

## Keynote speakers

### **Prof. Gordana Buljan Flander, Ph.D.**

*Director of the Child and Youth Protection Center of Zagreb*



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Prof. Gordana Buljan Flander is a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, working with children and parents for over 30 years, one of first professionals in Croatia who recognized the importance of the issue of child abuse and neglect. In 1997 she founded the helpline for abused and neglected children, and in 2002 initiated foundation of the Child Protection Center of Zagreb, the only health care institution specialized in working with traumatized children in Croatia. Among many recognitions of her work, the most significant is International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) award in 2008 for Center's multidisciplinary

She is also active in the scientific field, with seven books and a number of scientific and professional papers on child development, parenting and child trauma. She works as a lecturer at many Universities and is court expert for psychology, doing trainings in domestic and international settings, interested in sharing her experiences in Croatia and worldwide.

### **What we all need to know to be able to provide proper aid and support to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse**

Research shows a strong connection between a history of childhood abuse and negative outcomes in both childhood and adulthood, which span from mental and physical health difficulties to diminished economic wellbeing. Understanding the needs of traumatized children and knowledge on child friendly, trauma informed approach and trauma focused interventions, are of key importance for protecting the child and supporting the child's process of healing. Unfortunately, due to lack of such understanding by the child protection system, after the disclosure of the abuse children **often face experiences which deepen their traumatic experiences and undermine the process of healing. The aim of this lecture is to present the experiences of children victims within the child protection system from the child's perspective, provide an overview of scientific research on protective and risk factors after the initial disclosure of abuse, and to present the basic principles of child friendly and trauma sensitive approach within the child protection system.** Further, we will present the implementation of these principles in the work of Child and Youth Protection Center of Zagreb, which has been recognized as a model of good practice by the Council of Europe, and discuss the challenges that have been overcome and those we are currently facing.

## **Bruna Profaca, Ph.D., clinical psychologist**

*Child and Youth Protection Center of Zagreb*



Bruna Profaca is a clinical psychologist at the Child and Youth Protection Center of Zagreb, an institution specialised in work with traumatised and abused children and their families. The focus of her interest in clinical work, as well as in her professional and academic work, is the field of stress, trauma, traumatic loss and crisis during childhood, parenting, treatment work and counselling for children and families, and children's emotional difficulties.

As an external associate she teaches at several faculties at the University of Zagreb and has collaborated in several scientific projects. She participates in the training of professionals working with children and families in Croatia and abroad. She had published and presented a number of scientific and professional papers, articles in books, brochures and leaflets.

## **Treating childhood abuse trauma**

Today there are clear indications that difficulties during childhood are cumulative and affect the emergence of psychopathological symptoms associated with traumatic experiences. These problems lead to neurobiological consequences, psychosocial consequences and health risks. In addition, without early interventions, difficulties may emerge in cognitive functioning and learning, as well as in the form of emotional and social difficulties. Family system is here an important focus of prevention and intervention actions, with providing support to parents of traumatized children as a key focus. Questions arising here are what interventions the child needs? In assessing whether the child should be included in treatment, it is important to assess whether child's reactions interfere with his or her everyday functioning.

This presentation will consider treatment planning and setting goals in work with traumatized children. In addition to the overview of theoretical approaches in trauma treatment, it will focus on a more detailed model based on three phases, developed by Judith Herman as a standard way of working with clients who exhibit posttraumatic symptoms

Regardless of the type of treatment and therapeutic orientation, it is important that mental health experts working with the child during the process of recovery also assess the child's parents by answering these questions: Is the parent protecting the child? Can the parent respond adequately to the child's needs? How is the parent coping with child's behaviour and reactions? Is the parent giving emotional support to the child? Having focus on the empowerment of parents can help them to clearly identify their supportive role.

**Assist. Prof. Vita Poštuvan, Ph.D.**

*Slovene Centre for Suicide Research*



She works as a researcher and Deputy Head of the Slovene Centre for Suicide Research and Department of Psychology (FAMNIT). Her professional work covers the field of psychological counselling, psychotherapy and prevention. She leads the work related to clinical-research and public-health interventions in suicidology, bereavement, and crisis interventions. She has participated in major European and Slovenian studies and worked as a fellow researcher at the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry in Tokyo, Japan.

She is finishing certification process to be recognised as a cognitive-behavioural therapist. She also implements mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). She contributed to a large number of professional papers, organised and participated at national and international conferences, and published articles and chapters in the most prestigious journals in field of psychology, medicine and suicidology.

## **Matej Čujovič, Msc.**

*High Court Ljubljana*

Matej Čujovič is a judge at the High Court in Ljubljana. He is an expert in civil and family law cases, an experienced lecturer and trainer, he regularly participates in projects with the Center for Education in Judicial System, he gives lectures to lawyers, experts and students of the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana. He is the author of numerous professional articles, dealing primarily with family, civil procedural, inheritance, and compensation law. He speaks eight languages and he is also an amateur theatre actor.

## **Gašper Mlakar, Ph.D.**

*Association for Nonviolent Communication, Slovenia*

Gašper Mlakar works as a counsellor and social worker at nongovernmental, non-profit and humanitarian organization Association for Nonviolent Communication. He is working with the perpetrators of domestic violence and parents under the program »Social Skills Training for perpetrators« and leads groups and individual counselling in Ljubljana, Celje and Slovenj Gradec.

During his postgraduate study of Theoretical Psychoanalysis at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, he participated at national and international philosophical conferences and published papers and a chapter for Department of Philosophy publications and others. He is a Greenpeace activist and volunteer.

## **Iztok Koren**

*Association for Nonviolent Communication, Slovenia*

Iztok Koren works as a counsellor and social worker at non governmental, non profit and humanitarian organization Association for Nonviolent Communication. He leads program for domestic violence perpetrators »Social Skills Training for perpetrators« in Maribor, Novo mesto and Ljubljana. He leads groups and individual meetings.

He also worked as a Coordinator for mental health at the Center for Social Work Murska Sobota and as a social worker in a day center for homeless people at the Association for help and self-help of homeless people Kings of the Street.

## Workshops

### **Workshop: Primary prevention of violence and child abuse – what works and why prevention is so important?**

The consequences of violence and child abuse are various and multiple. The results of the ACE<sup>1</sup> study, performed on a sample of 17.421 participants in the period of 2 years, showed a direct connection between the childhood trauma and the onset of chronic diseases, mental illness, imprisonment experiences, and work related problems, such as absenteeism in adulthood. In addition to costs of healthcare and social care, child abuse has a major economic impact. The US studies found that on an annual basis the direct and indirect costs arising from the child abuse problem raised to a total of US \$ 94,000,000,000, or 1 % of the country's GDP (WHO, ISPCAN, 2006).

We cannot completely protect children from violence and abuse, but we can empower them with information, knowledge, and skills, so that they can respond adequately and protect themselves if or when being faced with risks of violence or abuse. In the framework of primary prevention activities, the problem of violence and child abuse is being addressed by strengthening the children's protective factors.

The main aim of primary prevention is protecting children from suffering traumatic consequences caused by violence or abuse. We also aim to prevent children and teenagers causing violence as children and teenagers and as adults in their relationships with their children and with other adults. It is important that primary preventive messages and skills are being presented to children starting in the preschool period. The programs have to be developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, long-term, including children's social network.

One of the successful primary prevention programs that has been implemented in kindergartens and elementary schools in Croatia and Slovenia since 1998 is the Child Abuse Prevention program (CAP program). The main message of the program is that all children have the right to be safe, strong, and free from violence and abuse. The program offers a developmentally appropriate approach to present the topics of bullying and child abuse to children in kindergarten and elementary school. In addition to the children, the program also addresses their parents and employees in kindergartens and schools. The program talks about violence and child abuse from a positive perspective of strengths, focusing on strengthening the protective factors of children and adults.

The concept of process-like and systematically implemented preventive activities for ensuring the safety and welfare of children will be presented in the workshop through theoretical emphasis and presentation of good practices from kindergartens and primary schools in Zagreb. Participants will learn about the arguments for the systematic implementation of primary prevention programs and the factors of successful preventive activities.

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<sup>1</sup> "Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults", American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 1998, Volume 14, 245–258)

## **Trainers: Marina Trbus, MSc., psychologist and a children's rights specialist**

*Step By Step Parents' Association*



Marina Trbus is a psychologist and a children's rights specialist. She has been working at the Step By Step Parents' Association as a Program Manager for CAP Croatia since 2011. she is also a board member of the Coordination of Children's Associations, an umbrella platform for NGOs active in the field of protraction and promotion of children's rights.

Working as a CAP trainer, Marina has implemented over 80 CAP workshops. She has been an integral part of supporting the CAP network throughout Croatia, managing around 450 CAP facilitators. Marina has been actively involved in two important projects of youth violence prevention, namely #deleteCyberBullying and Teen CAP. She successfully managed the EU project entitled Empower the Right of the Child to be Safe. She was in charge of editing the advocacy handbook (We are All Child Protection System) and a monitoring handbook (Empower Children's Right to be Safe). She is the author of several scientific and expert papers and has presented and held workshops at conferences throughout Croatia and the EU.

## **Mateja Štirn, MSc., psychologist and psychotherapist**

*ISA institute*



She has extensive experience as a practitioner, trainer, and consultant. Her specific interests include child protection and victims of violence protection issues, psychological trauma, interdisciplinary approaches to safety and wellbeing of children, youth and their families, equal opportunities, diversity and integration issues. She has extensive knowledge of curriculum development and has implemented a large number of trainings and educational projects. She has been working as the national CAP coordinator for Slovenia since 1998. She implemented a large number of CAP workshops and CAP facilitators trainings. Recently, she has been focusing her attention to developing and implementing programs for the promotion of personal resiliency - an important protective factor of our health and well-being.

## Workshop: Creating community solutions for effective psychosocial support to older survivors of violence

The share of elderly in total population in Europe is rapidly increasing. There is already 18,9 % of population aged 65 and over.<sup>2</sup> In Maribor the percentage of elderly in 2013 was already 23%.<sup>3</sup> Experts assume this trend had surprised the social environment in which we live and work. Today, aging is still considered mostly as a taboo, is often not spoken of, is ignored and ashamed of. There is too little discussion and not enough awareness rose regarding the increasing violence against elderly (usually economic and connected with physical violence). The common companions of aging are poverty, loneliness and lack of services which would increase quality of life and enable the elderly to live a more decent later life; but most importantly would provide the lengthiest possible stay in a familiar environment.

Material security is very important, but it is almost ineffective in the absence of positive communication between different generations, and lacking quality mutual relationships, solidarity and cooperation. This is also why the activities of the government, non-governmental organisations and families are very important; by providing the elderly a set of measures which would allow them to maintain good living fitness with various activities for the time in life when the elder needs assistance of the inclosing environment, in order that this period is short as possible and with least possible pain for the elder and his social network.

Nevertheless, in the last few years some activities were detected in the field of prevention. Postmodern social networks for intergenerational co-existence in local environments allow operating of self-helping groups for the elderly. There are more and more intergenerational centres developing different preventive programs by associating young, middle-aged and older generations. Voluntary work, day care centres, various forms of counselling for the elderly and their relatives, are being organized and expanding. Furthermore, those who are physically impaired or face other changes accompanying aging are being increasingly incorporated in before mentioned programs. All these activities enable building awareness in the elderly about self-care and satisfying their needs and decrease the risk of being exposed to violence. The purpose of this workshop is to examine through a practical example, how is the violence against elderly handled in different countries and to demonstrate some good practices in the field of prevention.

### Trainer: Ružica Petrovič, professional counsellor

*Center for social work Maribor*



Ružica Petrovič is a professional counsellor in the field of family relations at the Center for social work Maribor. She has been working in the field of social care for more than 32 years (mostly in the fields of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, partner and family counselling). She is leading self-help groups for elderly and coordinating service providers of the home care for elderly. She's a certified experiential gestalt family therapist (EAGT). As an educator, trainer or supervisor she has been active in several national and international programs and projects in the field of

domestic violence, primary prevention, providing support to the elderly victims of violence etc. She is also a lecturer at DOBA faculty, covering subjects of intergenerational cooperation and organisation of activities for the elderly.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Eurostat, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.maribor.si/dokument.aspx?id=28094>.

## **Workshop: Domestic violence, gender based violence and asylum: case studies from practice**

This workshop, led by AIRE Centre expert lawyer on asylum, Markella Papadouli, will look into the interplay between domestic violence and gender based violence on one hand and asylum claims on the other. Domestic and gender based violence as grounds of persecution and hence as a ground for an asylum application will be reviewed and practical examples from other EU legal realms will be explored. The workshop will also look into the fundamental theoretical principles on asylum and domestic and gender based violence alongside the relevant CJEU/ ECtHR jurisprudence on the issue (or lack thereof). In addition to the above, the issue of identification of victims of domestic and gender based violence in asylum proceedings and vice versa will be discussed.

### **Trainer: Markella Papadouli, MSc.**

*The AIRE Centre, London*



She is a UK Registered European lawyer, Greek qualified, who studied Law at the University of Athens and holds an LLM degree in Maritime Law from the University of Southampton and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Warwick on International Relations and Human Rights. Markella works as a lawyer and a legal project manager for The AIRE Centre in London, currently managing the Esmee Fairburn funded Trafficking project, providing free legal advice and representation to victims of trafficking, the delivery of training to relevant stakeholders and the representation of the AIRE Centre at conferences and meetings worldwide on asylum and trafficking. Markella is also a Lecturer at London South Bank University on European Asylum Law and Policy and International Refugee Law.

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Finally, the participants will be encouraged to share examples from their experience and will be invited to work together to find solutions to a case study, inspired by a real life case.

## **Lecture: Human trafficking – dealing with a hidden crime in modern society**

This session led by AIRE Legal Project Manager and Registered European lawyer Markella Papadouli will focus on trafficking as a form of gender based violence. Issues touched upon will include different forms of trafficking, trafficking as an international organised crime and indicators for identifying potential victims.