



**National Children's
Advocacy Center**

Memorandum of Understanding

between

**The Smile of the Child
(hereafter referred to as "SMILE")**

and

**National Child Advocacy Center
(hereafter referred to as "NCAC")**

Today, the 21st November 2018, "The Smile of the Child", Nonprofit Association, 1 Spyrou Loui str., 15124 Maroussi, Athens, Greece, represented by Mr. Konstantinos Giannopoulos, President of the Board of Directors; and, the "National Children's Advocacy Center", 210 Pratt Avenue NE, Huntsville, AL 35801, represented by Mr. Chris Newlin, Executive Director.

1. Introduction

'The Smile of the Child' ('Smile'), in Greek "Το Χαμόγελο του Παιδιού", is the largest internationally recognized non-profit, non-governmental Organization in Greece in the critical field of child protection, support of children and families with children in need.

The Organization was founded by a 10-year-old boy, Andreas Yannopoulos, before he succumbed to brain cancer in late 1995. His father Costas Yannopoulos, President of the Board of Directors, inspired by the wish of well-being for all children in the world expressed by his son, has gradually led 'Smile' to what it is today: in over 23 years of action 'Smile' has made the difference for more than 1.480.000 children and their families in Greece.

In these years, the Organization's mission and vision is to stand next to groups of children in need of protection and care: **children in poverty or threatened by poverty, missing children, children with serious health problems and children victims of any form of violence**. More specifically, being guided by the overall

vision of 'Smile', the mission is to operate nationwide, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, by offering services to all children in Greece regardless of ethnicity and/or religion. 'Smile's values are care, equality, dignity, love, selflessness, flexibility, innovation, respect, participation, consistency and cooperation.

As mentioned, '**Smile**' stands among others next to **children victims of any form of violence**, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse, neglect and bullying, smuggling and trafficking, as well as other forms. 'Smile' has been a leader in developing activities in Greece aiming at addressing the phenomenon of child abuse at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention. More specifically, at the level of primary prevention, "The Smile" regularly implements awareness raising campaigns, health promotion programs and interventions in schools and other facilities where children are supported, training programs for professionals, as well as community dissemination and awareness raising events such as conferences and other events; at the level of secondary prevention, it operates the National Helpline SOS 1056 for children as well as the European Hotline for missing children 116000 and the European Helpline for children and adolescents 116111, it develops activities for extremely vulnerable children's populations such as migrant and refugee children, while it also regularly cooperates with juridical and law enforcement authorities for suspected victims of child abuse, it provides residential care for children-victims that had to be removed from their offending relatives' custody, and so forth; at the tertiary level it offers long-term treatment and support to children victims of abuse, counseling to their non-offending parents and caregivers, and supports children throughout their early years of adulthood to make sure they can adequately cope with long term implications of their exposure to traumatic circumstances.

Therefore, all of 'Smile's actions are targeted to **prevention, intervention and therapy for children victims of abuse**, along with the other aforementioned fields.

The main principle which distinguishes 'Smile' from other similar organizations is the holistic approach in the support and protection of children, through the mobilization of the full range of activities in each individual case. Furthermore, 'Smile' recognizes the competence of authorities thus it promotes the power of joining forces through continuous and structure collaboration. When it comes to children, temporary involvement is not an option for 'Smile', thus it guarantees the continuity of any action it undertakes, ex. the Lines, Home, Support Center, etc. In order to achieve all of the above, it is essential to respond with flexibility in any occurred case.

It is important to mention that 'Smile' is a certified Organization from the Hellenic Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Solidarity for the provision of first, second and third-level services of social care, one of only two organizations in Greece. Moreover, 'Smile' is official partner to DG ECHO (Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission) through the signing of a Framework Partnership Agreement for the implementation of actions of humanitarian assistance in line with the principles of its 23 years of operation. 'Smile' became, thus, the first strictly national Organization in Greece that became official partner to DG ECHO.

While the actions of 'Smile' target children in Greece, its cooperation with international actors and partners has gradually grown into a mission of paramount importance. The Organization has learned and borrowed international examples and best practices from key international actors in the main areas of its focus. By now, however, "The Smile of the Child" is also in a position to showcase its own significant experience and transfer its know-how to third countries.

The "National Child Advocacy Center" (NCAC) revolutionized the United States'

response to child sexual abuse. Since its creation in 1985, the NCAC has served as a model for the 1000+ Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) now operating in the United States and in more than 33 countries throughout the world.

The CAC model of a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach to child abuse, developed through the vision of Former Congressman Robert E. "Bud" Cramer and a group of key individuals, coordinates law enforcement, criminal justice, child protective services, and medical and mental health workers onto one coordinated team. This model is predicated on two primary concepts:

1. No one agency or organization can comprehensively respond to child abuse. The only way to successfully respond is with a coordinated multidisciplinary team.
2. The "system" which is developed should actually help involved children and not cause them any further harm.

The NCAC campus provides co-location for many of our MDT partners, and we currently provide comprehensive child abuse response for all cases of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, and exposure to violence for children in Madison County, Alabama. This includes conducting forensic interviews, providing medical exams, providing victim advocacy services, and providing multiple trauma-focused evidence-based mental health interventions.

After developing its innovative CAC/MDT approach in Huntsville, the NCAC earned a national reputation and began to train others to deal effectively with this critical issue. Through its influence in training and leadership, communities across the country and across the world began to model their child abuse programs after the CAC/MDT approach created at the NCAC.

Training for child abuse response professionals began in February 1985 with the *Southeast Symposium on Child Sexual Abuse*, with 367 attendees from states in the southeastern U.S., and has now grown into the *International Symposium on Child Abuse*, with 1,364 attendees from 49 States, the District of Columbia, and 9 foreign countries in March 2017.

In addition to *Symposium*, the NCAC Training Center trains thousands of people each year, from the United States and around the world on how to recognize and support maltreated children. More than 138,000 child abuse professionals from all 50 states and 113 countries have been trained by the NCAC since 1985. The NCAC training initiatives, including the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center, have been significantly supported by the United States Department of Justice for more than 25 years.

Through the work of its Prevention Department, the NCAC provides numerous programs in Madison County, AL:

1. **Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN)** is a school-based program designed to provide child abuse prevention and safety information to school children. Staff members and trained volunteers teach youth about personal safety including inappropriate touching, Internet safety, and bullying.

2. **Healthy Families** is a parent support program for first-time parents living in Madison County. Parenting is a difficult and demanding job that is made easier with positive support system. Healthy Families offers family support and education services that begin in the last trimester of the pregnancy or before the baby is one month old.
3. **Parenting Classes** are offered to parents in Madison County using The Nurturing Program for Parents. The six-week long parenting classes begin every two months throughout the year.
4. **Partnering in Parenting** program aims to serve fathers and/or any parent living in Madison County, Alabama interested in learning about positive parenting and healthy marriage/relationship and co-parenting skills.
5. **Child Sexual Abuse Prevention for Adults** - Stewards of Children® Training is for every adult who cares about the safety of children. Child sexual abuse happens in our homes, neighborhoods, churches, schools, youth sports and online. It can happen to a child you care about – even your own child.

2. Principles of Commitment

The two Organizations share and are guided by a series of common principles, namely:

- Both Organizations are committed to the protection of children.
- Both Organizations believe that any work we do should have the best interests of children as a primary orienting principle.
- Both Organizations believe the only way to be truly effective in responding to child abuse is by having a multidisciplinary response, and government agencies must be a part of this response.
- Both Organizations believe that all countries can learn from others to help identify how best to protect children.
- Both Organizations believe that all children have the right to grow up free from abuse and neglect.
- Both Organizations believe that if children are abused, they have the right to receive comprehensive, high-quality services to help them heal from these experiences.

3. Fields of cooperation

In 2014, recognizing the need for support to children victims of abuse and inspired by the US model of the Child Advocacy Centers, 'Smile' established "**The House of the**

Child” with the aim to provide Customized Mental Health Services to Children and Adolescents, victims of any form of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence, and is comprised of a multi-disciplinary therapeutic team which undertakes a holistic and comprehensive evaluation and treatment. Since 2014 more than 650 children have received 12.500 therapeutic services from the multi-disciplinary team of “The House of the Child” Day Center.

It was with the support of the US Embassy in Greece that earlier in that year (2014), ‘Smile’ invited Mr. Chris Newlin, Executive Director of **NCAC**, to Greece to provide a two-day intensive training seminar on the multidisciplinary model of the Child Advocacy Center. Based on this training and in the framework of the close partnership between ‘Smile’ and NCAC that ensued, ‘Smile’ managed to establish the facility and place it at the disposal of all competent authorities (judicial, prosecutorial and law enforcement authorities), as well as healthcare professionals in order to ensure child-friendly justice for victimized children through a unique testimony from victimized children.

‘Smile’ has also participated in **NCAC’s International Symposia on Child Abuse** held annually in Huntsville, Alabama. More specifically, ‘Smile’ participated (represented by a psychologist, Coordinator of its Prevention Dpt) in the 31st International Symposium on Child Abuse, with the financial support of the US Embassy, while this year (2018) ‘Smile’ participated in the 34th Symposium which brought together experts in the field of child abuse and neglect from across the world, hosting more than 160 workshops on victims’ treatment and support. This year, ‘Smile’ was invited to organize a workshop dedicated to sharing the Greek experience and the work done in the field through its “The House of the Child” Day Center, unique in the country in the provision of dedicated services to victims’ treatment and support. The Scientific Coordinator of the Day Center, currently also Chairperson of the Lanzarote Committee of the Council of Europe and Director at the Mental Health and Social Welfare Department of the Institute of Child Health in Greece, Dr. George Nikolaidis, provided a brief overview of the phenomenon of child abuse and neglect in Greece, presenting the most recent representative figures on the scope and range of the problem, but also the main characteristics of the difficulties and shortcomings in pre-existing services and provisions for victims in Greece.

a. Exchange of expertise and good practices

Both Organizations have a long-lasting experience in the field of child protection and support. The aforementioned experience, which also reflects the specific characteristics, both similarities and differences between the two countries –USA and Greece- , and more importantly the good practices, can be shared among the professionals of the two Organizations.

The exchange of expertise and good practices can focus on various fields, such as prevention actions, methodologies and tools, training modules for professionals, tools and mechanisms in the provision of social and psychological support, the operation of the Child Advocacy Center, etc.

The exchange can take place through visits, and in this direction both Organizations will seek funding from national/European/international institutions in order to cover the related expenses. Nonetheless the exchange can also take place virtually (via skype, webex and other electronic means) with the use of technology.

b. Training of professionals

Both Organizations acknowledge the importance of specialized and targeted training for their professionals, in order to improve and develop their skills, increase their performance and improve the quality of their services, for the benefit of their target groups.

The trainings will be in common fields of interest and via different means, including in situ trainings and/or virtual trainings (skype, webex, etc.).

c. Making use of existing tools and adjusting them to the national context

Each Organization has developed a series of tools for addressing child abuse, both in prevention as well intervention and response, which could be useful for the other. Therefore, both Organizations will seek to translate into their language the tools deemed most useful.

d. Developing and organizing joint awareness raising campaigns

Each Organization develops and carries out awareness raising campaigns, primarily on a national level, aimed at the prevention of child abuse. Both Organizations will explore the possibility of developing and organizing joint awareness raising campaigns, on an international level, aiming at bringing additional attention to the issue, and expanding the reach of their actions.

e. Co-organizing conference on child abuse

Both Organizations organize conferences and/or other events on the issue of child abuse. Parallel to seeking to participate in the other's events (either as participant or speaker/trainer), as is currently the practice, both Organizations will explore the possibility of co-organizing an international conference on child abuse to be hosted in Europe.

4. General Provisions

The implementation of activities under this agreement by 'Smile' and NCAC will be carried out in accordance with each organization's mandate, regulations and procedures. Each party shall bear its own costs generated as a result of this Agreement unless otherwise specifically agreed by the Parties.

Both parties will disseminate this MoU to their staff and will take all necessary action to promote its implementation.

The Parties shall designate contact persons to lead and take responsibility for delivering the various components of the cooperation in the respective areas.

The Parties commit to communicate periodically, to review and evaluate its implementation and propose, if necessary, amendments.

This MoU shall enter into force on the date of its signature by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties. It may be terminated by either Party by providing the other Party with prior written notice. The MoU can be modified in writing at any time by mutual consent of the Parties.



Konstantinos Giannopoulos
President, Board of Directors
The Smile of the Child



Chris Newlin
Executive Director
National Child Advocacy Center

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