision and strategy of the organisation. They highlighted the importance however, of ensuring this is not done in a generic or tokenistic way. The youth must represent the diversity of children and young people, including those who may not be able to actively participate in volunteer work, and must benefit the youth and really integrate their voice into the decision-making processes.

**Membership Structure**

It was suggested that the Quality Standards assessment may migrate towards an accreditation system based on a tiered approach. Some members highlighted concern at the potential decrease in the membership as a result of this, however others mentioned this would be vital in ensuring the quality and strength of the network. Of course, everyone agreed that in this scenario, non-accredited members would still remain as members. This discussion is one to continue over the next year.
Looking ahead

Following the discussions from this Regional Consultation, it was agreed that the cooperation in Europe must not stop in the Regional Consultation but should continue through regular meetings and discussions. Members agreed that the online format worked well in conjunction with face-to-face meetings and it was suggested that, with some small technological improvements, more regional meetings could be held using the 'Zoom' online tool and could provide more frequent opportunities for members to exchange updates, knowledge and ideas.

As for the next steps, further work will be carried out by the team at Child Helpline International to gather the inputs of the rest of the membership regarding the new data strategy topics raised during the multi-annual planning session. This includes reviewing the feedback received during this meeting, as well as the Regional Consultations of Child Helplines in Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East and Northern Africa. There will also be a chance for members in the Americas and Caribbean region to offer their thoughts and opinions during their Regional Consultation to be held in Uruguay in March 2020. Both the Youth Advisory Council and the Supervisory Board met in Amsterdam in the latter half of 2019 and will also continue strategic discussions in 2020. In addition, various steering and sub-committees will have an opportunity to review all discussions and put forward a strategy that will be finally reviewed by the whole membership before a final launch at the International Consultation in September 2020.

All European Members are invited to attend this International Consultation, which will be hosted by BRIS Sweden and held 7-9 September 2020 in Stockholm. It will bring together government officials, high-level partners and members of the Child Helpline International network from more than 100 countries. The theme for the IC2020 is “Ten Year Countdown to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals”. As a network operating in 143 countries and territories around the world, Child Helpline International will harness the momentum and our collective voice to state our unique role and ambition in contributing to Agenda 2030. This will be summarised in a joint statement, The Stockholm Declaration, which the membership will develop together. Another special feature of the event will be the launch of the platform currently known as ‘Toronto Line’, the network’s integrated and collectively developed child helpline technology platform.

We thank everybody who participated in this Regional Consultation of Child Helplines in Europe and we look forward to continuing these discussions over the course of 2020 and beyond.
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