

# INSIDE: Meet the pilot - p3

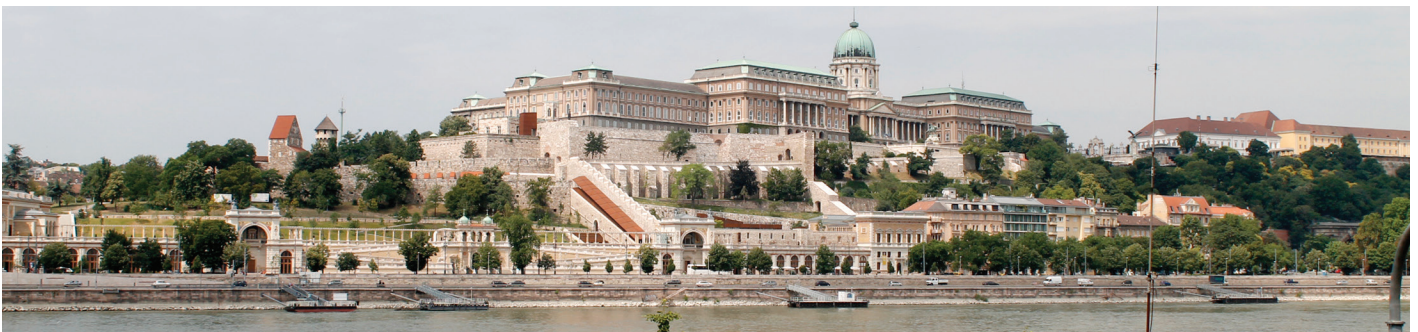
NEW!

# TURNING THE PAGE



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## BUDAPEST BLAST OFF!



**A**CTION for Change had a great take off at the Houses of Parliament in London where all partners met for the first time, but the project really blasted into orbit at the two day event in Budapest.

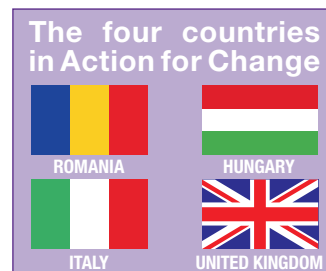
The event marked the launch of pilot projects in each country, the Women's Shadow Board finally met face to face and have launched their creative journey, the first phase of our research is complete, and we are placing our evaluation mechanisms in orbit of each pilot project.

We are now into month 7 of the project and some of our achievements include:

- Recruiting two women from each country who have had previous experience of domestic abuse and having their children taken into care
- Forming the Women's Shadow Board of which there are eight members and bringing the members together to meet in Budapest
- Recruiting pilot project practitioners in April

- Commencing the pilots in each country in July
- Compiling desktop literature reviews in each country on this subject

Producing the overall report that captures common themes and findings across the four countries.



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Daphne Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

**I**N early July, the partnership met in Budapest for our second international event. We were joined by the Women's Shadow Board that was coming together for the first time and agreed to participate in three key national awareness raising days, these being the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls, International Women's Day, and Children's Day. They also agreed to work towards an exhibition for the final conference of the project.

The Women's Shadow Board had a great time at a photography workshop run by See Change Films to teach them some fundamentals in photography, inspire them about the potential of photography to document their journeys, and to spend quality time together.

We heard about the journey of the Women's Shadow Board members; these were personal and took a lot of courage in front of a room full of strangers, but they were worthwhile as

they illustrated the challenges faced by survivors who have had their children taken into care in each country's social care system.

At the event, we spent a lot of time getting to know one another better, both at the day time conferences and in the evenings over dinner along the Danube River.

We finalised the nuts and bolts for pilot projects in each country and our research coordinator, Inclusion, led a workshop on how we will evaluate these pilots so that we can contribute to the body of research that we are pulling together.

We also visited a Mother's Refuge run by Red Cross on the outskirts of Budapest to hear about the support offered to women and the challenges that this organisation faces.

Finally, we did some thinking about best practice toolkits as we want to make research, evaluation and evidence based theory practical. We thought about what tools we would like to develop and

evaluate as part of our pilots and how we might disseminate our learning about these tools with other professionals.

To conclude the event, the Women's Shadow Board presented a selection of their best photographs that they took and each of the members talked about how they took the photograph and why.

The feedback from the Women's Shadow Board members on their experience of the event was positive:

- *"I was grateful to come in contact with different people and cultures."*
- *"I am grateful for the opportunity to learn about photography."*
- *"I want to continue to capture moments."*
- *"We had such a great day and I didn't want to give anyone else the camera!"*
- *"Helen and Chris showed us how to train our eyes and look at objects."*

## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to get involved with Action for Change, or just want to hear a bit more about what we are up to, we would love to hear from you!

- 020 8753 5024
- [actionforchange@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:actionforchange@rbkc.gov.uk)
- [www.actionforchange.eu](http://www.actionforchange.eu)
- Follow us @ [Action4ChangeDV](https://twitter.com/Action4ChangeDV) on Twitter





# Pilot

## WOMEN'S SHADOW BOARD

**G**REAT news! Ellen Bishop started as the Action for Change Practitioner at Advance Advocacy (UK Delivery Partner) and the pilot officially launched on 1 July 2015. We are currently getting our first clients.

In the UK, Ellen, who is a domestic violence specialist, will be co-located with Family Services to support 20 survivors of domestic abuse who have had their children taken into care. Ellen will be working closely alongside colleagues from Maternity Services, Social Care and Leaving Care teams.

Ellen will be working with:

- Women who have had one child removed and have been subject to domestic violence
- Pregnant women who have had a child removed and experienced domestic violence
- Care leavers who are pregnant and exposed to domestic violence

Romania's pilot will support families by getting involved with them at an earlier stage in order to prevent risks of having their children removed. The pilot will focus primarily on assisting women who are victims of domestic violence by offering them shelter, and by supporting them to develop social and financial skills that will enable them to take back their children; furthermore, pilot staff will work alongside support services to provide support to the victims.

Hungary will set up a pilot that will focus on empowering women, enabling them to have better control over their lives. Pilot staff will work closely with psychologists, legal aid lawyers; and the Child Protection

**W**e know that it can sometimes feel like services are centred around the child and often there are little or no support structures in place for mothers who have experienced domestic abuse and have had their children taken into care. No one will understand this journey better than survivors of domestic violence themselves, which is why a Women's Shadow Board was set up. This board will help steer the project bringing the voice of the survivor into the work we do.

The board consists of 2-3 survivors of domestic abuse from each country who have previously had their children taken into care. The board will communicate regularly over the course of the project. The areas of responsibility that the Women's Shadow Board will assume are to input into research, evaluation, and any proposals relating to the pilots. The board will capture their journey over the 2 year period in creative ways such as photography. They will also plan activities for 3 national awareness raising days, and finally, they will help bring the content of these issues alive by contributing to an exhibition.

They have now started working together on a Facebook page to upload their best pictures from the Hungary event and to plan the next event in October for International Day for the Elimination

Methodological Services of Budapest. This group will accept referrals from services that work with abused women, women who are victims of domestic violence, and shelter homes for women who have

experienced abuse.

Italy will work with 20 women hosted by a temporary residential community for women victims of domestic violence. The aim of the pilot will be to help improve the

relationship between the mother and child(ren) with a focus on the wellbeing of the child, and prevent the removal of the child from the mother.



## Research and evaluation

**O**ne of the first activities that we undertook at the start of the project was to agree the research framework for the desktop literature review in each country. We wanted to find any evidence of best practice, tried to capture the services that are currently available, and whether there are any policies in this field.

Each country produced a desktop literature review and Inclusion pulled all of these together into a research report that details common themes and findings. We found that:

- There are gaps in research exploring the relationship between domestic violence and child removal
- In the UK, 59% of children's service budget is spent on care
- 29% of women report experiencing domestic abuse - only 6% report receiving professional help
- Systems are child focused - often putting the onus on the victim of violence to protect children
- Support should be personalised, and holistic

# WHAT IS ACTION FOR CHANGE?

**A**ction for Change is a European Union sponsored project that started in January 2015. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is working in partnership with six other organisations across four European countries, these being the UK, Romania, Italy and Hungary.

We want to know which services are most effective in helping women who, as a result of ongoing domestic violence, have had or are at risk of having at least one child removed from their care.

The focus of the project will be:

- To support women to break the cycle of violence and improve outcomes
- To understand which services work and those that are missing across the four countries, and identify which of these will improve the support currently available for women experiencing domestic violence
- To form recommendations around key missing services

At the end of the project, we will come together and share the learning between us to develop a toolkit for services in the UK, and across Europe.

## THE ACTION FOR CHANGE PARTNERS

### The Coordinating Partner

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) manages and coordinates the overall project. As part of the combined Children's Services department, Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster City Council are associate partners that contribute to and benefit from Action for Change. Action for Change will be co-located with a Tri-Borough service called Support for Change to work with survivors of domestic abuse.

### Our UK Partners

ADVANCE is a charitable organisation that does great work in supporting women, children and young people affected by domestic and sexual

violence. It has fifteen years of experience in providing award-winning independent Domestic Violence advocacy and support to women and children in West London. Advance is the delivery partner for the UK and will set up and manage the pilot project in the UK. It has experience in facilitating participation of vulnerable women and will coordinate overall involvement of the Women's Shadow Board at an international level.

Inclusion is a leading not-for-profit company in the UK dedicated to tackling disadvantage and promoting social justice. It is the UK's research partner and also leads on developing the international research and evaluation framework.

### Our Romanian Partner

CFCECAS is a national NGO in Romania that has strengths in research, developing innovative projects and training for social services. Its focus is upon

developing partnerships with local and central authorities to improve services for vulnerable groups of people. It is delivering the research and evaluation in Romania, as well as working closely with authorities to deliver their pilot project. The project will also build these organisations' capacity to deliver services and European Union projects.

### Our Hungarian Partner

G-Led is a newly established research and training organisation in Hungary that aims to empower people to tackle injustices. Its focus is gender violence and equality and its experts have contributed to a Daphne project on Empowering Women. Its Associate Partner will be Hid Social and Child Protection Services of Budapest XIII. G-Led will deliver the research and evaluation in Hungary, as well as work collaboratively with Hid Social and Children

Protection Services to deliver their pilot project.

### Our Italian Partners

Borgorete is an organisation that works in protection and care services, that includes support victims of violence in Italy. It operates on behalf of local health and social authorities in Perugia. Borgorete has previously worked with RBKC on other EU projects, ranging from crime prevention to the prevention of human trafficking. Borgorete will be the delivery partner in Italy and will work collaboratively with protection and care services to deliver its pilot project.

CESIE is the research partner for Italy and will work alongside Borgorete in order to deliver the research and evaluation of the Italian pilot project. CESIE has strengths in research and considerable dissemination potential, and has a strong history of working effectively and successfully on EU projects.